

To: Daniel and Joyce,

You were temporarily separated from your parents for the sake of the gospel;

This led us to be forever inseparable from God.

For this, we are grateful to you.

— Your aunt Xiao Fang

The reason for writing this book

Is our five grandchildren.

Jonathan's grandfather was a pastor in China.

We hope that when you grow up,

You know that your grandparents

Are persons who follow Christ.

We hope that this rich spiritual heritage

Will permeate for generations to come.

OVE BEYOND HORIZON

Ministry opportunities are always present around us, but occasionally an unusual opportunity blossoms that demands special attention. Jonathan and Ruth Teo dove into one of these unusual kairos moments ministering to thousands of Chinese migrant workers and students temporarily living in Israel.

This account challenges the reader to be attentive to similar opportunities around us with the assurance that God will provide what is required if we respond in obedience to the need. The book includes aspects of inspiration, tutoring, creative strategies and the challenge to get involved in what God is doing among the peoples around us. It is a combination of timely testimony, challenge and invitation.

Rev. Dr. Craig Bundy (Retired missions worker)

This book records mission stories in Israel from the late 20th century to the early 21st century. It has been described as a miracle in recent mission history. An experienced pastor commented that there has never been a mission field with such an enthusiastic response to the gospel. This is a story that should never be forgotten. While this period was short, it is certainly a great event in the mission history of the world. It has been called a Modern Acts of the Apostles.





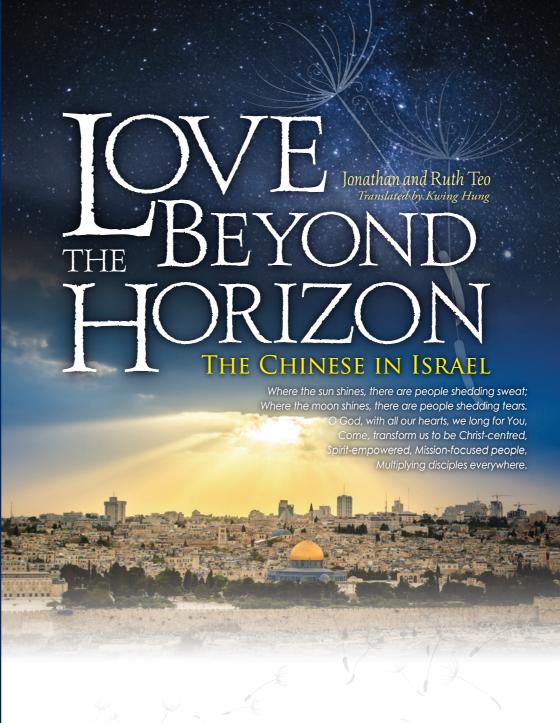
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LOVE BEYOND THE HORIZON

Jonathan and Ruth 7





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— Submission —

Not what I wish to be, nor where I wish to go.
For who am I that I should choose my way.
The Lord will choose for me, 'tis better far I know.
So let him bid me go; or stay.
(Hymn by Charles Austin Miles)





Love Beyond The Horizon

The Chinese In Israel

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"I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth."

(1 Corinthians 3:6-7, ESV)

No Reserves, No Retreats, No Regrets

– William Borden

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MISSIONAL LIFE AND DEDICATION

Jonathan and Ruth Teo's adventure-filled life in mission is rooted in their conversion and early discipleship in a mission-oriented local church in Singapore. They both cut their "spiritual teeth" in a soul-satisfying conversion from Chinese folk beliefs backgrounds and frequent experiences in short-term missions.

Who would have thought that their first overseas assignment as missions workers would have been to Israel? I certainly didn't. The thumbprint of God's providence is all over both their call and ongoing mission work. At the time the Teos were assigned to ministry in Israel I had minimal awareness of the similarities between Singapore and Israel. It was only during my post-graduate work in Singapore that I became aware of these striking similarities. Both Singapore and Israel are relatively small nations surrounded by larger Muslim neighbours. Both are far more technologically and economically advanced than their neighbours. The Teos' move represented considerable adjustment but in some respects it was a smooth move, orchestrated by the gracious hand of God.

Between Singapore and Israel it was necessary for the Teos to pass through Canada. It was there they found a home in a mission sending denomination, The Christian and Missionary Alliance. When working with several churches in Singapore I often heard them say, "There isn't a church in Singapore that's not interested in sending short-term missions teams, but you can count on your fingers the churches that send career missions workers." In the providence of God, the Teos landed at Canadian Theological Seminary where cross-cultural ministry was high on the list of priorities.

After Jonathan completed graduate theological training, they moved to Ottawa where they pioneered the Ottawa Mandarin Alliance Church and the first Mandarin Gospel Camp in the region. It was while in ministry there that they approached me about their call and desire to serve overseas. The screening

process went smoothly. Since our mission required both husband and wife to be theologically trained it was providential that Ruth had already completed both undergraduate and graduate degrees in theology while in Singapore and had nine years of pastoral ministry experience as well. It was abundantly evident that both were well qualified. The only impediment to immediate deployment was the reluctance of the church they had planted in Ottawa to release them. Eventually that too was resolved and the local church has moved from strength to strength under quality lay and pastoral leadership.

I recently noted in their personality profiles a quality that I'd failed to note during the screening process in 1997. The 16 Personality Factor Inventory revealed that Jonathan possessed an unusually high potential for innovation and creative development. What slipped past my attention back then became the hallmark of their ministry between 1998 and the present. Most of their ministries have required creative adaptation due to the security sensitive contexts where their work has focused: Israel, as already mentioned, Lebanon from which they were evacuated during the 2006 crisis, Jordan, Egypt and China. As you read on you will be thrilled to see how they developed creative and effective ministries in each location, doing so in ways that remained below the radar for the most part.

Jonathan and Ruth have evidenced a sustained commitment to three priorities: evangelism by every means possible, church-planting and the multiplication of cross-cultural workers. They have facilitated the training, deployment and orientation of missions workers between China and the Middle East in both directions. Their assiduous follow-up of workers has contributed greatly to their effectiveness.

The reader who picks up this chronicle of the adventures of Jonathan and Ruth in mission will be both thrilled and challenged to read accounts of God's gracious hand upon two lives fully committed to hastening the day when the loud voice of the seventh angel will sound the announcement from heaven: "The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will reign for ever and ever." (Revelation 11:15 NET1)

Rev. Wallace Albrecht Former Vice President Global Ministry The Christian and Missionary Alliance in Canada



Foreword

TO PUSH FORWARD GOD'S GREAT PLAN FOR ALL NATIONS

It was a delight to see Jonathan and Ruth Teo catapulted to the country of Israel. Their focus was on the Chinese who had come as overseas contract workers to help build some of the infrastructure and on scholars who were studying and doing research in the country.

Creatively, they went to visit the workers wherever they found them. We remember meeting a number of construction workers living in spartan conditions in the unfinished basement of the building they were working on. There around a little fire, the good news of Jesus Christ was shared with these workers. As the years progressed, thousands made commitments to Christ. You will delight in reading of the creative and loving ways in which Jonathan and Ruth, as well as short-term teams introduced people to Christ. Many of the migrant workers have now returned to their home country or have been redeployed elsewhere. God is now using them in their new locations to pass on the Good News. The Teos have continued to stay in touch to mentor and encourage those who made commitments to Christ under their care.

It was a delight to work with Jonathan and Ruth over these last 19 years. Their "Can-Do" spirit, their humility, determination, creativity and sense of humour contributed to the advancement of God's Kingdom. They denied themselves, overcame their fears, and saw the miraculous working of God.

It's been an honour and joy to work with Jonathan and Ruth. We highly commend their book to you, which will warm your heart to God's great plan for the nations.

Gerald and Dorothy Hogenbirk Former Canadian Regional Developers – SILK ROAD

STEPPING INTO GOD'S DOOR OF OPPORTUNITY

I believe it was Joseph Bayly who said, "The doors of God swing on small hinges". That was certainly the case when God opened the way in the 1990s for the Christian and Missionary Alliance to reach Chinese construction workers in Israel.

It was an Israeli evangelist named Dov who first came to me and said, "David, you are the head of the Alliance mission here. Have you seen all the Chinese faces in town? Have you read the press reports about the arrival of Chinese workers? What are you going to do?" Honestly, I wasn't going to do anything. The Alliance was very busy in the Holy Land trying to reach Israelis and Palestinians for Christ. Temporary Chinese labourers were not included in our field strategy. Nevertheless, the Holy Spirit kept repeating Dov's words in my heart. Then I went to a conference where the Jesus Film was offered to participants in many languages. The promoter, a man named Joel, pointedly asked me, "Would you take some of these CDs in the Mandarin language? Nobody seems to want them." The Spirit compelled me to take them and God used them powerfully to draw some of the workers to himself.

Then, when a Finnish Lutheran woman named Sally visited Israel, she sought me out to say, "The Chinese workers I've encountered here seem especially open to the gospel. I once was a missions worker in Thailand and Taiwan, and I came to respect the Alliance very much. What will you do with this opportunity?" The Holy Spirit again convicted my heart by her words.

Through these seemingly insignificant connections (hinges) God captured my attention and pushed open the door to the most fruitful work the Alliance ever pursued in the Middle East.

It was Rev. Peter Chu who first came to investigate the situation. I will never forget the verse he used to challenge our leadership team to add Chinese



outreach to our field strategy: "...exhausted yet pursuing" (Judges 8:4).

Praise God for the spiritually attentive hearts of the Grahams, Zeiglers, Elbels and Cederbergs who unanimously voted to commence the Chinese work in Israel.

After a year or so, the Lord brought Rev. Jonathan and Ruth Teo to the field to lead and expand the work. Clearly they were God's chosen leaders for this time, and I am delighted to commend them as the authors of this account. For them, their team, and the plentiful number of volunteer Chinese ministers who helped them, I and thousands of others are eternally grateful.

Rev. David N. Lauffer Former Field Director, Israel Field



COURAGEOUSLY ENGAGE YOUR GOD-GIVEN ADVENTURE!

It gives me incredible joy and gratitude to God to have been personally asked by Jonathan Teo, co-author (along with his wife Ruth) of "Love Beyond the Horizon: The Chinese in Israel" to provide a foreword to this book. I waited until I had all of the chapters sent to me before reading it thoroughly from cover to cover in one weekend. As a person who is passionate about missions and the mission heart of God, this book inspired me afresh and anew. There are many reasons for this inspiration. I will convey a few.

In the seven chapters of this book you will cease to be a reader and rather become a participant stepping into God's Missio Dei, in short, his mission plan. His compelling plan is to rescue people lost in darkness and without hope, with the message of his grace, mercy and transformational love. This is what God does! This is made clear from the testimonies as personally told.

The Teos intertwine amazing stories into various themes from the call of God, the significance of Israel as a chosen nation that is being re-gathered in accordance with biblical prophecy and the mysterious intrigue in what He is doing among Chinese migrants and intellectuals who find themselves in this foreign land completely unaware that they are key actors in God's unfolding plan, to rescue them with his compassionate love.

However this book wasn't written solely for the sake of unfolding stories of unexpected encounters with God, as amazing as these stories are. It becomes apparent as you move through each chapter that God is sovereignly at work, and He is comprehensively engaged in establishing His Kingdom and rule on earth. It involves people, wooed into the heart of God, discipled into faith by those who will say yes to God's urgings for engagement. Through all of this the Church is born and the community of faith is built up and released to continue the glorious task of mission - of bringing unsuspecting and needy people into

access to Jesus.

As amazing as it is, that Chinese in the thousands have become foreigners in the land of Israel where they are introduced to God, this is a microcosm of what is uniquely happening all across our world today. Your imagination is aroused and you get to see this, feel this and live this through the pages of this book.

Perhaps one of the most salient reasons for my joy in introducing this book is that Jonathan and I were colleagues in seminary together in Regina over the same years. We both were being shaped by a tender God with mission blueprints for us and our families. Our respective calls in mission have been unfolding. At this juncture, this book highlights an unusually deep appreciation and opportunity, both to cheer Jonathan and Ruth on in their callings as God's servants for their faithfulness over the years as well as to commend the reading of this semi-biography depicting their humble, joyful and courageous missional service to God.

Rev. Brem Frentz Vice President - Global Venture C&MA Canada



HIS STORY BEYOND THE HORIZON

History is His story, God's story. The gospel ministry in Israel is also His story. He initiates, He upholds, and He fulfils.

This book was written for three reasons:

- (1) To thank and glorify God: God is love. He does not forget the Chinese labourers who are sweating and bitterly tired in Israel. He does not forget the Chinese scholars who are burying their heads in experiments and anxious about their future.
- (2) To witness the power of the gospel in changing human life.
- (3) To inspire you to become more actively engaged in missions.

In many places around the world, the field is wide and the crops to be harvested are many. Yet, there is a shortage of workers in the gospel harvest. (Matthew 9:35-38)

If two ordinary people like us can be used by God, many more people can be used by God. "We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty." (Luke 17:10). If you have a willing heart, you can be a "fisher of men" (Luke 5:10) in this "crooked and twisted generation" (Philippians 2:15).

This is not a book about theories; not a fictional book. It is a snapshot of the times. It is a book about real life witnesses.

We would like to thank our family for their support. We would like to thank the people who made the publication of this book possible: Sister Teresa Huang for encouraging us to write this book and for her editing of the original Chinese version; Rev. Dr. Wallace Albrecht, Rev. Gerald Hogenbirk, Rev. David N. Lauffer, and Rev. Brem Frentz for their contributions; Dr. Kwing Hung for the English translation; and Rev. Dr. Penny Hall for the English proofreading. The above are all our longtime friends.

We would also like to thank Brother Robin Yu for creating the musical



scores; Sister Carmen Ma for translating the two MK reflections into Chinese; brother and sisters, and members of short-term missions teams for sharing their stories; and the many brothers and sisters who have supported the Chinese gospel ministry in Israel directly and indirectly. Most importantly, we thank our Heavenly Father for giving us the privilege to serve Him together with His people.

Samuel Pollard (1864-1915) came from England as a missions worker when he was 22 years old. He travelled deep into the Chinese inland. He overcame unimaginable difficulties. He developed the Miao writing and stimulated the rapid development of Miao society and history. In 1915, at Shimenkan, he took care of the Miao people infected with typhoid fever. He used his last vaccine on a Miao person before dying of the typhoid himself. He was only 51. He is the missions worker we admire most.

In 2008, a CCTV (Chinese Central Television) Program "Witness, a Journey of Discovery" made a feature film named "Beyond the Horizon". It shows Pollard's missions work in the Shimenkan area of Weining County in Guizhou Province. Because of this film, we have named this book "Love Beyond the Horizon".

Jesus said, "Love your neighbour". Far beyond the horizon are millions of people loved by Jesus. Jesus commands that we do not forget them, that we love them like He does, and that we work for them as He would.

"In the history of all ethnic groups and in the struggle for survival, they (the Miao people) are not significant in number. But they are still flowers in God's heart. Once again, God has chosen the weak of the earth." From Pollard's The Story of the Miao.

For Pollard, Shimenkan in Guizhou was the land beyond his horizon. Are you a modern day Samuel Pollard? Where is your horizon?





CHAPTER ONE

GOD'S GRACIOUS CALL

Opening Words

Israel – God's Promised Land - the Holy Land - holds the aspirations of many people, yet is often troubled by war.

Israel – a tiny country, not easily found on a world map. It pulls at the hearts of people from around the world. This disputed piece of land is often in the news and often attracts the world's attention.

Israel – a news battlefield for reporters from all over the world. It is the country with the highest concentration and density of reporters. This bridge between the three continents of Europe, Asia, and Africa is where reporters try to obtain the latest exclusive news.

Israel – a place with almost one thousand reporters in just one city, Jerusalem. In this sensitive strip of land, explosive news occurs almost every day, giving it the reputation of a powder keg of war.

Israel – a gospel field for a missions worker to bring the good news of salvation. Here, people of different background from all over the world gather, including thousands of Chinese who do not know the Lord.

Israel - a place where many Chinese labourers gather. They come from thousands of miles away, not fearful of the difficulties or dangers. They devote themselves to the tide of construction brought on by the returning Jews. Tens of thousands of Chinese labourers lived in Israel at the turn of the 20th century.

Under the call of God, many evangelists have come to Israel. They leave their peaceful homes and come to this perilous land because they are concerned about those who await the gracious call of the gospel.

1. God's Gracious Call to the Israelites

A Biblical Basis

Israel is a tiny country on the world stage, but its importance in world history and its international status are vital. Jesus Christ was born there, and the gospel spread from there. The Israelite Kingdom was founded and then destroyed; the people were led into captivity and scattered to the nations. Later, Jews returned and rebuilt their homes; Israel was restored. These events are all recorded in the Bible; long ago they had been revealed by God to the Israelites

through the prophets.

"But if you will not listen to me and will not do all these commandments, if you spurn my statutes, and if your soul abhors my rules, so that you will not do all my commandments, but break my covenant, then I will do this to you: I will visit you with panic, with wasting disease and fever that consume the eyes and make the heart ache. And you shall sow your seed in vain, for your enemies shall eat it.... And I will scatter you among the nations, and I will unsheathe the sword after you, and your land shall be a desolation, and your cities shall be a waste." (Leviticus 26:14-16,33)

The Israelites were "scattered in the nations" for more than 2000 years because of their disobedience to God, but God promised them through the prophet Ezekiel:

"And I will multiply people on you, the whole house of Israel, all of it. The cities shall be inhabited and the waste places rebuilt. And I will multiply on you man and beast, and they shall multiply and be fruitful. And I will cause you to be inhabited as in your former times, and will do more good to you than ever before. Then you will know that I am the Lord." (Ezekiel 36:10-11)

The Lord is a faithful God who said to the Israelites:

"Then say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Behold, I will take the people of Israel from the nations among which they have gone, and will gather them from all around, and bring them to their own land. And I will make them one nation in the land, on the mountains of Israel. And one king shall be king over them all, and they shall be no longer two nations, and no longer divided into two kingdoms. They shall not defile themselves anymore with their idols and their detestable things, or with any of their transgressions. But I will save them from all the backslidings in which they have sinned, and will cleanse them; and they shall be my people, and I will be their God." (Ezekiel 37:21-23)

Likewise, God warned the Israelites through the prophet Jeremiah:

"Hear the word of the Lord, O nations, and declare it in the coastlands far away; say, 'He who scattered Israel will gather him, and will keep him as a shepherd keeps his flock.'" (Jeremiah 31:10)

A Call for the Israelites to Return

From the preceding verses, we see that God disciplined the Israelites because



of their disobedience. They were scattered to all nations, but as He is merciful and loving, He promised that they would gather again to return and rebuild a nation.

Today, part of these prophecies have been fulfilled.

The Lord promised His people that He would bring them back to this land because He is a faithful God. In 1948, two thousand years after the destruction of Israel, He began to fulfill the promises made to the Israelites by the prophets (Ezekiel 36:10-11; 37:21-23; Jeremiah 31:10). Israel has finally been rebuilt and reconstructed as an independent state, joining the United Nations as its 60th member.

God began to summon His people to return to the Promised Land. Since then, Israel has ushered in wave after wave of returning Jews from every corner of the world, responding to the call of God. They have returned to their homeland from Russia, Europe, Africa, South America, and North America. The number returning to Israel have increased year after year, from 65,000 in 1948 to over 8 million in 2017- 6 million of them Jews.

2. God's Gracious Call to Chinese Migrant Workers in Israel

The story in this book is about the evangelistic ministry among Chinese migrant workers in Israel, during the period about 50 years after the founding of the modern State of Israel. In this time, the Israeli government have used many methods to attract more immigrants. Between 1990 to 2000, over 1,000,000 Jews returned to the Holy Land.

During the exodus from ancient Egypt, the Jews were also accompanied by "strangers" and "foreigners." When Israel re-established itself as an independent state, many new immigrants and foreign workers again entered Israel. They were workers from Romania, Turkey, the Philippines, Thailand, and China.

Among these foreigners, 5,000-8,000 people came from China. The majority of them worked in the construction industry, while hundreds of scholars pursued doctoral degrees or postdoctoral work in Israeli universities. Many Chinese also came to Israel as chefs and nannies, or workers in orchards and farms.

There is a street in Tel Aviv, just north of the bus terminal, named Nave Sha'ana Street in Hebrew and referred to as the "Roman Street" in Chinese. It

is a relatively ordinary commercial street, bustling with crowds that include a tide of Chinese migrant workers every day. In the 1990s, the number of Chinese migrant workers was still small. Most of the migrant workers on this street were Romanians.

On this overcrowded Roman Street, there are bars, gambling places and illicit drug outlets. This street is also the gathering place of gangs and secret societies and neighbours a red light district. On light poles, posters in poorly written Chinese characters solicited "internationally wanted people" or explicit advertisements in English. Gradually, more and more Chinese people regard this street as Tel Aviv's "Chinatown."

As the number of Chinese workers began to overtake those of the Romanians, this street slowly became the main gathering place for Chinese people. As this was a street of Romanians in the past, the Chinese simply called it "Roman Street", leaving out the second part of the word. Roman Street had nothing to do with the Romans from Italy.

Roman Street became well known to the Chinese for a reason. Every Saturday is the Jewish Sabbath, according to the laws of Israel and Law of Moses. On this day, Jews are forbidden to work.

During the Sabbath, Jews go to the synagogues to read and pray. There are not many places suitable for foreign workers so they would gather on Roman Street. The street is full of Chinese people on the Sabbath. With the influx of Chinese people, many shops began to cater specially for the Chinese with signs advertising "Phone cards for China," and "Yantai barber shop."

On weekends, this district remains a gathering place for foreign workers from various countries. They come here to meet with old friends, talk about the news, buy mobile phones and phone cards, buy food and snacks, drink, gamble, and pass the time.

3. The Israeli-Palestinian Conflict

Israel and Palestine are far away from most people in the world. Yet, for people living in Israel, unpredictable events occur frequently in their daily lives. Two different ethnic groups live on this strip of land, both descendants of Abraham. Their long-term relationship of mutual hate have led to unceasing struggle.



The years we lived in Israel were a special period as it marked the beginning of the second Palestinian uprising. Conflicts between Israel and the Palestinians were unending, with many suicide bombing incidents. These put the Chinese migrant workers and scholars in Israel in constant danger. This strip of land was completely covered in suffering, fear and danger.

The Palestinians launched two large-scale uprisings (known as intifada). The first was between 1987 to 1993 and ended with the signing of the Oslo Accords. The cause of the conflict came down to the Palestinians' opposition to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip.

The Palestinian uprising started a refusal to work for Israel. They initiated destructive activities against Israel, such as exploding fuel bombs against Israeli infrastructure. When Israel retaliated, both sides sustained casualties; 164 Israeli and 2,162 Palestinians dead.

The second Palestinian uprising started on September 28, 2000 when Ariel Sharon, Israeli Minister of Defence and leader of the official government opposition, led a group of delegates from the Likud Party under the protection of the Israeli riot police up to the square of the Al-Aqsa mosque on the Temple Mount of Jerusalem.

At the time, Sharon's visit to the Temple Mount was triggered by a complaint by Israeli archaeologists that the Muslim religious authority had destroyed several archaeological relics and built a mosque on the grounds of King Solomon's horse ring.

Sharon's Temple Mount visit caused such strong opposition from the Palestinian Muslims that it led to many acts of violence and wave of suicide bombings across the country.

The number of casualties in this second uprising was far greater than the first; 1,053 Israeli and 4,789 Palestinians dead.

On February 8, 2005, Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and Palestinian National Authority (PNA) leader Mahmoud Abbas reached an agreement: Palestinians would cease their attacks on Israel, and Israel would stop their military operations and withdraw their forces from the Gaza Strip.

After the agreement was signed, the Israeli-Palestinian agreement was seen as the end of the second uprising in Palestine, despite the fact that minor conflicts still occur.

IOVE BEYOND HORIZON

4. God's Gracious Call to the Messengers of the Gospel

During this time, thousands of Chinese people had come to Israel. They came to this unfamiliar land to work or to study. They integrated into life in Israel. They visited Biblical sites in this Holy Land. They heard about the adventures found in the history of Israel. Yet, there were few to tell them of the source or the mystery of all these stories.

Their purpose for coming to Israel was to earn money and to gain knowledge. They did not think about how the God who loves Israel also loves them. He wants to give them springs of living waters – spiritual wisdom which is better than money or worldly knowledge. But these Chinese did not know about the work that God had done for them. They never imagined that they would have the Bible to read, that they would hear the gospel, and that they would find a spiritual home in the church.

God spoke to my husband, Pastor Jonathan Teo, and I, moving us to leave our homeland and home country in North America to preach the gospel to these people in need of God's truth. God opened the way and led us to Israel to shepherd the Chinese migrant workers and Chinese scholars in Israel.

Tel Aviv's new bus terminal was a very accessible area. While the area was of questionable repute, it was an ideal location for the Chinese from different parts of the country to come together. For this reason, we rented a place nearby to meet.



The following is a glimpse of our life in Israel during this time.

Pizza Restaurant Exploded Twice

At a busy crossroad in Jerusalem stood a pizza restaurant that catered to lots of customers and ran good business. When our children came to visit us on holidays, our family would go to eat pizza there. During the Palestinian uprisings, two serious suicide bombings occurred at this shop. After the bombings, when our daughter stood across the street from the shop, she could not stop trembling and crying as the pizza restaurant had now become bakery

shop selling cake and biscuits. Can you imagine what would happen if our family had been in the shop when it was bombed?

Car Bomb Exploded at Jerusalem Open-Air Market

One morning, Jonathan and I walked from the Jerusalem Alliance Ministry Center to an open-air market to buy some bread. At a crossroad, we suddenly realized that the road was closed and Israeli soldiers were stopping the pedestrians. We saw groups of Israeli soldiers and police running toward the market.

Soon thereafter, police sirens began to sound loudly. The pedestrians were wondering what happened. Cell phone lines were all busy. Immediately, we saw a helicopter hovering above. Later, we found out that a car bomb had exploded in the market and there were casualties. For a long time afterwards, the market entrance was guarded by armed soldiers.

Chain Explosion at McChina Fried Noodle Shop

When we preached the gospel, we could encounter rejection, indifference, and even hate. As missions workers, we were psychologically prepared. When we preached the gospel to the Chinese, rude responses were common. Some told us to go away when we mentioned Jesus. One time, a rude man slapped a gospel tract out of my daughter's hand, greatly scaring her. However, Jonathan's reaction was quick. He caught the falling tract in mid-air and my daughter was surprised and cried, "Daddy is so cool!"

On Saturday, January 4, 2003, Jonathan and I, our daughter, and over 20 brothers distributed gospel tracts and leaflets on Roman Street. As the Chinese New Year was nearing, we invited Chinese workers to come to the celebration and gospel meeting of the Spring Festival. We were distributing around different areas on Roman Street. Jonathan was standing in front of the McChina fried noodle shop. This shop was selling fried noodles, not hamburgers, and business was good.

As the tracts were almost all distributed, we were preparing to return to the church. Everything seemed so normal, not much different from any other weekend. Yet, on the next day, at the same time and at the same place, at the McChina shop, two consecutive suicide bombings occurred.

The first explosion caused deaths and injuries. While the arriving rescue

workers were tending to the injured, a second bomb exploded, causing an even greater number of casualties.

A total of 23 died, including the bombers, and 120 were injured. Among the deaths were 15 Israelis and 8 foreigners (including 3 Chinese: Li Peizhong, Guo Aiping and Zhang Minmin). Most of the injured were foreign workers.

Of the several Chinese migrant workers injured in the incident, Brother Chen Wen received the most serious injuries. The preliminary diagnosis suggested he would be paralyzed for life. After many treatments, he returned to China for recovery. Although he never fully recovered, he continues to live a normal life. At that time, the news was so shocking! If the explosion had occurred one day earlier, we, along with many church brothers, would have likely been casualties.

Gas Masks and a Bomb Shelter

Besides the unfriendly reaction to our evangelistic work, we also had to face the threat of war. At that time, Iraq was threatening to attack Israel. The current situation was so tense that people in the country all had gas masks, either from distribution by their work units or from individual purchases. During the most intense times, students all carried their gas masks, swinging them on their way to school. Our children wore their gas masks to take photos, thinking it was cool.

At that time, the house we rented had a bedroom size bomb shelter, with walls made of strong materials, behind a thick and heavy iron gate, plus a large latch. Inside was a large roll of adhesive tape, to be used to seal gaps on the gate in order to prevent poisonous gas from seeping through.

Several things were also stored there: water bottles, canned water, dry food, a small radio, books, chess; survival gear, including a hammer, an ax, gas masks, a flashlight, spare batteries, matches, candles (for power failure emergencies); a pen and a notebook to keep records; spare clothes and simple bedding. The bomb shelter was a rare thing for most people, but at this time in Israel it was part of everyday life. While the necessary items were all prepared, it was, of course, best not to require the use of the bomb shelter. All Israeli buildings have bomb shelters when possible, just in case.

Fright at the Airport

One time in the Israel Ben Gurion International Airport, as we were waiting



at the hand baggage checkpoint, an alarm rang suddenly and an announcement from the loudspeaker informed us that a suspicious package had been found. Travellers were asked to leave their baggage behind and to evacuate quickly, moving away from the terminal.

Immediately, the airport was in chaos. Everyone ran in different directions. We dropped our baggage and followed the crowd to the exit. After a while, it was announced that everyone should return to the terminal to continue the boarding process. This kind of incident could have been serious, but thankfully nothing happened.

Detergent Box

Tel Aviv's bus terminal, new at the time, was Israel's largest and the busiest bus station. The reason why we chose to locate the church near the station was because people from all directions could easily come here by bus and then walk about ten minutes to the church. At that time, only one family in the church had a private car. Everyone else came to church by public transportation.

One Friday, Jonathan was to lead the monthly meeting of the Dedicators Fellowship. He found out that the streets near the church were closed because an Arab woman had hidden four kilograms of explosives in a detergent box and had tried to enter the Tel Aviv bus terminal.

Everyone entering the bus terminal is routinely searched. This woman refused to open the package she carried, which made the security personnel suspicious. Then the woman dropped the detergent box containing explosives and tried to escape. She was quickly captured and the explosives destroyed. There were four explosions and the church brothers heard them. Our church, which was just a few hundred meters away, was shaken by the explosions.

Led by Two "Angels" – Short-term missions Team's Experience in Bethlehem

We are fully convinced that, no matter what the situation is, our faithful God cares for us and protect us all the way. Our personal experiences affirm our convictions.

One year, seven brothers and sisters came to the Tel Aviv church on a short-term missions. Normally, Jonathan would take our guests to visit tourist sites in

the Holy Land.

The last few days of the mission, Jonathan would use the church van to take the short-term missions team sightseeing. One of the favourite spots was Bethlehem. The usual sightseeing route was first to visit the Shepherd's Field, because traditionally this was the place where the angels announced the gospel to the shepherds. After this came a visit to the Church of Nativity where Jesus was born.

Everyone was very excited to be on the way. To their surprise, soldiers stopped them at a checkpoint and told them that no visitors were allowed to enter Bethlehem because of recent tensions and possible danger. The group was really disappointed as they thought tensions in Israel had eased and that things had been be fine on that day. So the team repeatedly spoke to the soldiers saying that this would be the only time in their lives that they would be able to come to this place and that they could look after themselves. Unable to resist the pleading, the soldiers allowed the group to pass. Jonathan then drove the usual route and the group entered Bethlehem.

The short-term missions team was very happy and excited as they came to Bethlehem for the first time and were able to visit Shepherd's Field and the Church of Nativity. After taking lots of pictures and a nice visit, they prepared to leave.

As Jonathan began the return trip out of the city, they got caught up in a bad traffic jam, slowing their progress. Even the pedestrians moved faster than the traffic, but there was no way to backup as the cars behind blocked the way. They followed along at a snail's pace.

As they passed Rachel's Tomb, they saw Israeli soldiers on the right, hiding behind cement road blocks, aiming their rifles in front of them. Intuitively, Jonathan sensed that something bad was going to happen. He wanted to quickly leave that spot but he could not move the van out of the line. So he planned to turn back after the next cement barrier.

When the van reached the next cement barrier, Jonathan took note of a group of young Palestinian men to the left of the car. They were holding rocks, getting ready to throw them at the Israeli soldiers not far away. The situation was extremely dangerous, with Palestinian young men on the left and the Israeli soldiers on the right; the van was stuck in the middle.



At this extremely dangerous moment, Jonathan said to them with a smile: "Do you want to take pictures with them?" Everyone in the short-term missions team was horrified and could not respond to Jonathan's humour. Incredible fear was on their faces and everyone was scared to death.

Despite their efforts to leave the area, they were stuck; other vehicles jammed the road in front and behind their van- they couldn't move forward or backward. Moreover, Jonathan was not familiar with the routes in Bethlehem and simply did not know any other way out of the city. They could not move between two knives. What could they do?

Yet, there was hope in this helpless situation. Suddenly, in front of them appeared a sedan occupied by two people. One of them waved to Jonathan signalling him to follow their car. In this stressful moment, Jonathan could only obey and follow that car. He did not know whether these people were Jews or Palestinians.

While following that car, Jonathan was wondering uneasily. What would happen if those people led them to a dangerous place and then robbed or hurt them?

In any case, he could not stop the van and was obliged to follow the other car. They moved farther and farther and Jonathan felt more and more nervous. Jonathan continued to pray and uneasily followed that car for 20-30 minutes. Finally, Jonathan suddenly saw a ray of hope as a road sign pointing to Jerusalem appeared. He felt immediately relieved as he now knew the way to go back.

Later, they recounted actually having met two "angels"! They led the group through an alternate winding mountainous road out of Bethlehem, returning to Jerusalem. This group of evangelists escaped great danger and were brought to safety without any harm.

Jonathan told them, "Frankly, even if I had been able to drive out of Bethlehem, I would not be able to drive to Jerusalem by another road which I had never driven before. At that time, with no detailed maps, it could have been a big problem. If we had gotten lost, we could have ended up in bad a place and what might have happened to us next could have been unimaginable."

The next day, the news reported that a Palestinian demonstration and riot was held in Bethlehem the previous day resulting in casualties.

Twenty years have passed; Jonathan has guided many short-term missions

teams. While there were many incidents, none was as dangerous as the Bethlehem incident. All of these teams came and left safely.

Security Everywhere

When we were there, the security was particularly tight because of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In popular public places, such as department stores, restaurants, fast food restaurants, and schools, there were armed security personnel at the entrances searching people's handbags. The interrogation of passengers before boarding an airplane was particularly severe.

Dangerous Overpass

One night, near our home, we were trying to walk on a pedestrian overpass. Suddenly, we saw a few police cars parked with flashing signals. We suspected some serious incident occurred. On inquiring, we understood that there was a suspicious package on the overpass that could be a bomb. At that time in Israel, such incidents were not uncommon. We experienced a few of them but fortunately there was no real danger.

Perhaps, in the eyes of most people, Israel was not safe. But come to think of it, is there any country that is 100% safe? In some countries or areas, the public order is so poor that even police do not dare to go in. As Jonathan says, "No place is 100% safe." The safest thing is living in God's will. If someone does not live in God's will, he is unsafe wherever he is.

Are You Afraid?

People often ask us if we were afraid. Even the Field Director from the Alliance Ministry Center suggested that we could leave Israel if we felt afraid. While we knew that there was danger living in Israel, we truly were not afraid.

Jonathan said: "The Chinese workers are able to stay in turmoil in Israel to earn an income in order to feed their families. For us as missions workers, are we unable to stay in Israel to follow Jesus' commands in order to win people for the Lord?"

Later, Jonathan estimated that there were more than 20 terrorist events in one year occurring within the 20-minute walk radius of the Jerusalem Ministry Centre. Among dead suicide bombers were also Palestinian women.



Almost every month we travelled to Jerusalem for meetings or work. Sometimes when I entered the city, I would wonder whether I could safely leave this place or not, but these thoughts never stopped me from going to Jerusalem.

At that time, Jerusalem was often in the news headlines. Some children of missions workers whom we knew were hit with great sadness when they learned in school that their fellow classmates had died in a bombing on the previous day.

It is understandable that some mission families left the field because of the great pressure from living in such difficult conditions for so long.

Even today, we still keep some front pages from Israeli newspapers. At that time, we subscribed to the Jerusalem Post, which was brought by the newspaper boy to our door every morning. Sometimes on the front page were large pictures of bloody suicide bombings and the rescue. We had made arrangements for our children in case we were killed. To die on the mission field is, just as the apostle Peter said, a "worthy" cause: "Then they left the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonour for the name." (Acts 5:41)

During those years, every time we were sitting on a plane leaving Israel, we felt a sense of relief. When we picked up the newspapers on the plane, we felt something was missing – the lack of chaos in the Canadian news.

The Israelis seemed to be accustomed to this social turmoil. Even when there was a bombing, the business on the next street continued on. Even when there was bombing on one day, the business would be opened again in a few days after they had cleaned up. Jews act in such a way as to let the Palestinians know that the Jewish people are a strong nation and that they are not afraid of anybody's threats.

In the Bible, God's servants were persecuted when they proclaimed God's messages. Those pioneer missions workers who went to evangelize indigenous people were beaten, pursued, and killed by indigenous people and wild beasts. They were imprisoned and threatened by plagues. They sacrificed their lives. These were the real pioneers.





CHAPTER TWO

EARLY CHINESE PEOPLE IN ISRAEL

1. The Prophecies of the Bible, Strangers and Foreigners

Isaiah 61:1-3:

"The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound; to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor, and the day of vengeance of our God; to comfort all who mourn; to grant to those who mourn in Zion — to give them a beautiful headdress instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the garment of praise instead of a faint spirit; that they may be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Lord, that he may be glorified."

Pay attention to verses 4-5:
"They shall build up the ancient ruins;
they shall raise up the former devastations;
they shall repair the ruined cities,
the devastations of many generations.
Strangers shall stand and tend your flocks;
foreigners shall be your plowmen and vinedressers."

Who are these "strangers" and "foreigners"? We have witnessed that these verses were wonderfully fulfilled with the arrival of foreign workers around the 50th anniversary of modern Israel's founding. God loves the Israelis and God also loves the foreign workers who come to Israel. God let them set foot on this promised land, to help Israel develop and rebuild their homeland. Among these

are the Chinese people. They help build houses on construction sites, cultivate fields on farms and orchards, grow flowers in gardens, and repair vineyards. How glorious it is for Chinese people to take part in the rebuilding of Israel!

2. Early Migrant Workers in Israel

Along the streets in cities across Israel, Chinese people appear every evening, rushing back home after work, taking the bus, riding bicycles, or walking. They wear dirty work clothes and looked tired, but their hearts are full of hope for the future. Why do these Chinese construction workers leave their homes to come to this turbulent land? What are their living conditions? People are very curious about these foreigners.

Most Chinese migrant workers are between 20 and 45 years old. Among those who came to our church were people from at least 14 provinces and cities across China, including Fujian, Jiangsu, Shandong, Anhui, Henan, Hebei, Jiangxi, Tianjin, Shanghai, Liaoning, Jilin, Heilongjiang.

Since the reform and the opening up of China, there has been a boom in urban development. The demand for labour increased greatly in construction, urban development and related industries. Many young people from rural areas left their homes and moved to the cities. Most of the men became construction workers and most of the women became nannies or temporary workers.

Gradually, many of these migrant workers moved out of China to work in countries where labourers were needed. Some workers came to Israel, taking the risk to live in a dangerous area. Some became construction workers, and a small number of women became domestic workers.

Going Abroad Full of Hope

There has been a long history of Chinese people working abroad. They move abroad to work for many reasons. Some workers find it difficult to secure work locally; wages are low; they see other migrant workers sending money home, improving the livelihood of their families; and foreign currencies are higher than the Chinese Renminbi. As a result, many Chinese workers follow suit and go abroad to find work.



State Companies and Private Companies

Some Chinese construction workers were contracted by state-owned construction companies while others were contracted by private companies. In both cases, the workers needed to pay an upfront labour fee to sign on. The workers were usually attracted by the conditions promised by the companies. In the beginning, companies would usually agree to a two-year contract, to procuring a work visa and to paying a monthly fixed income.

In the early days, some state companies only paid the living expenses directly to the workers; a small portion of the full wage. The companies kept the rest. If there were disciplinary problems during the contract period, the company would usually impose fines and also deduct from the workers' wages. The rest of the wage would be paid to the workers only at the end of the contract, after the labour fee and fines had been deducted. After contracts expired, some workers would then take the wages but not return home. Instead, they opted to work in the black market to make more money.

