

## 2015 CCCGA ENGLISH MINISTRY ANNUAL REPORT

Dear Brothers and Sisters,

2015 marks the 14th year of the English Ministry at CCCGA. Looking back at this past year, we can witness many great changes as we see all God had done to bless, grow, and transform this ministry. Even our church building got a transformation with all of the renovations happening. May this picture remind us that God ultimately seeks to transform our lives toward Him (2 Corinthians 5:17). Thank you to all of the coworkers in the church for their faithful service and prayers for God's will to be done.

In Christ,  
Mr. Phil Woodrow, Ivan Yu, and Huiping Zhang

### Worship

#### *English Worship Service*

CCCGA English Ministry's biblical call remains to preach "Him crucified" toward the goal of "building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ" (Ephesians 4:11-16). Phil Woodrow and Ivan Yu continued to collaborate in the planning and sharing of the preaching responsibilities. As notable milestones, this year was the first in which the English Ministry had its own services on Good Friday and Christmas Eve, separate from the Chinese.

#### **Sermons Series**

- Dealings with Temptation (**January**)
- Dusting off God's Word - Ten Commandments (**February - July**)
- Who is this God that we Serve? (**October - January 2016**)

#### **Individual Sermons**

- Grace: The "Good" in Good Friday (Luke 23:32-43) (**4/3**)
- The Possibility for "Impossible" Perfection (Matthew 19:16-26) (**6/28**)
- The Love of God (1 Corinthians 13:1-3) (**7/5**)
- Viewing God's Version of Salvation (Romans 1:16-19) (**7/26**)
- The Blessing of Discipline from God (Hebrews 12:1-11) (**8/2**)
- The Transforming Work of God's Love (1 John 4:1-10) (**8/9**)
- Seeking Advice to Know God's Will (1 Kings 12:1-16 - Outdoor Service) (**8/16**)
- The Hope for a Restored Relationship with God (Hosea 1:1-3; 3:1-5) (**8/30**)
- Knowing and Responding to God's Call (Exodus 3:1-12) (**9/13**)
- The Role of the Holy Spirit in Missions (Acts 8:26-40) (**10/4**)
- Standing Firm during Spiritual Warfare (Ephesians 6:10-20) (**11/1**)

- Helping a New Believer Grow (Philemon 1:1-25) **(11/22)**
- Sharing the Gospel through Servant Evangelism (Acts 3:1-16) **(12/6)**
- A Christmas Reminder from the Faith of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12, 16) **(12/24)**
- Holiness - The Drive for Passionate Worship (Isaiah 6:1-7) **(12/27)**

### **Joint Service Sermons**

- Experiencing Joy and Grace in Serving Jesus (Luke 10:38-42) **(March)**
- The Power of An Empty Tomb (1 Corinthians 15:1-4) **(April - Easter)**
- The Mystery of the Lord's Supper (John 6:52-59) **(May)**
- Sacrificial Service – Is it Worth it? (Colossians 1:24-29) **(August)**
- Preparing the Heart for the Lord's Supper (John 13:1-15) **(September)**
- Restoring Relationships in the Church (Matthew 18:15-20) **(October)**

### *Guest speakers*

Throughout 2015, we invited the following five individuals to preach during our English Worship Services: **Sean Nolan** (Family Life Pastor at Christ Fellowship Church in MD); **Dr. Michael Haggard** (Director of Mid-America Baptist Theological Seminary – Northeast Branch); **David Keogh** (Missionary to S. East Asia with Send International); **George Bailey** (Elder at Clifton Park Community Church); and **Tom Trouwborst** (Pastor of Calvary Orthodox Presbyterian Church).

### *Praise Team*

This year marked the thirteenth year since the CCCGA Praise Team was officially established in the summer of 2002. Praise Team seeks to faithfully lead the congregation in the worship of our God during the English Worship Service, Joint service, and other church events. Alicia Chen had been serving as the Praise Team Coordinator since January 2014 and resigned in June of 2015 as she transitioned from high school into college. We thank Alicia for her faithful leadership. She, along with Ivan and Mr. Woodrow, began gradually introducing William Wang to coordinator responsibilities, as he became the next Praise Team Coordinator.

