



# First Quarter Newsletter



## Hong Kong Diary

Pastor Henry Mak

On March 12, Salina and I took a trans-Atlantic flight, crossing over Europe and Asia to arrive at the Hong Kong international airport after traveling for more than 17 hours. The trip could be considered as smooth and steady. We had planned to stay in Hong Kong for 12 days.

Stepping out of the restricted area, we were received by our eldest son. Salina was most elated to see her son after such a long wait. Looking at his large body habitus, she couldn't help reminding her son to lose weight, cut down on fatty food, take up exercise, etc. What a nagging admonishment, though out of good will.

It was already past 10 PM by the time we arrived at my parents' home. They were waiting for us way past their bedtime. Before long, my mom had to take her leave and rest in her room. Our bed had been prepared by the housemaid. I enjoyed a real good sleep of seven hours in the first night.

In the next morning, my day started with having tea and dim sum in a restaurant with my parents. This is their joy, gloriously enjoying the company of their children. But for me, eating dumplings and drinking Chinese tea early in the morning is really not my cup of tea. Therefore, I would always seize the opportunity to have a cocktail bun, milk tea or coffee before heading to Chinese restaurant.

At noon, the meeting place of Salina, her mother and her sister was also a Chinese restaurant. After lunch, Salina was introduced to a Chinese acupuncturist in Wanchai, in the hope of curing her hypertension.

By the time we went home at Sunset, Salina has almost lapsed into a deep sleep. By the time she got up to eat, it was after 9PM, way past the dinner hours. My father has been especially thoughtful. He has the housemaid prepared several live fishes for our enjoyment, thinking that we never have a taste of fresh fish.

The third day was my father's 80th grand birthday. Attendance of the morning tea party in restaurant was mandatory. My parents have seven children, namely, my brothers and sisters and me. This was our first reunion over a span of 32 years. Since 1980, we have parted our ways and resided in different places of Hong Kong and North America. This gathering brought great comfort to my parents. I was also deeply moved. I just wish that my parents and all my siblings' families could receive the saving grace of God.

Our friends and families filled up 12 banquet tables that night. At the gathering, I could really sense that my extended family had prospered and multiplied. There were many new members I couldn't recognize, and therefore could not greet them by names. It was sad to learn that some relatives have passed away. The good news is, quite a few of them have known and believed in Christ. We were drawn even closer knowing that we share the same Christian faith.



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I don't know since when my parents had a change of heart. On the next day, my father said that he wanted to believe in Christ and go to church. My mother's only concern was how to dispose the idols and shrines they have worshipped for decades. So I briefly explained to them what it means by believing in Jesus, the prerequisite of worshipping the only one true God Jesus Christ, and no others. The idols and shrines in their home could be disposed by a pastor, with their consent. I started with inviting them to attend Sunday worship service in the close-by Aberdeen Baptist Church.

Just like that, my parents got up real early in the morning, finished breakfast by 7 AM, skipped the morning tea at restaurant, headed off to church at 7:30AM. Both my mother and father have limited mobility. It was not easy to arrive at church entrance, just to find that they had to walk up three flights of stairs to the worship hall. Fortunately, there was no complaint. Even more, throughout the worship service, my father did not even cough once. He used to have noisy disturbing coughs. Rev. Timothy Sau Kwong Lam preached the sermon entitled "The Body of Christ Through Good Times and Troubles." When questioned about what they heard, my parents could not come up with anything they remembered. In spite of that, my parents came across several believers in the congregation who were acquainted with my father and grandfather. This brought a feeling of coziness to my father.

The reason for attending such an early morning worship was that we have arranged a group of nine consisting of my brothers and

sisters to tour Macau by boat at 11 AM. The two ferry companies we used to know have been replaced by multiple new ones. With a departure every 15 minutes, there was essentially no separation between Hong Kong and Macau. We resided in a time share resort, called Star World Macau, the largest hotel in Taipa Island. The hotel is a multifunctional building, containing food lounge, shopping pavilion, movie theaters, etc. As expected, the casino occupies the most area right in the center. All the construction and entertainment facilities are built around the casino. Free transportation was provided from pier to various hotels and casinos. The limousines are new and plenty, spacious and comfy.