Private companies required a much higher labour fee. Usually the workers would need to borrow the money from family and friends, or from high-interest lenders. Many workers needed to work two years or more just to repay the fee. In other words, wages earned in first two years were just enough to repay the borrowed money. They were only able to keep wages earned after this period.

Several Types of Migrant Workers

Most of the workers described below were male workers. They include the following: legally employed workers, illegally employed workers, temporary workers, hourly workers, and miscellaneous workers. A minority consisted also of female workers; they worked as nannies, live-in workers caring for children and the elderly, domestic workers, and cleaners.

[Legally employed workers] (Called "white market workers" in Chinese)

Workers with visas work legally for state-owned companies. They are protected by the law and have fixed salaries. While this type of work was relatively stable, the wages were still quite low and the workers had to live in homes converted from shipping containers. Their management was more rigorous. Some companies made roll call at 7:30 p.m. to confirm all migrant workers were back at the camp. This curfew was in place to prevent them from

moonlighting to earn extra money.

【 Illegally employed workers 】 (Called "black workers" or "black market workers" in Chinese)

Only after arriving in Israel do some workers find that the conditions they face were different from what was promised. Upon their immediate arrival, the first thing many workers experienced was the removal of their passports. Without their passports, they were highly restricted from doing much of anything. They had no control over where they were to work or what they were to supposed do. Many of them only actually received a legal visa to work for three months. After the three months, without help to extend their visas, they would unknowingly and involuntarily become illegal workers or black workers.

- Black market workers have an unstable life:
- Unstable work: it is easier to find work if there are acquaintances who can introduce them to work.
- Unstable income: there is income only when there is work; without work there is no income. Some employers abuse the psychological weakness common among the workers an eagerness to earn money by delaying or withholding their wages. Some simply refuse to pay them. Some delay paying them for a few months, even a whole year. If the amount they owe is too large, they could even disappear. Even worse, some employers would drive the illegal workers to strange places, ask them to wait, and then call the police to arrest them. If the workers are sent back to China, the employers do not need to pay their wages. Delaying and withholding wages happens not only in Israel but in many places in the world.
- Unstable residence: they can stay at a place for a few days, but after the project is finished, they have to move to another place to work. Their possessions include only simple personal items and bedding; just enough to roll them up and leave.
- · Unstable security: as there is no formal visa, they face the risk of being arrested by Israeli law enforcement officers, being locked in detention centres, and sent back to China. If they are sent back before they earn enough money, they don't make enough to repay their outstanding debts. Earning money and repaying debts are the two major concerns that trouble them.



• Other problems facing illegal workers:

The problems with saving money

Without passports illegal workers cannot open bank accounts. For legally employed workers, someone helps them to keep their wages. But what about illegal workers? If they keep their money at the work camps, it can be stolen while they are at the job site during the day. Some workers opted to carry their money with them all the time. Learning this, new immigrants to Israel would work together to target these workers to steal their money. Assault and theft from unconscious victims was a common occurrence.

The problems with sending money home

In order to send the money back to their families in China, some workers asked their fellow workers to carry the money back to China. Other workers travelled to the Palestinian areas to send the money because agencies in those areas would mail the money without the sender having to show a passport (handling fees were also lower). As a deterrence to being robbed, they travelled in large groups.

On May 12, 2002, nine workers from Hebei Province travelled to the West Bank to mail their money. After passing the Israeli-Palestinian border station, they boarded a Palestinian taxi, planning to go to Ramala to send the money. The taxi driver, aware that they had a lot of money with them, drove them to a secluded area where four Palestinians were waiting. The robbers assaulted the workers- stabbing them and causing injuries to their faces and abdomens and robbed them. These workers had \$50,000 USD on them; the hard-earned wages of the 9 workers and 21 other. The injured workers were later sent to a hospital in Jerusalem. This type of robbery was also common.

The problems with visiting family

Illegal workers can only stay in Israel until they are arrested by the authorities. They can stay for many years, but are unable to visit their families in China because without a passport, they can never return. Some workers even surrendered voluntarily to the authorities in order to be sent home, back to China.

The problems with consulting a doctor

When legally employed workers were sick, they receive medical attention

LOVE BEYOND HORIZON and treatment by doctors. Illegal workers can only rely on themselves. They can fall quickly into trouble if they run out of medication they brought to Israel. They can't get new medication from pharmacies because they cannot describe their symptoms in English or Hebrew. Furthermore, they cannot understand the instructions to use the drugs themselves. If they were to visit a hospital their status as illegal workers would quickly be discovered and they would be deported.

Being deported was the one thing that the illegal workers feared the most. For the most part, illegal workers tended to stay home, only leaving the relative safety for important things. Their home would become their prison. Some wore nice clothes when they went out – dressed in suits and ties – so as not to attract attention as migrant workers. Other, however, would be sent back to China for fighting, misconduct, theft, unqualified work, and insubordination.

[Temporary Workers] (Called "lineup workers" in Chinese)

These workers were called lineup workers because they had to wait in line to get work. These are workers were without regular jobs, and are most likely illegal workers. In order to get work, they would line up in the morning at specific places waiting for employers to hire them for work. A group of workers can range from strangers to acquaintances, and can come from many nationalities.

Israelis drove by these specific areas to find workers, easily recognized by their work clothes. When the cars stop, the migrant workers would swarm the car windows trying to negotiate for work. When an agreement was reached, the migrant workers get into the car to go to work.

There is a large variety of work for these workers, usually odd jobs, such as brushing walls, disposing debris, cleaning, and decorating interiors. Occasionally, work could be arranged for longer periods. Temporary workers sometimes worked on the Sabbath; they were willing to go anytime as long as there was money to be earned.

Pardes Katz, in eastern Tel Aviv, was known to the Chinese as "lineup workers' square"- for the hundreds of unemployed workers waiting every morning for a day's work.

Lineup workers do not work every day. Those who speak Hebrew have an advantage. These workers feel very desperate if they cannot find work for a few days. They can only return to their residence to sleep, gamble, or complain to

their friends.

Illegal workers live day by day as they do not know what might happen next. They may continue to work another day, or they may be arrested and deported. If they have not paid off their debts, being sent back is the equivalent to the death penalty.

[Hourly Workers]

Hourly workers are those paid by the hour, such as porters or cleaners.

Miscellaneous Workers

Some workers, with legal work visas, have been in Israel for a long time. These workers are familiar with the environment and are confident enough to find work themselves. They pay the sponsor companies a fee for their freedom so they can work independently. This may appear to be an unstable situation, but with good contacts and good skills, they can earn more money- especially those with knowledge of Hebrew. The Israelis are particularly satisfied with the Chinese migrant workers' skill in laying floor tiles and decorating walls.

A small number of migrant workers even bought their own cars and have secured work contracts. As a result, they employ Chinese workers to work for them. Some, with knowledge of architectural drawings, become foremen and earn more. Others become chefs in restaurants, and some work as translators.

Living Conditions

[Working]

Money is earned through work. Many workers often work overtime. They wake up at 4 or 5 a.m., eat breakfast, and take the bus. They begin work at the construction site around 6.30 a.m. They have a short rest at noon after lunch and return home around 6 or 7 p.m. Then they cook, bathe, talk on the phone, and then sleep. Every day they follow the same routine.

[Eating]

Workers were treated differently. Those who worked for state-owned companies would eat in cafeterias and would not have to cook for themselves.

There is a high living standard in Israel. Early migrant workers tried to save as much as they could. Some would try to pick edible fruits, vegetables and meat

from waste piles. The Jews who are accustomed to keep the Old Testament Laws would leave leftover food for poor people to pick up. The waste piles are usually larger on Friday afternoons before the Sabbath, when they close the stores.

Migrant workers who work on a farm may receive rice from their employers but they need to buy their own meat and vegetables. Some people live far from the market, making it more difficult to buy. Many of them cannot afford meat or they want to save money, so their diet would sometimes lack protein. Those who work in orange orchards would joke that that they alternate eating rice with oranges one day, and oranges with rice the next.

Some workers bring rice to work and others bring biscuits and soft drinks. Pita bread filled with meat and vegetables was the most convenient meal on the job. On weekends, some cooked better food and ate together. Homemade dumplings, steamed buns, a few dishes, and a few bottles of beer made for a great weekend.

[Living]

Migrant workers generally lived on the construction sites, in living quarters, or on farms. The work camp accommodations consisted of a crude bedroom built from converted shipping containers. Normally, 4 to 6 adult men are crowded into a small rectangular room, with their work clothes, work boots and tools.

Some migrant workers did not pay attention to their health. The toilet was seldom cleaned; dirty water was disposed of directly outside the door. Garbage from the kitchen was simply thrown outside the room, where it attracts cockroaches and rats. This, however, was not always the case.

During the intense heat of the summer, migrant workers would spray water on the roof to cool down the container in order to sleep at night. Winter is cold and hot water was often in short supply. Some workers, however, did live in better quarters and circumstances.

[Travelling]

Short trips, such as purchasing food at the grocery store, were usually made on foot or a bicycle. Public transportation, like a bus, was used for longer trips. In times of instability, they would try to avoid large buses. Taxis were used on occasion as well.



[Recreation]

The Sabbath is a day of rest. Usually there are no activities in the city and nothing to buy. The migrant workers are also reluctant to spend money. Some workers sit on the roadside, watching passing cars, hoping some Israelis will hire them for work so that they could earn extra money. Some might take more risks by visiting various places in the city, or visiting old friends. Some waste their spare time by gambling; some just read or sleep in their beds; and some visit the red light district.

Living in Danger

[The Danger of Injury at Work]

In the construction industry, it is inevitable for accidents to occur. The legally employed workers have access to emergency medical services, can stay in hospitals for treatment and receive injury compensation. Illegal workers would not dare to visit the hospital when injured, with the exception of critical injury, since they do not have any medical insurance coverage.

The Potential Danger of Working in Orchards

Working in orange orchards is labour intensive. Each day the workers carry a bag around their necks that hangs down in front to collect oranges. They move a ladder to a tree, climb the tree, pick the oranges, put them in the bag, move down the ladder with the heavy bag, and put the oranges into a nearby box. This is repeated throughout the day.

The money they receive depends on how many boxes they fill. So everyone wants to work quickly. Picking oranges all day like this is very tiring. If the ladder happens to be in an unstable position, the worker could fall from the ladder and get injured. This is very tiring work and it paid less than the jobs in construction.

The Danger of an Insecure Residence

The workers' residences are often not secure. In one particular living quarter occupied by a few dozen workers, thefts were so common as to occur a few times a week.

The Danger of Unrest

In the year 2000 and onwards, during the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there



were several suicide bombings aimed at big buses. These occurred in many different cities in Israel. Some Chinese workers were affected; some sustained injuries and some died.

At 4 p.m. on April 12, 2002, a suicide bombing happened in the Ben Yehuda area in Jerusalem. Six people died with more than 70 injured. Two Chinese workers (Cai Xianyang and Lin Chunmei) died at the scene. Two other Chinese workers (Lin Jinmou and Chen Yongjun) were seriously injured. Lin was in a coma for 15 days, and had both upper and lower limbs amputated. Chen was in a coma for 5 days and lost his left hand.

At 10.20 p.m. on July 17, 2002, a terrorist attack occurred near the old bus station in Tel Aviv. Seven people died and more than 40 were injured. Two Chinese workers (Xu Hengyong, Li Bin) died and two (Xu Xiangxing and Xu Xiangmin) were seriously injured. Two others (Sun Meichang and Zheng Biao) had minor injuries.

One day in 2003, the police received a report of a dispute in an apartment where some Chinese people lived. When the police arrived, three Chinese tried to escape by jumping out of the windows. Two of them escaped with injuries, but unfortunately, 20-year old Xu Guoyong died. Within 24 hours, another migrant worker also fell to his death at work.

On the afternoon of June 7, 2005, a rocket fired by the Palestinian militia hit a packing shed in Israel; sadly, 8 people who were working there were hit. A Chinese worker, Bi Shude, and another Palestinian worker were killed on the spot; another Palestinian was injured and died on the way to the hospital.

In the early days of the conflict, the Israel National Insurance Company paid compensation to families of Chinese citizens who were killed in suicide bombings. The payment, based on the number of family members, dependent elderly relatives, and dependent children, was given even to families of illegal workers. Later, the state insurance company decided not to pay compensation for illegal workers.

In Israel, work injuries of construction workers can be reported in public newspapers. More often, however, cases are resolved by the company and the individual in private. Just imagine: a Chinese migrant worker leaves China with great hopes, both the individual and the family; then suddenly the family receives news that the son, the brother, the husband, or the relative has been killed, crippled or injured. How frightening! What a shock!

[Kidnapping Chinese Migrant Workers]

Normally, labour companies, especially private labour companies, which bring in workers are restricted by quotas. For example, if a company brings 100 workers into Israel, they receive a certain amount of intermediary fees for each worker. When the contract expires, the company must send the 100 workers back to China before they can bring in a new group of 100 workers and receive new fees.

Workers that flee due to low wages or unfair treatment prevent companies from bringing in new workers, slowing business. In an effort to solve this problem, they resorted to kidnapping to capture the workers and forcibly send them back home.

At 3 a.m. on June 1, 1999, a private labour company hired some thugs to capture workers from a residence for illegal workers. The thugs impersonated the police and kidnapped over 13 workers. They locked up the workers and interrogated them one by one, trying to find the whereabouts of other escaped workers. During the interrogation, violence was used, including assault, slapping, and kicking. One of the workers was seriously injured. The thugs robbed the workers of \$2,500 USD, two phones and some valuables.

At 2 a.m. the next day, the 8 thugs returned to the same place to intimidate the illegal workers, again robbing them. This time, the landlord of the residence noticed and called the police. One thug escaped but all the others were arrested by the real police. The landlord and some of the illegal workers were called to the police station as witnesses. Two months later, the director of the company was charged in court by the government.

[Separated from the Family]

Another cost for migrant workers working overseas is separation from their families. Migrant workers in Israel all come alone, while their wives and children stay in the home country. The wife needs to take care of household and teach the children. Some might have the additional responsibility of caring for elderly relatives as well. Early migrant workers in Israel rarely returned home to visit their families. For illegal workers it is even worse; many do not return home for many years.

Israel tried several times to repatriate illegal workers. After that, there were fewer illegal workers. Now, most workers have legal visas so they can choose

when they want to return home to visit relatives and can then come back to Israel. Those who work under better conditions can even return home every year.

For those who have not returned home for a long time, they communicate only by phone and they only talk about happy events, skipping the sad things. Those at home do not know the real working conditions, and the workers do not know what happens at home. Some men and women may even take temporary mates.

Some workers feel a lack of excitement in life; they may get addicted to gambling in order to get excited or to win money without working for it. Some may lose a few years of savings and their wives back home may divorce them if they learn about what their husbands are doing.

The vast majority of migrant workers do not come from rich families. That is why they went abroad to make money in order to help their families in the first place. When the workers send their wages back to the home country, the wives line up at the local banks to get the money. Some wives receive a large amount and do not need to work anymore. With time on their hands, they may go out to play mahjong or go shopping. This becomes the normal lifestyle of migrant workers' wives. Of course, there also are many workers' wives who still keep to a thrifty lifestyle, living their life in an efficient manner.

With migrant workers working outside, the economic conditions at home improve. Some families build homes that their neighbours envy. Some move from the rural areas to the city. Some have money to send their children to university. Some may have the capital to open a shop, or a business, to invest, or to buy more houses.

Recent migrant workers with visas are usually skilled workers who receive decent wages, perhaps even higher than the wage of an average Israeli. Some even become Renminbi millionaires in a few years. A migrant worker who works in Israel for a few years bought a few houses in his home village, one for his parents, one for himself, one for the children, and even one to rent out. Some workers build houses for their parents in their villages while buying houses for their wife and kids in the city- all this for the kids to get a better education.

On the other hand, there can be negative effects. With a wealthy home, the children may not study very hard, because they may want to follow their father, thinking that more money can be earned by working abroad than by studying. With money at home, even the parents can become dishonest. Some wives urge



their husbands not to return home in order to earn more money abroad. Some of their acquaintances may want to take advantage of them. Some wives may even take illicit lovers. If the husband finds out, divorce becomes unavoidable and the family is destroyed. One Thai migrant worker in Israel found out that his wife eloped with another person. He became so distraught that he committed suicide in Israel. This is a nightmare and a sad scenario for migrant workers.

The money being sent home is earned with sweat, tears, danger, damage to health, and homesickness. The relatives at home have never seen hundreds of thousands or even millions of Renminbi. With so much money, they may not know how to manage it. They may be sucked in by risky investment advice and the hard earned money of migrant workers may be quickly lost. Many do not know how to manage their finances and fall into a common financial error of putting all eggs into one basket. For example, they may lend all their money to friends and relatives at high interest, thinking the return is greater than investing the money. However, if they invest everything in one item, it may be too late to make changes if the situation turns bad. Some people sign as a surety for others and later lose all their money. Some, frightened by debt collection agencies, dare not return home and move to other provinces or even go abroad.

[Unpredictable Danger]

As police gave chase on Roman street, a suspected thief threw money at the feet of a Chinese migrant worker who was then falsely accused of the theft. One time, a migrant worker was arrested after purchasing some goods; he was accused of using counterfeit currency which he had just received in wages from his employer.

Summary

Many migrant workers work like robots without stopping for long periods of time. Some do not know how to protect themselves at work. Some do not maintain their health and once they return home, their health simply breaks down. Others discover their illnesses in late stages long past the window for effective treatment resulting in death just a few short years after returning home.

How can the Chinese people tolerate such difficult lives in such an unsafe environment? It is based on their hope to earn money to send home, to allow their children to enter university, to build houses, to renovate their houses, to

let their families live a good life, to save money to go into business, and to save money for retirement. All these hopes shape their dreams and goals.

[Attitude to Religion]

Most migrant workers have never heard the gospel in their home country. Some may have family members who believe in Jesus but they themselves do not go to church.

3. Early Chinese Scholars in Israel

In Israel, there is a generation of new "wise men from the east." These are a few hundred intellectuals from China studying in Israel's institutions of higher learning. These intellectuals are engaged in higher learning or scientific research. Their situation is very different from the migrant workers.

Some of them are students. Others are exchange scholars or visiting scholars. Some stay for a few months; others for several years. Most of them come with their families.

1) Weizmann Institute of Science

This is the institution where most foreign students and scholars assemble. Located in the city of Rehovot, it is an institution of scientific research and one of the world's leading multidisciplinary research facilities. The institute offers postgraduate courses and postdoctoral training.

The Institute provides living quarters for visiting scholars and exchange scholars, and a dormitory for foreign students, called the Clore House. Residences are located inside the Institute, in very elegant environment.

Every weekend, students and scholars from China tend to come together to eat, play ball games, play cards, and talk about their work. For example, on the weekend evenings, the big room on the first floor of the Clore House is the place for Chinese students to play cards. A few dozen people happily gather to play and forget their exhaustion from work.

On weekend afternoons, a different scene appears on the Institute's volleyball field. The men sweat on the volleyball court, while the women gather on the sidelines to watch and cheer the competition as the children gleefully play on the grass.



The Education Division of the Chinese Embassy in Israel encouraged Chinese students to organize an Association of International Students and Scholars in Israel. Come each Chinese New Year, the Association of Chinese Students and Scholars of Weizmann Institute organizes the Spring Festival celebrations, trying to use laughter and happiness to wash away the sadness of being homesick.

2) Faculty of Agriculture, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem and Agricultural Research Organization - Volcani Center

The Faculty of Agriculture of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem is located in Rehovot. The Chinese students and scholars usually rent places to live in this smaller city. The Volcani Center of the Agricultural Research Organization is located in Beit-Dagan, about 11 km from Rehovot. Most Chinese students and scholars live in Rehovot, so many of the scholars from the Volcani Center choose to live in Rehovot also. They go to work by shuttle bus from the Centre or by public bus. In comparison with the Weizmann Institute of Science, student scholarships and wages are lower as the two institutions receive less in research funding.

Many of the students and scholars are married and some bring their families to Israel. Walking down the streets, one often sees Chinese women or children. On the weekends, these scholars sometimes bring their families to the Weizmann Institute so that their children can play with other children.

At the end of a workday, on the bus or at casual gatherings, you may notice an interesting phenomenon among the Chinese students and scholars – many of them yawn continually. This is because when they come to Israel, they no longer hold the iron rice bowl (a permanent job) which means that they need to work harder because of increased pressure of work and life thus reducing their sleep time significantly.

3) The Hebrew University of Jerusalem

There are a few dozen Chinese students and scholars at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Their studies and research work are also very intense.

As Jerusalem is a tourist city, some people also have outside jobs beside their studies and research work. The best side job is to give guided tours for sightseeing groups from China.

4) Other universities

There are Chinese students and scholars at the University of Haifa and the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology, located in northern Israel. They often went to meetings in Haifa at the home of Elder Kien Wong. Following this, the Tel Aviv Church had also organized occasional gatherings for students and scholars from the Tel Aviv University. In addition, there are Chinese students and scholars at other universities and institutions in Israel; some of whom are Christians.

Summary

[Pride of Heaven]

In the 1990s, few Chinese students studied overseas. Many bright young people dreamt of studying abroad and among these was a group of superiorly intelligent students who were called "the pride of heaven". They had a broad vision, high objectives, and great ambition for their future lives.

For them, going out of the country was to enter a bright new world, the first step to a gorgeous life. Like young swallows, they carried an infinitely wonderful imagination, ready to capture a new world, to learn new science and technology, and to fulfill the dream of publishing the first English article of their research careers.

[Living Conditions]

Contrary to today's self financed students, all students living in Israel, at the time, paid their living expenses through their scholarships. Like all overseas students, they were frugal with respect to their food and expenses. The exchange rate on the US dollar to the Renminbi was 1 to 10. So even for exchange students who were relatively financially well off, their attitude was to keep the gold and earn extra money. It is accurate to describe them as "splitting the dollar and using it as two halves".

Israel does not accept many gentile immigrants. After working a few years, these scholars must leave for other countries, or return home. As a result, Chinese students and scholars do not want to buy property in Israel. In order to keep their cost of living to a minimum, many scholars live very hard lives enduring situations such as rental properties with substandard furniture.



Living in a Foreign Land

As the Bible says in Ecclesiastes 1:9, there is nothing new under the sun. Israel's foreign students and scholars experience suffering just like any other foreigners living in a strange country. They experience situations that include difficulty communicating, work stress, an unfamiliar diet, and isolation from the family.

We have seen some sad examples:

- One Chinese scholar had a girlfriend in China who disliked the long-term separation and could not come to Israel to visit. As a result, she asked to end the relationship, inducing a sudden spell of schizophrenia for the Chinese scholar.
- Another scholar's wife who had a good office job in China could only work in Israel as a labourer. This demotion in work status caused emotional stress and led to a distorted family life causing pain to all involved.

As the Chinese culture places an importance of "saving face", intellectuals suppress the unhappiness of the heart and become people who laugh publicly and cry privately; this is the ultimate bitterness.

[Prospects for the Future]

Most commonly, the most obvious concern for these students is their future. Every student is faced with the question of where to go after completing their studies and leaving Israel. This means that they must find a link to the next place of work before the end of their studies.

What happens if they fail in their scientific research? What will they do if their research article is not published in a respected journal? What happens if there is a shortage of funding? Such questions are all linked to their job search. What will they do if they find a job but cannot get a visa? What will they do if they get sick and have to return home? All these worries weigh on their hearts and fill them with fear and anxiety, imprisoning their souls.

After the events of September 11, 2001, the United States immediately stopped issuing work visas. The US Immigration Service also announced that those who were applying for work visas might have to wait a year. For overseas students who just graduated in Israel and scholars who were moving to the United States, it was like a thunderbolt. At the end of their studies, their visas would expire and they would not be able to remain in Israel. It would have been extremely difficult to gain entrance to the US if they had to submit their

applications from China. Dark clouds hovered over everyone. Living through the period of waiting for visas was like riding the roller coaster with great ups and downs. The fear of a sudden collapse of their dream utopian existence brought feelings of anxiety, insecurity, and helplessness. Living in those times was frightening, almost like being suffocated.

Students and scholars in Israel called themselves overseas wanderers. No one knew where they would go. They could only face the present by completing their studies and concentrating on their research to prepare for the future. Most of these students and scholars, however, eventually moved to the States and experienced success. A minority of them returned to China and became prominent in universities and research institutions.

Most of the Israelis were friendly towards students from China, probably because China rescued many Jews during the Second World War. But there were some professors who made harsh demands on Chinese students and scholars.

[Attitude to Religion]

Many students placed value in materialism. For them, religion fell into the category of idealism and was not true. By that time, China's reform and opening up had been going on for some time; many government sponsored churches had resumed worship activities. In Israel, some of the students and scholars had Christian parents or relatives. Many had heard about religion and were no strangers to Christianity.

Yet, precisely because they were a group of very talented scientific research people, the future successors of China, many of them were Communist Youth League members and Communist Party members who were not allowed to participate in any form of religious activities. Therefore, among the students and scholars in Israel, there were people who felt indifferent, but not in opposition to religion, and other people who were strongly disgusted by any religious activities.

4. Summary of the Chapter

Vivid memories remain: A migrant worker squatting on the ground, using a rusted cleaver to violently chop a pig's head likely picked from the garbage; another migrant worker at a construction site burying his head in a bath towel, crying loudly and desperately as if no one was around because he could not pay



back the huge fee that he owed for coming into the country's labour force. A young bright translator of a construction company was fatally hurt in a highway car accident, physically and mentally exhausted students and scholars staggering home from their laboratories late at night.

Among the migrant workers and the hard-working scholars, all have personal difficulties about which they do not want others to know. After accepting Jesus, many lives were changed; they were able to sing joyfully even in the dark. But for a person to hear the gospel, he needs a messenger who preaches the gospel.

"Where the sun shines, there are Chinese people shedding sweat; Where the moon shines, there are Chinese people shedding tears." The author of two poetic lines remains unknown. I used these lines to write the song "Where the sun shines".

Where the sun shines, there are Chinese shedding sweat;
Where the moon shines, there are Chinese shedding tears.

Look up at the ripening harvest in the field;
who can understand the Lord's heart?
Without sowing in tears, how can one have a cheerful harvest?
Where the sun shines, may there be Chinese messengers for the gospel!
Where the moon shines, may there be Chinese songs of praise!

The Mission Statement of the Canadian Chinese Alliance Churches Association reads: "In Canada and in everywhere with the Chinese diaspora, to promote and to cultivate Chinese Alliance churches that put Christ as the centre, the Holy Spirit as the power, and mission as the focus." It is difficult for other ethnic groups to evangelize to the Chinese. Chinese people have a unique understanding of the cultural issues faced by Chinese non-believers and share in the responsibility of preaching the gospel to Chinese people.





CHAPTER THREE

BUILDING THE LORD'S CHURCH

hose in the church have been bought with the precious blood of Jesus Christ. According to Jesus' commands, the children of God are to continue to meet to worship the God who created heaven and earth. Inside the church, they live in fellowship; outside the church, they are the salt and the light of the world, proclaiming God's virtues and holy name.

Acts 2:42-47 describe the model of the early church:

"And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved."

- 1. Breaking bread, praising God, praying. (This is worship.)
- 2. In one place and in one mind, at the temple. (This is church life.)
- 3. Following the teachings of the apostles. (This is discipleship training.)
- 4. Having fellowship and eating together. (This is fellowship.)
- 5. The Lord added new believers to their number every day. (This is outreach.)
- 6. They shared their possessions and were favoured by all people. (This is social concern.)

Based on this model of the early church, we will describe how the migrant workers' church of Tel Aviv was built step by step.

Why did so many migrant workers in Israel participate in church meetings, tours, and special gatherings? This is related to the special circumstances in Israel, especially with respect to the Sabbath.

1. The Sabbath Day and Building the Migrant Workers' Church

Keeping the Sabbath is the fourth of the Ten Commandments. Exodus 20:8-11 states:

"Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labour, and

do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, or your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy."

Keeping the Sabbath is a unique way of life for the nation of Israel. It is a commandment from God, a day that is separated out by God as a holy day when people are commanded to stop working. This has been going on for a very long time.

The Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday evening and ends at sunset on Saturday evening. During the Sabbath, all public buses must stop while minibuses and taxis can still operate. All shops are to be closed, except for a small number of shops selling food.

The stoppage includes the construction industry; work at construction sites is not allowed. So construction workers have one day of rest out of the seven-day week. Moreover, they must rest. This is a unique phenomenon different from all other countries. Perhaps there may be a day of rest in other countries, but in Israel, this is a mandatory day of rest that brought about by religion.

Because of this special ruling, the migrant workers in Israel can come to the church on Saturday if they wish, and attend meetings for the whole day, worshipping, participating in activities or tourism, unlike workers in other countries who may need to work seven days a week.

2. The Early Pastoral Workers Used by God

Pastor Dov was a Jesus-believing Russian Jew with Israeli citizenship. As he went out to distribute Bibles, he became aware of a large number of Chinese people who had come to Israel. He mentioned this to Rev. Lauffer, the Field Director of the Alliance Church in Israel. Rev. Lauffer began to pay attention to this matter and learned that the migrant workers usually had two-year work contracts. While attending a conference, he bought two discs of the "Jesus" in Chinese.

Pastor Dov said that the Chinese were very friendly but he could not communicate with them because of the language barrier. Rev. Lauffer started to



play the "Jesus" in Mandarin for the migrant workers. He said that some migrant workers cried after watching the movie, but he could not communicate with the workers either, because they spoke neither English nor Hebrew.

Olavi, an elder who believes in Jesus is the Messiah with an Israeli citizenship who was from a Messianic Jewish Congregation, heard the news and said that he knew a woman missions worker named Sally who had worked in Taiwan for over 30 years. She could speak Mandarin and could come and temporarily help the migrant workers. So Sally came to preach the gospel to the migrant workers but she could only stay for 3 months. Rev. Lauffer spread the word about the need for a Mandarin-speaking pastor.

In February 1997, Rev. Peter Chu, former Executive Director of the United States Chinese Churches Association, came to Israel to investigate this need. He visited some students, businessmen and Chinese restaurant workers, and had the opportunity to preach on some construction sites. He said that he had never seen a group of people responding so well to the gospel.

Although there was still no Chinese-speaking pastor and no funding, Rev. Lauffer decided to begin a gospel ministry in Chinese in early April. In the first month, they bought a van for short-term missions people to visit construction sites and also printed some gospel materials.

At this time, Pastor and Mrs. Alfred Lai, and Elder and Mrs. Kien Wong joined in to help. Many pastors and co-workers came for short-term missions. The late Rev. John Tsang, also known as "the cyclone pastor," was a pastor deeply committed to evangelism. He deeply loved the Chinese migrant workers.

At the end of the year, God provided the necessary funds. Sasha, an Israeli Russian Christian, was the first driver of the gospel van. He learned to sing "May the Lord's Love be with You" in Chinese. Every time he sang the song, the Chinese migrant workers really appreciated it.

After more than two years of praying for a Mandarin-speaking pastor to be sent by the Lord to Israel, the Lord responded to this gospel need. In April 1998, we went to Israel.

3. Adaptation on Arrival to the Mission Field

On our arrival, we immediately received lots of loving help from many people, including co-workers in the gospel ministry, brothers and sisters, and the

IOVE BEYOND

At 12:45 a.m. on April 4, 1998, we arrived in the Promised Land, the mission field of Israel. At 2 a.m., we passed through customs to meet two brothers who had come to the airport to receive us. It was already past 2:30 a.m. when we arrived at the residence.

These two brothers treated us really well, taking us around to places that we needed to know, such as the food market, the post office, and the bus station.

Just before Easter, our two children flew to Israel with other missions workers' children to spend the Easter holidays with their families. They returned to school in Germany after the holidays. After they left, we began to face the harvest field where God had led us. What would the future hold for us?

Deer in the Headlights

One night during the first week after our arrival, we attended a street concert. There were many people of all ages, all wearing gorgeous clothes, singing and dancing. They immersed themselves in the very loud music with lyrics that we did not understand. The feeling was difficult to describe. Were we aliens or were they aliens? Of course we were the aliens.

Learning the Language

When we first arrived in Israel, I did not recognize the currency. When I bought food, I opened my hand with change and let the vendor take the money from my hand. After we learned to recognize the currency, we realized that the vendors were selling us food at a higher price than to the local people.

Undoubtedly, it was necessary to know the local language. Jonathan and I enrolled in the elementary Hebrew class with the new immigrants. In a group of more than a dozen people, we were the only Chinese; the others were all returning Jews. Every morning, we got up early to review the lessons. We arrived at the school at 8 a.m. for four hours of classes, five days a week. In the afternoons, we prepared for the ministry and in the evenings, we left to lead evangelistic meetings. Everyday was the same routine of rising early and returning late at night.

Recognizing the Route

At first, we had trouble with navigating the streets. At that time, they were no smartphones or GPS. Some street signs were only in Arabic, some only in

Hebrew and some in English. Some streets had no signs, the same street could have many names and the same place could have several different pronunciations. We bought a book of maps, but some towns did not have detailed maps. Many times we felt like the ancient Israelites circling in the wilderness.

Moreover, construction sites were often at the end of streets. Some streets were not paved; some had not been named; some might have names that had not been updated in the maps so the maps could not help us. Circling around and getting lost were frequent occurrences.

Nevertheless, after a long time and many visits, we were able to memorize the road signs and remember the routes. Many short-term missions members admired Jonathan's ability to recognize the routes. Even after we were away from Israel for many years, we could still remember how to drive to different places without using maps. Perhaps this was a benefit reaped from not using smartphones or GPS in those years.

Incident of the flashlight

One night, on the way home, the street lights were dim. The van ran into a sand pile and the wheels got stuck. We got out of the van and with the help of a flashlight, we walked toward a lit home to get help, hoping that someone could help us to push the van out. All of a sudden, someone jumped out from the dark trying to grab our flashlight. At that moment, Jonathan shouted something loudly. The person was shocked by the sound and quickly escaped. Afterwards, Jonathan could not remember what he shouted.

The Gospel Van

When we first arrived, the car fund was insufficient. A brother generously lent us a van that could carry eight people so that we could begin the gospel ministry. We used the van for nine months, much longer than we had anticipated, driving almost 40,000 kilometres. We can only thank this brother for it.

Later, we received some love offerings from North American brothers and sisters and were able to buy an 8-person "bread truck", which is Mandarin slang for a Mini van. Although this "bread truck" did not carry bread, but the gospel. This gospel van became our chariot, carrying us around for 6 years.

Every time we left for meetings, we always went over a checklist of the items

that we needed to bring along. Otherwise, we could forget some needed items and have to make a special trip home.

When we went to meetings, our gospel van would carry boxes of Bibles for distribution, gospel tracts, spiritual journals, Bible study books (New Life and New Living), CDs of "Jesus" and "The Story of God", and videotapes with testimonies from organizations including China Soul and Showers of Blessing. We also carried a CD/DVD player, a screen, a video projector, amplifiers, hymns in large text, an easel, a large 500-watt light (for gathering in open space at night), small presents, pens, maps, a mobile phone, an electrical cord extension, multiple electrical outlets, a mobile library (for lending books or audio books), cassette tapes, a flashlight, dry food and drinking water. We also brought attendance sheets to record those who came, a recording sheet for the meeting, recording sheets for those who responded to the gospel, testimony sheets for people who wanted to get baptized. Those who would eat the "bread" from this "bread truck" would "never go hungry again". What a great spiritual bread truck this was! It carried the Bread of Life wherever it went!

I still feel jubilant whenever I recall that time period when we toiled for the Lord. Seven evenings a week, we went out to lead gospel meetings. We travelled to a dozen or more towns and villages to lead meetings, evangelizing, training, visiting workers, or searching for new locations to meet.

Jonathan always called the gospel van the "chariot" for its use in fighting a good battle for the gospel. We used it to pick up people from the airport, to carry short-term missions teams on Holy Land tours, to do visitation, to carry people to medical appointments. When we were not around, the "chariot" was driven by short-term missions co-workers.

To describe this, I wrote a short song:

Mounting over high slopes, probing into deep jungles,
Climbing over steep ladders, moving to ends of the streets.

Dressed with stars, wearing the moon, enduring the sun, facing the blizzards.

Accompanied with prayers, carrying the bread of life,
because my beloved brothers were there.

"Chariot" Adventures

One time, we took a few brothers to attend a meeting in Beersheba. The van was parked outside. After the meeting, we noticed that the rear window of



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the van had been smashed and broken glass was on the ground. The projector, the amplifiers, and some electrical appliances had been stolen. Later, we heard that there were similar burglaries from cars in that area. One time, we forgot to remove the mobile phone when we parked. When we returned, the window of the front passenger seat was smashed and the phone was gone.

Another time, a large group from the church had an outing on the Mount of Olives overlooking Jerusalem. Jonathan sat at the driver's seat with the window open. The mobile phone sat on the dash. A child reached in and attempted to grab the phone.

Intimidation from the Intermediaries

In addition to the difficulty of learning the language, we also faced various threats and challenges. There was the threat of war between Iraq and the US, and the threat of suicide bombings. We also faced threats from the intermediaries. One day, we received a phone call threatening us not to go to the construction site of a few specific migrant workers; otherwise, we would be harmed. For many migrant workers, we were their only way of communicating with the outside world. The intermediaries were probably afraid that knowledge of the outside world would stimulate the migrant workers to disobey them. It was not surprising that the intermediaries would employ thugs. Later, through a brother, we invited the intermediaries to meet and dine in a Chinese restaurant. At first, they were belligerent, but we told them gently but firmly that we would not intervene in any disputes between them and the migrant workers, as we only wanted to tell the workers about Jesus.

I have to admit that in the few weeks after the meeting, I was a little afraid, fearing that the intermediaries might come after us and assault us. The meeting places were often at or near construction sites. If we were not careful while we walked, we could easily trip on the messy stack of building materials. There were often no paved roads and no streetlights. The meeting would be very remote when it was in an orchard.

Sometimes, after we parked, we had to walk in the dark for a while before reaching the workers' dormitory. In these situations, Jonathan would ask me to wait in the van. He would fetch some brothers to come to help move the teaching materials and the equipment. I would sit in the locked car, surrounded by darkness, only hearing the chirping insects in the woods. I was nervous and

anxious, eagerly hoping for the brothers to appear soon. Thankfully, we did not encounter any interference from the intermediaries after we met with them.

4. Building a Migrant Workers' Church

(1) Preaching the Gospel (Acts 2:47)

The Voice Behind the Sand Dune

When we first arrived in Israel, we knew that there were many Chinese migrant workers, but where would we find them? There were gospel ministries for the Chinese in the north with Elder Wong, in the south with Pastor John, in Beersheba with Pastor Lai, and in Jerusalem with the Finnish mission church, but there was none in Tel Aviv. So Jonathan and I went to Tel Aviv to find new meeting spots.

Where should we start new meetings? Jonathan thought to "Look up to the cross in the sky". Whenever we saw a towering crane with horizontal and vertical stems forming a cross, we would stop and ask if there were Chinese working there. If there were, we would greet them and tell them that we could come again to show them videos, to sing together, and to learn about the Bible. Most people were willing. One by one, Bible study groups were formed. The good news of gatherings for the Chinese spread among the migrant workers.

Once, Jonathan received a phone call: "Pastor, I heard from a friend that you are leading a meeting in their area. We would like to have a meeting too. Can you come to lead us?"

"Of course, where do you live?" Jonathan replied.

"We live behind the sand dune."

"Where is that? Do you have the street name?"

"We don't know the street name. Telling you a street name is not too useful because our residence is far from the main road. After getting out of the car, you still need to walk more than one kilometre. Pastor, we live behind the sand dune."

"Behind the sand dune?" What place was that? Jonathan asked many people but no one knew where this was. The description was too vague. There were many sand dunes outside the city. We refused to give up just because we did not



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know where it was. So we put this in our prayers and prayed earnestly.

One Saturday evening, Jonathan and a few of us were on the road in the van. We saw a few Chinese standing on the roadside, so Jonathan stopped the van, greeted them, and asked where they wanted to go. They said, "We want to go home. We live behind the sand dune."

When we heard this, we stared at each other.