The Praise Team leadership for the 2015-2016 school year include William Wang, Sophia Hsia, Dennis Pu, and Louise Xie, who rotate responsibilities in leading and preparing for the worship each Sunday. Other members include Cecilia Lu, Iris Pu, and Helen Yang. We also welcomed new members Lucia Sun, and Albert Chang who helps with running the soundboard.

Like the previous years, Praise Team continues to have monthly gatherings at members' homes. These have been renamed from "fellowships" to "training" to emphasize 1) that Praise Team should not be the main source of fellowship for its members, and that 2) the purpose of the gatherings is to work on improving our worship in a way that pleases God.

Due to the success of our first worship night in August of 2014, Praise Team decided to host one twice a year. The theme for the worship night on February 21 was "Take Up Your Cross", based

on Luke 9:23-24. Alicia created a devotional packet to be completed the week leading up to worship night. The Praise Team led worship songs, with short testimonies shared in between. The theme for the August 21 worship night was "God of this City", based on the Chris Tomlin song of the same name. Two other churches, Chinese Fellowship Bible Church and the Russian Church of Albany, were invited to attend and help lead worship with the Praise Teams. Worship sets were separated with opportunities of prayer, following the ACTS model. We focused on prayers for ministries of our churches and other Christian organizations to the hurting people of Greater Albany area in need of the gospel.

## **Education**

### ***Junior High Sunday School***

This year's Junior High Sunday School was continued to be coordinated by Caiyun Chen, with a rotating teaching schedule shared with Tracy Zhang and Qiang Chen. Last year, we prayed for a godly man to teach the class because of the many boys in our class. We thank God for answering our prayer by leading Brother Qiang to join us. From January to August, we used Regular Baptist Press' Junior High School series *Guided by God - Lessons from Elijah and Elisha*, which uses the prophets' life lessons to teach us how to follow and serve God. Lessons included "A Heart for God", "Sowing and Reaping", "Take a Stand", "Not Quitting", "Rely on God", "Sharing the News", and "Hope in God".

In September, we had a special welcome party for ten new 6th graders joining the Youth Ministry. One student graduated from 8th grade to the high school class. The Junior High Sunday School began using Dr. James Dobson's *Preparing for Adolescence*, which covered topics such as self-esteem, making sound decisions, peer pressure, the meaning of love, puberty, sexual development, independence, and identity in Christ. This course complements the Sunday School Class for parents on the same book, which ended in August 2015.

Due to the nature of some of the topics, the Junior High Sunday School was divided into a boys class led by Qiang Chen, and a girls class led by Mhinnie Tolentino. In the boys class, there were six 6th graders, six 7th graders, and one 8th grader. They shared, compared, and discussed two different worldviews regarding to these topics: "What the world considers important" and "What God says is important". Qiang Chen also encouraged them to initiate conversation with their parents and peers, and practice what they learned in their daily life. In the girls class, there were three 6th graders, two 7th graders, and three 8th graders. Mhinnie had the girls each keep a notebook as a diary to record what they learned, their own evaluations, thoughts, secrets, confusions, and problems the face. In each class, the girls would share about their week and how they were able to apply the biblical principles learned in the past session. Icebreaker games, mental games, and roleplay situations were used to supplement the lesson.

## ***High School Sunday School***

The high school class, led by Blossom Woodrow, endeavored to use 2 Timothy 3:16-17 as a guide to our study of various scripture passages. We always asked ourselves: What is this teaching me? How is this correcting me? How is this equipping me to live the righteous life that God wants me to live? For the first half of the year, being mindful that some were preparing to go to college, we focused on “Who am I in Christ” and not who the world says I am. We continued to affirm this crucial truth each week, as it is so easy to feel badly, even worthless, at times, such as receiving grades lower than expected. One can then quickly “fall in the opinion polls”, and lose sight of who God says we are. “I have told you these things, so that my joy and delight may be in you and that your joy may be made full and complete and overflowing.” (John 15:11, AMP).