The main event of this Macau tour was watching the "House of Dancing Water" show. This was an extravaganza of audio display, lighting, group dancing on water, wild motorcycle runs linked together by an opera. The grand ending was "leave the old behind and embrace the new". I think it means that this new age would be better than the old age and changes of time are inevitable. The next day, we toured the downtown area, chapels, and Ruins of St. Paul's cathedral. After lunch, we split up and returned to Hong Kong separately.

In the following days, Salina and I invited several vacationing brothers and sisters residing in Australia and Canada to an afternoon tea gathering. Salina strived to cut down dinning in restaurants so as to keep the hypertension at bay. Yet some evening banquets with her own siblings and relatives remained unavoidable. Overall, we have been too well fed during our stay in Hong Kong.



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During every encounter with friends and families, we have always come upon some discussion on Christian faith. Most of them gave us the cold shoulder. However, they all consider believing in Christ a good thing. It seems to them that Jesus is only one of the numerous gods. One time when I entered the building, the security guard popped the surprise question to me, asked whether I was a pastor. He also had favorable view of Christian faith. Seized this opportunity, I preached the gospel to him in three minutes. It's a pity that he did not think this was the moment for his conversion to Christ. I was perplexed by such a rampant belief that man is in control of his time. Truth of the matter is, nobody can tell how much time is left for him/her. We can only say, "The Lord willing, I may be able to do this or do that."

Before I know it, twelve days passed by like a breeze. There are still places that I could not find time to go. The next day, March 26 was the day that we would be returning to the U.S. That Saturday, my parents attended the senior fellowship in the church. Then they felt too exhausted and skipped the Sunday worship. I really hope that they could keep up the eagerness to know God and overcome the physical fatigue.

In summary, this trip is richly rewarding and blessed. God bestowed us with peace, happiness and enjoyment. I also thank God for keeping Salina's heart condition stable in the entire trip. *"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. 7 And the peace of God, which transcends*

*all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus."* Philippians 4:6-7.



## Testimony of Deacon Candidate

Edward Ha

### The grace of God and the seal of Holy Spirit:

Even since I was notified of my nomination as deacon candidate by the deacon's board, I kept this in my prayer and seek the will of God. A constant feeling of spiritual immaturity makes me very concerned about my inability to fulfill the role as deacon.

In a certain night, I shared the deacon nomination and my anxiety with my prayer partner. He encouraged me by saying, "There is ample evidence of God's guidance in the days of your conversion, when God granted your petition, fulfilled your desire and sometimes even beyond what you asked for. God guided you through the troubles to let you learn of God's providence and presence in your life. These are the evidences of protection, guidance and grace of God."

Thereafter, I searched my memory for my experience of God's grace, protection and guidance and found that they were innumerable. One of the incidents had serious bearing on my immigration to the United States. While working in Hong Kong, I was almost dragged into a case of violating the company's anti-corruption law, an offense that could totally ruin my immigration process. Thanks there be God, by His grace, I was not involved in the crime. Yet I have never looked



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from the perspectives of God, and I did not have a grateful heart, but instead I credited this to my luck and craftiness. Looking back, this was really God's mercy on me.

The above incident was just like what was depicted in *1 Timothy 6:8-9*, "*But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. 9 Those who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge people into ruin and destruction.*"

I also think of my lack of interest in spiritual matter due to busy work and weak will. However, God has not forsaken me, but keeps watching over me. This is God's great patience and grace for me.

## God corrects my bad habits through the Holy Spirit:

Taking up a blue collar job, I have been exposed constantly to unwholesome talks in the work place, which I picked up with time. Being a Christian, this would certainly bring shame to the name of God. Sunday school teacher mentioned the need for due diligence in prayer and scripture reading, so that we can be sensitive to the rebuke of the Holy Spirit. Efforts in prayer and scripture reading worked out to greatly cut down my unclean conversation. In the middle of hectic work, I could have a slip of tongue. I immediately seek the pardon of God. Sometimes when impure words are about to come out, I seem to have a brake paddle that halts the speech. Holy Spirit is at work, and under His watch, I have rid myself of bad language and I am able to glorify God in my position.

There are some rough edges in the character of me and my wife. Sometimes, we have major confrontation like that described by common folks as "Mars crushing on earth". We argue with words, but never get physical. I could get out and drive for 5 to 6 hours, out in the middle of nowhere, or spend a couple hours aimlessly in a theatre. Two or three days can pass without saying a single word at home.