These few Chinese workers had spent the day in Tel Aviv and were trying to go home. When we gave them a ride home, we found out that they lived in a place away from the main road. From the road to the back of the sand dune was a very bumpy gravel path over one kilometre long. No driver would be willing to drive on this path so the workers had to get out and walk back home. Occasionally, you could see migrant workers pushing their bicycles slowly along the path. Once inside, we found a world that was invisible from the main road.

The sand dune was a desolate piece of land. Rows of modified shipping containers were turned into the dormitories for the many workers that lived there. Besides the Chinese, there were migrant workers from several other countries. This place was actually not too far from the city, but as it was so well hidden, it was very difficult to find if no one led the way.

So, we found the place "behind the sand dune", seemingly by chance. We all understood in our heart, however, that using the word "chance" was improper because this was the result of God hearing our prayers. We were unable to find the place so God led us to meet the people from behind the sand dune so they could lead us there. We clearly knew that it was God who led the way.

Following that occasion, we held meetings there for a few years. On the open space outside the dormitories, we set up a small mobile church where meetings were held once a week. We sang praise songs and Chinese folk songs familiar to the workers. We played tapes of gospel testimonies. We preached and taught. At this sand dune meeting, we continuously saw many workers saved and baptized.

For a period of time after the founding of the Tel Aviv Church, brothers at the sand dune would hire a minibus to carry them to the church and drive them back home after weekly Saturday services. Some of these Christian brothers became the backbone of the church. Some who returned to China used their homes as meeting points. How wonderful was this "chance" which led to the salvation of so many! How lovely were those brothers from "behind the sand

dune"! Even now, we still keep in touch with some of them.

The Church Under the Stars

The twilight grew deeper. In the air, bold voices were heard singing The Lord is My Strength and I Have Decided to Follow Jesus. On the evening breeze, words from the Bible were released. On the desolate sand dune, a church with "a thousand stars" was meeting (we met outdoors, with no roof to obstruct the view of the night sky).

The following is a testimony of a sister from a short-term missions team:

In September 2003, I came to Israel with the short-term missions team organized by the New Covenant Alliance Church and the East Toronto Mandarin Alliance Church, both in Toronto. We came to preach the gospel at this area "behind the sand dune".

To preach the gospel to the migrant workers in Israel required taking the initiative because some workers had scruples against attending gatherings, while some others felt it was inconvenient or they were unwilling to go to church for various reasons. So the church there was a "portable church" whose location could be moved according to needs of the people.

Every time we held meetings, we used the inventory list, counted the items, and loaded them on to the gospel van. With the exception of chairs, almost the whole church had to be transportable. After the meeting, there was a lot of packing work and then moving the equipment back to the van. When we returned home, we had to move almost all items back to the house and back into storage, to be ready for the next meeting.

Because there was insufficient room inside the containers, we met in the open space on sand and gravel. Some eager brothers lent us tables for the equipment and helped us to connect the wires. Then the migrant workers returned after work. As they were tired after working all day, they needed to bathe and cook. After dinner, they liked to rest.

How could we attract them to come out to the meeting? First, the men on the mission team would go to their residence to invite them. Then the women who were team members would turn the amplifiers to a high volume, play some songs, or sing a few popular Chinese songs.

One evening, I sang My Home Country. When the song spread through the loudspeakers in the evening air, some curious migrant workers stuck



out their heads from their dormitories. The familiar melodies reminded the workers about their home country. At the meeting, they opened their hearts to sing energetically these popular songs that they had not sung for a long time.

Next was the fun-filled guessing game with prizes. The relaxed atmosphere made them forget the fatigue and the strange surroundings. Next was the gospel movie The Wanderers at the End of the World. The two main actors in the movie were in life Chinese living in a foreign land. What they experienced was similar to the migrant workers so they responded well with laughter from time to time.

Next was a sermon by Rev. Yu entitled A Story of Finding the Hometown. The sermon led the migrant workers to think deeply. They were physically tired, and perhaps some of them were still hungry. They would need to return to their heavy labour early the next morning, but they did not leave. It was very moving to see them listening so attentively. At the end of Rev. Yu's sermon, he called the workers to receive Christ. Out of the 150 people attending the meeting that evening, 18 people raised their hands and responded to the Lord.

In North America, we are familiar with a scene of properly dressed people attending meetings; they are orderly and sit and listen quietly. Here, the audience was standing, squatting, or sitting on the ground. They wore short shirts and trousers, or even bared their upper bodies. They met under the starry night sky. These entirely different gospel meetings provided a unique experience for the short-term missions teams.

Gospel Movie

The Gospel movie was one of the best ways to attract migrant workers to the meetings. One evening, in a big campsite, 140 migrant workers out of a total of 300 came to watch the gospel movie. Testimonies from real people recorded by the organizations of Showers of Blessing and China Soul were most convincing and effective. The "Jesus" movie also attracted them.

One time, a migrant worker at the back could not see the screen so he climbed up, stood on a horizontal iron rail, held on to a pillar, and watched the two-hour long Jesus movie. Later, Jonathan obtained the rights to duplicate the "Jesus" movie. The migrant workers could then buy the movie DVD at cost, so

the movie could spread to countless families in China.

Hurrying on Saturday

Facing this vast gospel harvest field, we racked our brains and wondered how we could reach out to more migrant workers. First, as gospel messengers, we followed Jesus by travelling to many towns and villages to find migrant workers. If there were managers among the migrant workers, we would try to meet with them to get permission to visit their workers.

We wanted to assist the migrant workers; helping with translation, helping the sick workers to see a doctor, buying medication, sending mail, traveling between campsites, taking them to markets to buy food, picking up free food for them, counselling them, praying with them, and so on.

No two mission fields are alike. When carrying out pioneering work, there are often no previous examples to follow. The missions workers have to innovate.

Before the Tel Aviv Church was founded, we led Bible studies 6 nights a week and all day on Saturday. A normal Saturday schedule was like this: from morning to evening, based on appointments, we went to different meetings with some brothers workers, in different locations and at different times. We left in the morning, just after 7 a.m. The earliest meeting began at 8 a.m. The last meeting was at 7.30 p.m. On average, there were 5 to 7 meetings on Saturday. The number depended on the distance to travel between meetings and also depended on whether there was help from short-term missions teams.

Most of the time, there were no short-term missions teams, so we would travel week after week, leaving around 7 a.m. and back home after 10 p.m. We had to drive long distances, move the Bibles, the teaching materials, and the equipment. At unfinished construction sites, we had to climb several dozen steps. We had to teach, talk to many people, make records, and drive carefully. When there was no air conditioning in the gospel van, the hot summer of Israel provided us with a free sauna.

Yet, this was just a physical tiredness that we willingly and joyfully endured. In many countries, the churches need several months to arrange a gospel meeting. They spend a lot of manpower and resources, with only a few people are converted, sometimes none. Every week we saw many people come to Christ. How could anything stop us from going out? Nothing could stop us as we were experiencing the joy of leading people to the Lord.

Have you ever tried to eat five hard boiled eggs at one meal? When we went to lead meetings, the migrant workers were often extremely polite; they would prepare lunch or supper for us before the meetings. One day, we visited a few brothers who did not have much to serve. They prepared a bowl of food for each of us – five boiled eggs. We experienced true hospitality as their daily staple food was boiled eggs.

Another time was even more memorable. Sometimes we went to visit migrant workers who worked in orchards. Before we left, the workers happily collected a box of oranges, apples, or avocadoes from the trees and insisted that we take them home. Jonathan would say, "Thank you, but keep it for yourselves." They would reply, "It's alright. Our employer permits us to eat whatever we can pick because we cannot eat too much. We thank you for visiting us and we have nothing else to offer you. This fruit doesn't mean much." So our family was never short of fresh fruit. When we visited the construction workers, we often took fruit to share with them.

When we visited migrant workers who grew flowers, they would give us a beautiful bouquet. When we shared our experiences back home in North America, Jonathan would sometimes say to the congregation: "I wonder what would happen if we visited workers who mined diamonds. Would they happily grab a handful of diamonds to give us? Or perhaps just a handful of small diamonds?" The audience would laugh loudly, knowing full well that he was joking.

As the number of Christian brothers gradually increased, Jonathan sometimes took some willing brothers to the Saturday gospel meetings. This provided an opportunity for them to learn to serve, to lead songs, to testify, and to assist with the teaching. As there were no public buses on Saturday, brothers who joined us on Saturdays would stay at our home on Friday nights.

Sometimes, Jonathan led a group of workers, driving them all day to preach the gospel. If no one cooked supper for the group, they were tired and hungry at the end of the evening. Jonathan would invite them to eat shawarmas (a typical Israeli fast food of grilled slices of meat, vegetables and spices packed inside a large pita bread), or McDonald hamburgers, or the "poor man's steak". Many years later, we went to China to visit some of the workers who helped us on Saturdays; they gleefully talked about how Jonathan invited them to eat delicious suppers because they hadn't had time to eat that kind of supper or that kind of

food was simply too expensive for them.

The Unforgettable "Poor Man's Steak"

Whenever we mentioned the "poor man's steak" to the brothers, they were intrigued. There was a town not far from Tel Aviv with a barbecue place. We did not know its proper name, but called it the "poor man's steak". The barbecue menu included beef skewers, chicken skewers, lamb skewers, chicken wings, chicken legs, tomato strings, onion strings, mushroom strings, chicken hearts, foie gras, minced meat strings, and so on. Uncooked skewers were placed behind a glass window, and you just ordered whatever you wanted to eat. The food you ordered was be placed first on a plate, then passed to the burning barbecue. After the barbecue chef grilled the food, you happily took the food to your table.

We used the term "poor man" not because the customers were poor but because the prices were affordable. For example, a barbecue skewer of three chicken wings was sold for only one US dollar. The same food sold in other restaurants would cost three US dollars. Of course, those restaurants provided air conditioning, a nice atmosphere, service by waiters, and more refined pickled appetizers. Yet for many people, affordable prices were more important. For a group of people eating together, saving a couple of dollars on one skewer meant big total savings.

It was called "steak" because grilled steaks were sometimes available. Those steaks were very delicious because of their fragrance and softness. A brother from a short-term missions team could not stop praising the place, saying that the steak there was better than any other place.

The barbecued food did not seem to be marinated with sauces. The secret was the in way the food was cooked. Barbecuing was really a peculiar way of cooking. Before the food was cooked, the chef sprinkled a little salt. Yet after it was cooked over the red charcoal grill, the food gave off a unique aroma that raised the appetite.

We found "poor man's steak" purely by accident. After a day-long gospel meeting on Saturday, we would sometimes drive past an area with white smoke rising from the chimneys. Later we learned that they were selling food. About nine months before the Tel Aviv Church was founded, we would often travel every Saturday for gospel meetings and would sometimes reward ourselves with "poor man's steak".

We took short-term missions teams to eat at the "poor man's steak". Not only was it affordable, but the mission teams were able to experience local customs. At that time, the parking lot there was not large and was paved with mud and gravel. The seating was simple. The customers were local Jews in casual attire. They came to enjoy a family feast after their Sabbath celebration where both young and old ate together.

Among the barbecue chefs was a person from China. When we saw him, we chatted with him and gave him some books. We could see that he stood for many hours daily in front of the red-hot charcoal fire. Continuously rotating the barbecue meat and waving a fan to keep the charcoal glowing was not an easy job. Even with a big electric fan blowing near him, it was still very hot near the fire. He said that wages were good but the hours were long.

We always joked that the giant-sized Middle Eastern bread looked like tablecloths but they tasted better than ordinary bread. There was an extra charge for pita bread, beverages, and French fries; the salad, piled up like a small hill, was free-of-charge. The salad consisted mainly of cucumber, tomatoes, onions and parsley. Bottled olive oil, lemon juice, salt, and ground chilli on the tables were also free-of-charge. I have included these details here to give readers some understanding of Israeli life.

Since leaving Israel many years ago, we still miss the "poor man's steak" place. We miss the colour, the taste, and the flavour of that barbecued food. We miss the bustling, simple, genuine Israeli people. In my dreams, I remember the white smoke rising from the chimneys. For me, the "poor man's steak" represents not just food. It represents days in my life, living in a foreign land where we hastily worked with the brothers, taking advantage of daylight. It represents a group of brothers doing the Lord's work with a united heart. It was a glorious and memorable time. Even today, we still keep in touch with some of those Saturday comrades.

Creative Travelling Evangelism

In summer, the Tel Aviv Church held a baptismal service in Galilee. In winter, the service was held in Jerusalem. When we brought people to the service, we also invited other people to witness the ceremony and to go for a tour.

This was a good opportunity to see the places where Jesus walked:

Bethlehem, Nazareth, Mount of Temptation, Cana, the Sea of Galilee, the Church of Multiplication, Capernaum, the Church of Peter the Primacy, the Mount of Beatitudes, Caesarea Philippi, Church of Saint Peter in Gallicantu where Peter denied the Lord three times, the House of the High Priest, the Pool of Bethesda, the Garden of Gethsemane, Via Dolorosa in the old city (the Passion Route), the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, the Garden Tomb, and the Mount of Olives.

During the tour, we used the Bible to vividly describe the birth of Jesus, His ministry, His death on the cross, His resurrection and ascension, His second coming. Some touring people accepted Jesus as they witnessed the facts of the living Bible, and saw the true evidence of faith.

The touring church groups also visited historical sites from different eras in the Bible, such as: Jericho, Beersheba, the Wailing Wall, the Aqueduct of Hezekiah, the pool of Siloam, En-gedi, Joppa, Megiddo, the Plain of Jezreel, Mount Carmel, and Caesarea.

5,000 Gifts

Sometimes, the short-term missions teams who came to Israel would also bring resources to our church, including song tapes or sermon tapes.

Around the year 2000, a short-term missions team brought copies of an album entitled The Road in the Deep Sea produced by a music ministry organization called "Melody of My Heart". When it was played in the church, many brothers and sisters loved it and wanted a copy.

We would play the music as the migrant workers returned from their work; beautiful songs such as Lord, You are My Most Intimate Friend and Echo in an Empty Valley would ring out in the evening air. Some workers would be walking to the showers with towels across their shoulders. Some would be carrying their lunch boxes to the cafeteria. Some moved tables outside of the makeshift container homes, preparing to play card games. Some were making phone calls or washing clothes. When they heard the Chinese songs from the loudspeakers, many would stick their heads out from the windows or come out of their residence to see what was happening. Some did not know who had come, but those who knew would say, "Jesus has come."

On one occasion, two brothers came from the United States on a short-term missions. Jonathan took them to the worker's gospel meetings. The two



brothers witnessed workers earnestly asking, "Can we have a tape?" But they were disappointed that we had no extra tapes to give them. I remember well what happened next on our way home. One of the two brothers sitting in the back asked, "If someone wants to send tapes here, how many should he send?" I blurted out, "Perhaps 5,000." There were about 5,000 Chinese workers in Israel when we first arrived. When the two Americans were visiting, there were about 10,000; later, the number increased to 30,000 workers.

After the two brothers returned to the United States, the brother who had asked the question donated 5,000 copies of The Road in the Deep Sea from "Melody of My Heart" and mailed the albums to us. Every time we carried the heavy boxes of tapes from the post office, our hearts were filled with surprise and gratitude.

Spreading the Gospel Seeds

For the Chinese Christians in other countries, "The Road in the Deep Sea" was one of many hymn tapes; but for the Chinese migrant workers in Israel, it was their first and only hymn tape. This was a new and wrapped original tape. When the workers received a copy of "The Road in the Deep Sea", many of them went out and purchased a small tape recorder to listen to the album.

We welcomed new friends to our church with a gift of "The Road in the Deep Sea" tape, a Bible, and a copy of the New Life Bible study materials. The givers of the gift were happy and the receivers were even happier. No matter where the newcomers were from, whether they were Christians or non-believers, they received a gift. "The Road in the Deep Sea" was like dandelions seeds dispersed in the wind, carrying the seed of the gospel to every corner of Israel. Many people prayed according to the prayer written in the packaging of the newcomer's gift and accepted Jesus.

One year, we went back to China to visit the Christian brothers and their families. One brother took us to visit another returning brother's family. While we were walking down a narrow street in a village, we heard one of the hymns from the tape:

"I am an echo in an empty valley, Trying to find my heart; I asked the water and the forests, Yet my heart is still nowhere to be found." The tape player was so loud that it could be heard down the whole street. We could not stop our tears. This was not a family we had planned to visit and they did not know that we were passing by. These tapes - these hymns, and this gospel message- followed the migrant workers home to China, bringing the gospel to their families and neighbours.

"The Road in the Deep Sea" tape continued its gospel mission; it was distributed for a few years until all copies were gone. We give thanks to the Lord; we later received 3,000 copies of "Father", another album produced by "Melody of My Heart". We estimate that over 10,000 tapes from "Melody of My Heart" tapes were distributed in Israel. With permission from different production agencies to duplicate the hymn and sermon tapes, even more copies were distributed.

As CDs replaced tapes and CD/DVD players replaced tape players, many brothers and sisters continued to listen to the songs by converting the tapes into MP3 files. Now, the hymns and sermons are available online- without the need for tapes or CDs.

Today, many of the 5,000 original copies of "The Road in the Deep Sea" distributed in Israel are likely damaged, lost, or packed away as souvenirs. For many, hearing the hymns from "The Road in the Deep Sea" reminds us of the years long past when we were working and living in Israel, a period of life with many unforgettable and treasured memories.

I've often been embarrassed about asking for the 5,000 tapes. My reply of 5,000 copies was blurted out without thinking. Was it an unreasonable exaggeration? Jonathan always smiled and said, "You did not ask it for yourself. You were inspired by the Holy Spirit."

Like the 5 loaves and two fish, the copies of "The Road in the Deep Sea" became spiritual food for the migrant workers and fed well over 5,000 people. These tapes became a beautiful act to be remembered in the overseas mission history, just as we remembered the costly ointment of Mary poured on Jesus' feet.

We are truly grateful to the leaders of "Melody of My Heart", Rev. and Mrs. Paul Yeh and their co-workers. We are also grateful to the brother who generously donated the 5,000 tapes and to the Lord for His provision.

Slowly, dozens of Bible study classes were established and the number of



believers continued to increase. We kept records of all the meetings. With the help of short-term missions teams, we contacted about 2,500 migrant workers between 1998 and 1999. During that time over 800 made decisions to follow Christ and 193 were baptized. We felt that it was time to form a church as the believers needed to learn about church life. Shortly after this time, we lost count as the number of believers increased to over 2,000. We could not continue tracking the number of new believers to follow up with given the shortage of workers. We believed that those who continued to search would come to the church themselves.

(2) Church Life (Acts 2:44-46)

Rented Church

In April 1998, when we first arrived in Israel, we were driving out seven evenings a week to establish and lead Bible study classes. In September, after the increase in the number of believers and baptized Christians, we rented a church to hold our services. The space seated 100 people and cost \$100 USD to rent each Saturday. A few months later, the rental space reached capacity and we began the search for a larger place to meet.

From a Mobile Church to a Fixed-Location Church

The brothers and sisters needed to experience church life before returning home. In 1999, the Tel Aviv Church grew from 50 in attendance in February to 140 by November. Jonathan began to plan for a more permanent place for the church as workers often moved between worksites, disrupting their ability to meet at their residences.

After earnest prayers, it was determined that a place near the new Tel Aviv bus terminal would be the perfect spot as public buses connected this location to cities across the country. Hundreds of migrant workers would also gather near the bus terminal.

We found a suitable place to rent not far from the Tel Aviv's new bus terminal. It seated 300 but came at a monthly cost of US \$3,000. Though it was well out of our budget, through God's provision, we were eventually able to rent that place.

Brother Chen, from the United States, called Jonathan before Christmas saying that he would send some money for the workers to buy food for

Christmas. Thanking him, Jonathan listened as the brother also asked if the church had any other needs. They talked through the church's needs and ended the call. Half an hour later, the phone rang again. It was Brother Chen calling back exclaiming, "Pastor, we have decided!"

Curious, Jonathan asked, "What was decided?"

He said, "My wife and I have discussed it and are in agreement. We would like to provide one year's rent for the church."

We will be forever grateful for the love and generosity of this couple and the provision of our gracious Heavenly Father. \$36,000 dollars is no small sum for any family!

As the year progressed, we started to worry about financing for the second year of rent. Upon reflection, we decided that the Church was God's and that he would provide. God stayed true to His word as the year came to a close- another couple sent enough to cover half a year of rent.

We often sent prayer letters during the 6 years we were in Israel, asking for prayer and informing partners about the development of the church. God would continuously touch the hearts of many, who sent offerings to support the church's needs.

We left Israel in April 2004 because of visa restrictions. Prior to our departure, we told the brothers and sisters of the church that we could not guarantee future support for the church rent. We had saved and set aside one year's rent so the church could continue on for at least another year. After that, they would need to find a way to pay for the rent. The church belonged to God and was entrusted to the brothers and sisters.

A few years later, one of the brothers who had served in managing the church's finances gave the following testimony:

I began managing the church finances in 2002. During the six years when our pastor and his wife were here, our brothers and sisters only covered \$9,000 in rent. The pastor raised the rest of the lump sum. When they left in 2004, the church faced a very difficult two years. In the first six years, it was like we were living in a greenhouse. Now, the church was without a pastor and was also responsible for the rent. The co-workers were really worried that we could not afford the high rent.

Concerning the truth about offering, Pastor Teo taught that all the



wealth in this life is given by God. More accurately, one tenth of it, or the tithe, belongs to God and it is our duty to give to Him; then the real offering is the part above the one tenth. From their witness, we understood that they practiced tithing. I was therefore moved by the Holy Spirit to start tithing also. It was not easy but I clung to God's promise: "Bring the full tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. And thereby put me to the test,' says the Lord of hosts,'if I will not open the windows of heaven for you and pour down for you a blessing until there is no more need.' " (Malachi 3:10).

As the brothers and sisters followed in the pastor's example and guidance and practiced tithing, the burden of the church rent was lifted. Although this lesson was not easy, it was also not difficult when we learned to trust in God's promise.

The Bible says, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also." (see Matthew 6:21) Most of the church members were blue-collar workers, earning their money by hard labour. Most members were new believers. For a church of less than 100 people, they gave their offering in faith and bore the huge monthly rent. The survival of the church is miracle in and of itself. Thanks to the grace of God and thanks to all the brothers and sisters who love the Lord, love the church, and have contributed to it through offering all these years. The church is now almost 20 years old and they continue to meet at the same location to this day.

A Multifunctional Church

The Tel Aviv Church is a church founded in the mission field. It is unlike a traditional church which can sometimes be restricted in the range of activities that a church can organize. Here, the activities and the nature of meetings are freely designed and implemented by the pastor according to the practical needs of the people being served.

The early Tel Aviv Church functioned like a normal church, such as worship, fellowship, Bible teaching, discipleship, co-worker training, spiritual mentoring, and ministry skill training. The church grew to include the services of a community centre, including tours, news, social events, and other services.

Tour Centre

For baptismal services, the church rented large coach buses to invite other people to join the service. Attendees included regular attendees of the church and others that might have never attended church but wanted to experience an excursion. All were welcome. If we travelled to Galilee, we would visit some tourist attractions in northern Israel. If we travelled to Jerusalem, we would also visit some tourist attractions in southern Israel.

For Christians, an opportunity to visit Biblical places was certainly great. It was also good for non-believers. It was a great weekend activity for all to relax after a busy week and to know more about Israel. To the delight of all who participated, the cost of the church tours were much cheaper than tours offered by local companies as the church tours were operated at cost and not for profit. Another benefit of the church tour was that no interpreter was needed as the tour's commentary was in Mandarin. The tours were always a lively affair, with busses packed to capacity.

Church tours presented an ideal time to preach the gospel. On the bus ride, those who were getting baptised gave their testimonies of their faith in Christ over the loudspeaker. We read the Bible and gave a message when arriving at Biblical attractions to provide context. As workers toured the attractions, the facts became irrefutable evidence for the Bible. Many came with the intention of participating in lively activities, touring places, or meeting new friends. For many, watching a baptism for the first time was a curious and shocking experience. After the tours, some would start to come to church. Some of them would also come to believe in Jesus and became baptised.

[News Centre]

The early migrant workers did not have smartphones or computers. They could not understand English or Hebrew when watching local TV, nor could they read the newspapers. They were oblivious to news back in China or around the world. It was important for them to be informed about terrorist incidents and public announcements regarding rule changes involving migrant workers. The easiest way for them to find these news was to come to church, where we would print it out in Chinese and post it for easy access.

[Friendship Centre]

Migrant workers worked in different parts of Israel. If they wanted to meet



with others, the church was often the best place. They could drink a cup of tea and talk for an unlimited time. Sometimes, while at church, they would discover that acquaintances from China had also come to Israel. When they required help, church friends might tell them where to find it.

It was a place to play table tennis and sing karaoke. At the New Year Festival, they could celebrate with a large group at church- much better than celebrating alone or with just a few friends. All the Chinese came to know of the location of the church, making it a favourite place to meet.

One time, a couple of gangs arranged a confrontation outside the church. When Jonathan heard the fighting on the street outside the church, he went down intending to help stop the fight. By then, the gangs had already dispersed, leaving behind bloody tracks on the ground. He learned that the gangs had used knives and sticks in their fight, wounding some people. Jonathan later visited the wounded people.

[Language Centre]

While on a drive to a meeting, a few workers from Fuzhou sat in the middle row of the van, while a few recently arrived workers from Anhui sat in the back row. The Fuzhou workers had been in Israel longer and they had more things to talk about. The Anhui workers sat quietly, listening. Finally, one of the Anhui workers spoke loudly, "Pastor, they speak Hebrew very fluently!" It should come at no surprise that the Chinese do not understand Hebrew; they have a hard enough time trying to understand another Chinese dialect.

It was important for newly arrived Chinese migrant workers to know some basic Hebrew. We compiled a list of basic words and sentences in Chinese (such as hammer, nails, bread, rice, and "Which bus should I take to the Tel Aviv bus terminal?") and with the help of our Hebrew teacher, prepared three audio tape recordings. We spoke one Chinese sentence followed by the sentence in Hebrew. These tapes were distributed to the migrant workers to learn some simple Hebrew expressions for daily conversation.

The church bought a few fast duplicating machines to make copies of tapes. The brothers duplicated so many recordings, even wearing out some of the machines. The church sold the tapes at cost. Some people who never attended church came to buy the tapes, some of which were also sent back to China. Some migrant workers who planned to come to Israel used the tapes to learn

basic Hebrew before they came. The church also arranged for Hebrew language teachers to come to the church to teach.

[Service Centre]

1) Mail delivery

Migrant workers often moved when job sites changed. Many of them could not even pronounce their new street names. Even worse, some place names were only in Hebrew. As most workers did not know either language, letters or packages mailed to them from China would easily get lost. Instead, they began to send all their mail to our address so as to have it reach its intended recipient. Our address became the address for many. We would take the mail to the church for recipients to pick up.

2) Package delivery

Migrant workers would bring some medications with them. When they needed more, they would send requests to their family in China. At times, they would request those packages to be sent to us. At first, it was not a problem for small packages but challenges began to emerge as volumes increased. Bottles of medicine oil would break in transit, filling the post office with pungent odours. Packages would be opened for inspection, revealing white powder with illegible Chinese characters. Government departments would demand an appearance to explain and confirm that packages did not contain illicit drugs. Marked as the recipient, we mediated on behalf of the workers. We did wonder what would happen if the packages really did contain illicit drugs.

Request for package transfers grew and even came from some who did not attend church. The packages also grew as many families got together to send single packages in order to save on shipping costs. One time, the post office clerk joked, "You receive so many packages that half of the packages in this office are yours." Not long after, we ended this service, limiting delivery to letters. Migrant workers continued to send packages to other workers with permanent addresses and their supervisors at work.

3) Money Transfer

Chinese migrant workers encountered risks when they tried to send money home. Migrant workers were often robbed when they travelled to the Palestinian-



controlled areas to send money home.

Understanding this, we met with a manager of a money exchange located in eastern Jerusalem and asked if they could help migrant workers who wished to send money. He did not have a license to open a branch in Tel Aviv but offered to provide a minibus service to pick up and drop off the migrant workers, safely shuttling them to and from his shop in Jerusalem. Every Saturday, a minibus would come by the church to bring migrant workers on money exchanging trip.

The minibus had to make several trips back and forth as demand grew for the service grew, The shop manager ended up renting a large bus to carry the migrant workers to send money. Sometimes, two large buses were needed to carry all the people. Inevitably, several money exchanges were opened near the church to help the migrant workers, ending the money exchanging trips.

4) Completing medical cards

Migrant workers who did not work in state-owned companies needed to find doctors by themselves when they were ill. The main problem was the difficulty in communicating with the doctor. The doctor might ask them about the location and severity of the pain, but they could not provide the information, not even by sign language.

At first, Jonathan would accompany some migrant workers to their medical appointments but that quickly became unsustainable. We developed a card with questions most frequently asked by doctors. Sick workers would come to meet with us before their appointment and we would complete their medical cards in English. With the cards, doctors could then understand the symptoms, such as headache, fever, cough, or any other specific discomforts. The card also detailed the location of the pain or the problem, the degree of discomfort, and the duration of the illness.

Under special circumstances, a sick migrant worker would call us from the clinic or the hospital and we would provide translations by phone. With serious illnesses, Jonathan would accompany sick workers to see doctors in the Palestinian-controlled areas where the patients were not required to show their identity cards.

5) Translating

While we were able to speak some Hebrew, our vocabulary was insufficient

LOVE BEYOND HORIZON On occasion, migrant workers would have things stolen during work hours. After several thefts, a few migrant workers deliberately stayed home during the day to investigate. They discovered an Arab thief, beat him and took his identity card. Losing an identity card is serious for an Arab, without it they cannot work in Israeli territory.

The exposed thief gathered his friends and returned to fight with the workers. After the first attack was thwarted, the bandits returned a second time with guns. Unable to defend themselves, the Chinese had no choice but to hide. One of the Chinese workers was shot in the stomach. He hid for a long time, only coming out after the attackers left. He was sent to the hospital. Another worker also suffered minor gun injuries. When the police arrived to investigate, Jonathan mediated as the translator.

Spiritual Home

On weekends, the church was the spiritual home of many brothers and sisters. For the Sabbath, the Jews rested on Saturdays, not Sundays. On the day of rest, all shops are closed; the streets are quiet with few pedestrians; There are fewer cars on the streets, and everything seems to quiet down. It was a very strange thing for the migrant workers to experience.

On Friday afternoon, working hours are shortened as people rush to buy food and flowers before the shops close. The Sabbath begins at sunset on Friday and ends at sunset on Saturday. Devout Jews do not work, do not watch TV, do not go shopping, do not cook, do not travel far, do not turn on electrical appliances, and do not answer phones.

Jewish families share dinner on Friday evening and go to pray in the synagogue afterwards. They go to the synagogue again on Saturday morning. In the afternoon, they meet with friends or relax at a park or read books at home.

After the sunset on Saturday, the buses start running and the city becomes busy again. The Jews open their shops, go to the movies, or meet with friends. The Sabbath allows for a rest for the body and the mind so that they can be closer to God and cultivate their human relationships and friendships.

What do the Chinese in Israel do on the Sabbath? Some scholars choose to continue with their experiments in the laboratories. Some migrant workers wait on the roadside for temporary work. Some clean, visit friends, or cook a good meal. Some go to the Roman Street to gamble and drink.

Christian brothers and sisters, and those interested in the church would come to church on the weekend. They would come to the church at 4 p.m. on Fridays to chat, read, sing, or play the piano, play chess or table tennis. They would have dinner together, followed by a Bible study and prayer meeting.

On Saturday mornings, a few brothers led a devotional, followed by breakfast. A small group Bible study was held before lunch and church service began at 1 p.m. Some would stay after service for meetings or other work. On occasion, additional training and special programs were provided to the church by short-term missions teams.

To this day, the church continues its normal functions. The work has been taken up by brothers and sisters, founded in their love for the Lord and for the church. They teach, receive new visitors, cook meals, lead worship, and clean the church after the service.

(3) Discipleship (Acts 2:42)

The Importance of Discipleship

What is the difference between believers and disciples? Believers are those who believe in salvation but they may not be living a committed life of self-sacrifice. Disciples are willing to receive training, willing to live according to the teachings of the Bible, willing to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and willing to serve. Jesus is the Lord of salvation, the sanctifying Lord, the healing Lord, and the coming King. Becoming a disciple is a progressive process brought about by understanding the whole gospel.

In Jesus' time, many heard His teaching. After prayer, He chose twelve of His followers to stay with Him and trained them to be His disciples. Mark 3:14 says, "And he appointed twelve so that they might be with him and he might send them out to preach."

The Chinese believers in Israel, including the scholars and the workers, were all in transition. They all had to work but could stay only for a limited time. All those who were willing to participate and to devote their time to be taught were

accepted by the church to enter discipleship training. This training was open to everyone.

Our plan was not only to spread the gospel to the Chinese in Tel Aviv and the surrounding area, but to spread it among all the Chinese in Israel. With this in mind, we set out to print Bible materials for all the Chinese people in all of Israel.

There are many areas of discipleship training. Our primary focus was to equip the workers with a Bible. The plan was to provide a copy of the Bible to every Chinese migrant worker who showed interest. It seemed like a fantasy seeing as there was never any budget for this. Yet Jehovah Jireh blessed the Chinese people in Israel. Even before they arrived in Israel, God had prepared the way.

The Miracle of 10,000 Chinese Bibles

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." (Isaiah 55:8-9)

The Lord's thoughts are higher than man's thoughts. Even before the Chinese came to Israel, God already knew that they would come so He prepared Chinese Bibles for them.

God used Elder Olavi and his connection with Bible publishers to supply Bibles of many different languages represented in Israel. One time, a Bible publisher had received an order for 10,000 Chinese Bibles. After they had been printed, the client that had made the order disliked the cover and refused to accept them. The publisher offered to sell the Bibles to Elder Olavi at a discount. Without seeing any Chinese living in Israel at the time, Elder Olavi bought the lot. Miraculously, not long after, many Chinese people began to arrive in Israel. During our first few years in Israel, these 10,000 Chinese Bibles were distributed freely to the Chinese.

This was really amazing. From man's point of view, this was an incredible thing. The early Chinese workers did not have Chinese books or magazines to read so they would often read the Bible. Moreover, the cost of printing 10,000 Bibles and transporting them to Israel would have been incredibly costly. Through this, God truly demonstrated His great love for the Chinese. It was miraculous!



"Great Commission Discipleship Training" Bible Study Materials

In addition to being taught the Bible during in church service, believers also needed to study the Bible. Great Commission Discipleship Training was very well suited for use to teach believers at this early stage. This series of Bible study material includes 6 books, each with 12 lessons: New Life, New Living, The Way of the Disciple, The Way of the Pastor, and The Way of Missions. Most migrant workers would stay in Israel long enough to complete the first 3 books.

New Life teaches about the Bible, the church, the assurance of salvation, and Jesus' life - good lessons for non-believers and new believers. New Living teaches about Christian devotion, Bible reading, prayer, stewardship, family life, and how to live a life centred on God. The Way of the Disciple teaches about holy life, spiritual gifts, personal evangelism, working with others, and concern for the world.

Participants are to complete questions by filling in blanks before the classes. The answers are all in the Bible. In the class, the teacher is to supplement the lesson and answer any questions.

The advantage of this course is its step-by-step guidance. It begins with building a foundation, leading believers to a mature spiritual life through learning about the Bible, daily living, and servanthood. It contains both knowledge and practical application. It required participants to continuously turn to the Bible to find the answers; they would become familiar with the contents of the Bible and many important verses upon completion of the course.

As believers follow this systematic course step by step, they learn everything essential for Christian living and service.

As the course was designed to have every participant complete their questions before class, it was necessary to provide copies for reference. Supplying a sufficient number of textbooks for everyone was a challenge. We sought and received permission from the publisher to print copies in Israel.

Setting up a Library

The church in Israel was different from churches in other places. In other local churches, brothers and sisters can stay for 10 to 20 years and can receive training slowly. On the contrary, the Chinese in Israel were highly mobile. While we did not know how long we could stay in Israel, the workers and the scholars knew that they would not stay in Israel for very long. If we had relied on a

traditional weekly Bible study and preaching approach, they would never have been able to learn the whole Bible and the entire truth.

We felt that a library was very important for them to dig deeper by reading more outside of the church service. Without their families around, the workers and scholars had much more time to read. We began to purchase a small quantity of commentaries. Rules for borrowing the books were established. Short-term missions teams added to the collection. Two libraries were established, one in the Tel Aviv Church and another at the Scholars' Church.

As short-term missions teams visited, they admired the library, saying, "Not all churches in North America have a well-stocked library such as this." From many testimonies of the people in Israel, it became evident that reading specific books in the library helped them to accept the Lord and build a stronger faith.

Mobile Library

We took books and tapes to those who lived far away and for those who did not come to church. We exchanged them for new ones with every new visit. Items not returned, as workers moved or returned to China were theirs to keep.

Baptism

[Baptism]

Brothers and sisters who wanted to be baptized needed to attend 12 classes, based on New Life, a baptismal class and were asked to write out their testimonies. They would be accepted for baptism after an interview, with the exception of a few special conditions. Being baptized in the Jordan River was a rare opportunity that made most proud. All baptismal candidates were given a certificate. Many years later, some brothers still carry their baptismal certificates in their wallet.

[Baptismal Gowns]

There were many, sometimes dozens, of baptismal candidates at each baptismal service. Knowing that some brothers could sew, we took them to buy fabric to make baptismal gowns. The brothers made 70 white baptismal gowns so that we no longer needed to rent them for each occasion.

【Little Fish Bible】

One brother gave the church a large number of Little Fish Bibles. It was



a very thick annotated Bible with supplemental reading material. These Bibles were given as gifts to those who were baptized. Some of the brothers and sisters wanted extra copies for pastors and Christians in China. We would provide copies for those as an incentive who could recite one chapter of the bible during worship service.

(4) Fellowship (Acts 2:46)

The Meaning of Fellowship

Fellowship means association. Unlike the vertical relationship between God and man, fellowship refers to horizontal relationships between people. Believers are to love, accept, forgive, and care for one another. They bear each others' burdens, exhort, submit, serve, support, and build up one another. A fellowship is a community that accepts Christ as Head. Believers are linked by love and they witness to the world.

Making Good Use of Holidays

During holidays, no one needs to work so it becomes a good opportunity to gather to enjoy friendship and receive training.

Friendship Gathering for New Friends

The church organized a friendship gathering for new friends called "One Day of Christian Life". In the morning, a message was given about why we need to believe in Jesus, followed by a small group meeting and the sharing of testimonies. In the small group discussion, new friends could raise questions about faith and life. Competent group leaders were appointed to lead the discussion, to provide answers, and to pray for the new friends.

The afternoon was filled with group games and sports. In one game, we tried to fit as many men on a single sheet of newspaper. At sports time, we would play basketball, table tennis, or football. We ended the day in a climatic game of a tug of war.

The relaxed atmosphere allowed participants to enjoy the stress-free daymany had not enjoyed this kind of uncontrolled laughter and tears of joy for a long time. They discovered that the church was not always a strict and oldfashioned place, but could also be a happy place. Because of such activities, some friends continued to come to church and to stay in the church.

Membership Retreat

The church was within walking distance from the Tel Aviv beach. Normally, the worship service and other meetings and activities were at the church. During seasons of good weather, we held our retreat or worship service in the open at the seaside. There we all enjoyed a panoramic view.

Sometimes there were too many people, making it difficult to arrange a large enough place to meet outside. In those cases, we would hold the retreat at the church. Group games were the best ice-breakers. Through the games, everyone laughed happily and shed off formality. In addition to Biblical teaching, there were talks on various special topics. These helped the participants understand Israeli folk culture, history and geography.

Co-Workers Retreat

Co-workers in the church (both scholars and workers) usually worked in their own areas, for which they were responsible. During formal co-worker meetings, the discussions centred primarily around church business, but with insufficient time for sharing. Sometimes, Jonathan would invite all the co-workers to come to our home for meetings. My task was to prepare the meal for the co-workers to enjoy after the meeting. Sharing a meal together in a home atmosphere was certainly very different from meeting in the church.

We had an annual offsite co-workers retreat. Part of the time was used to discuss church business. The main purpose was to deepen the mutual understanding between the co-workers, in order to promote better cooperation. During the retreat, every co-worker had the opportunity to share some personal needs and to receive others' intercession through laying of hands.