We are now looking at “The Heart Condition” with various scripture references. Weekly assignments are usually to pray Ps.139:23. “Search me O God and know my heart, try me and know my thoughts, and see if there be any grievous way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting.”

During the month of December, we took advantage of the returning college students, who were a part of the Sunday school, just a few months ago! When asked to share their college experiences, they were most open and sincere, sharing from their hearts their difficulties and God’s faithfulness.

We also focused on the Christmas account with fresh eyes, to see what is this sharp, living, powerful, Word of God, saying to us...here and now!

## ***Foundations (College and Young Adult)***

Foundations began in the fall of 2014 and was led by Elaine Tse and Tracy Sun until the spring of 2015. We thank them for their leadership. During the summer of 2015, Brian and Jeanne Yung became the new leaders for Foundations. By end of August and early September, many of the RPI and SUNY Albany students returned from summer break. Throughout the semester, we had about six undergraduate students from RPI, two undergraduate students from SUNY Albany, and about three graduate students/young professionals, not including leaders within Foundations. Most attendees remained active throughout the semester.

The purpose of Foundations is to act as a welcoming body of Christ for college students in the area either as a primary or supplemental source of fellow believers to those who are out-of-town students. Foundations encourages college students to take full advantage of Gospel-centered campus fellowships and most of Foundation's undergraduates attend the Campus Crusade for Christ fellowship (joint between RPI and SUNY Albany). As the local church, the leaders and the fellowship seek to support the college and young professionals in ways to bolster their walk with God and their need for spiritual community in ways that are not already met by other activities such as on-campus ministries.

We started a book recommended by a leader from Sunny Fellowship called *How People Grow* by Henry Cloud and John Townsend. By the end of 2015, the group finished seven chapters of the book and covered topics of why we need God and Jesus to help us grow spiritually and deeper rather than a surface-level faith. Every Sunday morning, the fellowship discussed in small groups on topics such as why we are sinners and why we need the Gospel, how we need to give up control of our lives to God, the problem of judging others, meaning of discipleship, the need for grace and understanding the role of the Holy Spirit in our spiritual growth.

## **Christian Nurture**

### ***Mustard Seed Fellowship (Youth)***

This year marks the fourth year of the Youth Fellowship. It continues to meet every Friday night from 7:00 to 9:00pm at church with a time of worship in song, icebreaker games, and a one-hour Bible study, topical discussion, or message. Three changes took place this year: (1) In February, the fellowship voted for a new name: Mustard Seed Fellowship, as the group sought to grow in faith (Matthew 17:20). (2) David Shieh, a graduate student in Albany Med, joined the Fellowship as one of the leaders. (3) As the Fellowship grew in size, the students have been divided into two groups during Bible study time since September: High School group (~7 students) and Junior High group (~15 students). While High School students take turns to lead their own Bible study under Ivan's supervision, each Junior High student was paired up with either Huiping, David or Tracy to co-lead the Junior High group.

The Fellowship finished studying the Book of James in January, followed by 1 Corinthians until July. Then we had a few topical discussions (e.g. on self-esteem, Jesus Christ, etc.), and two movie nights. The Bible study resumed in the fall with the Book of 2 Corinthians, which is expected to conclude at the end of January 2016. Ivan conducted a workshop on the Inductive Bible Study Method during (11/6) to equip the students in leading the studies.

Here are a few specific prayer requests: (1) High School student attendance has been declining this year. Pray that our students will be able take time out of their busy schedule to fellowship and seek to grow together with their peers; (2) The Junior High students, especially the 6th graders, for a desire to grow and be able to focus on God's Word during the study/discussion times; and (3) God will raise up some more college/graduate students to serve during the Mustard Seed Fellowship.