Whenever I have a heated conversation with my wife, the scripture comes to my mind. *Ephesians 4:26-27* tells me, "*In your anger do not sin. Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.*" Reminded by the word of God, I can calm down immediately, soften my stand, and rid myself of hostility. Driving on the road blinded by rage is very prone to accidents, resulting in bodily damage and disability or even total loss of vehicle and life. Once again, I was changed by the Spirit of God.

The first of April is the "April Fool's Day". However, God is the one who loves me and he will not make me a fool. On April 1st of 1991, I arrived at Boston and started a new era of my life. Twenty-one years later, also on April 1st, I will turn another page of my life. I serve the graceful God who changes me, with a humble, obedient and thankful heart, in response to His love and grace. I wish that my shortfalls could be remedied through the supplication of brothers and sisters, and I ask God to strengthen me in His service, till the day I meet Him face to face.



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## North Quincy High School Chinese New Year Booth

May Li

I am thankful for the protection and care of God. The church mission in the 24th Chinese New Year celebration event held at North Quincy High school has been accomplished. By the grace of God and the active participation and support of brothers and sisters, we were able to attract people to our booth through games and riddles. Five hundred church introductory brochures, 300 evangelical pamphlets, bible verses red packets, 250 ball pens, balloons and 3 big bags of small gifts donated by sisters have all been distributed.

Majority of the people we interacted with did not know Jesus Christ, nor did they know the location of our church. I was very gratified to see so many Chinese people, unknown to us, holding the evangelical message we handed out. An urge to preach the gospel hits me. Since we are saved by the gospel, why not relay the message to them? Handing out evangelical pamphlets is like sowing seeds. God needs us to do this preparatory work of sowing. More seeds are sown, more plants will grow. Just as what Apostle Paul said, "How, then, can they call on the one they have not believed in? And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard? And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?"

Participation in this seed sowing activity brings a profound feeling of God's

presence. His grace is always beyond what we think and ask for. He gave us a favorable location for our booth close to entrance; greatly facilitate the distribution of pamphlets. God also motivated many brothers and sisters to fervently participate in ministry. I am more than convinced of the success in evangelical endeavor through our Lord Jesus.



## Women Fellowship Chinese New Year Celebration

Irene Ho

Every year, the Women Fellowship invites the entire congregation to join their annual Lunar New Year gathering. This year, it was on the evening of February 4th (Spring Day). There was a great turn up. Our sisters prepared many great dishes to share with us. Many of them are highly proficient chefs. They put their superb culinary skills to work and produced a collection of delectable food items specific for the festivity. We all got a taste of this scrumptious meal which received great praises. Just like the previous years, we gave each dish a name with good tidings, fitting for the theme of the New Year. Honestly speaking, some individual names are quite out of place, such as "ferocious fire" which hardly relates to the occasion. Anyhow, it still brought about interesting conversation. Happiness and fun are always more important. Following the past tradition, all sisters of the Women Fellowship dressed in red apparel



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appropriate for the occasion, which further enriched the festival atmosphere.

Following the sumptuous dinner, Deaconess Donna Yung, host of the event brought out the exciting items. We started with New Year celebrating Chinese opera sing-a-long. The music was enjoyable and suitable for the occasion. There was great and exciting participation.

Then, it was time to put on our thinking caps to solve the riddles. Deaconess Donna made some graphic riddles that seemed simple, but actually were quite tricky. The participants were divided into two groups which then sent out their representatives. Group A found themselves an elite member in Scholar Shum who is well versed in Chinese literature. He was able to figure out the answer in a short time. We have mixed feelings of love and hatred for him. Conceivably, group A had a great lead on scores. However, my group B was not giving up easily without a good fight.

The second game was charade. Each group sent out a member to perform the acts alluding to four character words that always include "dragon". Teammates tried to guess the answer. Once again, it seemed that group A got more wits than us and scored higher. We just want to have fun. Winning is not that important. In the end, everybody got a prize, a red packet that brings real sweetness in the heart.

Last but not least, the climax of the event was the dragon dance performed by people of the entire age range. It really added to the fun and got everybody really excited.

Guess who were the skillful elderly dragon dancers? Sorry, I don't think I can tell you. Otherwise, if you could not recognize them, someone will take offense. Give me a call if you are really interested to find out.

Thanks be to God. Apart from full participation by our regular members, we had quite a few guests coming to share the delicious dinner and had a good time. I hope that they could feel the love and joy we share as a family in Christ. May all glory and praise be to God our father.