The retreats were held in different locations. At the Sea of Galilee, we were reminded of our Lord's love. At the Netanya seaside, the co-workers practiced washing each other's feet. At a retreat centre in Yad Hashmona, we played a group game called "Survival in the Desert" leaving us with many fond memories. These retreats really helped the co-workers build closer mutual relationships.

Pastoral Co-Workers' Retreat

God arranged for the Chinese pastors to spread the gospel in south-central, central, and northern parts of Israel. At one time, there were 7 pastoral coworkers working simultaneously. Including ourselves, there were Pastor and Mrs.



Alfred Lai, Rev. Stanley Hui, and Elder and Mrs. Kien Wong.

At that time, Jonathan was the Director of the Chinese Ministry in Israel. The pastors met monthly to seek the Lord's will, to share with each other, to review the past, to discuss the present ministry and future plans, and to pray together. In addition, speakers were invited to encourage us.

One Family in the Lord

Jonathan encouraged our co-workers to visit the brothers and sisters and also encouraged the brothers and sisters to visit each other. Some brothers and sisters, who stayed in Israel for several years, have lived through difficult days together and have become lifelong friends. After returning to China, they have continued to communicate with each other through social media. They have even arranged to meet together during Spring Festival.

The scholars' group met weekly in our home at 10 a.m. on Saturdays. We would prepare food each week as meetings usually finished around lunchtime. This also gave an opportunity for some to stay behind to chat. I would cook large amounts of food, such as macaroni with chicken and vegetables, spicy and sour cold noodles, peanut porridge, or sweet black glutinous rice with coconut nectar; enough to feed a few dozen people.

In early times, the worship service in the Tel Aviv Church had 200-300 people in weekly attendance. At first, the church did not have a budget for lunch expenses so we served tea and ate biscuits. As Israel began to limit the entry of migrant workers church attendance began to decrease.

Newer migrant workers were better off and they could cook their own meals. So before the Friday Bible study group, after the Saturday morning prayer meeting, and before the Sunday noon service, they prepared food for the whole group. Usually, a huge pail of porridge or noodles with meat and vegetables were made to feed dozens of people.

At festival time or the New Year, we prepared food like steamed buns, fried twists, or dumplings. When the short-term missions teams visited, they prepared additional dishes adding to the already big meal. The food was less important than the gathering of the brothers and sisters, who were attracted by the Lord to gather in God's loving family. The brothers and sisters together formed one body, communicated in a fellowship as the family of the Lord. It was beautiful!

"And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their

homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts." (Acts 2:46)

(5) Fishers of Men (Acts 2:47)

Theological training and pastoral experience provided us with a blueprint to build a church in the mission field and taught us how to lead the brothers and sisters to progress in their faith. We provided knowledge and opportunities for the brothers and sisters to practice what they had learned. Before they could become fishers of men, however, they would need to build themselves up in the truth in order to build other people up.

Learn to Be a Mouthpiece

The basis for understanding salvation is the Bible. The basis of spiritual growth is the Bible. Leading people to the Lord, church growth, and the basis of missions are all based on the Bible.

Providing fish is less important than providing them with a method of fishing. Giving them fish to eat is less important than teaching them how to fish. If you give fish to someone to eat, all the fish will be eaten in one day. If you teach them how to fish, they will have continue to have fish to eat. The same principle holds true for spiritual reality. If a believer only listens to sermons, he will continue to wait to be fed. If, however, he knows how to study the Bible and how to preach, he will obtain spiritual food from the Bible for himself and he also will be able to share it with others.

1) Learn to Feed Yourself

[Reciting the Bible]

If a believer wants to be the mouthpiece for God's Word, the first step is to fill his own heart with God's Word. One way to be filled with God's Word in his heart is to memorize it. Our church encouraged the brothers and sisters to memorize and recite the Bible chapter by chapter. Once someone learned to recite a chapter, he could then recite it before others in the worship service to encourage others. One time, a sister amazingly recited Psalm 119, the longest chapter in the Bible with 176 verses- without error.

【Independently Learning Spiritual Pursuit, Devotions, Bible Reading and Study】

The church encouraged the brothers and sisters to form a habit of having



their own devotions, Bible reading, and Bible study, in addition to just listening to sermons. Everyone needs to hear God's voice directly through the Bible. As Colossians 3:16 states: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly."

2) Learn to Feed Someone Else

【Learn Bible Study Methods】

How can a believer share God's Word with others in a small group? He has to learn different methods of studying the Bible. These methods include expository study, inductive study, biographical study, and thematic study. He needs to understand the context of the passage and the simple historical background in order to avoid explaining the Bible out of context. He needs to know the theme of each book and the focus of the text. He needs to ask the Holy Spirit, with humility, to release the truth to him through prayer. The most important point is to find applications from the Bible passage so that God's Word can purify us and change our thoughts and behaviour.

【Learn to Use Commentaries and Read Spiritual Books】

Commentaries and spiritual books record the results of other Christians' research and spiritual insights. Reading the insights that other people have received and walking in other people's footsteps can help us to gain alertness and motivation.

【Learn Skills to Lead Small Groups】

It is one thing to teach the Bible in a small group and another to lead the small group well. Bible study leaders must learn to focus those who talk too much, are too subjective, or wander into irrelevant subjects. The group leader needs to balance the time between studying the Bible, sharing and praying while keeping an eye on the time.

【Learning to Preach】

It is not difficult to take lessons on how to preach. After the lessons, one needs to prepare the sermons. A person who completes a course on preaching will know that whenever he listens to a sermon, he needs to be aware of many things besides the content. This includes how to begin with an introduction, how to divide the sermon into sections, and how to conclude. Preaching is like cooking a dish with many ingredients.

LOVE BEYOND HORIZON

Learn to Pastor a Church

Jesus is the great Shepherd of the church. He appointed shepherds in the world to pastor churches. The time and energy of a pastor are limited, so the church needs co-workers who can bear the burden, have the mentality of a pastor, and possess pastoral gifts. They can then share the sacred work of caring and shepherding the brothers and sisters.

The following are two ways in which the church can prepare brothers and sisters to practice their pastoral gifts.

The Way of the Pastor

The Way of the Pastor is the extension of the Bible study materials, after New Life, New Living, and The Way of Disciple. The book contains 12 lessons: Am I a pastor? Pastor and being equipped, Intercession, Worship, Preaching, Teaching, Visitation, Missions, Distinguishing truth and falsehood, Spiritual warfare, A glorious road. All these summaries contain the various aspects that a pastor should know. While it is not a formal course for pastors, it is sufficient for a believer who wishes to serve as a lay pastor. They can serve and continue to learn at the same time.

[Pastoral Training]

The United States Chinese Alliance Churches Association has a training course to train lay leaders for churches without a pastor. While these church leaders are engaged in full time work outside of the church and cannot commit to full time training, these churches still do need someone to manage the church's administrative affairs, provide counsel, lead Bible studies, and preach.

The Tel Aviv Church invited the Association to send some teachers to teach the course. We believe that the brothers and sisters who received such training would be able to help churches that already have pastors, when they returned to China. The training would also be useful if they were to establish new churches.

The teachers were all experienced pastors from North America. The course was centred on the Bible and emphasized practical application. Subjects included Learning Church Administration (through studying Nehemiah), Spiritual Growth (through studying the Psalms), Learn to be a Christian of the Age (through studying the major prophets), The Life of Jesus (through studying the gospels), The Basics of the Gospel (through studying Romans), Handling

Church Problems (through studying First Corinthians), How to Read and Think Independently (through the course Read and Think).

The course was open to everyone so all the brothers and sisters could participate. Participants included both scholars and workers. Usually, there were about 50 students in all classes and they received very useful instruction.

The pastoral training was normally condensed and delivered over two weekends. They started on Friday evening and continued through Saturday. Many brothers were very willing to participate. They were required to attend the lectures, complete the homework and hand in the reports. Those who completed the course received a certificate. Some brothers even stayed longer in Israel to complete the courses before returning home.

They came to the course, opening the Bible, listening to the lectures attentively, writing notes, asking questions, and participating in discussions. After the class, they dined together with more discussion and needed to do homework at home. We thank the Lord for these people and trust what they learned will be applied.

Learning to Manage the Church

[Co-Workers' Training]

After believing in the Lord, the brothers and sisters who were willing to serve in the church were given training and then they were assigned to different positions to serve.

We believed that it was important to assign people into different positions, including chairperson for a worship service, song leader, counsellor, financial controller, computer operator, presentation developer, church record keeper, prayer coordinator, library manager, annual plan and budget controller, evangelism planner, caring coordinator, Bible teacher, welcoming coordinator, follow-up coordinator, chairperson of meetings, holiday activities planner, and equipment operator.

The church is an organic community so no two churches have the same ministry structure. The church structure depends on the size, manpower, resources, and the spiritual maturity of the co-workers. All these factors should be considered in establishing the ministry structure.

The church needs a basic handbook to guide the co-workers in their work

so that when the worker in a position is changed, the new person knows their responsibilities.

We believed that training should not only be catered towards finding a person to fill a particular role. But positions can also be created according to the individual gifts. The duty of the pastor is to help brothers and sisters to discover and use their spiritual gifts, so that they can serve the church with their best. The spiritual gifts of the co-workers are gifts that our heavenly Father gives to the church.

The First Co-Workers Committee

After providing basic training, Jonathan established the first Co-workers Committee. It met monthly and discussed special needs. Together, we drafted the church's constitution and a membership system so that the co-workers could operate accordingly.

Time passed year after year. New members replaced the old and new coworkers replaced the old co-workers. After we left Israel, the church had no fulltime pastor. Yet the co-workers who loved the church continued to sacrifice their time and worked hard so that the church continued to operate.

Learn to Preach the Gospel

[What is the Gospel?]

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16)

[Why Do We Need to Preach the Gospel?]

It is the command of Jesus.

"And he said to them, Go into all the world and proclaim the gospel to the whole creation." (Mark 16:15)

It is the responsibility of Christians.

Paul says, "For if I preach the gospel, that gives me no ground for boasting. For necessity is laid upon me. Woe to me if I do not preach the gospel!" (1 Corinthians 9:16)

[To Whom is the Gospel Preached?]

We preach to the people we know; to family, neighbours, colleagues, and to



people we do not know because they are all created by God and loved by God.

"(The Lord)…not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance." (2 Peter 3:9)

[How to Preach the Gospel?]

We need to learn to preach the gospel using the Bible. We should be ready at all times to give a 5-minute testimony. We need to learn how to use various gospel tools, such as gospel tracts (which include The Wordless Book, The Three Blessings, The Four Spiritual Laws, The Five Mysteries, The Gospel Bridge), gospel magazines and periodicals, and the internet. Gospel books can be given to more receptive seekers, such as Knowing the Truth and Songs of a Wanderer. We need to learn how to lead a gospel Bible study. Different tools can be used for different persons.

Paul says, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ." (Colossians 1:28)

[Important Points on Evangelism]

We need to believe in the power of the gospel.

Paul says, "For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16)

We need to believe that after a Christian preaches the gospel, the Holy Spirit will work in the heart of man, leading the hearer to believe, so that he will grow in Christ and later become a future gospel preacher. This is not based on human eloquence or ability but is entirely the work of the Holy Spirit.

Preaching the gospel is to convert people for the Lord, to bear the eternal fruit for the Lord.

"You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you that you should go and bear fruit and that your fruit should abide." (John 15:16)

Preaching the gospel requires a sense of urgency and debt.

Paul says, "I am under obligation both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to the wise and to the foolish." (Romans 1:14)

It is good to preach the gospel using words and various other tools but it is more important to testify by the way we live. By living the lifestyle of a Christian, everyone will see that you are a disciple of Christ. "Having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame." (1 Peter 3:16)

[Learn to Spread the Gospel Nearby]

This includes personal evangelism, family evangelism, church gospel meetings, holiday evangelism, and community evangelism.

"And he did not permit him but said to him (the man who was freed from demon possession), Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you." (Mark 5:19)

[Learn to Spread the Gospel to Far Away]

This includes printed material evangelism and internet evangelism. We can also use prayer and financial support for mission activities of churches and mission agencies, supporting both individuals and organizations. We can also promote missions, short-term missions work, or long-term missions work.

Jesus commands His disciples: "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

【First Annual Missions Conference and the Dedicators Fellowship】

We experienced different stages in the church: preaching the gospel, gathering Christian brothers and sisters, establishing the church, teaching the Bible, holding baptisms, training disciples, writing the church constitution, holding weekly meetings, and establishing the Dedicators Fellowship. Now was the time to teach missions and to inspire the brothers and sisters to have a vision for the harvest field like Christ. This was something that could not wait.

One year after the church was founded, the first missions conference was organized. During the conference, a total of 37 brothers responded to the call of the speaker and were willing to dedicate their lives to serve Christ. As a result, the Dedicators Fellowship was formed. We met on the first Friday of each month. In the meeting, Jonathan explained the Biblical teaching on missions, and introduced the needs of local and foreign missions. Sometimes, missions workers were invited to share their testimonies to motivate the fellowship members so that they would keep their commitment to be instruments for the Lord.

Only with proper understanding of evangelism can the enthusiasm of



evangelism be sustained. After discipleship training, one needs to have an opportunity to practice serving. The ultimate result of serving the Lord is to be fishers of men. The new people will be trained as disciples, forming an endless cycle. "The Way of Mission" was taught at this stage.

Summary

Those who want to swim must get into the water; those who want to play the piano must practice the piano. After learning to preach, one must have an opportunity to preach from the pulpit. After learning about church management, one must have the opportunity to manage the church. After understanding the importance of missions, one must get involved in the work of missions. While the Tel Aviv Church was not a big church, brothers and sisters were taught how to serve and given opportunities to practice serving.

Long after there was no full time pastor and no more short-term missions teams, the brothers and sisters followed the Bible, prayed for the Lord to speak to them, and learned the ways to lead Bible studies based on Biblical principles.

(6) Community Care (Acts 2:47)

The early church gained "favour with all the people". Social concern is an indispensable function of the church and is the responsibility of all Christians. Activities like singing hymns, praying, reading the Bible, associating with other believers, and communicating with God may be enjoyable but are only aimed at believers. A church must have a mission towards sharing the gospel with non-believers as well. A culture of cultivating preachers and missions workers is a great achievement for the church. If the church does not do something beneficial to the community, it will have no influence on the society and the society will neglect the existence of the church.

The success of a church depends not only on an increase in its congregation, but also on how it influences society. When believers in the church see the needs of people outside the church, they ought to try to bring the gospel to them. In Israel, some Chinese people become Israeli citizens because they made unique contributions to Israel.

Taking into consideration the differences in language, education, identity, length of time in the country, and environment, migrant workers were not able to participate in certain local community activities. However, the Bible teaches

that Christians need to be salt and light of the world. The least that the migrant workers could do was to live a holy life for others to see the difference between them and non-believers. For example, they can work with due diligence, not evade proper fares, be law-abiding, maintain a clean environment, be friendly and peaceful with migrant workers of other nationalities, and be faithful in all matters.

Chinese migrant workers in Israel generally gave a very good impression. They did not mind working overtime if there was income. They were diligent, did not get involved in disputes, and had a good reputation. When Israeli people see Chinese, they may not speak much Chinese but many have learn to greet the Chinese with "Ni hao" (How are you?). When Chinese people are mentioned, most of them will give a thumbs up.

We would sometimes bring co-workers to attend multicultural church events, with nationalities including Arabs, Jews, and Russians. Most of the co-workers did not understand much of the proceedings, even after translation, but it gave them an opportunity to experience the atmosphere of being one family in Christ. In the summer, Christians speaking different languages would have meetings in the park; we would bring Chinese Christians to attend. It is important for anyone staying in Israel to associate not only with their compatriots but also with people from other ethnic groups in order to understand the overall environment of Israel.

Sometimes, we would invite an Arab, Jewish, or Russian pastor to preach in the church and introduce their work in order to give our brothers and sisters an opportunity to understand them better. We encouraged the church to give donations to support their work. One time, a Jewish pastor, not expecting a donation, said tearfully, "I know you all work very hard and making money is not easy. Since you come to our country, we should help you. Yet you help us instead." To have the opportunity to support cross-cultural gospel work in Israel is the grace of God for the Chinese church in Israel.

5. Building a Scholars' Church

In Israel, we often referred to Chinese scholars studying at the Weizmann institute as a group of modern "wise men from the east" (as Weizmann sounds like "wise men"). They came to Israel to study. Answering the call of the Holy



Spirit, they believed in the Lord and became children of God. In response to a vision from the Lord, a scholars' church was established.

Below is a testimony from a family member of a scholar at the Weizmann Institute of Science in Israel. It is a brief description of the establishment of a scholar's church in Israel.

The Lord Prepares Us to Worship and Serve Him

Matthew chapter 2 records how the Lord Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Israel 2,000 years ago and how a few wise men came from the east to worship Him. Today, a group of ambitious Chinese students and scholars travel abroad. Some of these come to work and study in Israel and become the modern wise men from the east. My husband is one of them.

The Weizmann Institute of Science is located in the city of Rehovot, 20 km south of Tel Aviv.

Genesis 26:22 talks about this place: "And he (Isaac) moved from there and dug another well, and they did not quarrel over it. So he called its name Rehoboth, saying, 'For now the Lord has made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land.'"

The Bible describes astrologers from the east coming to seek the baby Jesus. They were called "wise men" from the east. As Weizmann sounds like "wise men", so all Chinese scholars who came to Weizmann are called Israel's wise men from the east.

About half of the 300 Chinese students in Israel live in Rehovot and study or research in the Weizmann Institute. Based on the results of scientific research, the Weizmann Institute ranks as one of the top research organizations in the world. Rehovot is located south of Tel Aviv. The name of the Weizmann Institute was named after Chaim Weizmann, the first president of Israel after the founding of the nation.

There are also Chinese scholars in the Volcani Center (the Faculty of Agriculture of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem) and in the Kaplan Medical Center. The team of Chinese scholars is a powerful scientific research team. Our research areas include chemistry, life sciences, such as brain research and cancer research, and nuclear physics.

Our youth contributes to our vibrancy and thirst for success. Our education in materialism made us regard science as the ultimate answer. But

one question puzzles us: Is there a God? If there is, please show yourself to us. We regard Christianity as a western religion so we tightly lock our heart from it. We do not know what the gospel is. Since we were born, we have never known any pastors. How long and difficult is the spiritual journey to communicate with God!

[Through Gathering Us to Building His Church]

How could we imagine that we would receive a gift that is better than academic degrees? The gift was the forgiveness of sins, becoming children of God and receiving eternal life. In the Holy Land, we serve with joy. We are willing to be vessels that God will use to spread the good gospel.

Two months after Pastor and Mrs. Teo arrived in Israel, Elder Kien Wong brought them to the Clore House, the residence of the Weizmann Institute. Here, Pastor Teo, speaking the wonderful words of the Lord with a Christ-like mildness, suddenly opened the hearts of scholars and their families. Like the first chapter of a reborn life, we sang the first hymn, opened the Bible for the first time, and prayed our first prayer.

Under the leadership of the pastor and his wife, we began a biweekly Bible study. In the basement hall of the student dormitory, in the piano room, in the students' residence, under the blue sky and on the green grass of Rehovot, many of us hungrily followed the path of the Lord, carefully guided by the love of the pastor and his wife.

In the first 6 months after the church was established, aided by the testimonies and messages from the brothers and sisters of the short-term missions team, 15-20 seekers professed to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord of their lives.

Objective necessity increased our need to find a meeting place for the church. Pastor and Mrs. Teo eventually found a house in the residential area about 10-minute walk from the institute. We started meeting in April 2000. The pastor's family is much loved by our brothers and sisters. Their two children studied in Germany and their family could only be together a few times every year during the school holidays.

After having this convenient place to meet, our biweekly meeting became a weekly meeting. Many migrant workers also joined in. Mrs. Teo was so warm and thoughtful that she personally prepared a lot of food for us after the worship service.



We were in a real home! This house became our activity centre for our spiritual life. We were also concerned about the needs of scholars' children. Through Bible stories and testimonies of Christian parents' words and deeds, we planted in their young minds seeds of the Lord's love.

[Through Touring the Holy Land to Letting Us Know More about the Bible]

We explored the truth and reliability of the Bible through many Holy Land antiquity tours, combined with Bible readings. The Nazareth tour brought us back to the era of the Lord Jesus' life, helping us to understand the background and truth of the parables. It was great fun when we put on first century costumes to take photos.

The Megiddo Plain tour was also highly beneficial. Over 20 layers of soil provided information about more than 20 periods of human cultural history. The Bible prophesied that the final war would be fought on this plain that lay before our eyes. How horrific was this thought! In addition, we also travelled to Jerusalem, Galilee, and Caesarea.

[Through Changing Lives to Healing Us]

We remember so many sleepless nights when we were deeply troubled. We remember so many heated debates when we explained in length our viewpoints to our compatriots. We also remember so many heartfelt conversations when we talked candidly with the pastor and his wife. All these made us truly understand that the God we believe in is a true and living God, a God who answers prayers.

How great is the work of the Holy Spirit! So many proud hearts eventually were humbled. Countless brothers and sisters decided to believe in the Lord; they were willing to repent, and accept Jesus as their personal Saviour and Lord of their lives. We had New Life, New Living, Discipleship and Pastoral training. Like our brothers, the migrant workers, we have turned a new chapter in our spiritual life.

On May 19, 2001, the Rehovot Faith-Hope-Love Chinese Alliance Church was established. The 5 co-workers had only been believers for from 2 to 4 years. Yet by God's grace and the personal guidance of the pastor and his wife, we carried the responsibilities of church ministry, beginning to serve and walk through the next step in training.

We learned to lead various gatherings of the church and to participate in the management of the church. We learned to care for and build up each other. We learned to preach the gospel to non-believers. On February 12, 2002, during the Spring Festival gospel celebration, we joined with brothers and sisters from North America and some migrant workers in a choir, singing hymns to spread the gospel. Dear Heavenly Father, in your house, how good and pleasant it is when brothers and sisters dwell in peace and work in unity! How sweet it is!

Listen! One after one, overjoyed phone calls from overseas came. Look! One after one, emotional faxes and emails arrived. Many of our brothers and sisters who went to Canada and the United States were baptized in the local churches. They continued to follow the Lord and preach the gospel to their relatives from China.

We left our homeland and studied in a foreign land. Was it by chance? No! It was God's plan for each of us. God guided thousands of Chinese scholars to many places in the world. When we were learning technology and skills, we also learned about Jesus Christ, the Lord of our lives. Did we not know that our advance in skills could be moulded into a vessel that the Lord could use in the future?

In addition to benefiting the human society, we need to spread the gospel to people around us: our relatives, our friends, millions of our compatriots, and the world to the ends of the earth. How deep is God's mind! How perfect is God's plan!

Thanks to the many short-term missions teams. Your professional knowledge and spiritual teachings expanded our horizons.

Listen! The Lord of Galilee is still calling today! "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men." (Matthew 4:19)

Dear friends, did you hear that? Please come and follow Him! We can worship and serve Him together. May the rich grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be poured out fully on you. All glory and praise to our Lord!

The scholars' church at Rehovot stopped gathering with our departure in 2004, due to the decreasing number of scholars. In Israel, foreign students and scholars now join university fellowships, local Chinese gatherings, or local churches of other language groups.



6. Summary of the Chapter

The church did not have many welcoming songs. I wrote a light-hearted welcoming song in Chinese, set to a Chinese tune. The brothers and sisters in the Tel Aviv Church still sing it today.

Welcome, welcome, friends, to God's big family;
Here is light, here is love, God's love, human love.
Hope you enjoy the fellowship here, hope you find the Truth here,
Welcome, welcome, friends, to God's big family,

When Jesus was on the cross, His arms were open wide. The church is the place where people are welcome at any time.

"The Spirit and the Bride say, 'Come.' And let the one who hears say, 'Come.' And let the one who is thirsty come; let the one who desires take the water of life without price." (Revelation 22:17)





CHAPTER FOUR

RICH AND COLOURFUL SHORT-TERM MISSIONS

Preface

As increasing numbers of Chinese migrant workers and scholars believed in the Lord, we needed to follow up with them to help their spiritual growth. While we still spent time reaching out to non-believers, we also spent considerable effort training believers to be disciples so that they could be equipped as coworkers and spiritual leaders. As the need was so great and there was so much work, we certainly could not accomplish the whole job; we needed support and help from others. God continuously guided many short-term missions teams to come to join in sowing the seed and harvesting.

We would like to thank everyone who came for short-term missions. Most had to sacrifice two weeks of vacation to come to Israel. Such commitments are not easy. Being of the same mind as Jesus Christ, they preached the gospel, testified, and brought stray sheep back to the Saviour's fold. All these short-term missions teams from different parts of the world were God's grace to the mission field.

The short-term missions teams helped with the missions work, experienced the treasure of serving together, the joy of leading people back to Christ, the reality of working in the mission field and they grew in their understanding of the mercy of the Lord and the power of the gospel.

1. Three questions for the Short-term missions Teams

The following are some notes written by a few brothers and sisters who came to Israel with short-term missions teams. These notes provide a good description of their work.

On the day after our short-term missions team arrived in Israel, we arrived at the home of Pastor Teo. We met for our first group devotional time before our work. Pastor Teo used Judges 18:3 when sharing about three questions for us: "Who brought you here? What are you doing here? What will you get here?"

(a) Who Brought You Here?

The following was what Pastor Teo said.

"When I was pastoring a church, I felt that the church was like a family and church life was a very good life. The few disciples who saw the

transfiguration felt the same. They felt it was great on the mountain but Jesus led them back down the mountain. He led them to serve the crowd who were in need as they must not be satisfied with their good life on the mountain; they needed to share the good news with others. God opened the way and called me to serve in this place. The need was greater than in the church where I was a pastor. I followed because I knew it was God who led me here.

Every short-term missions member has to decide what motivates you to come here. Ask yourself. Did I come because this is a place of spiritual need? Is it because our church has a short-term missions team every year so I came to be a member of the team? Is it because our children have never experienced life in a poor place so I am bringing my children here? Or have I joined because I don't know what to do with my vacation time? All these can be your reason to join a short-term missions team.

More importantly, pray and ask God. As needs are found everywhere, which people group should I serve? How do I serve? Where should I go? When should I go? Pray and work on the answer. Ask God to let you know and to open the way for you. Most importantly, you need to know that it is God who is leading you to go, not someone else's suggestion, or because you have other motives.

(b) What Are You Doing Here?

At the Tel Aviv Church, we sang popular Chinese songs during festivals, such as Clouds at My Hometown or Moon of the Mid-Autumn Festival. We screened the songs first. Some might object if these were sung in a North American church, but on the mission field, those people who came to church for the first time might have found hymns very boring because they don't know them. They will sing loudly when they hear songs that they know.

When they sing happily, they smile and their closed hearts begin to open. Later, when you talk about spiritual things and sing church hymns, they will listen to you because you first listened to them. Communication is a two-way street.

Short-term missions teams need be prepared with the teaching materials they will use, but missions is not just teaching the prepared materials from beginning to end. Every place has its own unique history, culture, customs,



religious view, and spiritual difficulties.

The problems and matters of concern in your own country may not be the same as problems and matters of concern here. Two keywords are sensitivity and flexibility. Look for opportunities to talk to local missions workers, believers, and non-believers; then look to the Holy Spirit for wisdom to teach you to say the right words and to help them. What do short-term missions teams do on the mission field? Pray before you go and pray while you are working. Always ask for the Lord's direction. Help the people on the mission field according to their actual needs. Otherwise, you could damage the work."

(c) What Will You Get Here?

Pastor Teo said, "We have our sacrifices. In this unfamiliar place, we sometimes feel lonely. Our children study in a far-away place and we miss them...." Pastor Teo was sobbing with tears in his eyes. After a moment of silence, he continued, "What we get is that people turn to Jesus." Here, his face showed uncontrollable excitement and joy.

He went on to say, "For you short-term missions members, you have to sacrifice but you also receive. You give up your time, the cost of your travelling expenses, and your love. You bring the gospel to the mission field. You work with brothers and sisters, and you help the missions workers. You receive the thanks from the missions workers and the brothers and sisters on the mission field. Moreover, God is pleased with you."

Pastor Teo's sharing greatly motivated the brothers and sisters on the short-term missions team. The three questions that Pastor Teo asked hit their hearts heavily, like a drum. Certainly, if short-term missions members have the right answers for the three questions, their work will have clear objectives and motives. They will serve joyfully and effectively and will not deviate.

What are the required qualifications for missions work? Pastor Teo said, "Education, missions theories, and experience are all important but a fervent heart for preaching the gospel is more important." Again, who sent the short-term missions team to Israel? What should we do here? What do we want to get from this experience? Apparently, we have the answers. This devotion reminded us of our motives and objectives for coming to Israel. It also reminded us to seize the time and this opportunity to preach the gospel.

IOVE BEYOND HORIZON

The Chinese have a saying, "It is happy to have friends from afar." We were happy when pastors and short-term missions teams came to visit.

In 1998, the first year of our stay in Israel, there were short-term missions teams from the US, Canada, Singapore, and Hong Kong; a total of 40 people. They came to sow the seed and reap the harvest with us. Sometimes, it was just one person, sometimes two or more. They came for one week, two weeks, a month, and sometimes even longer.

The ministry in Israel was very exciting. On one hand, they were able to help the ministry. On the other hand, short-term missions teams were also able to tour Israel.

During the 6 years we were in Israel, we received many short-term missions teams. Many who came for short-term missions later became full-time pastors; some became missions workers.

Short-term mission teams that came often inquired about the weather, whether it was safe, and would want to know about the life in Israel. We would respond to all their questions, trying to calm their worries. The teams would submit applications by email with their conversion experience, ministry experience, and a recommendation from their pastor. They would also provide information about their expertise in order for us to decide on seminars they could give, including subjects on parenting, health care, daily life, evangelism, discipleship training, and music.

Short-term missions teams were very helpful on baptismal trips. Most short-term missions members were pastors or Christians experienced in ministry and were very familiar with the Bible. We only needed to tell them the Biblical events that happened at each location and they would be able to talk about the Bible passages and teachings.

We are very grateful to every brother and sister that visited as part of a short-term missions teams. When they arrived, our home was transformed into a gospel inn. We prepared rooms and cooked meals. Jonathan would lead morning devotions, arrange transportation, events and an evening review. After work, Jonathan also took them to tour Jerusalem, Galilee, and other Biblical attractions.

The following is a list, not at all exhaustive, of people who came on short-term missions.

Elder and Mrs. Leong Yin Chu, from Singapore, stayed with us for 6 months. He was 72 years old when they came. Elder Leong led Bible studies at the church and at construction sites. Together, they led many people to Christ and were loved by the brothers. The couple also visited many workers after their return to China.

Rev. Abraham Lu came many times. He was very cheerful, with a good sense of humour. His wife was a good singer and Rev. Lu played the flute well. Their performances were loved by many.

Teacher Bian Yunbo, a renowned preacher from China, also came. He was the speaker for the 2002 Gospel Meeting when 2,200 people attended. He told us a story. Dozens of years ago when he was young, he dreamt about being in Israel where a young brother took him on a tour of the country. At that time, he lived in China and felt that Israel was too far away and impossible to reach. When he came with his wife to Israel, Jonathan took them on a tour of Jerusalem. He said to Jonathan, "I now realize that the young brother in my dream was you!"

Here is another testimony from a short-term missions member:

The love, care and sacrifice of the pastor are just like that of a parent. He sacrifices himself for his sheep. He was called here to counsel, persuade, teach, and pray. He is to help them at any time of the day. In this special environment, the pastor needs God's wisdom to solve the many challenges he encounters.

When the pastor meets migrant workers here, he needs to use unique and ingenious ways to preach the gospel according to their need. Unless one understands God's mercy for the loss, it is difficult to understand how someone would leave the comfortable and safe life in North America to come to Israel to work 7 days a week and 24 hours a day in this difficult environment.

During these two weeks of short-term missions, I personally witnessed that the hearts of the people here are ready. They are very responsive to the gospel. The hard life and pressures from the environment force the migrant workers to reflect on the meaning of life. Many come to the conclusion that

money is not everything. When the gospel message is preached and when the invitation is given, many people accepted Jesus Christ as their Saviour and Lord of life.

After they believe in the Lord, their lives are changed. They are committed and very enthusiastic about spiritual matters and are willing to serve. During the meetings, at the end of every prayer, the whole audience responded loudly and with certainty, "Amen!" On hearing that, I always feel blessed anew.

Up the Mountain and Down to the Sea: A Tour of 10 Big Buses

[Floating in the Dead Sea]

Baptismal services in the Jordan River and the subsequent Holy Land tours were a unique characteristic of the church in Israel. At its peak, the service and tour required 10 coach buses, carrying 540 people from various locations. This particular outing included 20 baptismal candidates, 3 of which were scholars. After the baptism, we travelled to the Dead Sea and a historical site called Masada.

One participant said he was worried when he saw 540 people getting into the sea and hoped that there would not be any accidents. One brother drifted quite far from the shore, coming back half an hour late. One of the buses broke down on the return trip. Fortunately, a few minutes later, an empty bus passed by and its driver agreed to drive the passengers back to the meeting points. We thank the Lord that there were no accidents during the many years of touring.

[Snake up the Mountain, the Chinese People Captured Masada]

The history of Masada is a tragic story. In AD 73, 960 Jews were under siege by the Romans in these hills. On the eve of the fall of the stronghold, the people decided not to surrender and all committed suicide. Their determination to remain free, along with their spirit of loyalty to their nation became legend.

The ruins that remain at Masada tell the story of life during the siege. You can feel a sense of awe while wandering among these hills. The Chinese migrant workers climbed ramp built by the ancient Romans when they invaded Masada. As we zig-zagged up the slopes, some commented that this time it was the conquest of Masada by the Chinese. How interesting!



Men Dressed Like Women, Christmas at Bethlehem

We organized the first Christmas celebration for the church in Bethlehem. Brothers and sisters from the Haifa Church prepared a delicious lunch. We started early in the morning with three buses picking people up from different locations. In total there were 165 people.

There were 15 brothers baptized that time. In the morning, we visited the Mount of Olives at Jerusalem, the Garden of Gethsemane, and the empty tomb of Jesus. In the afternoon, we visited the Bethlehem Church of the Nativity and the Shepherd's Field.

Two thousand years ago, the angels proclaimed the good news to the shepherds in this wilderness. That day, we held Christmas service by candlelight, sang Christmas carols and performed a skit about Lord Jesus' birth directed by Brother Zhang from the US. Since all the migrant workers were brothers, one brother had to dress like a woman to take on the role of Mary. The actors used bed sheets and towels to dress themselves as people of ancient times.

What an extraordinary celebration it was!

Two-thirds of the 165 participants were non-believers. Visiting the places of Jesus' birth, death, burial, resurrection, and the second coming helped many to confirm their faith and encouraged brothers and sisters to continue the mission of preaching the gospel.

Thousand Star Hotel tour (In the Wilderness of Judea)

From a human perspective, migrant workers and scholars are very different people. However, in Christ, all can associate in harmony. At the Holy Communion table, all are sinners in need of the salvation of Jesus Christ.

The migrant workers admired the scholars, saying that the questions they asked were very profound. The Christian scholars admired the Christian migrant workers, saying that their prayers were very powerful. Despite the distance between the Tel Aviv Church of migrant workers and the Rehovot Church of scholars, we tried to bring the two groups together. When there were special speakers at the Tel Aviv Church, the scholars would come to join in. Those workers who lived close to Rehovot would sometimes attend the scholars' church.

People live together in cities and towns. A large group of trees are referred to as woods. The Bible talks about wilderness. The Israelites lived in the wilderness

for 40 years. Jesus was tempted in the wilderness. What is the wilderness? The wilderness is not necessarily a desert; it is the large empty tract of land in the wild, without the footprint of humankind. How this land may be developed in the future is not known, but at least for the present, it is a bare place not suitable for human habitation.

Bedouins nomadic Arabs, live in tents in the wilderness. Some Bedouins run tours for people who want to experience what it is like to live with Bedouins and to understand Bedouin life. We felt that because Bedouins are part of the landscape of Israel, it would be good to experience this lifestyle. We invited some migrant workers and scholars to participate the tour of the "Thousand Star Hotel Tour" with us.

Driving to the destination felt very different from the normal tours. On arrival, they faced an endless uninhabited land. At first they thought there was nothing to see or to enjoy. Then came a surprise. The place where they would stay overnight was a giant tent that could accommodate 100 people, with pillows and sheets but no partitions; they would be sleeping on a mat on the ground.

In the afternoon, when it was less sunny, the migrant workers and the scholars gathered to ride on camels and donkeys, led by Bedouins. They travelled in single file across the wilderness, just like Chinese merchants in a camel caravan on the Silk Road. Most of us had never see camels or donkeys up close. We had great fun and took many photos of each other.

At dinner, we are food and drank coffee prepared by the Bedouins. Through translation, we listened to an old man talking about Bedouin culture and customs. At night, we gathered in a circle around a large campfire, singing, playing games, and listening to the gospel message. Some Christian brothers and sisters shared their life experiences.

That night under the stars was extremely quiet. In that ambience, we felt an unspeakable sense of mystery. There were no buildings or lights nearby making the night sky very clear. The stars looked particularly bright. There seemed to be more stars than usual and they also seemed very close. We joked happily that this was a "thousand-star hotel" (relative to the common "five-star hotels"). We felt very close to nature and very close to the Creator. No wonder the ancient monks chose to live in the wilderness. When the noise of the world was distant, we faced our own heart, and we faced our God.



The accommodations made for a comfortable stay, providing basic amenities like toilets. That trip was a special experience, appreciated by all participants. Someone even asked afterwards, "When will we come back again?"

Early the next morning, we travelled to a nearby mountain where we saw the sun rising over the Masada hills. We shared a morning devotion together in the fresh air. After that, we travelled to a place where one never tires of visiting: the Dead Sea!

National Day Barbecue Evangelism

The following is written by a sister from a short-term missions team:

Israel's National Day is in May when the whole country celebrates. On this day, Jewish families like to travel for recreation and a barbecue at the seashore. They also like to watch the air show by the Israeli Air Force. This is also the day when our church holds the annual Gospel Barbecue Day.

At 9 a.m., the worker brothers took a 20-minute walk from the church to a flat lawn under the tree shade by the sea. Based on the division of labour drawn up by the church committee, some opened 4 large canvases on the lawn (each canvas could sit more than 30 people). Some set up the barbecue stand, placing the marinated skewers on the barbecue stand and some set up the audio equipment on the ground. All of them were served quickly and efficiently.

This year's church barbecue gospel meeting was joined by a 4-person short-term missions team from Canada. The combination of the short-term missions team and church co-workers brought a fuller, more colourful, and more effective evangelistic outreach. The short-term missions team members led some group games including the "three-legged race" and "pass the flower on drums". We sang some songs and Sister Angie from the short-term missions team shared a moving testimony and a Bible story. Elder Lan shared his testimony and Pastor Chen gave a gospel message.

Rather interestingly, during the pastor's message, the air show started. Three Israeli fighter planes flew over side-by-side, as though they were helping celebrate the church's Gospel Barbecue Day.

On that day, there were more than 150 participants. Many of them were non-believing migrant workers. Some were female domestic workers and several were students from the Tel Aviv University. After the testimonies

and the message, the short-term missions members invited people to accept salvation and 18 people raised their hands to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour. This Barbecue Day was a very fruitful day!

The most touching part of the event was the work of the church coworkers who demonstrated by their attitude that they were trying their best to serve God. They did not hesitate to buy good quality meat and to sweat over the grilling to cook the food. They served the cooked skewers to the guests and ate only after everyone else had been served.

The choir members in white shirts joined with the sisters from the shortterm missions team in leading the songs. Those responsible for follow up paid close attention to those guests who raised their hands, indicating their intention to accept Christ. They carefully noted down the names and contact information of the new believers so that the church could follow up with them later.

The "pass the flower on drums" event attracted some local Israeli people who joined in the game. Two female Jewish singers and a male Jewish dancer performed, causing great jubilation from the audience. A pretty female German student sang the Israeli national anthem in Hebrew bringing the event to its climax! It was already 3 p.m. when the event was finished. Then everyone joined together to clean up.