### **Activities**

- Skating at Empire State Plaza and games night (2/20)
- Movie Night: "Do You Believe" at Crossgates Regal Cinemas (4/10)
- Movie Night: "End of the Spear" (8/7)
- 6th Grade Welcome Party (9/5)
- Packing gift shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child (11/13)
- Thanksgiving Gathering at Huiping's House (11/27)

### ***Prayer Ministry***

Mhinnie Tolentino and Junhong Wang continue to lead bilingual prayer meetings every Sunday from 1:15-2:15pm. This year, we dedicated a room on the second floor to be used exclusively for prayer only. The Prayer Ministry also continued to be involved in English Ministry events such as the International Day of Prayer, monthly persecution sharing/prayer, Worship Nights, and special worship services. If you have a prayer request, please feel free to send an email to [prayerbox.cccga@gmail.com](mailto:prayerbox.cccga@gmail.com). Any request for anonymity will be honored.

### ***2015 CCCGA Retreat***

Our fifth retreat was held at Grace Manor Retreat Center from May 29 to 31. Our guest speaker was David Keogh, a pastor and missionary preparing to return to China to serve long term. He shared four messages about the purpose and importance of missions. He even taught about the history of missions in China. We were consistently reminded of the chief end of man and missions:

“The chief end of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.”

“The chief end of missions is the supremacy of God and the joy of all people.”

## **Missions**

### ***2016 Mexico Short-Term Missions Trip***

For the first time, CCCGA will be sending a team on a one-week short-term missions trip to Mexico in July of 2016 with YUGO Ministries. This is a response to David Keogh’s messages. After the informational meeting on November 8th, there were eleven individuals who expressed interest. Application forms will be due on January 10, 2016 followed by a round of interviews before individuals are accepted to serve on this missions trip. Preparations for this trip will include six training sessions. Please be praying for God’s guidance and provision as we seek to bring the gospel to those in Mexico.

### ***Community Service Ministry***

Recently, CCCGA formally started a Community Service Ministry led by parents. This ministry not only provides youth with an opportunity to serve and put faith into action, but also provides parents with an opportunity to be equipped with leadership skills. Parents involved with this ministry are responsible for planning six community service projects a year and leading debriefing meetings after each one to help the youth discuss about what they learned from God while serving. If you are a parent at CCCGA and are interested in being equipped as a leader for the Community Service Ministry, please contact Tong Wang or Ivan Yu.

## **2015 Service Projects**

- Construction work with Habitat for Humanity (2/28)
- Volunteering at Platoon Land Farms (8/22)
- Serving Community Dinner at City Mission of Schenectady (8/27)
- Organizing clothing and shoe donations at the Distribution Center of City Mission of Schenectady (12/5)

## **Youth/English Pastor Search**

The Search Committee includes Pastor Hsia, Huiping Zhang (Chair), Qi Tan, Xuming Wang, Eric Ting and Zewu Chen. After Ivan Yu had served in the pastoral intern in CCCGA over 1.5 years, the committee met at the end of August and recommended him as the new Youth/English Pastor to the Board of Deacons on September 10th. The Board of Deacons approved the recommendation and made an offer letter to Ivan on September 15th. The offer letter was finalized on October 14th, and Ivan accepted the offer on the 15th. On November 8th, the church congregation voted for Ivan to be the next Pastor of the English Ministry. He will begin serving full-time in June of 2016.

## **Miscellaneous**

On June 28th, we had a Senior Celebration at Zewu and Caiyun's house. Congratulations to Alicia Chen, Jessica Liu, Shelly Zhang, and Angela Zhu for graduating high school and finishing their first semester of college this year! Also congratulations to Calvin Hou and Martin Ho for graduating from RPI with their bachelors, and Dennis Pu for graduating from SUNY Albany with his masters!

In September, the new website for the CCCGA English Ministry was launched. It may be viewed in the link from <http://cccgga.org/>.

In addition to the mission statement for the overall English Ministry, this year we developed ones for our individual youth and young adult ministries. They may be viewed in the following link: <http://wp.me/P4CSVJ-1p>.

On November 8th, the church congregation voted for Zhaolin Cheng to be the next English Ministry Deacon beginning in January of 2016. Thank you to Huiping Zhang for faithfully serving in this position for the past seven years!