## Fisher of Men

Nancy Wong

Praise our Lord! Give thanks to our Lord! God has led a large group of brothers and sisters in Christ coming to this Fisher of Men Spread the Good News Workshop. God has prepared Pastor Paul Lin to teach us how to spread the gospel effectively. Pastor Lin has prepared a lot of great information for us to learn. I can only summarize and share some of the important points with you.

Here are a few effective steps:

1. Ask the Holy Spirit for talent in spreading the gospel
2. Hold on to the chance given to spread the gospel
3. Use the correct methods to spread the gospel

Prayer Evangelism in Four Easy Steps:

1. Speak peace to the lost (Blessing): Blessing opens the door to unbiased fellowship.



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2. Fellowship with them (Fellowship): Fellowship establishes a level of trust, allowing our neighbors to share with us their felt needs.
3. Take care of their needs (Caring): Prayer addresses these felt needs.
4. Proclaim good news (Witnessing): When we intercede for our neighbors, God comes near them in a tangible way: "Say to them, 'The Kingdom of God has come near to you.'"

All believers should be well-equipped.

Use spiritual materials for spreading the gospel:

- The four spiritual laws
- Gospel bridge
- Other materials
- Your own materials

(Pastor Lin likes to use John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." And John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.")

May God help us to revive our love for God and to be a fisher of men! To accomplish God's great mission! Amen.



## Recollection of the Care Group Fun Day

Nancy Chan, Irene Ho (The Angel of Love)

The first care group gathering for this year was held on March 3rd, in the church basement. This was organized by May Li, our newly elected director of evangelical outreach

department. With the full support of care group leaders, excellent effort in inviting members, we had a great turnout on that day. Kathy Wong's group had a perfect attendance and this deserves praise and applause.

The gathering began with served lunch. Apart from the mixed vegetable fry noodles, each group topped it up with their special items, composing a scrumptious meal, with wide variety of desserts. We can all cross group boundaries and taste all available food items. We enjoyed a great cheerful communication with lots of laughter.

After lunch, Mrs. Salina Mak led us in the singing of the song "My Friends". The beautiful melody coupled with meaningful lyrics really brought out the true love among members in Christ.

Irene, the self-proclaimed crafty ambassador of joy then took over the time of fun game. Before the game, Irene suggested a compilation of trivial events of group members. She was not disappointed. Group leaders really came up with an extravaganza of frivolous personal news. Without the disclosure by Mrs. Yeung, we would not have known that Brother George Chan has been serving God in our church more than two decades ago. He was a proficient presider of worship service. Brother George even responded in Mandarin, boasting his accurate Mandarin phonation. We just hope this could bring such a talented brother to the attention to our reverend, not to leave him idle. Brother George could have an important role in our sprouting Mandarin ministry. Through this game of trivia, we learned a lot about many people's recent condition and intriguing events,



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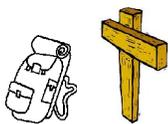
thereby know more and care more about each other.

To reward the effort of care group leaders, Irene shopped around many Dollar Stores (to be thrifty in spending resources of the church). She managed to buy 12 cute toy bees as souvenirs for group leaders at the cost of \$2. This served to honor the care group leaders who work diligently to care for group members, just like the busy cute bees, always caring.

A Bingo game was then played using the contents of the Bible. All the group members have to participate. One has to be very knowledgeable in Bible and takes a bit of luck to attain Bingo. Deaconess Donna's group was the quickest to complete the Bingo. This should be no surprise for anyone.

Happy times fly by and soon it was time to say goodbye. Unwillingly, we concluded the gathering and left, with eager anticipation for the next gathering.

We should all remember to love and care for one another, build a joyful and spiritual family, thereby bring glory to God.



## Youth Encountering Christ (YEC)

Ellen Chow

Youth Encountering Christ (YEC) was an amazing experience. Our youth group went at the end January for the second year in a row.

From the very start, we were immersed in a very unique atmosphere. Almost everyone there was a Christian. For 3 days and 2 nights we became closer to God than ever before as we broke away from our normal daily routines. It was a place where you could think about and worship God all day without distractions from our friends (really, we weren't allowed to bring our cellphones or any electronics).