A Colourful Red Sea Tour

For a 6-person short-term missions team from a Toronto church, one of the highlights was a gospel tour to the Red Sea. The following is a description of that tour written by one of the sisters.

[Unceasing Prayers]

Jesus taught the disciples to pray: "Hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come; Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." (Matthew 6:10) In order for people of this world to hallow the Lord's name, to understand and to obey Him, someone must tell them the Good News. Spreading the gospel and doing missions work means engaging in spiritual warfare. Only God can capture the human heart. Therefore, before going on a short-term missions team trip, all participants should pray and have devotions together, in order that the team members understand the objectives and aims of the missions trip and are united in heart for the mission before



them.

Prayer is the driving force behind the short-term missions. Throughout the trip, we met every morning for prayer and devotions, and every evening for a review or evaluation of the day, for sharing, and for prayer. These provided the spiritual support for the whole team. Even prayer in the car before each trip is very important and essential for spiritual preparation of the team.

[On the Bus]

The most exciting, rich and colourful experience was a 3-day gospel tour. The theme of the trip was "We become one family", meaning we were to unite as one family in Jesus.

A large group of 160 people participated in this unforgettable 3-day tour. We travelled for 5 hours to reach the Red Sea. Pastor and Mrs. Teo and a few short-term missions members were the tour guides on each of the 3 buses. They were very unique tour guides. They led in singing praise songs and Chinese folk songs, played gospel videos, introduced the tour attractions, led games, shared the gospel message, held a Bible knowledge quiz, shared testimonies, made conversion calls, and even performed a baptismal ceremony on the way.

The 5-hour trip from Tel Aviv to the Red Sea provided a time of continuous evangelism which led some people to accept the Lord on the bus and some people indicate their willingness to be baptized the next time.

[Group Devotion and Worship]

During the trip, we had group devotions, a Saturday worship service on two mornings, a "we become one family" celebration, and a "talent show" on the two evenings. Every night before bedtime, we also had a time for group sharing and a co-workers' evaluation.

During one of the group devotions, Pastor Yu shared on Psalm 23. He used God's caring for His sheep as a metaphor of life, leading the audience to resonate with his message, to meditate on God's Word with a calm spirit, and accepting God's Word with an open heart.

In the Saturday morning worship. Pastor Yu explained the unity of the church, encouraging everyone to accept each other, to appreciate each other, and to serve the church humbly by using God's spiritual gifts given to each

IOVE BEYOND HORIZON One fascinating point was that group devotion and Saturday worship were held before breakfast, so everyone had to rise very early. Likewise, in the evening, the group sharing was held after the evening celebration, so everyone had to stay up rather late. This became quite a test for all the participants who were expecting an easy time on the tour. Nevertheless, everyone was very excited and participated positively.

[Talent Show]

For the talent show, each group selected a Bible story by a draw. The group leader would direct the group members to perform the events in the story. Without a detailed script, the participants had to use their imagination. This event tested everyone's wits and communication skills, as well as their spirit of cooperation, as one component in scoring was related to the number of participating members.

Some of the migrant workers were not great speakers or great actors, with neither an outstanding voice nor appearance. Yet they tried their best to outperform other actors by using much of their free time to rehearse, employing unusual acting methods, thus causing bursts of laughter. As we were getting to know each other better, we enjoyed the warmth and happiness of being in one family. One very exciting thing happened when one of the groups performed "The Return of the Prodigal Son". The person who acted as the prodigal son was a non-believer, but he became a believer after his performance.

[Touring the Red Sea]

Aside from the indoor gatherings, Pastor Teo arranged for the whole group to visit Eilat and the Red Sea. Eilat is at the southernmost tip of Israel. The city is not very large but is the fourth largest city in Israel. The location was close to where Moses led the Israelites across the Red Sea and was also the starting point of Solomon's sea expeditions.

To the south of Eilat is the Red Sea. To the north is a desert. To the east is the Aqaba Bay of Jordan. To the west is the Sinai Peninsula of Egypt. It is the city between Egypt and Jordan. As the seawater temperature is suitable for coral growth, Eilat also has the reputation of being a "coral city". Here, the sun shines all year round; it is one of the greatest tourist destination and

a great spot for diving.

We went to the famous entertainment park, where the admission fee allowed us to play and watch many shows. There was a parrot show, and some dolphins fed by their keepers. In a small cinema, we sat on seats with seatbelts as the movie simulated a wild ride on a boat at sea.

Some of us took a trip by submarine to see the underwater world. Others went to a restaurant located 20 feet below sea level where through the big glass windows they could see divers swimming, surrounded by colourful tropical fish and rare living corals. God's creation is really wonderful. Some brothers bought diamond jewellery for their wives in China, as the diamond processing industry in Israel is world famous.

During these few days, we held meetings together, played together, ate together, shared and prayed together in our bedrooms. All these enhanced our mutual understanding and friendship. This gospel tour allowed the participants to have some physical and mental relief aside from the daily pressure. We learned a lot and were spiritually fed. This trip brought a closer friendship among the pastors, the short-term missions members, the scholars, and the migrant workers.

In Second Timothy 4:2, Paul said, "preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching."

A Brief Description of Sightseeing in Israel by the Short-term missions Team

The short-term missions teams in Israel came to help the church. Then for a few days, Jonathan would take the short-term missions teams to visit Jerusalem, Nazareth, the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan River and other holy places. On the way, he described the places where Jesus travelled and performed miracles, as recorded in the four gospels. This was very beneficial for the short-term missions members. Some members said that these trips were very useful for their teaching the gospels and Acts of the Apostles in the future.

The following is a brief description by another short-term missions team member:

IOVE BEYOND HORIZON

Short-term missions teams go to Israeli gospel frontline and then they travel on the road that Lord Jesus walked. In a way, they experience a "living Bible".

The pastor drove us to Jerusalem. We walked step by step along Via Dolorosa (the Passion Way) in old Jerusalem and remembered how Jesus walked here before he died on the cross. We meditated on how the Lord died for our sins.

In the Garden of Gethsemane, we saw a few olive trees that had been here for a long long time. Here, the Lord prayed for us all night, demonstrating His love for us. In old Jerusalem, a Jewish restaurant owner asked us whether we were afraid coming to Israel. We said, "No, because our Lord is with us." He asked the question because there had been two suicide bombings in that neighbourhood and no foreign tourists had been there for a long time.

Not far from the Al-Aqsa Mosque, we visited the Wailing Wall. The left side was reserved for male believers and the right side for female believers. Three brothers of the short-term missions team wore yamakas and touched the wall to pray. In the hall to the left were devout Jews, many of them with black hats and black suits, reading, and occasionally nodding their heads.

[Nazareth Where Jesus Grew Up]

To fulfil our long last wish, we visited Nazareth, the hometown where the Lord Jesus grew up. From far away, we could already see this city on the hills. After entering the city, we went to a magnificent Church of Annunciation where, according to the Bible, the angel Gabriel announced the news of Jesus' birth to Mary (Luke 1:26-38). On one side was a small church called the Joseph Church with a sign: the site of the carpenter Joseph.

The city was not large and hills were not high. Lord Jesus lived there for 30 years during His childhood and youth.

In the Gospel of Luke we find the record of Jesus' trip to Jerusalem when He was 12 years old. Today, the car trip to Jerusalem takes about one to two hours. In ancient times, it was a difficult trip. We visited the "Nazareth Village", a place showing first-century life in Nazareth. We saw people wearing first-century clothes, riding on donkeys and tending sheep. We took

some photos with them, imagining that we had travelled through time to become people of the first century.

[Remembering the Lord at the Shore of the Sea of Galilee]

On the day we reached the Sea of Galilee, the weather was nice and clear. We could see the Golan Heights across the lake. The scenery was great. The area of the lake was about 50 times the size of Kunming Lake in Beijing.

The lakeside is now a tourist attraction, with swimming pools, yachts and other facilities for tourists to enjoy. We drove along the shore to see the lake scenery. At one spot, we stopped the van, walked to the lake, and dipped our hands into the lake to remember our visit. The lake was calm, but the Holy Spirit reminded me about the time when Jesus walked on the water. Peter asked the Lord to let him walk on water, but he sank when he saw the waves. The Lord reached out and saved him, teaching him to have faith. That scene appeared in my mind.

At the lakeshore was the Church of the Beatitudes where Jesus gave his disciples the Sermon on the Mount. Next, we visited the Church of the Multiplication where the Lord miraculously fed 5,000 people on the grass at the lakeshore. In the church was a mosaic picture of 5 loaves and 2 fish to commemorate this historical event.

[Capernaum]

Finally, we visited Capernaum where Lord Jesus healed many people and cast demons out of others. We saw a plaque that said: House of Peter's Mother-in-Law. There was an old site of a large Jewish synagogue where the pillars and the perimeter of the old synagogue still exist.

[Jordan River]

The Jordan River is the place where many Christians wish to be baptized. There are baptismal facilities that allow several groups of people to have baptism simultaneously. As this is the upper part of the Jordan River, the river is relatively narrow. (The place where the Israelites entered Canaan is in the lower part of the river and is much broader.) People can follow the steps that lead to the middle of the river. The pastor had performed baptism for dozens of people many times in the past. Before baptism, all baptismal candidates were required to finish the "New Life" Bible study classes and a

baptismal class, and to write a conversion testimony.

The pastor acted as the driver, the tour guide, and the teacher explaining the Bible on-site. For example, at the Mount of the Beatitudes, the pastor read Matthew chapter 5, leading us to meditate on Jesus' Sermon on the Mount. When I walked on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, many scenes from the four gospels appeared in my mind. The Bible was no longer just inanimate words.

I remembered the time when I travelled in China, visiting many ancient attractions. An ancient poet wrote: "the bright moon in Qin Dynasty and the ancient gate in Han Dynasty." They composed poems to lament the passing of time. It was the same here. Time has passed and things have changed. Yet, our Lord is the true and living Lord, the unchanging Lord of the past, present and future. In the past, disciples followed Him. Today, after 2,000 years, I am also His disciple. I follow Him just like Peter, John and James. This thought brought thanksgiving to my heart, full of hope and joy.

3. Celebration of the Spring Festival

Chinese people in Israel usually have different types of festivals. There are the Chinese festivals such as the Spring Festival and Mid-Autumn Festival. There are the Jewish festivals such as the Passover, the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the Feast of First Fruit, the Pentecost, the Feast of Trumpets, the Day of Atonement, the Feast of Booths, and the Jewish New Year. There are Christian festivals such as Easter and Christmas. Some of these festivals are holidays while others are not.

Why did the Tel Aviv Church celebrate the Spring Festival every year? One day in Autumn 1998, We took Elder and Mrs. Leong on a 3-hour trip from Tel Aviv to the Golan Heights in the north to visit Chinese migrant workers who worked in the orchards there. We went to a pre-arranged meeting place to meet with a few brothers who worked in the apple orchards.

After sharing God's Word, Jonathan asked them whether they knew any other Chinese workers in the Golan Heights. They said yes but did not know exactly where they were. Jonathan asked them if they would be willing to try and find them. As there were insufficient seats in the van for the group, Jonathan left us behind; they said that they would return soon.

"Soon" turned out to be a long time as the Golan Heights is a large area. Other migrant workers stayed behind to wait with us. Then I heard a migrant worker say that it was the Mid-Autumn Festival that day. So I said that we could celebrate the festival together. Without any prior preparations, I had to use everything I knew to come up with something: singing, quizzing, playing games, and getting the migrant workers to describe how they celebrated the festival in their hometown. A few Christian brothers then shared their testimonies about their difficult life in Israel. We were drinking tea and eating some juicy, and crunchy apples that they had just picked from the trees. With the full moon in the sky, we happily celebrated the Mid-Autumn Festival.

This experience opened my mind to an opportunity. There is a Chinese saying, "With every festival, we remember deeply our relatives." People who travel away from home, especially the migrant workers, could be gathered to celebrate the festivals and they could even decide on the content of the celebration. We believed that it was a great idea. Therefore, starting in 1999, we arranged the annual celebration of the Spring Festival.

Attendance at the celebration increased every year:

1999 – 150 (at the church)

2000 – 350 (at the church, chairs were removed and everyone sat on the floor because there were too many people)

2001 – 500 (at the church, most sat on the floor but some people could not get in and stood in the street outside the church)

2002 – 2,200 (at an indoor stadium that was entirely full, with 1,000 standing outside who could not get in)

2003 - 3,200 (held in two sessions in a hanger)

Some Chinese migrant workers travelled many hours from various parts of Israel to Tel Aviv to celebrate the Spring Festival. Some came from the extreme north near the Lebanese border and others from the extreme south near the Egyptian border.

Spring Festival Gospel Celebration, 2002: "True Blessings"

The following notes were written by the late Mr. Li Enzhi:

In February 2002, the Tel Aviv Church arranged a Spring Festival Gospel Celebration so they recruited some short-term missions teams to help.

IOVE BEYOND HORIZON The celebration was held in Tel Aviv Sports Stadium. This was the first large-scale gospel meeting, four years after the arrival of Pastor and Mrs. Teo. All 2,200 seats in the rented stadium were filled. A large crowd stayed outside, perhaps at least 1,000 people. To comply with security regulations, the security guards locked all the doors. The people outside could only knock loudly on the doors but still could not get in. Pastor Teo said that we had only rented one-third of the stadium based on faith, and would have been grateful to the Lord if there were 1,000 attendees.

With such a large-scale event, the church urgently needed external support from short-term missions teams. At that time, however, there were frequent terrorist attacks in Israel. Before we left for Israel, the three of us and our families all worried about our safety. Thank the Lord that brothers and sisters in our church prayed earnestly for us. The Holy Spirit told us not to worry while serving our Lord. We eventually overcame all difficulties, arrived smoothly in Tel Aviv, and returned home safely.

The high point of this short-term missions was the Spring Festival Gospel Celebration on February 12 (the first day of the Chinese New Year). For the first time in my life, I witnessed such a moving scene as so many people attended and so many became converted believers. I saw with my own eyes the effect of the work of the Holy Spirit. Praise be to the Lord.

After 4 years of evangelistic work, the Lord added believers year by year and we saw a group of Christians trained and willing to serve the Lord. As Pastor Teo saw the yearly increase of attendees at the Spring Festival celebration, he boldly rented a larger place to hold the meeting. People came from Tel Aviv, Rehovot, Beersheba, Jerusalem, and Haifa. Many of them were brothers and sisters but more were new non-believing friends.

The church asked other churches to pray earnestly for them so that the Lord would smooth the way, give them strength to overcome all difficulties, to serve in unity, to receive sufficient financial support, to overcome technical problems, to successfully rent the facilities, to solve transportation and security problems. We thank the Lord for providing everything, and giving us more than what we asked. All the difficulties were solved.

The audio equipment was rented from an audio company, providing excellent sound effects. The equipment was brought in on a large truck and there were two large projection screens. The Israeli workers were very friendly and some migrant workers could converse with them in Hebrew. The decoration was done by the Christian migrant workers. They worked efficiently and the place was transformed into a festive atmosphere. All other work was carried out by 150 brothers and sisters who were divided into 15 work groups.

A joint choir was formed by 80 brothers and sisters from various Chinese churches in Israel. Mrs. Teo was the director. The short-term missions team members from the US could sing and play instruments, including the electronic organ, violin, and guitar, producing beautiful touching music. A brother from the church played the drum and a sister from the church played the Chinese zither. The speaker of the gospel message was Mr. Bian Yunbo. He preached on John 3:16. The message was short but powerful. Through the work of the Holy Spirit, a total of 168 people left their seats, came to the stage, and were willing to accept Christ.

After the gospel message, the celebrations included a choir presentation, a martial arts demonstration, and the writing of Spring Festival signs. The migrant workers and the scholars acted out a short drama composed by themselves. It reflected their life and their conversion to Christianity. The finale was a performance by an ensemble of Chinese and western instruments playing "Real Blessings", with a sister playing the Chinese zither and me playing the Chinese erhu. The joint choir joined the singing of "The Abundant Blessings of Jehovah". Then everyone stood up and loudly sang together to thank and praise the Lord.

When I recall the event, I worried at first that the police would come and try to apprehend illegal workers with expired visas. While we were celebrating, we heard that the police blocked the two entrances to the Roman Street, where they arrested some illegal workers but the people who came to the celebration were not affected. I am ashamed that I worried so much.

This was the first time I witnessed the scene of a fruitful harvest. I saw how the migrant workers who came from afar hungered and thirst for the gospel. I saw that the Lord heard the prayers of brothers and sisters from different places working in unity. I felt how great the power of the Holy

Spirit was.

Then I recalled what happened 8 years ago when Pastor Teo told us that he and Mrs. Teo would be leaving for missions work in Israel. At that time, I was a co-worker in his church. According to my thinking, I was reluctant to let them leave us. As the church had only been established a little over 3 years, there was a lot of work to do and there were many difficulties to overcome.

Now, I witnessed such a large-scale evangelistic event, saw so many compatriots hear the gospel and so many willing to serve the Lord. I believe that God's thoughts are higher than my thoughts and that I am so short-sighted. Through this short-term missions, I witnessed this rare event that truly opened my eyes.

We thank the Lord that He made our church learn the lesson of bearing the responsibilities and serving together when we did not have a pastor. He also allowed me to witness through this gospel meeting how the Holy Spirit gave Pastor and Mrs. Teo faith and wisdom to carry such a big event.

Spring Festival Gospel Celebration, 2003: "Blessings for the Whole Family"

In 2002, the church rented 2,200 seats in the Tel Aviv Sports Stadium. After all the seats were filled, there were still 1,000 disappointed people standing outside, not able to get in. One person said that he had come from the Red Sea after a 5-hour trip. Hearing of this experience, we decided to find a place that could seat up to 4,000 people for the celebration next year.

We went to the stadium inquiring whether we could rent the place for the Spring Festival celebration the next year. The response was that the stadium was already reserved for a basketball match that evening. Jonathan asked them to provide information of alternative venues. We went to see all these places. However, except for the Tel Aviv Stadium, no other place could accommodate that number of people.

There was another possible venue but it was reserved by an Israeli political party for their general conference. Eventually, we found a place near the northern docks of Tel Aviv. It was an old airplane hanger that could seat 2,500 people. We reserved it for a Saturday and began preparations. We planned to stage two identical sessions of the celebration to accommodate attendees.

The place had some offices and was mostly an empty shell. We needed to prepare all the hardware for the meeting. We needed to build a platform, rent audio and lighting equipment, 2,500 folding chairs, powerful projectors, and two giant screens to show song lyrics and the images of stage performers and speakers.

As the date approached, the manager of the venue told Jonathan that another group had rented the place on the night before our meeting. Their party was from 12 midnight to 8 a.m. the next morning. With such scheduling, the preparation work was going to be very tight. By that point, it was too late to change venues so we decided to have our meeting starting at 10 a.m., hoping that we could complete the vast amount of preparation in time. Jonathan then asked the venue manager to provide a room for us to store the rented equipment before the date.

The situation in the Middle East at that time was highly unpredictable. Many people were very nervous as Iraq was threatening to bomb Israel with poison gas. Some people attending the Spring Festival celebration brought gas masks with them. It was a fascinating sight to see people carrying and swinging gas masks around.

The arrangement for that day was that the event would be divided into two parts, one inside the venue and one outside the venue. The part inside the venue included songs, a performance, and a gospel message. The part outside the venue included game stalls following the theme of "Eight Blessings". People waiting outside would play games while they waited to get into the celebration. To be prepared for rain, a large tent was erected outside the venue.

Finally, the day for the Spring Festival celebration arrived! On that day, Jonathan and the co-workers planned to arrive early to make preparations. Surprisingly, when they arrived, the party at the venue had not finished. When our brothers went in to get the equipment, they discovered a party of 3,000 homosexual people. At the end of their party, the place was in complete chaos. The co-workers gathered immediately to pray.

Eventually, the people from the previous party left. The venue was not properly staffed to clean up after this party and would not have been able line up the seats in time for our celebration. Without hesitation and complaint, our brothers started to divide up the work. In two hours' time, we cleaned up the place, built the stage, and lined up the chairs. The venue manager was greatly

appreciative of the help and gave us a discount on the rent.

Transportation is the biggest challenge for a meeting of over 3,000 people. Many attendees did not know how to get there and even worse, because it was a Saturday and there was no public transport on the Sabbath. We had prepared for this problem by arranging for private buses to pick up people from different gathering points. We rented 26 coach buses to collect people from different parts of Israel and to take them back after the celebration. The most important gathering point was the church as most people knew how to get to the church.

Jonathan was directing the preparations at the venue. When the preparation was almost finished, someone called him with another problem: the arrival of the police at the church. The 10 buses sent to pick up people at the church caused such a congestion on the street that the police were called. Fortunately, the bus company manager was present and he explained to the police that the Chinese were celebrating the Spring Festival, resolving the issue. Some Israelis had never seen so many Chinese people in Israel- they even took pictures.

Many brothers and sisters did not have the opportunity to attend the celebration inside the venue, including the short-term missions team members who managed the activities outside the venue. Rev. Daniel Ng. humbly took up the responsibility of managing bus operations. It was a difficult job that involved working all day. He was the right person as he could communicate with the bus drivers in English and had the experience of dealing with emergencies. Unexpectedly, he also needed to talk to the police and communicate with lost bus drivers and lost migrant workers. He said that he was able to deal with so many emergencies only thanks to continuous prayer.

At the venue, many people had arrived. They participated at the game stalls outside the venue. People crowded everywhere, at the game stalls and at the entrances. At the meeting time, the gatekeepers opened the doors and people rushed into the venue. All 2,500 seats were soon filled. In the second session, there were 700 people, for a total of 3,200 attendees that day.

Like the year before, the 2003 celebration began with singing some popular songs, which I led with brothers and sisters from the church. Then the children of the scholars presented some songs. A short skit by scholars, migrant workers and short-term missions team members followed. Next came a martial arts demonstration, a gymnastic dance, and a presentation by an 80-person joint choir directed by Rev. Stanley Hui.

The church encouraged the migrant workers to invite their non-Chinese bosses and colleagues to join our celebration. The planning committee reserved some seats for them with headphones for translation. A Messianic Jewish pastor (who believed in Jesus) told Jonathan that this was the biggest gospel meeting in Israel since the meeting on Pentecost (as recorded in the Bible). We felt humbled, thinking of how wonderful such a gospel meeting was for the Chinese. God blessed and lifted the hearts of these blue-collar workers by giving them the opportunity to hear the gospel and celebrate the Spring Festival in the home country of Jesus.

The meeting progressed smoothly, all because of the work of God. There could have been many big issues. For example, the meeting could have been delayed were it not for everyone who quickly cleaned up the venue and lined up the chairs. The police could have intervened were it not for the presence of the bus company manager who explained why so many buses blocked the street. The bus drivers could have gotten lost and been unable to pick up the attendees. The threat of missile attack and the sounding of warning sirens could have brought chaos. Thousands of attendees trying to escape together would have resulted in serious consequences. The Israeli Ministry of Labour could have come to arrest illegal workers, blocking exists to trap everyone inside. Any of these possibilities could have disrupted the meeting and could have led to unimaginable consequences. But God controlled everything and for that, we give Him thanks.

These two Spring Festival Celebrations in Israel are meetings that cannot be duplicated again. Jonathan and I learned many lessons from the process. For example, we needed to prepare early for important things. After one celebration, we needed to immediately find the location for the celebration the next year.

After we left Israel, the church did not have a full time pastor for over 10 years. In 2010, the church asked Pastor Teo to serve as an advisory pastor. When the church plans for a meeting, Jonathan asks the co-workers to look for a location as early as possible, but there are times the co-workers are inclined to delay this step as it is difficult to estimate how many people will come.

When we organized the two large-scale meetings, we did not have sufficient funds on hand when we signed the contract to rent the venue. We did not know how many people would come. We reserved the place in faith. A Chinese saying says, "We see how much rice we can eat only when we first see how many dishes we have." Spiritual matters are not like this. It is not right to decide on how

much sacred work we can do based on how much money, how many people, and how much resources we have at hand. This will only limit God's work. Sometimes, God accomplishes things based on how much faith we have. Jesus said, "Did I not tell you that if you believed you would see the glory of God?" (John 11:40)

A missions worker has only one pair of hands and may not have the expertise to do some things. Sometimes, even if we are able to do them, we may not have enough time. That is why we need brothers and sisters to join and work together, to help each other, and to do what we can do best. Just as the Bible describes, "with one mind striving side by side for the faith of the gospel" (Philippians 1:27). On the stage that day, all the exquisitely written words and all the magnificent design and artwork were done by the migrant worker brothers. These are not things we could have done alone.

The division of labour before the event was also very important. The planning committee divided the work for 24 work groups, which included prayer, management inside the venue, management outside the venue, the presentation platform design, decoration, program coordinator, sound, lighting, projection, computer, ushers, photography, counselling, guest welcoming, transportation. The committee was clear about all elements of the project and everyone was clear about their responsibilities; the whole operation was well organized.

In the celebration of 2002, there was a church brother who could play drums. So we talked to a church about what we needed. We wanted to have a short-term missions team that could be in charge of the musical presentations on the platform, with keyboard, violin, guitar players, and lead singers. Indeed, we had a team that met our requirements. So we thank the Lord and thank them.

My idea was that the singing would be led by a group of brothers and sisters, with lots of action, to express the happiness of the Chinese New Year. Despite the sadness of being away from home, we hoped to celebrate as a family in the name of Jesus so that we could sing out the gospel message in a touching scene.

With only two weeks left before the celebration, we gathered some songs and added some choreography. We found a dozen brothers and sisters to rehearse. While the schedule was tight, the participants were successful in memorizing the songs and the movements. The presentation was successful.

After the celebration, our field director said to me, "I was under the



impression that you were a quiet person. I didn't think that you would host of a celebration in front of thousands of people." I told him, "I would not have imagined it either."

From these two celebration sessions, I learned some lessons:

- 1) If you believe how the ministry should be done, then you should try your best to make it a reality. Don't say that it is easier to do less. This could hurt the Lord's work.
- 2) God will use you, if you are willing. No one wanted to act as host for the celebration. I took on the role and God used me in a way that I would have not thought possible.
- 3) Where do we find volunteers? Look for them. If the ministry is approved by God, you will find volunteers who are willing to serve.
- 4) Don't say: "I have never done that." If you have never done it, you can always try. How do you know you cannot do it? When God provides an opportunity for you, you may discover new gifts the Lord has given to you. When you have a heart to complete God's ministry, the result can be a success beyond your imagination.
- 5) Each performance should have a profound effect.

That year, I invited a group of the scholars' children to sing and dance accompanied by a gymnastics performance directed by the late Brother Liu Haihe.

Most of the attendees were fathers who had been separated from their children. I wrote the song "The End-of-Class Bell" to a popular Chinese tune "Childhood" for the workers who could not return home to see their children at Chinese New Year.

One year, when I was in China, at the end of a school day, I was passing by a primary school. At that moment, the bell rang and the children came rushing out of the school gate. Some of them were waiting for their parents, grandparents or caretakers to take them home. Then I thought about some children, who knew that their fathers would not be able to come to fetch them in the next several years. At this moment, I had an extremely sad feeling in my heart.

Many of the fathers who heard the song had tears in their eyes; the children on the stage were just like their own children that they had left at home. After the song came the gospel message. This song prepared the hearts of the audience to know and accept the heavenly Father.

The theme of this celebration was "Blessings for the Whole Family". The speaker was Rev. Barclay Chong. He encouraged the non-believers to believe in Jesus and to receive the blessings from God for themselves first, and then to bring the blessings to their families. During the two sessions that day, about 400-500 people accepted the Lord. Those who came to the stage were led outside by ushers through a side door. Counsellors repeated the basic content of the gospel for them and recorded their contact information before asking them to return to their seats. The personal information of these new believers was grouped by the city of their residence and then passed to the nearest Chinese church for follow up.

Summary of the Chapter

For the 2003 Spring Festival, in addition to Rev. Chong and Rev. Ng, we received two short-term missions teams. Rev. Himsy Hui led his short-term missions team to manage the game booth outside the meeting hall. A couple from the US helped greet the guests and with translation.

We give thanks to the Lord and for the support and prayers of brothers and sisters from many countries. Thanks to the short-term missions teams and to the planning committee. Years later, many brothers and sisters have kept that special yellow 2003 Spring Festival sweater. The memories of serving together will remain in the hearts of the participating brothers and sisters. All praise and glory to God.

It was an occasion supported by much prayer. At the beginning of the 2002 celebration, some members of Falun Gong were distributing their tracts outside the stadium. Before the 2003 gospel meeting, there was a party held by homosexuals. These were not accidental. A few months before the meeting, the brothers and sisters of our church had begun praying earnestly, and Christians from many countries had joined in praying for the Tel Aviv Church.

Jonathan also invited a group of non-Chinese co-workers who loved the Chinese to pray. While the meeting was in progress, they continued to pray earnestly for the meeting in a room next to the meeting hall. Only through prayer could the work have an eternal spiritual effect.



[Supplement] THE END-OF-CLASS BELL

Lyrics: Ruth Teo

Music: "Childhood" (by Luo Dayou)

(1)

The class bell rings and school ends, Other moms and dads appear;
I walk out of school, My father's figure has not been seen for many years.
When will you hold my little hand again, To catch fish and shrimp at the stream?
Dear Dad, my beloved dad, When will you come home?

(2)

New things were added to our home, Greatly envied by Ahmao from next door; Grandfather went to the hospital last week, But mom said not to let you know. I've been doing well in my computer class, My aunt said I have grown; Dear Dad, my beloved dad, No need to rush home.

(3)

Cannot say much in the phone, But I really miss you;
Our Heavenly Father will look after us, I pray that He will look after you too.
Caring inside and outside, busy day and night, Mom is really great;
Dear Dad, my beloved dad, I look forward to your return.

(4)

Man's wish is to travel the world, Dad, take care of yourself afar; When I grew up, Will you let me fly free in the wide sky like you? When I remember you, I can only hold the photos you sent back; Dear Dad, my beloved dad, I am waiting for your return.

An experienced pastor, who had knowledge of many mission fields, said the following after witnessing the Chinese missions work in Israel:

This is a rare good soil for the gospel. The missions work in Israel during this time was a miracle in modern mission history. As far as I know, there has never been a mission field with such an enthusiastic response to the gospel. This is a story that should never be forgotten. While this period was short, it was certainly a great event in the world's mission history. It can even be called a Modern Acts of the Apostles.





A CLOUD OF WITNESSES

e experienced a special heartache after we left Israel. If we had remained in a Canadian church, we would have met a group of familiar brothers and sisters every week. We would have experienced life together, grown together, worried and rejoiced together, grown old together. How great that would have been!

We have not seen many of the brothers and sisters since having left Israel. Emails and social media were not widely used at the time; we have lost contact with many friends. Fortunately, there are still some people with whom we have kept in touch. But for those with whom we have lost contact, we take comfort that we will see them again in heaven.

After returning to Canada, we have not been as busy as before because of Jonathan's health. Some pastors and brothers and sisters have encouraged us to write about our ministry in Israel. Our motto has been "Live to be forgotten so Christ could be remembered". However, after pondering, evaluating, and praying, we decided to make a record of our experience because, not only did God work in us; He also worked in the lives of many migrant workers and scholars in Israel. There are many moving stories about people who form a beautiful cloud of witnesses on the horizon, revealing the immeasurable love of God and His wonderful works.

How to Write a Testimony

When we invited brothers and sisters in Israel to write a personal testimony before their baptism, some would ask: "How do we write this testimony?" We compiled a series of questions for them to use as a guide to begin writing their story of accepting the gospel. If they could provide the answers for the questions in the outline, their testimony would be substantial enough to determine whether they were clear about their salvation, whether their life had changed, and whether they were ready to be baptized. This guide, entitled "How to write a testimony", is given below:

The purpose of a testimony is to let the brothers and sisters remember how God had worked in their lives and how they had been guided by God to know Him. By writing down how one became a Christian, one can strengthen one's own faith. Sharing a testimony is the best way to spread the gospel.

[The Contents of the Testimony]

- 1) Before believing in the Lord:
 - Did your family believe in the Lord?
 - Did your hometown have a church?
 - Did you ever attend church?
 - What was your opinion about Christians and the Bible?
 - Were you already a Christian in your home country?
- 2) Contact with the gospel:
 - What was your life like here?
 - How did you come to believe in the Lord: through hearing, Bible reading, gospel tracts, friends?
 - Have you admitted that you are a sinner (someone with wrongdoings)?
 - Have you accepted Jesus as the Saviour and Lord of your life?
 - Why have you decided to be baptized?
- 3) After believing in the Lord:
 - How have you felt after believing in the Lord?
 - What changes have come to your thinking and behaviour?
 - Can you give a testimony about how God listens to your prayer?
 - Can you give a testimony about how God helps you in your life?
 - Can you give a testimony about leading other people to Christ?
 - Which verse or which paragraph in the Bible has helped you the most?
 - What kind of Christian have you decided to be in the future?
 - Any other information?

In this chapter, we share some testimonies encountered over the years, coming primarily from baptismal testimonies. Each of them personally told a life story that reflects the marvellous deeds of God.

While some people did not want us to use their real names, and some have lost contact with us, we decided to leave all stories anonymous. We know who these people are and God certainly knows who they are. Every testimony represents a name, a face, and a journey of the heart. The backgrounds are different but there is one similarity: all these people met their Saviour, the Lord of life in the Holy Land.

1. Testimonies of Migrant Workers

My Grandfather's Belief Becomes My Belief

My grandfather was a Christian. When I was small, I often listened to his Bible stories, but his belief was not my belief. When my grandfather passed away, it was a big blow to me. When someone in my hometown came to Israel, I also applied to come to Israel. Unexpectedly, God prepared a church for us here. I joined the church here and also served. My feeling is that I have come home. My grandfather's belief is now my belief.

Curse Before Speak

In the past, I always cursed before I spoke. Whenever I lined up to get work, I often got rid of other people near me by cursing. I was often the first person to grab the work. After I believed in the Lord, I cursed no more. Now, I often apologize and try to understand and tolerate others.

The Church Treats Us Very Well

In order to make more money, I paid off all the debts that I owed. My life is still mostly work, work, work. Most of my time is still spent in my job, with very little rest, but the happiest time is when I join the Chinese church on tours. The church treats us very well so I was willing to join the church activities and have accepted Jesus.

Looking Forward Most to Saturdays

I love to go to the church to listen to the pastor explain the Bible. After I knew the truth, I decided to believe in the Lord and have been baptized. Before I believed, I often felt lonely and I had bad habits. Now, unless I need to buy phone cards, I don't go near those complicated neighbourhoods. Aside from the worship services and Bible study classes, I also joined the pastoral training courses. If the church can use me in any area whatsoever, I am very willing to serve. Every week, the day that I look forward most is Saturday because I can go to church. Time spent inside the church is the happiest time of my week.

Learning to Forgive

I used to be angry with the people who hurt me, waiting for an opportunity to get revenge. After I believed in the Lord, I asked myself: Would the Lord Jesus

do such things? Jesus said, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23:34) In a sermon, the preacher said that we should release those people who are imprisoned in our heart. So I handed over everything to the Lord. Now, I never think about revenge and I have learned to forgive. After I made this decision, my mind became cheerful and I felt much relief.

I Thought I Knew a Lot

Before I believed in the Lord, I felt it was ridiculous to hear Christians pray "O Lord" or "O Father". I thought I knew a lot. I participated in many tours organized by the pastor and his wife. Every time I participated, I felt increasingly more touched by their dedication. I wondered what power motivated them to forget themselves. Later, by reading spiritual books from the church library, by listening to sermons from different pastors, and by reading the Bible, I finally understood how ignorant I was. Now, I dare not feel proud anymore.

I Often Fight With Others

Before I believed in the Lord, I often fought with other people. One time, I broke a person's leg and was sent to prison by public security bureau for 15 days. I continued to fight after I was released. Although I was such a rotten person, God did not abandon me. December 28, 1998 is the day I can never forget. A Christian brother who worked in my work site said to me, "Pastor Teo will come at 3 p.m. to preach the gospel in our work site."

Urged by curiosity, I joined the weekly meeting at the work site and also joined the services at the Tel Aviv Church. After listening to the Bible, I understood the true God that everyone should respect. People should live together peacefully and love each other, never harming others. After I believed in the Lord, I have never fought again even once.

My Furious Self

I had an irritable temper when I was in a specialized secondary school. As I was studying electronics, I had to face electronic boards with tiny components that are extremely squeezed in. Often, whenever a minor problem in an electrical appliance could not be fixed, I would go into a rage and break the appliance. A teacher said to me, "If you don't change your uncontrollable temper, it will become a fatal problem in your studies and for your work."

I thank God for guiding me to Israel where I had the opportunity to live a



church life. Since my fellowship with God, my angry personality has changed a lot. As the Bible says, gentleness, self-control and patience are the fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Learn to Pray

I have a mother who loves me and prays for me everyday. After coming to Israel, I had to be the master of my own life. Previously I had never tried to pray. A brother from the church knew that I did not know how to pray so he taught me. From that day on, I have tried to pray at night.

The Lord also helped me learn to pray. At first, it was a silent prayer, then, I opened my mouth to pray. At first, I prayed only by myself, then, I was not afraid to pray in public meetings. At first, I prayed with a few sentences, then, I could pray longer. At first, I stuttered in prayer, then, I could pray fluently. At first, I felt very tense in praying, as if it was a hard job, then, I understood that prayer is communicating with God and can be free and comfortable, just like a child talking to his father. I thank God for guiding me in learning to pray in Israel.

The Gang Boss

This testimony is about someone else. As most of you know, a brother at church was previously a gang boss. He had a nickname, "possessing five poisons" (describing his many evil deeds), and he had a very bad temper. He was a contractor in Israel. A few Christians worked under him. They often shared the gospel with him as good life witnesses. Later, this contractor became a Christian and was completely changed. He invited the pastor to dispose of all the idols he had brought from China. His face also had a smile. He served in many ministries. He even carried the mop to clean the church with other brothers.

He testified, "People think that I was self-important and arrogant. Actually, my heart was filled with trouble, sadness, low self-esteem, shamefulness, contradiction, loneliness, and helplessness. I did not have even one true friend. Now, I don't fight with other people. I don't pursue material wealth and power." Later, this brother returned to China and became a full time pastor.

God Healed Me

After arriving in Israel, I had no relatives around me. At the work site, the foreign foreman always said, "Work faster. If you don't, you will be sent home."

Didn't you know that we had to pay more than 100,000 Renminbi intermediary fee to come here? How can we be just sent home? One evening during my second month in Israel, I felt a lack of strength in my limbs and could not even get up from the bed. I was very fearful, as I had no relatives near me. I lay on the bed crying, fearing that I might die in Israel.

At that point, I remembered the Jesus in whom my mother believed. My mother said, "God loves the whole world and can heal all illness." So I opened my mouth to talk to God, "If you are like what my mother told me, that you love the whole world and can heal all illness, I am asking you to make my body healthy. Then I will worship you everyday and will go to church to learn your word." Thank God! Immediately after I finished my prayer, I felt a miraculous power descending on my body and I got up easily from the bed.

From Sorrow to Joy

My mother never learned to read, but she can listen to the Bible and can even read the Bible. I am truly amazed. After coming to Israel, I became dissatisfied with my life. I felt weary, very tired, empty, and without joy. I looked sad all the time. I lived like a robot. I felt that everyone owes me something.

I had some Christian friends who went to church. They were very different from me. I knew that they also had problems and distress but they still lived a positive and joyful life. Through conversation with them, I heard them sharing their journey of believing in Jesus. I followed them to church and then understood that they have the Lord Jesus in their hearts. After I believed, I then understand that there will always be difficulties in life, but Jesus abiding in us, we have the strength to face each day. Jesus turns my sadness into joy.

Do All Men Do Bad Things?

After leaving school, I saw the dirty business of using witchcraft in cheating, so I hated those occult things. After coming to Israel, I found that my work was not successful. My boss cheated me of two-thirds of my annual salary. During an extreme troubling time, I was assigned to work on a chicken farm. I was lonely and bored. Then I had the opportunity to read the book Knowing Truth. I followed the advice of the book and said a prayer that included some requests.

Today, two years since that day, my experience in life proves that there is a real and living God. He changed my former philosophy of "Benefitting yourself is the highest objective in life" and "All men should do bad things for profit".



My lifeboat is no longer directionless.

