

THE JOURNEY OF ENGLISH MINISTRY

The mandarin speaking congregation of TCCC first gained independence and established TMCCC in 1996. In 2000, with TCCC relocating to their new building, we were able to have our own church building at the Sheppard/Birchmount site. However, with unilingual Sunday Service in mandarin, there was still something missing! How do we accommodate our second generation who will be brought up speaking mainly English, and also how to reach out to our community who are mainly English speaking?

A few families like that of Daniel & Lu-Hwa Chan, Esther & Joseph Lai, Kee & Nancy Wong, and James & Rebecca Li, after much discussion and planning, started the first English Sunday Worship on 14th January 2001, in Room 23. The first sermon was delivered by Rev Bernard Ho, who was also our speaker in the early years of English Sunday Service.

Soon more families came and join in this noble effort, including those of Simon & Grace Shiu, Simon & Celia Wong, Bernard & Yee-Nee Li, and many others. God also provided helpers from outside the ACEM community, such as Tony and Karen Wang (Son-in-law and daughter of Elder Chester Hu and Mrs. Hu) who helped to kick off the first English fellowship meeting. Peter Koropatwa, a SIM missionary who had a passion in cross-culture evangelism, came to help out in pulpit ministry. He also introduced our young people the techniques of “Mime”, which resulted in a splendid performance at an ACEM mission conference.

True to our original intend, a Youth Fellowship was soon started for the children of the mandarin congregation. The Youth Fellowship flourished under the guidance of Grace Shiu and Kee Wong, who also acted as their counsellors. After much soul searching, the Teen Fellowship found itself a name – foHgo as in “for His Glory”. The leadership baton has recently passed onto Tim Kwan, who has been diligently shepherding this fellowship since.

In 2003 God sent his servant Rev. Joseph Ng all the way from Singapore; he was our first English Pastor. He showed us by example, the true meaning of humility and simple, frugal living. We were impressed by his down-to-earth attitude, and well spoken English, even with a Singaporean twang. He and his wife, Alicia, treated everyone warmly and cordially. Their three rambunctious young boys, John, Jordan and Joshua, to our great delight, wasted no time in adapting themselves to the new environment and our winter of snow and ice.

Pastor Joseph was keen on instilling Christian doctrines/apologetics through his sermons and preached in a scholarly yet passionate fashion. He taught us that there should not be compromise with pure Christian faith. Caring for his flock was paramount, even at the expense of his own family time. Many outreach programs were tried and the ESL (English as a Second language) program has benefitted many who came. Some even stayed on and joined the family of TMCCC, either in the Mandarin congregation or the English congregation. Under his leadership, fellowship among congregants flourished. He showed us good Christian fellowship needed not just took place within the sanctuary. He took us out of the confine of our church building and led us to many memorable trips including the Metro Zoo and the Rouge Park. Pastor Joseph and his family served in the English congregation for 3 years. The memories of their love and compassion for people lingers.

Next came Rev. Victor Lee, then Senior English Pastor of TCCC, who answered God's call and came to fill our need of an English Pastor for the next 10 years. He had a vision to build the small TMCCC English congregation into a ministry with native English speakers of different origins. He advocated for Small Groups Ministry, and strongly believed that Bible Studies and fellowship through small groups would nurture the desired spiritual growth and relational bonds. It is worth mentioning that, out of this approach, we have Hugh & Mary Rough, a SIM missionary couple, becoming a member of this small Christian family. Hugh diligently served us both as our frequent Sunday speaker and also Adult Sunday School teacher. We have wholeheartedly sponsored them as our ACEM missionary, and both are now being sent to South Africa for their mission work.

Together with his wife Joyce and their two daughters, Hannah and Jessica, the Lee's served TMCCC well in both English and Mandarin ministries. Their faithfulness and accountability will stay in our memories as good examples of servanthood. Towards the end of 2014, Pastor Victor then said goodbye to us and answered God's call to serve at another church.

On 31st January 2016, the English congregation held a "Revival Conference" conducted by Pastor Enoch Kwan. Pastor Enoch presented "the Essentials" that we should focus on to make the revival long-lasting and God-pleasing. It was such a timely encouragement that compelled us to press on. We are to move forward focusing on God's power and with "Christ-confidence".

With the coming and going of our English Pastor, we trust this is within the grand scheme of God's perfect will. We may feel anxious from time to time, however, we are constantly being reminded that God's grace is sufficient and His wisdom unfathomable. We continue to pray and patiently wait upon the Lord for our next English Pastor, asking Him to showing us what are our true congregational needs. On our own limited wisdom we find the needs are many, the answer will only be found down when we are on our bended knees.

Without an English Pastor to lead, and regardless of the lack of much needed manpower and resources, the small congregation of the TMCCC English Ministry with faith soldiers on. The ministry started up by just a few families with their teenage children and friends, still worked together always in harmony and unity. We found on many Sundays, unexpected newcomers would walk in and have themselves embraced with warmth and enthusiasm. We believe in time, God had shown us the type of ministry He wanted to plant in this location – irrespective of whether English is the mother tongue. We began to have visitors who normally would not set foot in a Christian church because of cultural, language background, age, etc. start making TMCCC English Ministry their spiritual home. We were amazed by what God has done to the English Ministry: turning an English speaking Chinese worship group, into a multi-dimensional congregant with diversity in language and culture.

May all the glory, honour and thanksgiving be to our Almighty God and Him alone!