And it wasn't just sitting there listening to boring sermons all day. There was a live band singing worship songs that made it seem like it was a rock concert at times. There were a lot of fun games that end up relating to moral lessons. The food there was great and many of us actually had time to eat breakfast since we didn't have to rush out to get to school on time. The whole entire time, from Friday night to Sunday morning, the excitement of being there never left us. I will definitely remember this experience for the rest of my life and look forward to next year's YEC.



## Sunday Service Attendance

(Weekly average attendance)

	Oct	Nov	Dec
Chinese Sunday Service	79	81	90
English Sunday Service	20	21	22
Combined Service	97	120	116
Children Service	5	6	6
Sunday School	60	59	66



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## Finance

### October

Income	Expense	Surplus
26,692	16,101	10,591

### November

Income	Expense	Deficit
15,255	15,882	(628)

### December

Income	Expense	Surplus
36,388	32,080	4,308

5. On March 4, we have the first care group fun day of this year, with great turn out and participation.

### Upcoming church events:

1. Brother Edward Ha will be ordained as deacon on April 1st worship service.
2. Teenager Gary Lok and adult believer Ms Suk Yee Chan will be baptized on April 8.
3. Pastor Paul Lin will be our part time Mandarin pastor starting May 1.
4. We will start to have Mandarin Worship Service on Sundays at 9:15 am.
5. There will be Sunday school teacher training part I, taught by Rev. Paul Lin on June 16.
6. The annual church picnic will be held on June 30 at Cochituate State Park at Natick.



## Church News

### First quarter church events:

1. On January 23, we have successfully held the annual general members' meeting, for the first time, in Chinese and English.
2. On February 4, Rev. Paul Lin gave a comprehensive instructive course on effective evangelism, to make us all good fishermen of man.
3. In November, the 2012 church council members were elected by general assembly.
4. On February 12, our church participated in the Quincy Lunar New Year celebration, rented a booth in North Quincy High School gymnasium, effectively spreading the gospel message to Chinese residents.

### Keep up with the mission of supplication:

1. The main theme of the church for the year 2012 is "Extend the blessings of God to all nations". Let us encourage each other in spiritual growth.
2. The goal of church building fund raising for 2012 is \$50,000. Commitment to contribute to support Rev. Lin's stipend is also needed. Ask God to motivate brothers and sisters to make generous offerings.
3. Persevere in lifting up the Mandarin ministry in prayer. Ask God for a major revival in Mandarin worship, Sunday school, prayer meeting, fellowship and weekday bible studies. Pray for the smooth operation under new worship schedule, seamless collaboration between Rev. Mak and Rev. Lin.



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## Prayer Requests

1. Ask God to motivate brothers and sisters in keeping up with daily Bible reading and prayers, fervently pursue spiritual growth.
2. Intercede for Reverend Henry Mak. Ask God to fill him with the Holy Spirit, empower him to lead brothers and sisters in unity to build up the congregation and spread the gospel.
3. Pray that the love of the Lord compels brothers and sisters to keep on offering for church building, to enable timely paying off of church debts and mortgage.
4. Pray for God's continuous provision of suitable preachers in the English worship service, to enable our youth group to worship in unison. Remember Katelyn Saylor, our youth instructor in your prayer. Ask the Lord to equip her with love, wisdom and patience to lead the youth fellowship, to edify their spiritual life.
5. Intercede for the newly started Mandarin worship service. Ask God to use Rev. Paul Lin in a great way, bringing Mandarin speaking brothers and sisters to focus on worshipping God. Pray for the participation of more truth seeking visitors so that they can learn about God.
6. Intercede for our church members:
  - i. Mrs. Grace Yuen has to continue regular hemodialysis. Ask God to grant her peace and ease during the procedure.
  - ii. Intercede for Deaconess Irene Chow Kan Chan, currently residing in the South Cove Manor Nursing Home, so that she could maintain or gain mobility and strength.
  - iii. Pray that the arthritic pain of Sister Koon Wan Chow Wong will not progress.
  - iv. Pray for God's speedy healing of Sister Mo Ping Wong after foot surgery.
  - v. Pray for proper control of the blood pressure of Mrs. Salina Mak back to normal range.
  - vi. Intercede for painful back condition of Sister Wai Wah Chan Wong (mother of Brother Tony). Pray for God's healing.
  - vii. Intercede for the unemployed brothers and sisters in their job search. Ask God to provide their daily needs and employment opportunity.