God Abides Here

In China, I did not go to church because I saw mostly women going to this house church, most of them elderly and only few were young. When my friend brought me to the Tel Aviv Church, I saw mostly men, quite different from China. Here, it is a different world, with love and peace, light and life, and most importantly, the abiding presence of God.

After coming to church, I rarely swear and I drink very little. Before, if someone criticized me only a little, I would be angry and not speak to him. I would retain my hatred, just like I treated my wife. I know now that I was wrong. My wife and my two children know that I now believe in the Lord and always go to church. I am very happy because now my family has harmony. This is more valuable than anything else.

Truly Miraculous

When I look back, I find my previous life was like playing with fire. I didn't commit crimes that are written in the law, but I committed all the sins mentioned in the Bible. It was really terrible.

After my arrival in Israel, in my spare time, I saw that my friend's church was handing out Bibles and a "Chinese Christian Missions" monthly magazine on the street. I casually picked it up and read and felt the things written quite reasonable. Since then, I continued to read. Later, I went to the church to see what Jesus was like. From then on, I went to the church every Sabbath to hear the sermons and was deeply attracted by the truth in the Bible.

When I applied the Bible to my life, I was completely changed. This is not based on what I say but on what my friend has observed. Previously, my life was broken but now I have received salvation and the healing of my heart and mind. The words in the Bible have changed the wrong thinking on which I insisted during the first half of my life. It is truly miraculous.

The One-Hour Walk

As part of my daily life and work, I was the only Chinese, surrounded by Israelis and Arabs. Once, I changed my workplace three times in one month. In those changes, I did not pray to earn lots of money, rather what I prayed for was to have transportation to the church. I thank God that He answered my prayer

every time.

I did not earn much money in Israel but my greatest blessing was to come to know the Lord Jesus and have an opportunity to learn to serve God. One time, my home journey required one hour of walking after the bus ride. Then I remembered how Jesus died on the cross for us. This one-hour walk was nothing in comparison.

While I walked, I talked to God in my heart. When I arrived home, I was surprised that I had finished the walk so quickly and my heart was filled with joy. I am never afraid that the way to the church is too far so that I will not go to worship and serve God. God is worthy of my worship and service. If I am troubled by one hour's walk, how can I say that I can overcome difficulties to spread the gospel?

Gamble, Gamble, Gamble

In 1997, I was gambling in the casino in China at the gambling machine. I lost a lot of money in two evenings. I lost all my wages and even owed some public money. My relationship with my wife deteriorated and we were separated.

In 1998, I came to Israel. There were poker machines in the Tel Aviv red light district, only a few minutes walk from my residence. I know these kinds of machines are like traps. They let you win at the beginning; then they trap you and you lose big. I gambled through the night until the next afternoon, and I was in a really bad situation.

As my work was hard, I gambled continuously every weekend, without resting and eating. My body was seriously spent. This time a big loss allowed me to see what my dark future holds. For the last few years, I have been in a cycle of gambling, losing, regretting, having money again, gambling, losing, regretting. If I were to continue in these countless cycles, I will come to a dead end if I don't repent.

Just then, the foreman at my work said that there was a Chinese church in Tel Aviv. I decided to try my luck the last time on gambling "Fighting the Landlord". If I won, I would stop gambling. In February 1999, during the night of the Spring Festival, I gambled on "Fighting the Landlord" through the night. At noon the next day, I drank a lot. Then the foreman took me to the Tel Aviv Chinese Church. I responded to the call by the the speaker and decided to accept Jesus. I began my new life. I now understand that my past was like a filthy coat

but the Lord died for people like me. This great love is really unparalleled!

A Husband Who Goes to the Red Light District

"A man with money will always turn bad." This is what my wife always said in my ear. At that time, I firmly objected her view and believed that I would never be such a person. Then I became really rich and had money to freely squander. I became a frequent visitor of the red light district. Moreover, it was out of control as I spent over US \$1,000 every month.

When my wife learned about this, she said, "I am true to you but how do you treat me? Where is your conscience?" Yes, where did my conscience go? I was not a good husband. How could I face my wife and children?

I thank the Lord for the Chinese church in Tel Aviv. Through learning at church, I know what pleases God and what displeases Him. I decided to leave this disgraceful life.

Since I believed in the Lord, my mind has been much more relaxed. The Bible says, "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17)

I told my wife and family about my belief in the Lord. My wife was surprised about my change so she asked me more. I told her over the phone about the gospel of heaven that I had heard. My wife was happy. She forgave me and said that she would believe in the Lord too. With God's love, my family has changed direction. We have changed from quarrelling to joy, from not knowing God to magnifying Him. Thanks be to the Lord!

Deep Wounds in the Body yet Blessing in the Spirit

I was born in a small town in the lower Yangtze River valley. Poverty was common in rural areas. We worked hard to fill the belly and yet remained penniless. My father died of illness and my family really struggled. In order for my family to live better, I spent US \$20,000 in intermediary fees and came to work in Israel with much hope.

One Spring Festival, a friend from my hometown invited me to the Tel Aviv Chinese Church. That was my first time in church as my hometown does not have a church and I did not believe in the supernatural. However, the friendly smiles and the joyful atmosphere brought me a feeling of home.

One afternoon, while checking a cement column at the construction site, I accidentally tripped on some steel wires. I fell from the fourth floor to

the ground floor. That spot usually had lots of rubble but somebody had just cleaned it that morning, otherwise the consequences could have been even more disastrous. My head was punctured by my helmet; my chin was broken; my arms were fractured; my spine was broken in two places; and one of my ribs was broken. I was in a coma in the hospital for a few days. When I woke up, I thought it was a bad dream.

I am a careful person and I could not believe that I had met with this disaster. The cruel reality tortured me. No one could understand the pain I had. I thought, "It would be best if I died from the fall. How can I live like this? What meaning does my life have now?" While I moaned in pain, I had the idea of committing suicide a few times, but God's love had touched me. Every day, Pastor and Mrs. Lai who lived close by came to visit me.

After my fall, my lower body was paralyzed for one year. I could not even sit and needed to always lie on the bed. Now, I still have no feeling below my chest but I can take care of myself. I rely on God who gives me strength. I can go to the church in my wheelchair to learn God's Word.

Even though I had experienced poverty and the loss of my father in the past, before my injury I always felt that I could work hard and conquer all difficulties. If I rely on my hands, I could build a beautiful tomorrow. This accident helped me to know human fragility. Life is short. I hope everyone who sojourns on the earth can come and enjoy the great love of our heavenly Father. I hope we do not wait until we face difficulties.

In the Turbulent Years (By a Sister)

When I first arrived in Israel, I could not communicate. Work was very hard. Saturday was the Sabbath of the Israelites and shops were all closed. Public transport was not convenient so I had nothing to do. I did not have books to read, no radio, no television, nothing. Even if I had had a radio or a television, I would not have understood. It was like living in a vacuum and I felt depressed.

One day, I met Mrs. Teo at the post office. She invited me to join the meeting at her house and I started going to this house church. I did not believe that I was a sinful person and I did not care about eternal life. I wanted to stay being myself and did not want to change. Even so, I was with Christian brothers and sisters, singing praise songs, learning the Bible, eating meals after the meetings, conversing, treating others with sincerity. I felt the warmth of a home.



More importantly, God's love slowly melted my cold and closed heart. After a year of church life and teaching from the Bible, I finally admitted my sin and repented. I accepted Jesus as my Saviour and Lord of life and was baptized in the Jordan River.

Because of work, I often moved my residence. For some time I was living in an orchard. I built a woody shed. After hanging mosquito nets, it became my home. Luckily, there is not much rain in Israel. When it was rainy and cool at the year's end, my living condition could become rather difficult.

Life is hard when you live outside your home country. After I believed in the Lord, my heart has peace and confidence. I no longer felt that my life was bitter and I don't complain about injustice in life. During the turbulent years in Israel, I felt deeply that God was on my side and he helped me all the time. God loves the world; it is true. I am determined to be one that pleases God's heart.

Wandering Near the Bus Terminal (By a Sister)

I grew up in an environment of atheism. No one ever talked to me about the Bible.

I came alone to Israel, hoping that I could provide a good life for myself and my family. Unexpectedly, a fragile woman leaving her hometown and working outside could face difficulties much greater than what I had imagined. My mind and my heart were deeply hurt. I lived a heart-broken life, in tears all day long.

One day, I had nowhere to go. My heart was unstable and I walked aimlessly in the streets. I could not remember how long I walked, but I found myself wandering near the Tel Aviv bus terminal. I felt lonely, forlorn, and angry and was hoping that a miracle would happen. I met a Chinese and he told me that there was a church nearby. In this way, I entered the church in Tel Aviv for the first time.

The brothers and sisters at the door were very warm. They gave me a Bible and I felt it was a treasure. When my boss learned what happened, he was unhappy so he arranged for me to work in a location far from Tel Aviv, hoping to prevent me from going to church. From the place where I worked it took 6 hours for a return trip so I could not go to church every week.

When I could not go to church, I would read the Bible at home. Sometimes, I wanted to know the ending of the story and would read until midnight.

When I recount all these, I am very grateful to Pastor and Mrs. Teo who

introduced me to Christ and to understand the Bible. They are my mentors who have led me into the abundant life of a Christian.

When I could not go to church, Mrs. Teo communicated with me by phone to help me to understand my spiritual life. I was willing to open my heart to accept Jesus Christ as my Saviour and Lord of life. I was willing to change my self-centred life to a Christ-centred life. Pastor and Mrs. Teo said that while I could not regularly attend church, I had a clear understanding of salvation so they allowed me to prepare for baptism, along with a group of brothers and sisters from church. I want to thank them for their understanding in allowing me to be baptized.

That day was unforgettable. It was a fine summer day. I was with 60-70 brothers and sisters lining up by the Jordan River, all wearing white baptismal gowns. We took turns to be baptized. My heart was very excited because Jesus had not forgotten me. He cared about me and gave me the opportunity to be baptized in His name and become one of His people.

Since I believed, the Lord has healed my deep pain and the wounds in my heart. He substitutes for our weakness and bears our sickness (Matthew 8:16-17). Originally, I was oppressed by unfortunate reality but now I have become a lively person. I work well and I sleep well. My life is full of vigour.

The Shock of Baptism at the Jordan River

When I was in China, a college professor often told me about the gospel, but I would not listen. Before I came to Israel, I told my family not to let the professor know where I was going so that she would not bother me again. During a church tour, I witnessed a serious ceremony in which believers were baptized. I was shocked, as now I knew that believing in Jesus is not something that you do one day and leave the next day. After this, I often asked the pastor about questions on faith. Eventually, I was baptized in the Jordan River.

2. Testimonies of Scholars

My Life is Tiresome

I grew up in a family of intellectuals, and my parents are both respected professors. They were wounded in their lives so they hoped that I could become one that "does not seek miracles but is a self-confident person seeking self-



improvement". Before believing in the Lord, my goal in life was to become a person that would make my parents proud. I became very tired chasing this goal. While I felt helpless and wounded, the Lord Jesus pointed me to a new way. I accepted Him as my Saviour and Lord of my life. I received true freedom in Christ and began a new life. I was a witness to my friend's baptism in the Jordan River and then I was baptized the next year.

I Am Nicodemus

I am an executive in an agency in China. I was sent to Israel as a representative for China. This allowed me to visit the church. Previously, I had read many Christian articles online but I did not understand many things. As I lived very far, it was not convenient to come to church. Whenever I came to Tel Aviv, Pastor Teo would invite me to meals. He helped solve many questions on faith that I had. I overcame the obstacle of unbelief and became a follower of Jesus.

Walk with the Lord

Here is the story of Brother Liu Haihe, written by another brother.

Brother Liu's wife was a researcher at Weizmann Institute of Science. Haihe originally studied Physical Education. During his wife's assignment in Israel, he was responsible for looking after their two young children. When the children were at school, he would do some temporary work and teach Tai Chi (martial arts) to the Jews.

Then he went to the meetings in Pastor and Mrs. Teo's home. He became a serious student of the Bible by listening to tapes. Later, he became a believer. After each meeting, he always took up the mop to clean the floor.

When they were ready to move to the US, Haihe was diagnosed with leukemia by doctors. After some treatment, he passed away in the Lord. He was the only Chinese that was buried in the Jerusalem Alliance Cemetery.

The Jews love him so there are always flowers at his tomb. In the memorial service for him, almost 100 of his Jewish friends participated. The pastor used this opportunity to preach the gospel of Jesus to those attendees who don't usually go to church.

Serving with the Written Word

Let me talk about another brother. He was an English translator for his



From Listening to Radio Broadcast to Baptism

Before I accepted Jesus as my Saviour, I was a thorough materialist and did not believe in God. In China, none in my family was a believer and there was no church in my hometown. When I was in university, I liked to listen to the broadcasts of the Good Friend Radio. I could not understand the existence of God and could not understand the viewpoint that everyone has sin.

In the late 1990s, I had an opportunity to come to Israel to study and I heard the gospel. I received a Bible from Pastor Teo. I brought Bible magazines back home after every meeting. My wife and I started to read the Bible together everyday and we prayed together. I also read the English Bible and spiritual materials from the internet.

When I told the pastor that I wanted to be baptized, he talked with me about my faith. While it was not convenient for me to go to church every week, I knew about the Bible and the content of salvation. My life had been changed also. So the pastor allowed me to be baptized together with some brothers and sisters. Being able to know more about Jesus Christ, and be baptized in the Jordan River are the most precious things that I received in Israel.

Evolutionism or Theism (By a Sister)

I was born in a family of intellectuals. While growing up, I never knew any Christians. Stories from the Bible seemed like fairy stories coming from another part of the earth. Christians were like people from another world. At the end of the 1990s, I came to Israel to study for a Ph.D. at the Weizmann Institute of Science.

Being influenced by atheism and evolutionism, I undoubtedly believed that "God's creation of the universe" was something from fairy tales. In fact, accepting theism was not as difficult as imagined. My present research is on the subject of cell signalling and regulation. Using my expertise as the background, I ponder life seriously. We live in a world that is so complex yet so orderly, with life and non-life, from lower animals to higher animals, the homogeneity

of genes, yet impossible to be infinitely simplified. Evolution talks about inorganic elements colliding accidentally to form life macromolecules, nucleic acids, proteins, etc. Is this reasoning in evolution possible? I now feel that the explanation of life by evolution is too simplistic and too rough.

When the meaning of Lord Jesus' resurrection suddenly became clear before my eyes, my tears could not stop flowing. I was like the wandering child, returning to the embrace of the parents. My grievances and bitterness were released with my tears.

The World is Completely Changed in My Eyes

I came from mainland China. My goal of education since young was to be "a man above other men". With this goal, I put in hard effort. Although I completed undergraduate and graduate studies and got my bachelor, master, and doctorate, my heart always felt empty.

I received an opportunity to come to Israel. Less than two weeks after my arrival, my friend introduced me to Pastor Teo and the fellowship. At the beginning, I felt negative about how they met as I did not like singing hymns. So deliberately or not, I went late to avoid the singing time. Yet it seemed that a force was pushing me to go and I received something every time I joined the fellowship.

Gradually, I was attracted by the teaching and began to think about the meaning of life. I began to study the Bible seriously. I thought that God's Word could only be spoken by God.

I got a tape entitled "Road in the Deep Sea". I saw a prayer in the manual. One night, I tried to read this prayer with a sincere heart. Afterwards, I felt an unparalleled peace and joy. I felt that the great Caregiver was concerned about me and I entered into His warm embrace for which I had long sought. From that day on, the world in my eyes changed completely. I used to believe that the world was full of darkness but now I see the light.

I clearly remember the day of my baptism. The world seemed uncommonly serene. Trees and flowers were particularly beautiful. During the prayer in the evening, I cried, feeling like a prodigal son returning to a long left warm home. Since then, my heart has been full of heavenly peace and joy.

I'm Home (By a Sister)

I was born in an atheistic country. The foundation of my worldview is based



Pastor and Mrs. Teo came to our university to lead a meeting. I went to the meeting hoping to understand more about western culture. I often did not go but I supported my husband to go because his mood was always good after attending the meetings. Then he would rush to do housework without complaining.

I was worried that if he went for too long, he would go astray. In order to help him master his direction, I also went to the meetings. However, I was fully armed before going. I locked myself in a box and I put a big question mark on everything that the pastor said. Still, I read many books from the church library, aiming to understand Christianity.

Soon after, a group of people decided to be baptized. The night before the baptism, I dreamed that a large crowd was climbing a mountain. I climbed to a high place and was very tired. Then I saw a large group that followed a wide road descending the mountain so I followed them to go downward. I heard someone from the group said, "Oh, think about those people who want to be baptized. How pitiable!"

On my downward way, I heard someone reminding me that I was walking the wrong way and should follow the other way. So I followed the voice and walked on the ascending way. But that was not really a road. It was simply steep cliffs and I hanged on to some vines and kept climbing.

Halfway up I was too tired and did not have strength to climb farther. I thought, "Is there an end to this climb? Am I able to climb up?" At this point, the mountain seemed to suddenly lower its head to let me see the great scenery of the mountaintop. It was wide open, with a light blue colour, immersed in clouds. It was really beautiful.

Then I regained my faith and my strength to continue climbing. At last I reached the top. There was a small square entrance to the mountaintop but I was still hanging onto a vine. I was exhausted and the entrance was very small so I could not reach it. I heard many people above talking and laughing. They appeared to be very happy. So I cried loudly, "Don't laugh anymore. Save me first!" Then a strong figure appeared, stretching out his strong arm and pulled me up. I breathed a sigh of relief, and sobbed continuously. Then I woke up.

After I woke up, I told this dream to my husband. At the beginning I

was simply describing what my dream was, but after I finished, I asked, "Am I saved?" My husband said, "Yes, you are saved." I continued to cry, this time because of my emotion.

The truth of the Bible touched me. I prayed to God for the first time, accepting Jesus as my Saviour and Lord of my life. After praying, all the burdens of my heart seemed to have unloaded. I felt an unusual relief and an inexplicable comfort. I felt like I'm home. The love of my heavenly Father was just like the love of my earthly father, wide and deep.

At Easter that year, I was baptized in Jerusalem in the name of the Lord. When I stood up in the baptismal pool, I seemed to hear angels cheering. That day, I gave my testimony. I thank God that several people in the audience decided to accept Jesus Christ as their Saviour.

The Best Job

Let me tell you the testimony of two scholars, husband and wife. They accepted salvation in Israel and were baptized. God called them to leave their work and serve God full time. They, however, did not understand the meaning and specific details about full time ministry so they did not obey. Afterwards, they went to North America, entered into a post-doctoral program and obtained green cards (permanent residence documents). Yet several questions continued to revolve in their minds: Why do I use my precious time in life to bury myself in the laboratory? If not for Pastor and Mrs. Teo preaching the gospel in Israel, how would I have had the opportunity to know about the gospel? If I don't preach the gospel, how will other people have the opportunity to know about the gospel?

After a few years of learning and serving in the church, they slowly understood that full time ministry is the best career. God called them again in a Gospel Assembly and the husband decided to leave his research work in a popular subject. He enrolled full time in a theological seminary to be trained. Two years later, his wife's contract was up for renewal, but God's call came to her so she did not renew the contract and was enrolled in the same seminary to study. At that time, they had a child studying in university and another young child. As both of them had lost their income, how were they going to pay the mortgage for the house? How were they going to pay for their child's tuition fees and living expenses?

At that time, the price of their house fell to a lower point and the bank did not agree to sell their house quickly. They relied on their faith in God and handed over their house for auction. They did not get any money from the auction but many brothers and sisters from their church understood what had happened so they unconditionally helped the couple financially. The seminary where they studied also provided help and they completed their training. Now, the husband is pastoring a church and the wife is working with a Christian organization. Everyday, they have opportunities to help many people in their daily lives and with spiritual matters.

The Door That is Pushed Open

It was a hot place in the subtropical region. I was studying hard for a doctorate. Then a Chinese missions worker couple came. They were sent by God to harvest the crop – me . That person came with a wife who was always with him and always smiling. This couple came directly, without being introduced. They did not have stage fright and were not afraid of the strange surroundings. They came directly to the activity room in our students' residence where there was a piano. The man opened a large piece of paper with handwritten words of songs and the woman started playing the piano.

The sound of songs floated into my ears which had been filled with noises all day. I could not help but slow down my pace to listen attentively. The songs seemed to be different from all the songs that I heard before. On listening, the songs slipped from my tiny ear into my heart. I had never heard such songs. They were unlike love songs that could softly rub my fragile heart back and forth. They were unlike fast-paced marches or glorious epic-like symphonies that could lead people to restless and sleepless nights.

From the songs came a serenity that allowed me to forget all the troubles in the world, a serenity that led my impetuous heart to rest in a moment of quietness. When the music came, it slowed down my hurrying and rushing steps; it grabbed my tired, sad and insecure heart.

I had rarely seen two pairs of eyes with such peace. They infected my busy and unstable eyesight. Their two smiling faces reached out to me. All these roused my curiosity. I was peeping through the door wondering what my next step should be. Finally, I summoned the courage to knock on the door and entered. From then on, I walked through a big door in my life and entered a life

that led to true blessedness. Jesus said: "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you." (Matthew 7:7) I pushed this door open and I found the true meaning of life.

The way of pursuit was hard. The couple always came around 2 p.m. on weekends, the time usually reserved for my afternoon nap. When the weather was hot, studying and researching were hard on my body so the weekend was the only day that I could rest. Taking an afternoon nap in hot weather became my greatest wish. So I struggled between my want for pleasure and my wish to pursue truth. I became a truth seeker that fished for three days and dried the net for two. Reluctantly, I stretched out my hands to accept the best treasure that became the most precious in my life.

My physical weakness and the imprisonment of my thinking by my youthful indoctrination turned the road of pursuing truth into a road of battles. Many times I considered stopping, but the wonderful music, the serene eyesight, the smiling faces, and the touching testimonies pulled me back to God's side.

Many times the weakness of the flesh defeated my spiritual pursuit. Yet time and again, my spiritual pursuit defeated the weakness of the flesh. Every time I abandoned my pursuit, I would have objective reasons: physical fatigue, busy housework, unfinished academic assignments, research topics, the invisibility of God, the argument from atheism, and rational questions. All seemed to be sufficient reasons to abandon my search. O Lord, you are so good but the difficulties that I faced were more realistic.

You see, when someone wants to give up, he always turns some unrelated excuses into legitimate reasons so that his retreats can be disguised as ends with a reason. In this way, I walked on this way of pursuit with advances and delays.

However, even with this 3-day fishing and 2-day drying nets, I did not abandon my search for truth. Slowly, I tasted the sweetness as I found myself gradually changing. Yes, I was changing. The once heavy burdens were now not carried by myself alone. My outward mechanical imitation of a jagged man could not hide my inward weakness. Finally, one day, with that music in the background, my mask was lifted and my weak true self was revealed.

So my tears burst out from my weak heart. Without hesitation, I handed my life to God, that all-powerful Master. It was not only tears. It was the bitter wine of my life, accompanied by failures, successes, rivalries, and ambition. It was a cup of bitter wine mixed from my past struggles, pressure, bitterness, emptiness,

and different emotions. This bitter wine was suddenly released with my tears. My heart was no longer the brewing yeast. My body was no longer the cellar that stored the bitter wine. I had a refreshing feeling like that which comes after detoxification.

I found that I was changing. I could finally share beauty with others. I converted bitterness toward others into heartfelt praise. I substituted hate for tolerance. I turned indifference into mercy. Formerly, I was like a pitiful pupa living inside a totally dark cocoon. The cocoon was difficult to break through but I finally bit out a small hole. I was attracted by the penetrating fresh air and the bright sunshine. I climbed out from the self-enclosed space of dirty air. I welcomed the fresh and bright life. I even grew wings that allowed me to fly in the enormous colourful world that contained love, forgiveness, friendship, warmth, and pretty blossoms. I could fly freely, enjoying God's beautiful creation.

Whenever I thought about how a worm is transformed into a butterfly while in a cocoon, much like being released from the control of sins like rivalry, constriction, bitterness, and negativity, I could only genuinely thank the power of God. "If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come." (2 Corinthians 5:17) How could my heart deny that knowing God is the most beautiful blessing in my life?

Whenever I think about the moment when I pushed open the door, that door was no longer an ordinary door in my mind's eye. What I pushed open was a fresh picture of my life. I pushed open a total metamorphosis. I pushed away my old self that was useless to the world and to me. I pushed open a newly created person.

I sincerely thank the missions couple. If not for them, I may still be reading the world's macro theory in philosophy or learning the world's philosophies of life. Yet these philosophies cannot compare with this life that God has given me. This life is far more positive, bright and beautiful. For this, I feel fortunate to have had the sudden impulse of pushing open the door. Otherwise, I may still enjoy staying in that tightly enclosed cocoon, living a dark, blind but self-righteous life.

I also feel fortunate of not hiding my natural impulses, allowing me to dispose of that layer of a veil of shyness. I did not worry about people's ridicule or contempt. I impulsively raised my hand to decision, receiving this gift of life



that looks prettier and prettier with time. For these, I feel really fortunate.

In the past, I have pursued many good things in the world. I could not escape from the mist-like brief contentment. Yet, this road in the pursuit of God is entirely different from the pursuit of this world's fame, power and money and the pursuit of respect from others. This pursuit of God turns your worldview upside down. It uproots your seeking of stale values. It removes the dark trenches in your life. It sweeps the stumbling blocks clean, opening you to the sun. In essence, it achieves a good life for you. The way of pursuing God may not be easy but what you receive in the end is an incomparably great life.

My Life Has Been Changed (By a Sister)

[Arrival]

I left China in 1996 when China had begun to show early stages of prosperity. Weekends were the best time for business as the largest number of people and crowds filled business districts and supermarkets. After a week of work, people were enthusiastic about participating in all sorts of activities. Eating, drinking, playing were all scheduled for Saturdays and Sundays. Yet after I came to Israel, I found out that all shops were closed on weekends and all business operations ceased. I was amazed with this silence.

In China, I was always busy on weekends but now weekends were quiet. It was a state of forced stoppage. Why did the Israelis behave in such a way? Was it some underlying force, religion or rules and regulations? The people said that the answer could be found in the Bible.

The Bible I read in China was a condensed version. Before going abroad, the Bible was a mythical novel to me. It contained many kinds of incredible yet wonderful stories. It was a history book of the Israelites. Yet, from what I observed, the people here seemed to enjoy this quiet weekend, despite the inconveniences caused by the closed shops. So I read the Bible again with a probing mindset.

I believed my level of English was sufficient to cope with everyday life and recreational activities. After coming to Israel, however, there was a sudden change into a Hebrew environment. Life was not so convenient. If I had gone to North America, my tendency would have been to eat and play everywhere. Yet God knows my personality so he used the life in Israel to calm my body and mind before Him.

IOVE BEYOND HORIZON

The turning point of my quest was when, for the first time in my life, I met the pastor and his wife. I remember that I was walking down from the second floor of the student residence at the Weizmann Institute of Science. Pastor Teo greeted me in the lobby of the first floor. He introduced himself as a pastor and I almost jumped. The pastor before my eyes wore a beige plaid shirt, with casual pants and sneakers. Mrs. Teo also wore a casual dress, quiet and amiable.

Before that, I had never met a pastor. My image of a pastor had come from Catholic priests in the movies. So I immediately asked him, "Where is your robe? Why aren't you wearing a robe?" Since that day, the Chinese scholars in the institute began a new stage in life under the guidance of Pastor and Mrs. Teo. For the first time, they read the Bible, prayed, and sang praise songs.

With parent hearts, the pastor and his wife fed us spiritual food. If we had not received such feeding, our lives would not have grown. This allowed me to understand the importance of reading God's Word for a person's spiritual life. They were never lax in teaching us God's Word. In addition to explaining the Bible, we were also trained through many Bible studies, including the books New Life, New Living, and Discipleship Training. These helped build a stable spiritual foundation for us and an ability to discern what was best in our daily life in order to live a holy life.

Such equipping was very helpful for our future spiritual life when we were to leave Israel and travel to other countries. We thank God for sending Pastor and Mrs. Teo to feed us in a timely manner and to build our faith on God's Word. Such training helped us to build a relationship with God that was pleasing to Him, giving Him our highest priority. This relationship is unlike the one between Aladdin and the magic lamp, and is not one that can be terminated. As a result, when we would leave Israel and face real difficulties, our faith in God could overcome those difficulties. God would remain as sovereign in our hearts. In retrospect, I am very grateful.

[Learning to Serve]

Pastor and Mrs. Teo were very bold in allowing us to participate in ministry. This gave us the opportunity to train our spiritual life and improve our skills in serving. In this church that was composed of scholars and their families, everyone had a lot of earthly knowledge and could speak well. However, when

we worked together, there was still interference from out negative human nature. Yet the pastor and his wife still allowed us to serve with the Tel Aviv Church that was composed of migrant workers.

Through serving, we learned humility. We learned to love each other as we loved ourselves. We built each other up. We respected the Lord and humbled ourselves. We learned to be part of the body of Christ. Through prayer, we confessed to each other and accepted each other. We enjoyed the fellowship in Christ, a relationship that was even closer than that with our worldly relatives. Our lives were changed. We understood deeply how to humbly walk with God in our daily life.

【God is a Saving God, Not a Forsaking God】

I remember some people who rejected the gospel during their time in the Institute of Science and some people who heard the gospel but did not confirm their faith. Many of them were baptized after they left Israel and went to North America. The Holy Spirit caused the gospel seeds sown by the pastor to bear fruit later.

In Canada, I met a sister whom I knew before. She was baptized after living in the United States. She heard the gospel in Israel. When she encountered difficulties in the US, she immediately called on God and God faithfully led her home.

Another brother wrote in his testimony: "When I was in the university, I dared not and would not think about going abroad. When I got into university, I thought I would remain impoverished. For that, I was thankful and content; I thank God for His power and mercy. His will is higher than my will and His path is higher than my path. He led me to Israel so that we could hear His holy name and experience His grace. In Israel, when my friend invited us to go to church, I always responded with mocking words. We felt that we lived well enough and did not need God. The real reason was that I simply did not believe in the existence of God. In retrospect, I was so ignorant and spiritually so blind. I thank God for His persistent love. In 2005, after we came to the US, God chose me and my wife to be His children."

[The Example of the Pastor]

The thing that touched me most is the example of the pastor and his wife in preaching the gospel on the mission field. They committed their lives to obey

the Great Commission. They actualized and demonstrated the unavoidable responsibility of the Great Commission. Acquaintance with them made us realize what type of lifestyle Christians should live: doing missions is the norm for daily life. I am deeply grateful to God for inheriting this kind of life.

We imitate the example of the pastor and his wife. When we went back to China, the brothers and sisters in Israel found this an excellent opportunity for missions. We used the days of reunion with loved ones to spread the gospel of heaven. Back to Israel after our visit, we gathered to pray for our relatives and we shared our testimonies of spreading the gospel.

I used such an opportunity of returning home to tell the gospel to my sister-in-law. At that time, my mother also listened. She was not quiet at all and often talked back. Yet God is a wonderful God. When I left Israel going to Canada, my sister-in-law was still a seeker but my mother was already baptized as a Christian. Hallelujah!

In order to be missions workers, the pastor and his wife left their children in a boarding school far away. I am a mother and I understand how difficult it is to separate from your children. Even if the separation is short, it is already painful. They used their temporary separation with their children to exchange it for our togetherness in God's salvation.

If there are no consecutive generations of missions workers to continue sacrificing their lives and going fearlessly to mission fields, we would not have been saved and would not be taking part in the eternal life.

"Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love he predestined us for adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will." (Ephesians 1:4-5)

In view of this, can we say that it was only accidental that we went from China to Israel? No, God already arranged that for each of us. Just as the Psalmist exclaims,

"For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well." (Psalm 139:13-14)

Praise to the Lord. My life has been changed!



A Mountaineer's Insight

I feel like a man who has arrived at mid-mountain. I look back and realize that I have travelled a long road that seems impossible to finish. Also, each step was in God's plan and each stride was in God's grace. In 1988, I had contact with the gospel. Today, 30 years later, I am a pastor.

The first decade: the seed of the gospel (John 4:27)

In 1988, an American missions worker, Greg Brunk, came to Tianjin to spread the gospel. He came every weekend to teach me the Gospels. My thoughts at that time were as follows: my intention was to learn English- whatever books used was not important. The deepest impression that his eyes gave me was that he had a peace that I did not have. Later, God led me to work in a Hong Kongowned enterprise in Shenzhen for 3 years, during which I learned Cantonese. This paved the way for me to serve later in a Canadian church which uses English, Mandarin and Cantonese.

The second decade: the pot in the potter's hand (Jeremiah 18:6)

In September 1997, I came with enthusiasm to this gold rush in Israel. I became a construction foreman and a translator for English. A few days later, Brother John Pex came from the Red Sea to visit us at the work site, bringing Bibles with him. The late Pastor John Tsang and Sasha took me to the church. We began to follow the pastor, trying to find Chinese workers in order to study the Bible with them. The Chinese workers typically worked all day to earn money. After dinner, they had nothing to do. So when the gospel arrived, they were like dry land without rain. They quickly believed, were baptized, and became devout Christians.

On January 17, 1998, Rev. Tsang and Pastor Teo baptized me. After Pastor Tsang left Israel, I became a co-worker with Pastor Teo, visiting Chinese workers and leading Bible study groups. Later, I followed Pastor and Mrs. Teo to start the Tel Aviv Faith-Hope-Love Church. During this time, I followed Pastor Teo when he travelled to many places in Israel, from the Red Sea in southern Israel, to the Dead Sea and Jerusalem in central Israel, to Galilee and Golan Heights in northern Israel, bringing the gospel to Chinese people.

After returning to China from Israel, God put me in a well-known Japanese enterprise for $4\frac{1}{2}$ years.

In Israel, God led me to receive a series of training, including how to lead Bible study groups, and how to build a church. Back in China, God led me to receive training in business, in learning the spirit of a craftsman, in working in teams, in being obedient, and in relating to people from different cultural backgrounds.

The third decade: learning to be concerned about the feelings of others (Ephesians 4:2-3)

In 2004, God guided my family to Canada. On our arrival, a couple whom Pastor Teo had contacted beforehand led us to a residence that they had rented for us. Soon, a Bible study group started at our home and the group later became a Mandarin church.

In 2005, I started working for a British company designing oil pipelines. I learned both to work in an area of responsibility and to relate to other people with concern for the feelings of others. In the second half of 2008, there was a global economic crisis and I moved to another city for work. At the beginning of 2010, the economic condition improved and I returned to work with the original company and I joined the church close to my home. God allowed me to learn from the pastor about building small groups and about church administration. I also spent 5 years completing the courses in a seminary by correspondence.

At the end of 2013, with the oil crisis in Canada, there was a vast layoff. In August 2015, after more than a year of uncertainty of facing the possibility of being laid off, my future was decided.

From China to Canada, simultaneous with hard work, I learned to focus on other people's feelings. I continued training in building Bible study groups and expanding training in the church. I also completed my theological training.

The fourth decade: being called to be His worker (Luke 5:10-11)

In August, the weather was great in Calgary. Holding the severance pay from my company and the employment insurance pay from the government, I had sufficient money to not work to take more than a year off work. So I did lots of renovation at home. I worked hard in the front yard and the backyard. I painted the fence and the deck in the garden. When I got tired, I rested on the hammock under the sun. I drank my tea and watched little squirrels running back and forth on the grass. It was like living in the Garden of Eden.

Suddenly a Bible verse came to my mind: "Do you love me more than these?" This sentence was like a blow to my head. I recalled God's guidance through these decades. God's shaping and training me were for His use, for me to preach the gospel, to allow the lost sheep to hear His voice, and to be led into



God's family. They were not for me to lie under the sun. Yet, where was the next step? God is wonderful; everything had been arranged.

In June 2016, the pastor of my church retired. Some brothers and sisters encouraged me to apply to be the pastor. At that time, I did not thank God and actually felt unwilling as I could still draw from my insurance for one more year. In other words, I could still have income for not working. If I became a pastor, I would have less income and would need to work under orders from others. Wasn't this year of paid vacation not a blessing from God? It was also the compensation for my 10 years of hard work.

While I was still hesitant, the word of God came again. Peter, John and James abandoned their fishing nets, the boat and all the tools of their livelihood to follow Jesus. Should I still care about this one year of paid vacation when God was calling me to do His work? My consideration, I argued, was not just for this paid vacation. The oil business had always fluctuated. Right now, it was facing economic hardship. Yet, if I accepted God's call, I might face the temptation of a rich salary and good benefits if oil prices were to rise one day. Could I resist the temptation sufficiently to serve God and serve a congregation like other pastors? Remember, when the economy is good, working 3 to 5 years in a professional job is the same as working 10 to 20 years in an ordinary job.

I thank God! After a few weeks of earnest prayer, God finally helped me put down the material world and accept His commission.

Summary of the Chapter

Those who don't believe in the Lord say these experiences are destiny. Those who believe in the Lord say these circumstances are the gracious plan of God. Let us remind ourselves how we have had this wonderful opportunity of meeting these precious souls in an unexpected place, to know each other, and to walk together on the heavenly way, the unforgettable portion of our lives – the "mutual brightness in this rendezvous" (phrase by Hamilton Xu). These days in Israel became the highlight of our lives and also of many other people.





CHAPTER SIX

THE TESTIMONY OF GOD'S SERVANT COUPLE

Quote From a Reporter

Many people's lives and careers have been devoured by the frequent conflicts. For many of us, it is difficult to imagine the hardships of living in country in a constant state of unrest. Chinese migrant workers face not only the danger of war, but also the danger of injuries on construction sites. Some of the workers would choose to become illegal workers and stay even when their visa had expired and risk being arrested by the police.

For Chinese migrant workers, hardship and hope coexist. For missions workers, crisis and opportunity can coexist. For missions workers, they faced the danger of war but also many unique obstacles in sharing the gospel.

People often asked us whether Israel was safe. Liu Hong, Xinhua (New China) News Agency's international reporter, who often reported from battlefields, wrote this about Israel: "The way to peace is invisible but the shedding of blood is everywhere." He then wrote, "After living in the Palestinian-Israeli area for a long time, you feel excessive fatigue from conflict, bloodshed and killing. Travelling through cities and ruins, you risk being shot by bullets or wounded by stones. I have experienced the danger, felt the fear, and gathered the scars."

The life of reporting in Israel left unhealed scars on his mind. He also said, "In the two years of my reporting career in Jerusalem, I have experienced too many tragedies. I have felt the pain of too many people who have lost their loved ones. I have heard too many expectations of peace, craving it even through cries."

"There were times when I really was hoping that all reporters here would lose their jobs. They have heard too much news of blood and news of death. Please give them a moment of peace, even if it is only a brief one... But peace is still a very serious dream! I sincerely hope that all those who truly long for peace will shortly see the real dawn. I wish that all my colleagues who still work in this war will be safe."

Liu Hong and the world he describes are full of fear, helplessness and despair, but what he wrote about are all real facts and feelings.

1. The Equipping of God's Servant Couple

Our hearts are full of hope because we deeply trust the unchanging love of

IOVE BEYOND HORIZON our heavenly Father and the unchanging power of the gospel.

We believe that although the situation is difficult to grasp, our lives are in the hands of God. If God wants to take away our lives, He can take them away no matter where we are. If God wants to preserve our lives, He can preserve them no matter where we are. If He wants to protect our lives, I believe that even grenades that drop next to us will not explode.

The Equipping of Jonathan

Every full-time missions worker has a unique story. We are no exception. Before Jonathan studied in the university, he went through military service. Military training taught him discipline, bravery, and responsibility. In university, he majored in business administration, which cultivated a strong work ethic.

From the Oven to the Freezer

Jonathan became a Christian when he was a university student. Not long after he joined a church, he started to participate in short-term missions and help organize gospel meetings. After graduation, he worked for a few years before God called him to work in full-time ministry.

The three years of studying in seminary was an unforgettable test of faith. At that time, we had a 2½-year old son and an 8-month old daughter. We travelled across the ocean, from an oven to a freezer. We moved from a tropical country to a cold country where the severe snowy weather extends for half the year. We had also moved to a place far from our relatives and friends. When we first came, we had little, only enough to cover basic living expenses.

At that time, family members of seminary students were not allowed to work. For three years, I cut my family's hair, including my own. So, how did this family of four live through 3 years of studies? By living frugally and even more frugally.

The Small Room called "New to You"

At the seminary, there was a small room where used clothes and household items were stored. The room was called the "New to You" room. Any family could take items from the room for their own needs. The "New to You" room provided clothing for our family during Jonathan's three years in seminary.

As Jonathan reflected on this time of need, he once said, "I was sobbing. I said to myself, 'How can I be so poor that I cannot even buy clothes for my

children?' But this helped me to learn humility. After many years, our children have grown up very well and by God's grace they were not affected by what happened."

Miraculously, after three years, when we were ready to leave the seminary, I found our bank account had the same amount of money as when we first came – enough for one year's living expenses. God had wonderfully provided for us by different ravens (see 2 Kings 17:6).

[To Stay or Not to Stay]

After Jonathan graduated from seminary, our mother church in Singapore invited us to return to become a pastor there. Then a trilingual Canadian church (Cantonese, Mandarin and English) also contacted us for the position of their Mandarin assistant pastor.

We chose the second option, to remain and work in Canada. The reason was because there was a group of students and visiting scholars from China coming to Canada that year. They needed to hear the gospel and there was an insufficient number of pastors who could speak all three languages. We expected there would be an increase of students and scholars arriving in Canada so evangelizing them was of great significance to us. As a result, we decided to stay in Canada based on a pioneering mentality.

Jonathan began his job as Assistant Pastor of the Mandarin congregation at Ottawa Chinese Alliance Church. Five years later, Jonathan became the Senior Pastor of the newly planted Ottawa Mandarin Alliance Church. Three years after that, we began the road to missions.

When he was pastoring at Ottawa Mandarin Alliance Church, he saw that there were joint winter conferences and gospel camps for the Cantonese-speaking congregation but none for the Mandarin. He gathered a group of young students to start planning. We began to visit Mandarin churches in different cities in Ontario. We asked church co-workers to encourage Mandarin-speaking brothers and sisters to participate. Soon after, the first Ontario Mandarin Gospel Camp was held.

[The Four Spiritual Laws Below the Street Light]

One time, Jonathan and I were driving home with a sister who was still a non-believer at that time. Jonathan thought that the sister would be open to hearing the gospel. He parked the car below a streetlight and pulled out a copy of "The Four Spiritual Laws." He explained the gospel to this sister who then made a decision to believe right then and there.

Becoming a Christian in university, Jonathan had a heart for student evangelism. During his eight years of pastoring in Canada, he emphasized leading students to Christ through different methods. At the university, he knocked on the door of the Chinese overseas students' office. He introduced himself and invited the students to come to the Bible Study class at church. He organized different kinds of evangelistic activities: music gospel meetings on campus, welcome parties for new students, movie nights, gospel camps, gospel tours, training classes on preaching the gospel, short-term missions to preach the gospel, discipleship training classes, and training in techniques for serving the church.

All these efforts of sowing seeds and watering laid the foundation of strong faith and ministries for Ottawa Mandarin Alliance Church and brought fruitful harvests. Most of the brothers and sisters who left later to study and work continued to follow the Lord. Some have brought their whole family to the Lord as well. Those who stayed behind become pillars and leaders in the church.

The Equipping of Ruth

[The First to Believe]

I became a Christian when I was young and was the first one in my family to believe. Because of my belief in Christ, negative energy in my life became positive and my worldview changed drastically. I felt deeply that leading other people to Christ was to give them the greatest gift in life. Therefore, I was eager to become equipped to become a full-time worker in spreading the gospel. Psalm 90:14 is the key verse for my calling: "Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days." In the same way that I had been led to Christ, I wanted to experience the joy of leading other people to Christ and guiding them to a life of joy and of reliance on God. I believe the goal of leading others to Christ should be set as early as possible so as to not live a wasteful life.

I quietly applied to study in seminary and did not dare to tell my family because I was certain that they would try to stop me. Since my family objected to church attendance, I did not have a supporting church when I went to seminary and thus did not have the funds to pay for seminary. Nevertheless, I borrowed



\$20 from a friend for transportation, I packed some clothes, my Bible, and a few pens in a bag. I left home without telling my family. My family tried to dissuade me when they found out but I was firm in my decision.

[Studying Four Years of Theology with Forty Cents]

The seminary stipulated that there would not be any grants for first semester students. After paying for transportation on that first day of seminary, I was left with 40 cents. I prayed, "Heavenly Father, how can I study for four years in the seminary with only 40 cents?"

The next day was a Sunday. A senior student brought me to a church and even paid my bus fare. During the worship service, the offering bag passed before me and I put all my 40 cents into it. I prayed silently, "Father, if coming to the seminary is your good will, I believe that you will provide for me."

I did not let my teachers or fellow students know about my financial situation. I ate with the other students in the seminary cafeteria but my heart was anxious, wondering how I could pay for my meal. On Sundays, since seminary students were typically serving in different churches during the day, the cafeteria did not provide lunch and dinner so I had nothing to eat. When the students went out to serve, they took the bus and I would walk. In class, I used the pens I brought from home to write my notes. When the black pen ran out, I used the blue pen, and eventually the red pen.

Yet God is faithful. The miraculous "raven" appeared! I received white envelopes in my mailbox from anonymous senders; there were no names on the outside and no writing inside, but the envelopes held bank notes of \$5, \$10 or, at times, even \$50. With this money, I could pay for my meals, stationery, toothpaste, detergent, and the bus fare to church.

On the last day of the first semester, the seminary president wanted to see me. I was worried as I did not know why. When I entered his office, he said that he wanted to see me because my grades were very good. He talked to me about different things and then he asked me about my financial situation. When he knew that I had no funds to support myself, he said, "OK, I will find a church to support you." Because of this, I did not need to worry about my living expenses anymore. With the help of the seminary president and my supporting church, I successfully completed the four years of seminary.

After graduating from the seminary, God opened a way for me to serve full-

time at Singapore Life Church for nine years. After I married, I was a full-time mother for 2½ years, wife of a seminary student for 3 years, and then the wife of a pastor for 8 years. After that, Jonathan and I became missions workers working on mission fields for 14 years.

God provided the opportunity for Jonathan and me to learn and practice the precious lessons of faith during our seminary years. This allowed us to look up to God during our days of serving Him. We can trust His will and do things that please Him because God always fulfills His promises.

In Israel, we needed to organize large-scale gospel meetings. We needed to rent a big place but did not have sufficient funds for the rent and other expenses. Yet, based on our faith, we signed the rental contract simply because we believed that a gospel meeting allows people to hear the gospel and this pleases God. God again and again showed us that He is a faithful God.

[The Cross and the White Snow Stack]

There were no Alliance churches in Singapore. Then why would Jonathan choose to study at the Canadian Theological Seminary (an Alliance seminary, the predecessor of Ambrose University). The reason was that a fellow senior student from this seminary said that this seminary held to an orthodox faith and the tuition was also affordable. While we received the enrolment manuals from a few other seminaries, we found the pamphlet from Canadian Theological Seminary the most pleasing. We saw pictures of young students sitting on a green lawn, reading and laughing. However, we encountered the unexpected.

We moved to Regina in central Canada, where summers can be hotter than 40 degrees Celsius and winters can be colder than -50 degrees, from the island nation of Singapore where summer with temperatures between 23 and 32 degrees Celsius is year round. What a big difference in temperature!

In the first years at this seminary, I felt a little helpless because of the long snowy winters and the monotonous life. It felt like a prison. Then, one day during our homeward journey after Sunday worship at church, I was watching the scenery outside rushing past us quickly. Something caught my attention. The horizontal and vertical wood of the electric poles along the road formed shapes of crosses. Below the crosses were piles and piles of snow.

I heard a voice speaking to me: "Child, if I want you to be buried below the snow for my sake, are you willing?" I was shocked for a moment and then



I answered without hesitation in my trembling heart: "Lord, who am I? If you want me to stay in Canada, how dare I to be unwilling?" Since then, I have been willing to obey fully during every long cold and snowy winter. For 8 years before we went to the mission field, we served in Canadian churches.

[The Daughter and the Winter Coat]

Here is a funny story. On the first Sunday after we arrived in Canada, we brought our children to worship at church. Other people were putting winter coats on their children so I also wrapped my 8-month old daughter with a winter coat. At church, the other people took the children's winter coats off. I did not realize that there was heating inside the church, so the children needed to take off their coats. I was dumbfounded because underneath my daughter's coat, she was wearing only underwear and diaper.

2. From Short-term missions to Long-Term Missions

Short-term missions

In 1993, Jonathan and I went with a short-term missions team to China. God brought us first to a town of an ethnic minority. We needed to take a car trip for 2 to 3 hours before arriving at the bottom of the mountain. Then, with the help of some locals, we climbed to our destination up a pathless slope. In some places, the steep lofty cliffs were next to us and there was the risk of death if we ever slipped.

After climbing for a few hours, we were very close to our destination. We saw a tall straight tree, bare of branches, standing alone near the peak. I curiously asked the brother who led the climb, "This tree looks special. Why is it there?"

The brother said, "Over 100 years ago, a western missions worker came here. At the beginning, no one believed in Christ but later entire villages became Christians and churches were established. This tree was planted, so that the people from regions around and those people from below the mountain would know the location of the church. After a long time, this tree became what you can see now." The brother continued with his story, "This missions worker stayed here until he passed away. He is buried here."

We can only cherish the memory of this western missions worker who left the familiar environment of his home country and came to these barren mountains where even the Chinese were unwilling to venture. He came to spread the gospel to people unrelated to him, to an ethnic minority. He led village after village to Christ and eventually was buried here. When we heard and saw what he left behind, we could only pay this missions worker deep respect and felt a great awe in our hearts.

When we stood below that tree that had withstood 100 years of wind and frost, we prayed together: "Lord, we are willing. No matter where you send us, no matter how difficult, lonely, distant, dangerous, and challenging, we are willing because we have seen an example for us."

After this short-term missions, we returned to our church but the phrases "Christ's love compels me" and "the Lord died for me so I want to live for the Lord" rang in our hearts. (2 Corinthians 5:14-15)

In the next few years, while we were pastoring our church, we continued to prepare ourselves and wait for God's voice at the appropriate time. This short-term missions was not the first one for Jonathan. He joined one during his university days when he was a young believer. He joined a short-term missions to Indonesia. In a small rural chapel, their pastor preached, but because the chapel was small, many people had to stand outside.

To save the seats for the attendees, the short-term missions members stood outside as well. Standing outside, Jonathan suddenly had an idea: it would be good if I could preach to these people on the outside. He did not speak at that time because he was a new believer and was not yet equipped to preach, but this experience left a deep influence on him and stimulated desire to preach the gospel to people outside the walls of the church.

It was very good to pastor in a local church as we could still preach the gospel, but our heart never felt peaceful. We still felt that there was a call for us from beyond the blue sky and distant mountains.

"Do not go where the path may lead; go instead where there is no path and leave a trail." – Ralph Waldo Emerson. This is my favourite motto.

In Romans 15:20, Paul says, "I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation." Paul's ambition was also our ambition.

"Go out and build a church where there is no church." This was a lingering urge that pushed us to leave our familiar environment and approach an



unknown future beyond the horizon.

Long-Term Missions

God's time arrived and we heard His voice, coming through an email. In 1997, Rev. Peter Chu, the executive director of the United States Chinese Alliance Churches Association, affiliated with the C&MA in the U.S. sent an email to all pastoral co-workers in North America. He described how there were 5,000 Chinese workers in Israel who urgently needed a Chinese pastor. He also described how these early Chinese migrant workers lived in a deplorable environment and had nothing to do on the Sabbath.

We remember that day clearly. We were reading the email together on a very old computer. Afterwards, we looked at each other. We had a unanimous spirit that apparently said: This is it! That email was of course directed to many people but we felt that it was specifically for us.

Five years after we expressed our willingness to take up the call, we arrived in Israel, a dangerous faraway country and a challenging mission field. We gladly accepted the mission because our hearts were ready.

"Be careful about your prayer, for the heavenly Father will answer what you ask for one by one." Every time we have shared this with brothers and sisters, we see people immediately staring at us, expressing different strange expressions.

3. Preparation Before Departure

From the day of our decision to go until the actual date of departure constituted a period for our preparation. We needed to pack all our belongings to move. We gave away many things in our home. We threw out lots and we put what we still wanted to keep into cardboard boxes.

We did not know how long we would stay in Israel so we did not sell our car or our house. Fortunately, we did not sell the house, because otherwise, we would not be able to afford a house when we moved back home from the mission field. This is our advice to new missions workers who go to mission fields: do not sell your house.

Some families who love the Lord gladly allowed us to store our belongings in their basement and our car in their garage so that we also had a car to use when we came back home on furlough.

When one of those families needed to renovate their basement, we needed to move the cardboard boxes to another family's home. After we moved the boxes a

few times, the brothers who helped us to move asked: "Why do your belongings decrease every time you move?" Yes, it was because with every move, we threw out more things. Every time I looked at the cardboard boxes, I was quietly in tears as most of the contents were books. We thought that books could be loaned to others to read, especially when e-books were not common in those days. Later, two brothers helped us to store these belongings in temporary storage.

Cardboard boxes became a common feature in our lives for the next dozen of years. Move, move, and move. Who does not want a permanent home? "Not that there is no home. No that there is no wish for home. Yet there are a lot of people still drifting in the world." (a verse by Sister Xiaomin) For the sake of those drifting people overseas, we also became drifting people.

When emails were still uncommon, some sisters helped us to prepare prayer letters to mail them out. During furlough, we were invited to churches to share and these churches became our prayer partners, people who were continually concerned about us. Every time we encountered difficulties on the mission field, every time we felt low in spirit, we remembered these churches, and those brothers and sisters who remembered us in their prayers and our hearts felt comforted and strengthened.

We usually returned home for three months during summer once every two years for furlough. The brothers and sisters would help us to rent a place, lend us temporary furniture, or let us stay in their homes. When our children had vacations, the families who love the Lord would receive them in their own homes and love our children like their own children. We are unable to make a list of all those who loved us in these ways but we will forever remember them.

At that time, we wanted to send some insured items to Israel but the post office refused to insure them when they heard that the destination was Israel. When we wanted to buy life insurance, the insurance companies refused when they knew that we were going to Israel. We felt so helpless but all these things are in the past.

Commissioning Ceremony

A brother recorded the ceremony of our commissioning.

November 2, 1997 is an important day. All four Chinese Alliance churches in Ottawa gather in the auditorium of the Adult High School for the annual missions conference. After the preaching of Rev. Philip Teng, he



presides over the commissioning ceremony of Pastor and Mrs. Jonathan Teo. The theme of this year's missions conference is "Lord, please send me."

A family of four including the children kneel before the podium. With the witness of over 1,000 people as witnesses, pastors and missions elders lay hands on them and pray. Everyone gives them a blessing and sends them to the mission field in Israel.

During the meeting, many people shed tears. Even after many years, they still feel that it was a very moving scene. In particular, they feel the sadness of the two young children being separated from their parents.

Early Empty Nest

After we sent the children to boarding school, we returned to an empty home for a final cleanup. It was very difficult time for us.

When I stepped into the house, I felt my body go limp. I sat on the stairs and my tears could not stop flowing. In that moment, I felt the pain of being pierced by innumerable arrows. I did not even have the strength or the courage to walk upstairs to the children's bedrooms where some of their clothes, books, and toys remained. They were no longer living there. I was not able to listen to them practice the piano, not see them read books or play around our home. The food that I cooked would not be shared with them. Although we were not yet reached the age of empty nest, our home had become an empty nest.

I packed up the children's belongings with tears. I needed to decide which items to keep, which to give away, and which to throw out. Many years later, our daughter asked me, "Where are all my soft toys?" I said, "We shared them all with other children. Only a few smaller ones remain."

One day while our children were at the boarding school, our son's residence had a fire. He was the first person to see the fire so he pulled the fire alarm. A great fire burnt down part of the residence where over 20 students lived. Many personal belongings that our son had brought with him were destroyed in the fire. We must remember that our greatest treasures are not the material things on this earth but our greatest treasure is in heaven!

Setting Foot on the Journey

In January 1998, we visited the mission field. On the same trip, we took our children to the boarding school in Europe for missions workers' children. After we came back, we made our final preparations.



On April 3, we boarded the plane, responding to the call of God, having the support of the mission agency, and the blessings of many churches. My heart was filled with mixed feelings; everything we had in our home country became memories.

This was not our first long trip. Yet we felt very happy every time we came back to Canada for furlough. We also felt very sad every time we left Canada. Someone asked us, "Since you come and go so often, perhaps you are accustomed to it." My heart answered, "You can never get used to leaving."

4. Thanksgiving and Moving Stories

Looking back at our time in Israel, we have experienced many touching and memorable things.

Jonathan's Memories and Stories of Thanksgiving

【Loving Israel】

Jonathan always says, "Coming to Israel can be addictive as you want to come again and again." Then he says, "If you don't believe this, try to come here only once."

[Advanced Car Parking Skill]

In Tel Aviv, you often see how Israelis can parallel park their cars in tiny parking spaces. It is stunning. You really admire the superb parking skill of Israelis.

[Safe Driving]

You need to be very alert while driving in Israel. We thank the Lord that not once did Jonathan have an accident while driving day and night in Israel for six years, not even one small collision. He has been very grateful for the Lord's protection.

【Commendable National Character】

For the 2002 Spring Festival celebration, Jonathan thought that the all 100 co-workers should have a uniform for easy identification. He found a shop that specialized in printing logos on uniforms. After finalizing design and sizing, Jonathan asked, "How much down payment do you need?" The shop manager

said, "No need." Jonathan was surprised and said, "What if I don't come back to pick up the clothes?" The manager said, "You look like a good person. I trust you." We could see that Israelis do business based on trust. We did appreciate this admirable national character.

Ruth's Moving Stories

[The Water Tank Burst]

The Israelis say that they are like cactus, with thorns on the outside, but in fact, the inside is soft and sweet. Political circumstances make them cautious at all times which is understandable. All the Israelis we encountered trusted us. One day, Jonathan was not at home and the water tank on the roof of the house burst. Our home was flooded. I hurried next door to ask our Israeli neighbours to help. They were willing to come and help immediately.

[Looking after the Pastor's Wife at the Spring Festival]

During one Spring Festival, Jonathan had gone to another country to teach so I was alone at home. Just after 10 a.m. on the eve of the festival, over ten brothers from the Tel Aviv Church came to our home unannounced. They brought bags of food, including expensive seafood. They started preparing a feast in the kitchen, insisting that I take a rest. They stayed until after 10 p.m. that evening.

Weeding before Returning Home

We rented a single house with more space so that we could use it for meetings and for hosting short-term missions teams. Both the front and the back had gardens with lemon trees, loquat trees, and mango trees. To keep the garden looking good and not barren or unsightly, I often planted flowers and removed the weeds. One brother came to help weeding one day before his return trip to China. I said, "No, no need to help since you will be returning home tomorrow." He said, "This is my last day to do something for the pastor and his wife."

On his last day in Israel, he had lots to do. Furthermore, weeds would always come back. Yet on this day, this brother got down on his hands and knees to weed for the whole afternoon. Later, when we returned to China to visit brothers and sisters that we had pastored, we made a special trip to his home to visit his family and to recall our memorable past times.

The Lonely Pumpkin Man

Someone told Jonathan that there was a Chinese worker working on a farm so we went to visit him. He was difficult to find but we succeeded. When we met him, he was very happy. He said that he was the only Chinese person on the farm. All other workers were non-Chinese foreigners.

He had been working in Israel for many years. When there was no work, it was really boring because he could not communicate with his boss or other workers. He heard that there was a Chinese church in Tel Aviv but it was far from where he was working and he did not know how to take a bus.

Even though he was the only person that we met with that day, we sang, prayed, and read the Bible with him. When we departed, we left him a Bible and some spiritual reading materials. When we were about to leave, he wanted to give us a pumpkin. He said that one time he grew a pumpkin and watched it grow large day by day.

He led us to the field where there was only one pumpkin and it was very big. He said that he had grown this pumpkin for more than two years. It did not belong to the boss so he could decide to whom he would give it. We said, "Keep it for yourself since you have grown it for so long." He said, "I am very thankful for your visit. I don't have much to give you. This is the only thing that I can give." He insisted in giving it to us and he would not listen to our argument. Eventually, I suggested, "OK, thank you for your kindness. We will take it and boil some pumpkin congee for other brothers to share." He said, "Good. Please greet them for me."

This pumpkin had been with him every day for two years. Perhaps it was like a friend to him. Perhaps he could talk to the pumpkin, telling it about his memories of his family. Perhaps he shared with it that he came to this lonely strange land to make a living. The pumpkin had grown to such a big size and he was still reluctant to eat it. Why was this so? Perhaps if he ate it, he would lose a "friend", a companion who listened to him. Yet, when real friends with flesh came to visit him for the first time, he did not hesitate to freely give away his treasured achievement of two years. The next time we tried to visit him, we were told that he had moved away and communication with him was lost.

The image of this big golden pumpkin still stays in my memory. This pumpkin represents a person who was willing to listen to the gospel and was thankful for the missions workers. It represents all the Chinese who came to this

foreign country to work and live alone. It represents their gratitude to those who visit them with love.

In many corners of the world, there are many lonely Chinese, looking forward to meet other Chinese people who care about them, visit them, make friends with them, and take the gospel to them.

5. On Furlough

In general, one term for missions workers is two to four years. At the end of term, they return home to give reports to their supporting churches. Normally, they stay home for one year after every four years. We decided to return home for three months once every two years. The reason was because our children were in school and could come back during their summer vacation. Otherwise, if they returned home for one whole year, they would need to find another school and then go back to the MK school a year later.

Missions workers work in a different culture and face new environments and new relationships. The many adaptations and instabilities create much stress. When we return home, we have the opportunity to reunite with family members, rest, and receive training. We preach in churches and report on God's work on the mission field. Direct communication with brothers and sisters allows them to understand the missions workers and mission fields more. With this understanding, they could better pray for and support us.

When we became missions workers, we returned home for the first time after two years. We preached in 48 meetings in different churches in 3 months. Later, we found out that for missions workers with 3-month furloughs, the minimum required is to preach in 8 meetings in different churches. However, many churches heard about the work in Israel and they all wanted to hear what we had to share.

After more than 10 years, we have preached at countless missions conferences. Just before the end of each conference, we have always made a call for a greater commitment to missions. There have been many brothers and sisters from different age groups who stood up, responding to the call to full-time ministry or career-associated ministry. All those who respond were followed up by their local churches.

Sometimes, when we have felt tired, we may doubt whether preaching at

missions conferences is actually useful. Perhaps many brothers and sisters simply take the message as a story and just let it pass by.

One day, after a meeting, a brother came and spoke to Jonathan, "Pastor, you probably don't recognize me. When you preached the first time at our church's annual missions conference, I stood up to respond to the call for full-time ministry. I am now the pastor of this church." He took out a cell phone to show Jonathan a photo and said, "This is the poster that announced your preaching at our missions conference years ago. I have kept this photo ever since."

Another time, Jonathan was invited to preach in a joint missions conference organized by 6 churches. Before the sermon, the choir sang a hymn about "Lord, if you send me, I will go". After singing, the choir sat in the front rows. Before the sermon, Jonathan thanked the choir for the hymn and then inadvertently pointed to them and said, "You sang very well but I hope your heart was in the words you sang."

Many years later, Jonathan was sharing at a church, when a middle-aged brother came up to him and said, "Pastor, do you remember me? During that joint missions conference by 6 churches, I was a member of the choir. You pointed at me and asked me whether my heart was in the words we sang. After that, my heart could not find peace. I wanted to dedicate myself to full-time ministry but I could not put down some things. One day a few years later, I suddenly figured it out. Even if my bank account had a few more zeros added, what would that mean? Can I take my bank account to see God? So I sold my house, my car, my business and went to seminary to study."

On another occasion, a sister said to Jonathan, "Pastor, one time you were sharing with your wife at a joint missions conference. What you said moved my heart. I was a pastor in a church but you let me know what missions was all about. I have already passed the evaluation by a mission agency and I have received the permit to go to the mission field. I will depart soon."

Above are only three examples. How many people heard our missions messages and testimonies and have committed to local or overseas missions? No one knows. Perhaps we can only know when we see our God.

Jonathan always emphasizes: "This is totally the work of God. Only God can make people call Jesus as Lord, grow in Christ, serve willingly, and walk in the way of living for the Lord and be wholeheartedly dedicated. May glory be to





6. Our Children

When our first child was born in Singapore, Jonathan had not studied in the seminary yet. He had a regular job and an elderly parent was still at home. I resigned from full-time pastoral work.

When Jonathan was a pastor in Canada, I chose not to work, but stayed home to take care of the household. At church, I taught Sunday School, led the choir, and cared for brothers and sisters. I was familiar with different church ministries and participated very willingly.

After we became missions workers, we had to send our children, our son in grade 8 and our daughter in grade 6, to study in Germany at the school for missions workers' kids. We were thus separated from our children and felt very sad. On one hand, we worried that our children would complain about us leaving them and on the other hand, we worried about our children adapting to boarding school.

When we first tried to enrol our son in the school, the school replied that it was already full. So the mission agency planned to arrange for our son to study in another school for missions workers' kids in Malaysia. That would have meant that our two children would be in different schools and different countries. By God's mercy, a boy withdrew from the school in Germany and our children were able to be enrolled in the same school.

At the opening ceremony of the school, student representatives held large national flags representing all the countries where their parents worked as missions workers. There were more than 50 flags. To solemn music, those representatives marched into the hall. They placed the flags in front of the podium. It was a spectacularly moving scene.

When we brought our daughter to her residence, some other parents were also sending their child in. At the door, that child held the parents briefly before going in without looking back. The parents left with tears in their eyes.

After our daughter said goodbye, we also left with tears. When parents work in a foreign country, for various reasons such as education or safety, sometimes it could be better to arrange other accommodations for their children instead of taking them along to the field.

When our daughter was in Grade 6, we received good comments about her from the dormitory parents. They said that our daughter accompanied younger children when they were doing their homework. She walked with them and consoled homesick children to sleep. Children in the dormitory called her "Mummy". This we could never have imagined.

We saw our son play soccer with other students on the campus lawn and when he got the ball, everyone cheered loudly for him. He also served as an editor for the school magazine.

Both our children participated in the school soccer teams and participated in inter-school soccer matches in neighbouring countries. Sometimes, we visited them at the school but we could not be there to cheer for them for most school activities, including piano performances, soccer matches, and drama performances as we were only able to see them three times a year - Easter, summer vacation and Christmas.

The teachers at their school did not receive salaries but instead raised their own funds to teach there. There were more than 300 students in their primary and secondary schools- 80% of them were children of missions workers. Their parents work in Europe, North Africa, Russia, the Middle East, and Central Asia. The other 20% are children of business people or embassy workers. We are very grateful for the educators working in the schools for missions workers' children.

During the school holidays at the end of 1999, our children came to Israel for Christmas. On Christmas day, we were taking migrant workers to visit Bethlehem so we could not meet them at the airport. The field director's children were at the same school as our children so they picked up our children and drove them to Bethlehem.

That evening, the migrant workers were performing the Christmas drama. We were meeting in the wilderness near Bethlehem under the moon and the stars. I can never forget the moment when we embraced our children tightly after our long separation.

Whenever someone asked us, "How can you bear the separation from your children by putting them in a boarding school", I respond by saying "The heart of all parents is the same in the whole world. Similar to other parents, we cannot bear a long separation from our children."

Some were curious and asked, "Then how did you conquer this feeling?"



My response was, "Missions workers in the past faced this and missions workers today still face the same. If other people can do it, why can't we?" The Bible says, "Whoever loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." (Matthew 10:37)

Jonathan said, "If migrant workers in Israel can leave their family and children to come here to earn American dollars, then why can't we do the same for the sake of the gospel? Our minds are at ease because most of the children at the school were in the same situation as our children in having parents on the mission field. All the teachers know why these children are sent to this school so they loved the children as their own and cared about them in their lives and in their studies."

At the primary school, my daughter needed to take a bus from the residence to the school. On the bus, she often felt dizzy and sometimes even threw up. Speaking on the phone with us, she always cried about this problem. Later, she changed her residence to a place where she could walk to the school. Once when she was ill, she had to stay in the hospital. When we saw the photo that she sent to us, we could not help but feel anxious.

Later when our son started to work in Canada, he had an accident on the highway. The car was the one that Jonathan had driven for 16 years. The car could not be salvaged after the accident but there were no physical injuries so we thanked the Lord. Due to the time zone difference, the accident happened during our night hours so he did not immediately call us.

These may seem small matters for other people but they really made us worry.

Many years later, we asked our children on separate occasions whether they felt sorry for being separated from their parents during their maturing years. Both of them said no. They also said that they treasure the experience of this period and would not exchange it for any other experience.

God is a merciful God. He guided the growth of our children. We thank the brothers and sisters praying for our children. Now, both our children have their own families, careers, and children. Both of them and their families love and follow the Lord. Their spouses were friends from the campus fellowship at university. Families of their spouses are all Christians. For what more blessings can we ask?

Our son Daniel studied chemical engineering and now he works as a project



Our daughter Joyce studied physical and health education. Her husband Andrew, a Ph.D. in Engineering Physics, is the pastor of discipleship in their local church so Joyce is a pastor's wife. They have three children.

Our Children Baptized in the Jordan River

When our children were ready to be baptized, Jonathan baptized them on separate occasions in the Jordan River. For a child to be baptized by his or her father and in the Jordan River no less, is a very precious memory.

Reflection From Our Daughter Joyce

Being away from my parents was something I thought to be normal, as it was the life situation of all my friends at the time as well. At Black Forest Academy, we were extremely blessed with dorm parents and teachers who were mission workers themselves, who loved us as their very own. From waking us up in the morning, helping us make lunches, doing our laundry, tucking us into bed at night even taking us on special outings, we were very well loved and cared for.

During my pre-teen years, my understanding of what my parents did in Israel was very minimal. My parents would call on Sunday nights and in the evenings during the week, and we could dictate letters addressed to our parents for our dorm parents to type into emails.

When we visited my parents during Christmas, Easter and the summer holidays, we joined my parents as they took busloads of Chinese workers on tours, baptism trips and I simply looked forward to climbing new rocks, bartering for the cheapest trinkets and eating good food. Little did I understand that my parents were doing marvellous work for the Lord, that lives were being saved and that I was roaming the same streets that Jesus and his disciples once walked.

As my faith grew in my teenage years, my understanding of the extent to which my parents were serving the Lord grew. I began to see the Holy Spirit working through them; how they denied themselves to serve others no matter what the cost and how God was using them as his hands and feet to bring the good news of great joy to the isolated, lonely, homesick, overworked

Chinese labourers in Israel.

God's hand has been upon my parents throughout their entire ministry in the Middle East. The majority of those who accepted Christ as their personal Saviour in Israel during the time of my parents ministry are no longer in Israel, yet we continue to hear from them from China, Australia, Europe, United States, Canada, etc, with reports of the gospel being furthered through their faithful lives of service to the Lord.

How does one follow in these gigantic footsteps? I know that for my life, or should I say, at this time in my life I don't see God leading me to Israel to do the same work that my parents did in Israel, but I am certain that my parents have set a beautiful example of servanthood for me as they dedicated their lives to serving the Lord wholeheartedly; something I truly aspire to do. I truly thank God for giving me a front row seat to see what he is doing here on this earth. For now, he has given me and my family a front row seat to what he is doing in this mission field of Toronto, Ontario.

It really is amazing to think about all that happened during the time my parents were missions workers in Israel. But ultimately, the gospel impact during their tenure in Israel testifies that indeed, "neither he who plants not he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth" (1 Corinthians 3:7). To God be the glory!

Reflection From Our Son Daniel

Send Off

I remember my parents taking us aside and asking if we would support their decision. At the time, I didn't fully grasp the depth of my parents' conviction to persist in obedience to the Great Commission. We accepted it. The new road ahead was exciting.

It wasn't long before our things were packed. Everything that was to carry me through the next stage of life was crammed into two standard suitcases. At 11 and 13, my sister and I were sent to Germany where we would attend a boarding school for missions workers' kids.

In many aspects, my childhood as an MK (missions workers' kids) was pretty ordinary. I went to school, made excuses for unfinished assignments and cultivated a growing affinity for playing soccer. Then there were aspects that would be considered atypical for most: I would not see my parents for

long periods of time; I did not speak the country's native tongue; I had friends come and leave so often that I opted for "see you later" in hopes of one-day crossing paths again.

Regardless of the challenges, I also experienced the extraordinary. I studied history on the beaches of Normandy and wandered the streets of Venice on a field trip. The highlight of boarding school was, by far, the relationships developed and deepened through the shared experience of life abroad.

Being raised as an MK, I had a unique experience of God's divine character and teaching, which shaped my perspective of ministry.

A Mistaken Identity

If you ever get the chance, ask an MK "where are you from?" The question is most often followed by an awkward silence and a blank stare. Don't be offended, you did nothing wrong. It just takes a minute for an MK to decide on how to answer the question. The answer is never quite straightforward. In my case, having to explain being born in one country, raised in a second, living in a third while being educated in a fourth makes for a mouthful. It's more than most care to know.

Trading stability and comfort for a new foreign environment is not an easy transition for MKs. The lack of roots and a constant sense of displacement can manifest itself as a crisis of identity – an unease of never really knowing who they are or where they belong. In a boarding school represented by children whose parents are serving in over fifty countries, our differences were plainly obvious. Yet in spite of our different perspectives and backgrounds, we were not defined by nationality or cultural upbringing. We were united in Christ and shared in His identity.

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul writes, "If then you have been raised with Christ, seek the things that are above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God." He goes on, teaching the church to "Set your minds on things that are above, not on things that are on earth." He concludes, "For you have died, and your life is hidden with Christ in God. When Christ who is your life appears, then you also will appear with him in glory." (Colossians 3:1-4)

Paul declared that a worldly identity is irrelevant. Where I came from

did not matter. I am a child of God – freed from sin, righteous in His eyes. I belong to Christ and with Christ; He is where I'm from. This eternal perspective brought – and continues to bring – comfort to me as a child in a barrage of change that comes frequently to MKs.

In His Time

My sister and I went to visit my parents during the school holidays, such as Christmas, Spring break and summer. During one particular visit (though I don't remember exactly which holiday, or even which year), I was rudely awoken from my sleep while it was still dark outside. Groggy and unimpressed, I woke up to my dad telling us to go pack our suitcases because we were going on a trip. In utter confusion, I reluctantly obliged – we had only just arrived and unpacked.

In the commotion of packing while half awake, my dad excitedly explained that we were going to Turkey. "Why?!" we asked in bewilderment. It turns out, there had been an earthquake in Turkey and the flights and accommodations were dirt cheap. The discounts were just too good to pass up. We went to Turkey that night for a lovely impromptu family vacation.

In the book of Acts, the Lord tells Philip to travel south on the road from Jerusalem. On the way Philip meets an Ethiopian, a busy man on important business, who is doing his reading in transit.

The Spirit prompts Philip to approach the chariot where he overhears the Ethiopian reading a passage from Isaiah. Curious to the meaning of the passage, the Ethiopian invites Philip into his chariot where Philip shares the Gospel. The Ethiopian accepts Christ. Along the way, they come up to a pool of water. The Ethiopian orders his chariot to stop and they make their way to down to the water. Philip baptizes the Ethiopian and they part ways. Philip makes the most of the opportunity, like my dad jumping at the discounted airfare to Turkey.

I continually observed this "let's go" attitude in my parents during their time overseas; they were willing to follow where the Lord was leading. The influx of Chinese workers in their mission field opened an opportunity too good for them to pass up. They organized tours, baptizing believers and witnessing to those interested in seeing the sights. Their tent pole Chinese New Year celebrations brought in people from across the country. They

planted and grew the church, training leaders to teach others. Years later, many of the workers who came to Christ returned home continuing to spread the gospel and some have even moved into full time ministry.

I had the privilege of accompanying them to the makeshift work camps – thrown together with shipping containers – and watched them seize every opportunity to preach the Gospel. Sharing in their experience left a lasting impression. It revealed that the relationships God entrusts in our lives are with purpose and that each of our interactions can have eternal repercussions. Our part in this is to be mindful of the Spirit and to share the gospel whenever the need arises.

Wherever, Whenever

While my parents served overseas, I was asked if I would follow in their footsteps one day. I struggled with the answer towards the end of my time at boarding school. Clarity came one afternoon by way of a teacher sharing his view on ministry. He summarized the fundamental elements of ministry in three words: head, heart and hands.

With our heads, we seek to understand the Living Word and reflect on the teachings of the gospel. In that we learn of the character of God, our identity in Christ, repentance from sin and the power of His saving grace.

With our hearts, we grow in the knowledge of the Lord, which compels us to have faith and believe in the death and resurrection of Christ, the forgiveness of sin and in salvation through the Cross. In our desire to be reconciled with God, we develop compassion for those who are also in need of a Saviour.

With our hands, we put to action the convictions of our hearts. Relying on the Spirit, we are equipped to step forward in the service of others and share the message of Christ.

The lesson resonates with me to this day.

I did not follow in my parents' footsteps, per se. I returned to Canada after finishing up at boarding school and went on to earn a degree after years of study. From there I ventured to work in my field of study, planting roots and starting a family of my own.

While I am not in full time ministry, I am engaged in ministry full time. My duty is to act as an ambassador of Christ to my family, to my

workplace, and to the local community. Not every mission field is some distant place and at times, even that can feel quite foreign. Regardless of our vocation, we all have the access and the means to step into areas that are in need of Christ's grace and love. We should endeavour to take every opportunity to reach out- despite the setting- and exemplify the characteristics of Christ, praying that those within our sphere of influence come to have a relationship with God.

As followers of Christ, some are called to be both fishers of men and fishermen. Catching fish and sharing the gospel are all part of the Lord's work, after all. Paul reminds us as much, writing, "...whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him." (Colossians 3:17).

Because of who we are in Christ, we are all uniquely equipped to share His love with everyone we come across. God provides opportunities to reach those who might not otherwise have the chance to hear the message of salvation – whether it's friends, co-workers or unreached people groups. It remains for us to be open to the prompting of the Spirit and with the conviction of our hearts, accept the call into the mission field of His choosing, whether at home or abroad.

7. A Few Originally Composed Hymns

Background of Composition

I always wanted to write a song for Jerusalem before leaving Jerusalem.

Then on January 29, 2004, a serious suicide bombing occurred again on a public bus in Jerusalem.

When I heard the news, I was overcome with sadness for the longsuffering of Jerusalem. I decided to wait no longer and wrote the lyrics to, "Golden Jerusalem". Later, I also composed "Jerusalem, May You Have Peace".

1) Golden Jerusalem

Lyrics: Ruth Teo

Music: Francy Shao

(1)

Golden light reflecting under the setting sun, O golden Jerusalem!



Why do bustling crowds hurry along?
Like an outsider, I trod along in this city,
Everything so familiar yet so strange.
I wish to sit below the high walls and ponder,
I wish to grasp the passing time moment by moment.
Pilgrims along the Path of Passion with weary steps,
People in overwhelming reverence before the empty tomb.

(2)

At night, the Holy City is like a crown;
Little lights appear as inlaid precious stones.
Below the Wailing Wall, tears are never dry;
Faces of suffering families under the flickering candlelight.
The rocks silently recite millenniums of change,
Telling past wars, today's turmoil, and tomorrow's glory.
In the air echoes an eventful history,

O Jerusalem, may you have peace, may those who love you prosper.

(3.

At departure, I can only lovingly look back,
Jerusalem, when will I come back to your side?
How the mountains surround Jerusalem,
So the Lord surrounds His people.
May the Lord bless you from Zion,

May the Lord bless you from Zion,
May you forever see the benefits of the Holy City.
Day and night, you are on the heart of so many,
O Jerusalem, I shed tears for you, I sing songs for you.

(4)

I seem to see the new Jerusalem descending from heaven, I seem to see my new name written on it.

Peace is no longer a wishful thought, do not be sad,

The Lord will teach His way to all nations.

I see peoples of many nations coming together,
The sound of praising the Lord rings loudly everywhere.
O city gates, open to welcome your King,
Jerusalem, the city I love, and I long for that city.

(Chorus)

Jerusalem, Jerusalem, lift up your head and sing: Hosanna to the Lamb! Hosanna to the triumphant King!

2) Jerusalem, May You Have Peace

Lyrics: Ruth Teo Music: Francy Shao

(1)

O Children of Jerusalem, hear me sing; Sing a song of peace, song of peace. As flags blue and white flying in bright sky, Young soldiers' spirits riding high. For three thousand years, too many tales passed; The Lord gathered you, now scatter no more. You are the dear apple of God's eye, And sheep of His pastureland.

(2)

O Children of Jerusalem, hear me sing;
Sing a comfort song, comfort song.
In the streets long, long ago thund'ring tanks roared;
And the gates now with bullet holes pierced.
The Lord shall turn wailing to joyful dance,
Your sackcloth stripped off, with joy clothed again.
At the Mount of Olives also wept our Lord,
As He viewed Jerusalem.

(3)

O Children of Jerusalem, hear me sing;
Sing a blessing song, blessing song.
For years of storms weathered these ancient walls,
With the night breeze, the harp's music soared.
May you know God, blessings bestowed upon you;
May you exalt Him that all people will be blessed.
May the Lord your God's blessings from heav'n descend,
May He give you the Promised Land.

Chorus:

Shalom! Shalom! Jerusalem! City of Peace is your name.



Shalom! Shalom! Jerusalem! May you have peace!

3) Morning at the Sea of Galilee

One time, Jonathan and I led a group of pastoral co-workers to hold a retreat near the Sea of Galilee. On the second day, I felt that coming to Galilee was a rare opportunity so I woke up early and walked alone by the shore of the lake, not far from the campsite.

Unconsciously, thoughts, words, and music floated into my mind. I put words to the tune of an old Irish folk song. This hymn "Morning at the Sea of Galilee" was written.

Whenever in a meeting, I ask brothers and sisters to meditate on the words of this hymn and then I sing the hymn with a calm heart, and there are always listeners with tears.

Lyrics: Ruth Teo

Music: Danny Boy (Old Irish folk song)

(1)

Your glorious pow'r is like the rising morning sun, Rays bright and warm shine over all the earth. Your grace appears like crystal clear lake water, Immense and deep beyond our measure.

Long long ago, the Lord walked on this lakeshore, Until today, the saints still follow Him. The Lord of harvest still is calling out today, He's calling you to give your life to follow Him.

(2)

Shells on the shore tell me the briefness of our life, Birds singing songs, they praise your faithfulness, Footprints on sand confirm your near abiding, The drying nets remind me of your charge.

Seen or unseen, I only seek the Lord's smile, To east or west, I'll follow in your steps.

Till vict'ry song, the golden gates open for me;

The dear Lord calls: "Faithful servant, welcome home!"

4) You are Lord of the Harvest

This song was written at the time of my personal devotion. Lyrics and Music: Ruth Teo

Summary of the Chapter

[This Way]

Whenever we recall the past, we are amazed to see how our prayers have been fulfilled by the Lord since the day of our willingness to completely give our lives to God, and our willingness to go to the frontline in missions through prayer and commitment. We lived a wonderful and rich life for over ten years, all because of God's grace and mercy.

We like the hymn "This Way" sung by the Heavenly Melody Singing Group. While this song is not long, it has a deep meaning.

I walk through the most blessed way, the way of following,

Letting your hand guide every step in life.

I walk through the most joyful way, the way of relying,

Handing over every day to be cared by your heart.

Denying myself, yet more broad; letting go, yet more secure;

Beyond imagination, wonderful and rich, I follow you on this way.

(Lyrics: Linda Yeh; Music: Johnny Wen)

This is the way of a follower. As a consequence of the will to follow, there is reliance, self-denial, and letting go. When you walk in this way, there are gains and losses, ups and downs. Yet, when you look back, you find that you have been constantly led by the Lord, guarded by the Lord.

As a result of walking in the Way, life becomes more secure, more wonderful, more rich beyond imagination. Jesus walks side-by-side with us in this way. It is so true, so beautiful, so full of blessing and gratitude. It is very joyful. It is joy with tears. Is it contradictory? No, not at all.

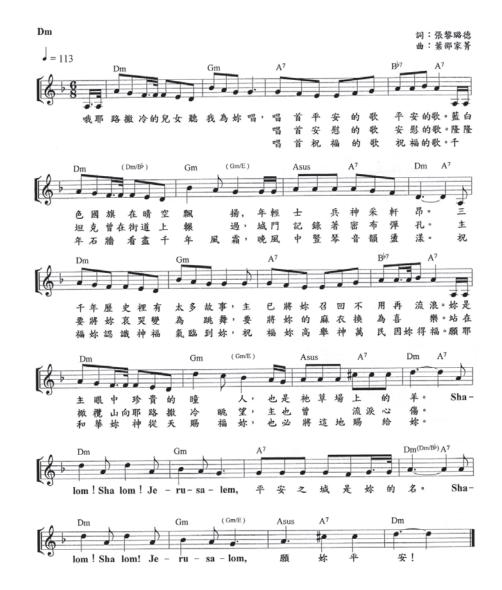
This way is the way of being chosen, the way of being blessed, the way of no regret.

金色的耶路撒冷





耶路撒冷, 願妳平安



加利利之晨



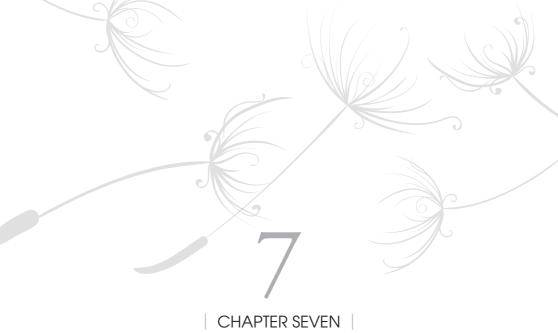
祢是莊稼的主



You are Lord of the harvest, I stand plead- ing to you. Send out your- labourers, fields are white and ripe You are Lord of the harvest, I lift up my hands to you. Great mission of the gospel, place it firmly in my soul.

Don't let me idle, nor let my heart be cold- O look to the mountain. see the lost sheep no place to go. You are Lord of the harvest, O strengthen your children's hands. Joyfully we bring back home- all buckets full.





AN UNFINISHED SYMPHONY

1. A Sequel to the Gospel Ministry in Israel

The Returned Believers' Fellowship

In 1999, when we visited the brothers who had returned to China from Israel, Jonathan was planning ways to help the returning brothers continue to attend church and grow spiritually. He gathered some returning brothers to pray and they decided to meet for prayer and fellowship regularly and to celebrate at the Spring Festival together in the Fujian province.

With that, the "Returned Believers' Fellowship" began in Brother Zhang's home.

The objective of the fellowship was to welcome brothers who have returned home from Israel so that they will have a buffer before joining a church. The reason is that many who became believers in Israel were accustomed to the Tel Aviv Church. When they return to China, they have to join the Three-Self churches or house churches and need to adapt to a new church. The Returned Believers' Fellowship is intended to reduce dropout rates and to help the returning brothers and sisters find a place to go to be built up in the Lord. After a period of time, they can then join local churches and become a blessing to that church.

In 2007, the fellowship was led by Brother Weng. A co-workers committee was set up in 2015, led by Brother Chen. They had Bible study and prayer meetings every week and had a Spring Festival Revival and Gospel Meeting every year. Participants sometimes came from many provinces. The attendance ranged from a few dozen up to 400 people.

Today, there are fellowships in different cities in Fujian, Anhui, Jiangsu, and Shandong provinces. Many have Spring Festival meetings where the brothers and sisters living in different provinces reunite to fellowship together.

In recent years, Jonathan has invited speakers for the meetings. Once, the Returned Believers' Fellowship members fasted and prayed for a month for the speakers and the meetings.

In Fujian, there was a period of time when many workers came from Sichuan Province. The Returned Believers' Fellowship brothers preached the gospel to them and there were about 200 who believed in the Lord, so a brother opened his second floor home for meetings. Some even visited them in Sichuan

after they left.

There have been some returning brothers who have dropped out, but there are also others who have been witnessing for the Lord in various workplaces. Some have become full time pastors and one brother opened a 100-bed retirement home.

The gospel ministry in Israel has not remained in Israel. Many brothers and sisters have carried the gospel back to China and other places in the world. This is called reverse missions in missiology. God led many young people, who previously never went to church in China, to church in Israel. Having their lives changed by the gospel, they returned home to be good husbands and fathers, and a blessing for the church in China.

The modern Chinese Church often mentions cross-cultural missions of taking the gospel back to Jerusalem. Unexpectedly, Chinese churches were already established 20 years ago in several major cities in Israel.

Remote Pastoring

In 2010, Jonathan was invited by the Tel Aviv Church to be their Advisory Pastor. He gladly agreed. Although we couldn't always be in Israel, we participated in their co-workers meetings and prayed together through videoconferences. We sent them information and discussed church business with them through email and social media. Although we were far from each other, we felt connected with them.

In what way can we help the Tel Aviv Church? While we participate in their regular meetings, provide suggestions for their activities, discuss urgent matters, we also help with one important item: finding short-term missions teams for the church. The arrival of short-term missions teams is always an exciting event. Now, when Jonathan preaches in churches, he always remembers to encourage brothers and sisters to join short-term missions to Israel. He then contacts people who have indicated their willingness to go. He explains to them what short-term missions members should know. He uses telephone, email, and videoconferencing to coordinate between short-term missions teams and the church.

Short-term missions can help the church for short periods but Jonathan also encourages brothers and sisters to pray for a full time pastor for the Tel Aviv Church. Short-term missions members are mobile as they all have their own



jobs and can only work for a short time. The church really needs a pastor to be responsible for comprehensive care, overall planning and promotion.

Unfinished Symphony

In 2008, the Tel Aviv Church celebrated their tenth anniversary. They invited us to participate. I wrote the following short article to express our deepest feelings:

There is a common saying: "unable to use words to express". There is another saying: "Great grace does not need any thanks". Sometimes, human words cannot fully express the feeling of the heart. Take for example, the amazing world of nature and the innocent smile of a child. Who can fully describe them with words?

Our days in Israel were not very long but neither were they short. Yet they were the most memorable period in our lives. If we want to talk about this period, we could talk without pause for 3 days and 3 nights. We could write a book about it. Every name represents a face and a story. Every photo represents a historic moment...

We can talk without end about how hard we worked in Israel, how many places we visited, how many meetings we organized, how many people we led to Christ, how many people we baptized, how many Bible study materials we printed, how many spiritual books and tapes we distributed.

However, these numbers are not important. When a person believes in Christ, follows Him, and serves Him, that is most important, and only the Lord knows about this.

This was a period of separation and gathering, a period of tears and abundant harvest.

This was a period of war and peace, a period of difficulties and joyful days.

Although we have left, God has not left. The church is God's and He continues to dispense blessings. He continues to add the number of saved people to the church. The brothers and sisters bear the burden of the church, practice loving the church, serving the Lord and the people, showing faith and commitment. All these are truly commendable.

This is an unfinished symphony. Before we came, the concert had already started. We came just to play the music that God wanted us to play.

After we left, the concert still has continued. In times of success or in times of difficulty, we need to trust God. God composed the music and is also the chief conductor. We are only His instruments. We only serve to our best and offer our best effort at His appointed time. Let all the applause be dedicated to Him.

The thing that we want to say most is thanks.

We thank God for giving us a part in the gospel ministry among Chinese in Israel.

We thank all of you who have toiled and worked with us in Israel, including Chinese and non-Chinese co-workers. We thank God that He put us together to serve, to testify to the wonderful work of God. May the Lord accept and remember your service. Your service with us is our joy.

We thank each co-worker in the co-workers committee who have worked over the years. You spent your time meeting to plan various meetings and activities. You took up the responsibilities of various departments in the church. You prayed for the church, cried for the church, and worried about the church. You bore the burden of expanding and watching over the church. May you experience the faithfulness and grace of God on your ministry. May you build a foundation for your future service through what you learn in this church. May God be pleased with your offering.

To every brother and sister who came to this church, welcome. No matter what the reason that led you here, may you enjoy the fellowship. May you learn truth and feel the love of God and the people here. The church was established for you.

We thank all the brothers and sisters who helped the Chinese gospel ministry in Israel through prayer, offerings, short-term missions, and assisting the work directly or indirectly. Thank you for your love for this group of overseas compatriots based on the love of our Lord.

The Tel Aviv Church does not have their own building but the brothers and sisters are God's living stones and God's invisible church. When you disperse to different places in the world, you bring the gospel to different countries and different places. Isn't this God's will?

Our prayer is: "establish the work of our hands upon us; yes, establish the work of our hands!" (Psalm 90:17)



We left Israel in 2004. In the autumn of 2005, Elder and Mrs. Kien Wong accepted the invitation of the co-workers committee to help the Tel Aviv Church. They left the co-workers committee in February 2009 but continued to help the church to lead the sacraments. Pastor Alfred Lai took up the work of the Christian education department in 2006, leading Bible studies and training. Mrs. Lai became the chairperson of the church committee from September 2012 to the end of 2013. Pastor Sophia Guo started serving at the church in 2009, leading sacred music and the youth fellowship. These people have moved on from ministry at the Tel Aviv church.

The Lord continued to send short-term missions teams and co-workers to come to teach and help. When the church encountered important issues that they needed to deal with, the US Association of Chinese Alliance Churches sent co-workers to help. During this time, the church continued to lead people to Christ, baptize them, and equip them to be disciples.

Around the year 2000, Israel sent thousands of Chinese workers back to China; some of them illegally employed workers. Later, the Israeli government stopped the recruitment for new workers from China. In those next few years, there were more people leaving than coming. Now, the number of Chinese working in Israel is down to only a few thousand.

The housing demand in Israel is high. Housing price have risen 118% in Israel in the last 10 years (timesofisrael.com. Dec 2017). There is a shortage of experienced local construction workers in Israel and in Palestine. To solve the housing crisis, Israel borrows construction workers from China. In the eyes of Israelis, Chinese construction workers are an experienced labour force with good skills. An analysis reported that the average time required to construct tall buildings is 20-30% less if the construction involved Chinese workers. Chinese workers are known to be hardworking and the cost to hire Chinese workers is lower than hiring local workers.

There is the prospect that a new wave of Chinese workers will arrive in Israel. The Israeli Interior Ministry and the Ministry of Finance jointly announced that beginning in 2017 they would recruit 6,000-20,000 Chinese construction workers in the next few years. They will receive multi-year work visas.

When this new wave of Chinese workers arrives, some of them may be Christians. We pray that the church will grow and ministries will be strengthened and that the arrival of non-believing workers will renew efforts in evangelism.

Over the last 20 years, there have always been new Chinese people from different countries appearing in Israel. Some may study in the universities or Bible seminaries while others may work in various occupations. There is always a continuous stream of Chinese tourists coming to Israel. We believe that the future for Chinese Christians to worship and praise in the Holy Land will be fruitful.

2. Short-term missions and Long-Term Missions

Living Missions Workers

On one occasion, we were invited to a church to speak at their annual missions conference. A brother said, "Aha, it is great to see living missions workers!" I thought, what is the meaning of "living missions workers"? Should missions workers be "dead"? Perhaps it was the first time that this church invited missions workers to preach. I was hoping that this was a new brother who had never had the opportunity to listen to preaching on missions.

There are many well-known missions workers such as David Livingstone, who went to Africa, James Hudson Taylor, who went to China and William Carey who went to India. These people have all passed away. Are there living missions workers today?

Can you name some living missions workers of today and also the place where they spread the gospel?

A name that we should know is Dr. William Cassidy. He was the first missions worker sent by the Alliance Church at the end of the 19th century. He was originally a medical doctor in Toronto. While on his trip to China, he suffered from smallpox and died, being unable to fulfil his wish. Yet his death stimulated many more sparks for missions.

There is a set of books that we all should have. They record stories of missions workers sent by the Canadian Alliance Church, compiled by Dr. Ronald Brown and Dr. Charles Cook. The title is Ordinary People Leading Extraordinary Lives. The first volume is already published. It tells the stories of missions workers sent to different areas in the world during the first 100 years of the Canadian Alliance Church. The second volume will be published in 2018 and the third volume in 2020. These latter two volumes tell the stories of more

recent missions workers. (See https://extraordinarystories.ca/ for information.)

It is good for a church to maintain its operation every week, to organize meetings and activities for the church and the community, and to lead people to Christ. Yet, at the same time, the church must not forget to intentionally train theology students, pastors, and missions workers. The church can often share news of missions workers sent out by other churches and pray for them. It is even better if the church can pray for missions workers sent out by their own church.

If a church has been established for some years and yet is unable to send out its own missions workers or pastors, then the church should earnestly ask the Lord to move them to get involved in world-wide missions. Jesus commanded that you should go out to the world. This command has not been changed for 2,000 years. Then why is no one hearing this command and putting it into practice? Or is it because people hear it and let this command pass them by? A church usually provides annual financial support for various evangelistic organizations. Can we be assured that some of the resources are used to support theology students from with our own churches, or missions workers sent out by our own church? It is important to help train fishers of men from among ourselves. This should be the urgent prayer and joy of every church.

When I was in Israel, I met a brother who said that he would work as a pastor when he returned to China. When I asked him "why", he responded that one day before he had become a Christian, he passed by a small house church. He heard the sound of sobbing from inside. He went in to take a look and found a few old women meeting. They were earnestly praying to God for more young people to join their church. God touched the heart of this young brother and gave him the desire to be the successor at that church.

"Mission" is not an antiquated term nor is it only for the West. In North America, there are missions conferences and missions workers in Cantonese-speaking and English-speaking churches. Now, there are lots of Mandarin-speaking immigrants from the Chinese Mainland. There are Mandarin churches that organize local gospel camps, gospel conferences, and disciple training camps. We are praying for and waiting for Mandarin-speaking brothers and sisters to organize missions conferences and to send Mandarin-speaking missions workers to work all over the world.

Short-term missions

Modern transportation and information dissemination have been well-developed. The sending of short-term missions teams by churches has become quite common. Mission efforts can be classified as follows: missions of less than one year are short-term missions; missions of 1-3 years are medium-term missions; missions of 4 years or more are long-term missions.

Is it true that those who participate in short-term missions will later join long-term missions? It is true for some but not all. Some who go to long-term missions may be the result of being touched by special events, such as reading the Bible, being acquainted with missions workers, participating in a missions camp or a missions prayer meeting, or reading biographies of missions workers. It is good to encourage church members to read more missions biographies as they can bring heavy-hearted feelings, or feelings of extreme enthusiasm or amazement.

In some places, entry visas can easily obtained for professionals. Therefore, brothers and sisters with a profession should be encouraged to seek opportunities to work abroad and serve as missions workers for a few years. Skills in health care, accounting, information technology, teaching, agriculture, business, engineering and other occupations can positively impact different regions practically. Spiritually, we can seek the Lord's guidance to touch people's lives, widen our life experience and also help local missions workers.

I asked a Chinese scholar who became a pastor what made him decide to dedicate his life to Christ. He said that an elderly non-Chinese sister paid for his expenses to participate in a gospel conference where he raised his hand to dedicate himself to full-time ministries during the call. Someone has made the following suggestion: if you know that you cannot go to long-term missions, and you feel that going to short-term missions many times is not productive, then you can consider using the expenses needed for your trips to pay for the travelling expenses of another person who has the potential of going to long-term missions. These can be used for that person's short-term missions trips or for participation of a missions conference.

Long-Term Missions

Just imagine, if Hudson Taylor, William Carey, and David Livingstone had decided to just go to short-term missions, then the mission histories of China,



India, and Africa would be drastically different.

Short-term missions cannot replace long-term missions. Short-term missions are like guerrilla battles. If you want to win a war, you need troops who stay in place. Missions is a noble, honourable, and sacred call and is worthwhile for the dedication of an entire life. Someone may argue: let me wait until my children finish university studies, or let me wait until I accumulate sufficient pension funds, then I will wait for the call from Jesus.

People who need the gospel cannot wait.

The migrant workers in Israel now are different from the migrant workers 20 years ago. Today, most of them will have computers or smartphones. When the church goes to preach the gospel at worksites in the evening, many workers will be watching Chinese dramas on their computers and not come out to listen to the gospel. At the Spring Festival, they can watch celebrations in China on their computers and not swarm to church for Spring Festival celebrations. Taking all these into consideration, does it mean that it is impossible to spread the gospel among the Chinese in Israel? It is still possible, but it will require a change in the way it is done, based on what the workers need.

The gospel ministry among the Chinese in Israel is like a legend. It was done at an opportune moment, at the right place, and with the presence of people spreading the gospel. This was the so-called "window of opportunity". It was a fleeting opportunity.

There's a Chinese proverb that says: "Some people say that opportunity is like a naughty child who has some hair on his forehead. When he comes, you have to grab him. If he passes by, you will not be able to grab him as the back of his head is bare." In other words, don't miss this window of opportunity.

I read an article titled Missions Worker without a Call, which I will remember forever. In the article, someone asked the missions worker, "How did God call you to be a missions worker?" He said, "I don't have a call." The person wondered why he did not have a call. He said, "Why do I need a special call? Isn't it true what Jesus said clearly in the Bible: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations. Isn't this a call?"

How do you know that God chose you? If you feel that doing any other thing in the world is less important than leading people to Christ, and if you cannot experience peace except by walking the road of dedication, then it is

likely that God's call has come to you.

In the book Travelling 30,000 Miles in Africa, the Biography of Livingstone (written by Zhang Wenliang, Dunhuang Publishing House, 2000), we can see the traces of a Christian family touched by grace. A few paragraphs are included here:

In 1835, Livingstone read the book Appeal of China, written by Karl Friedrich August Gützlaff (1803-1851), a Dutch missions worker. It reads,

"Listen! From the harvest field in China, there are cries from thousands and more people who have never heard the gospel. Why do we respond with just a sigh? Where are the missions workers? Why are there so few overseas missions workers?"

These words pierced Livingstone's heart. He later wrote,

"My life is to liberate human souls. There can be no other choice. I will reach this goal with all my strength, to equip myself."

When the door to China was closed, Livingstone planned to go to Africa. He wrote to his family,

"I don't care about where God will use me. I only care that God is using me. For God's call, I am willing to keep myself in holiness. I will be faithful in the work before me."

The night before Livingstone left home, his father stayed with him drinking tea. His father murmured,

"May God have mercy on the rich people in Glasgow. Let them know that donating money to support overseas gospel missions and missions workers is more worthy than wasting money on hunting and horse-racing."

These words should be told to us as believers. Am I a good steward, using the money that God gave us to invest in the more worthwhile missions work which has eternal values?

Livingstone later wrote,

"I have never seen my father walk so slowly. After I got on the train, I saw my father's lonely shadow standing on the platform but I must firmly go forward."



This was the last time he saw his father. It was a reluctant separation for father and son. Both of their hearts moved toward the altar of dedication. They did not retain for themselves their most cherished people.

3. Where is the Next Relay Runner?

Robert Morrison went to China when he was 25 years old. David Livingstone went to Africa when he was 28. Hudson Taylor went to China when he was 22. S. Zwemer went to the United Arab Emirates when he was 23. R. Jaffray went to China when he was 24. E. Stanley went to India when he was 23.

People say that today's young people are willing to go to short-term missions but not long-term missions. Some are not willing because they have not been truly touched by the Lord of missions. Some may be avoiding the call. One time, we were talking with two good friends, a couple, about mission matters. We were lamenting that very few young people are dedicated to God's work. A young woman, their daughter, was also there listening. She might have been thinking about being one of those young people too, because eventually, she went for missions work overseas.

If God touched young people of the past, He surely can touch young people of today. Sometimes, it is not because young people do not want to go out. Rather, it is because people are not willing to support them. Young people, who intend to be missions workers, must be careful about choosing a spouse. A spouse who does not have the passion for missions will pull a dedicated person back. Those who are parents or a spouse should thank God for the child or the spouse whom God has chosen.

In 2013, the C&MA in Canada had over 200 missions workers. The average age was 49. The increasing age of missions workers is now a serious problem. Many missions workers are already grandparents. These elderly missions workers will retire in the next 10 to 20 years. If there are no young people or middle-aged people replacing them, the ranks of missions workers will decrease. Perhaps some people can retire early to be missions workers. The Lord can use people of any age.

Desmond Doss, the conscientious objector portrayed in the movie Hacksaw Ridge, was unique for not carrying firearms on the battlefield. One night, when he was totally exhausted, he carried 75 wounded soldiers from the battlefield

down a slope, relying on this prayer: "Please Lord, help me get one more!"

Do we have a heart for saving people's souls? "Please Lord, help me get one more!"

Every day, the sun rises and sets, but the world is not always the same. Every day, millions of people perish. Do Christians truly believe that Jesus is the only way, the truth, and the life? The best gift that a Christian can give to another person is the gospel of atonement and repentance. It calls people to accept Jesus. It allows the imprisoned to find liberty. It allows them to have a higher goal in life because of the Lord. It allows them to have a completely renewed life and the hope of eternal life. It is true that "Millions of souls wait to hear the gospel." (Hymns of Life, no.250, Chinese words)

4. When the Disease Struck

Every moving story seems to have a low point in the plot. What would happen if an eagle is forced to stop soaring? What would happen if a horse is forced to stop galloping?

There is a saying: "A hero is scared of being grounded by illness." Whether it is the hero or a minor character, when disease strikes, many things are delayed.

When we watched the video recording of the Spring Festival celebration for 2003, we noticed that as Jonathan welcomed guests from the different provinces in China, his hand that held the guest list was trembling. At that time, he said that he had lost his sense of smell. He felt pain in his shoulder and he could not lift his arm. At first, his pain was treated as common 'shoulder tightening of the fifties'. In 2004, we returned to Canada where a specialist diagnosed his illness as Parkinson's Disease. All the previous symptoms were precursors of the disease. He was only in his 40s at the time.

Over the next 10 years, he took various medications a few times every day. The disease appeared to be stabilized. He would tremble if he missed his medication, but the disease did not slow down the pace of his ministry. After leaving Israel, he continued to serve in three different countries. For each of these ministries, he needed to initiate the work, adapt to the environment, develop the ministry, and then leave. All these consumed his body and his energy.

In 2010, he accepted the Tel Aviv Church's invitation to be the advisory pastor.



In 2012, his health quickly worsened and he was allowed to return to Canada. In Canada, he preached in many churches, promoting missions, counselling brothers and sisters, and encouraging young co-workers.

In 2015, after a year of testing, Jonathan received surgery for 'Deep Brain Stimulation'. Multiple incisions were made in and on his head during surgery. After the surgery, the wounds was closed with over 40 staples. Inside his forehead, two electrical wires with electrodes were inserted and linked to a battery placed in his right chest. There is a manual control to adjust the strength of the electricity based on the condition of the disease. The surgery was intended to reduce Jonathan's trembling and his use of medication. Now, Jonathan can be described as a person relying on a battery to live. Without the battery, he would tremble uncontrollably.

Deep Brain Stimulation mitigates symptoms but is not a cure for Parkinson's; the disease can continue to worsen. Even after the surgery, Jonathan still requires regular checkups. He is easily tired and his voice is weak. During this time, he preached while sitting down. Sometimes, he would still joke by saying, "Don't let my grandchildren take my battery control."

In the summer of 2016, during a workshop at a summer camp, Jonathan was not able to continue in the middle of the lecture, so I had to use his notes to complete the lecture. Many people in the audience who knew him shed tears quietly. Another time, when Jonathan was invited to preach, he was still able to speak during dinner but could not say a word just before the meeting; again, I had to use his sermon script to preach. After this, whenever someone invited him to preach, he doubted his ability to speak. Recently, after the doctor made an adjustment to the electric flow, Jonathan has regained the ability to speak, though still with difficulty.

An experienced pastor who witnessed Jonathan's work in Israel said that the amount of Jonathan's workload, plus his untiring drive for ministry, was equivalent to the workload for five persons. A person who is willing to serve God, who does not reserve his strength when he is strong, who continues to toil for God, now has to stop because of sickness. Who can understand his inner feelings? He is not yet at retirement age but his physical and mental strength are insufficient to handle normal pastoral work. How will he be able to work in the future?

From 1990 to today, Jonathan has worked as a pastor and a missions worker

IOVE BEYOND HORIZON for 27 years. In addition to his 3 years of studies, he has been in the Alliance Church for 30 years. Thanks to the grace of the Lord and thanks to the grace of the C&MA in Canada, the present arrangement is for Jonathan to continue to be an official missions worker. His work is to coordinate the connection between missions workers and churches, to assist in the linkage churches and the missions agency, to provide consultation for churches in missions matters, and to counsel co-workers. We ask the Lord to provide the grace of healing.

If you were to ask Jonathan what his thoughts now that he has this disease, he would say that he does not think much about himself. He just hopes that brothers and sisters will work more for the Lord while they have the opportunity, while having the light of day and good physical health. He would also say that when a missions worker is forced to leave the mission field, we can pray that there will be more missions workers to fill the vacancy.

5. Here I Am; Please Send Me

Isaiah 6:8: "And I heard the voice of the Lord saying, 'Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?' Then I said, 'Here am I! Send me.'"

[Equipping Needed for Missions workers]

Denis Lane listed 10 basic requirements for missions worker by missions agencies and 8 other requirements. [Denis Lane, tr. Liu Rujing, A Handbook for Missions: Church, Missionary Agencies, Missions workers (Taipei, Campus Press, 1991), 31-41.]

- 10 basic requirements by missions agencies:
- (1) a clear call for missions
- (2) a matured spiritual life
- (3) a servanthood mentality
- (4) able to self-discipline
- (5) possessing enthusiasm to spread the gospel
- (6) willing to share with others (spiritual gift and technique)
- (7) experienced in life and service
- (8) good emotional management
- (9) able to adapt to different environments

(10) willing to learn a new language

8 other requirements:

- (1) experienced in following through on work
- (2) experienced in developing new work
- (3) experienced in team work
- (4) experienced in human relations
- (5) willing to listen
- (6) accepted by others
- (7) ability to communicate
- (8) power to manage one's home well

In addition, the C&MA in Canada added a few requirements for missions workers:

- Canadian citizenship
- Membership in an Alliance Church
- Acceptance of the Statement of Faith of the C&MA in Canada
- For married applicants, similar requirements for the spouse in terms of burden for missions and completing related courses
- complete the Alliance History and Thoughts course
- complete the Kairos or The Perspectives course

[A Selection of Famous Missions Quotes]

May the following famous missions quotes that have touched many people should also touch you and me.

Only one life, 'twill soon be past, Only what's done for Christ will last.

- Charles Thomas Studd

To know the will of God, we need an open Bible and an open map.

– William Carey

I have but one candle of life to burn, and I would rather burn it out in a land filled with darkness than in a land flooded with light.

Ion Keith-Falconer

No one has the right to hear the gospel twice, while there remains someone who has not heard it once.

- Oswald J. Smith



The mark of a great church is not its seating capacity, but its sending capacity.

— Mike Stachura If Jesus Christ be God and died for me, then no sacrifice can be too great for me to make for Him.

— C.T. Studd This generation of Christians is responsible for this generation of souls on

earth.

— Keith Green

God isn't looking for people of great faith, but for individuals ready to follow Him.

— James Hudson Taylor

God had only one Son and he made that Son a missionary.

– David Livingstone

Tell the students to give up their small ambitions and come eastward to preach the gospel of Christ.

— Francis Xavier

Missions is not the ultimate goal of the church. Worship is. Missions exists because worship doesn't.

— John Piper

What are we here for, to have a good time with Christians or to save sinners?

- Malla Moe

He is no fool who gives up what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose.

- Jim Elliot

Let my heart be broken with the things that break God's heart.

- Bob Pierce

We must be global Christians with a global vision because our God is a global God.

— John Stott

This movement stands for a commitment to reach the most neglected fields, to avoid the beaten tracks of other labourers, to press on to the regions beyond and instead of building upon another man's foundation, to preach the Gospel where Christ has not been named."

– Albert Benjamin Simpson. Founder of the Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA)

O God, we implore You,

Come, transform us to be a group of Christ-centred,

Spirit-empowered, Mission-focused people,

Multiplying disciples everywhere.

– Our vision and prayer

Selected Bible Verses

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who dishonours you I will curse, and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

- Genesis 12:1-3

Those who sow in tears shall reap with shouts of joy! He who goes out weeping, bearing the seed for sowing, shall come home with shouts of joy, bringing his sheaves with him.

— Psalm 126:5-6

He says: "It is too light a thing that you should be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob and to bring back the preserved of Israel; I will make you as a light for the nations, that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."

- Isaiah 49:6

And Jesus went throughout all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every affliction. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the labourers are few; therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out labourers into his harvest."

- Matthew 9:35-38

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

- Matthew 24:14

Do you not say, 'There are yet four months, then comes the harvest'? Look, I tell you, lift up your eyes, and see that the fields are white for harvest.

- John 4:35

Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you."

— John 20:21

But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." - Acts 1:8

And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift

of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

- Acts 2:38-39

How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!"

— Romans 10:14-15

For the love of Christ controls us, because we have concluded this: that one has died for all, therefore all have died; and he died for all, that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised. -2 Corinthians. 5:14-15

After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands.

— Revelation 7:9

【Unreached People Group】

"Go therefore and make disciples of all nations." (Matthew 28:19a)

What does the Lord Jesus mean by "all nations"? Nations or People = ethne = ethnic groups. For example, Nigeria is a country, but it has 538 ethnic groups.

What is an unreached people group?

An unreached people group is a community that has a unique cultural, linguistic and/or social status, but there are not any Christians to preach the gospel to them or any other foreign influence. This group of people can only hear the message of salvation through witnesses coming from the outside their cultural group. Missiologists consider community where Christ's followers constitute less than 2% of the population as "unreached people group". According to the latest statistics in the Joshua Project database, the world now has 16,587 people groups. "Unreached people groups" constitute 40.6%, or 6,738 people groups.

One objective for the Alliance Church is to "develop a self-propagating church with an indigenous movement in an unreached people to glorify God". With limited resources and conditions, the C&MA chooses to spread the gospel to the following people groups:



- groups where the proportion of Christians is far less than 2% of the group
- groups with a population of more than 100,000
- groups where the ratio of the number of missions workers to the total population is less than 1: 50,000
- groups where the a ratio of local church population to the total population is less than 1:20,000

Who has heard the whisper of the Lord and a Macedonian call?

The one who loves God will love those whom God loves. Love is the heartbeat of missions. What can you do? Who will follow Jesus' footsteps and climb the mountains, joyfully bringing the Lord's sheep back to the Father's fold?

[Alliance Church = Alliance of Christians and Missions Workers]

Not everyone is a missions worker. A missions worker needs the support of the church and complementary to the church. The name Christian and Missionary Alliance (C&MA) means that Christians and Missions Workers work together to fulfil the Great Commission for the Lord. Therefore, everyone is needed and everyone is important. Everyone is pleasing to God.

"For as his share is who goes down into the battle, so shall his share be who stays by the baggage. They shall share alike." (1 Samuel 30:24)

Summary of the Chapter

This is an unfinished symphony with many instruments and performers. Our heavenly Father is the composer and the conductor. If his conducting baton points to us, but we do not respond with our instruments, won't the conductor and the audience be disappointed? He expects us to be watchful all the time. When it is our turn to perform, may we offer the timely, the most accurate, and the most beautiful music.

MY RESPONSE

After reading this book, do you feel inspired? If your heart has been moved, it is better for your hand to move and act accordingly.

Prayer

- · Pray for unreached peoples. Pray for missions workers.
- Joshua Project Database (in English): https://joshuaproject.net/
- Mission Daily (in Chinese): http://missionpathway.org/mp01.htm

Equipping

Attend missions conferences. Attend missions courses such as:

- Kairos kairoscourse.org OR
- Perspectives perspectives.org

Offering

You can donate through any Alliance church or online.

- C&MA in Canada
 30 Carrier Drive, Suite 100.
 M9W 5T7 Toronto. Ontario. Canada
- Global Advance Fund cmacan.org/give

Departure

(see envisioncanda.org for more information)

• Exploration Trip (7 to 10 days)

Make good use of your passion, expertise and experience. Go with your group to areas of need. Learn from the local workers and serve with them. In a local area or overseas.

• Short-term missions Internship (3 months to one year)

Whether you are a student or a career person with a flexible work schedule, participate in missions and use the time to discover God, His



world and yourself through a new viewpoint. Search to discover how God can use you in His kingdom in a local area or overseas.

· Mission Apprenticeship (2 years)

Under the guidance of C&MA General Missions, live the love of Christ, work among ethnic groups that rarely have heard about Christ, live among people who speak a different language in a different cultural environment. Explore and prepare for the possibility of working as a local worker for four years or more, or working as an missions worker.

· Departure to Overseas (4 years or more)

To serve as an missions worker of the C&MA in Canada, working among ethnic groups that rarely have heard about Christ, living in a different cultural and linguistic environment, living the love of Christ. Four different tracks are possible: building an indigenous church, workplace mission, social concern, and peer support.

[My Prayer]

Will you respond to the Lord of missions who knows you and deeply loves you with the following?

Lord Jesus, whenever, wherever, and whatever you ask me to do,
My definite answer is: I am willing!
No matter where you lead me to go, no matter how great the price,

Lord, I am willing.

If the Lord leads me to provide support from my home, I am fully willing to support and care about missions and missions workers, through prayer and offerings.

I am willing to be used by you until I hear from you at the end: "Good and faithful servant, Come in, and dine with me!"



Joy with the co-workers



↑ 7 Chinese ministry co-workers



- ↑ With Elder and Mrs. Leong Yin Chu
- → Short-term missions team co-workers
- ◆ One-day tour for co-workers





The Ministry begins

- **尽** Look up to the cross (construction crane)
- → Trailer dormitories
- Temporary worker brothers
- Rev. John Tsang, Missions worker Sally







Early church

- ↑ Floor tiling experts
- ← The first Spring Festival Celebration,
- ◆ Distributing gospel tracts outside McChina

 Ψ The pizza restaurant where two explosions occurred



Evangelism at construction sites

- Personal evangelism
- → Meeting at the construction site, eating buns prepared by the migrant workers
- lacksquare Meeting on the sand dune







 $\ensuremath{\uparrow}$ Gospel meeting inside a cafeteria





Evangelism at construction sites

- Gospel team for Saturday gospel meetings
- → Evangelism in an orchard on Golan Heights
- Evangelism at a workers' residence
- ◆ Ruth and short-term missions members at a construction site







Photo

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Evangelism for scholars

↑ Bible study for scholars on campus

→ A scholar in the laboratory

■ Bible class for scholars' children











- ↑ Washing each other's feet
- Prayer meeting at the Tel Aviv Church
- ☑ The first annual Missions Conference
- ◆ Dinner for co-workers at the pastor's house





Touring the Holy Land

- ↑ Touring Jerusalem
- Celebrating Easter in the Old City
- ≥ Explaining the history of Megiddo
- ◆ Touring the Dead Sea with 540 people in 10 buses





God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it.



Touring the Holy Land

- ↑ Touring the Dead Sea
- ∠ Camels and caravans in the wilderness
- ◆ Touring the Tank Museum





Touring the Holy Land

- Evangelism on the ferry in the Sea of Galilee
- → The 16 group leaders of the Red Sea Tour
- The blessed people on the Mount of Beatitudes
- ◆ The villagers of Nazareth









Baptism in the Jordan River

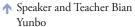
- ↑ Baptism in the Jordan River, 1999
- ← A happy day baptism of brothers in the Jordan River
- The light of baptism
- ◆ New creation baptism in the Jordan River, 2003



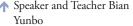


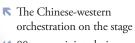
Spring Festival Celebration Gospel Meeting, 2002

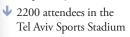




∠ 80-person joint choir











- ↑ Baptism testimonies
- Spring Festival Drama performed by migrant workers, scholars, and shortterm missions members
- ← A grand total of 3200 attendees in two gospel meetings
- ↓ 150 co-workers for the meetings





← Joint Missions Conference Nov 1997, Commissioning Service

As for me and my family

- → Baptism of Daniel Teo, our son
- → Baptism of Joyce Teo, our daughter
- Sending our children to their boarding school
- Photo at our departure





Only one life

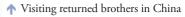


- ↑ Here I am, please send me
- ◆ Those among the soldiers





The Returned Believers' Fellowship



- Visiting the family members of returned brothers in China
- $\ensuremath{\boldsymbol{arepsilon}}$ Visiting returned brothers and sisters
- ◆ Spring Festival celebration of one of the Returned Believers' Fellowship



IOVE BEYOND HORIZON