

# CHINESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH OF GREATER ALBANY

## 2003 Annual Report On Youth/English Ministries

It is a privilege to present this report covering calendar 2003, the second full year of this church's Youth/English Ministries. It will be presented according the following outline: Corporate Worship; Teaching, Youth Activities; Summary & Acknowledgments; and Looking Ahead to 2004.

### I. Corporate Worship

The Youth/English Worship Hour underwent a number of significant changes during the year that has resulted in positive changes:

- **Location:** At Mt. Ida Baptist Church, in Troy, the worship hour was re-scheduled from the 9:30 to the 11:00 a.m. hour, allowing the youth offer their worship to the Lord in the sanctuary. Though one recognizes that true worship is not dependent upon the location, one may also recognize that this was a positive step in their lives. Moving from the church basement where there had been many distractions (poor heating, lighting, acoustics; room arrangement; people traffic), to the "adult sanctuary", made a clear statement to our youth concerning their perceived value in the eyes of the adult church population. In addition to the location, the availability of a keyboard and piano, multiple microphones and an excellent sound system has been an enhancement to their worship experience.
- **Music Worship Team:** Under the leadership of Sunny Shih, the Music Worship Team was transformed from a few individuals interested in exercising their respective talents to a unified team interested in using their skills to worship and glorify God. The inclinations of individual personalities gave way to a disciplined response to the recognized leader, with Saturday afternoon practices becoming opportunities to prepare their hearts and minds to lead the rest of the youth congregation in a more meaningful worship experience on Sunday morning.

- **Messages:** The messages preached during the year were not the result of a 12-month plan but, rather, a response to the Spirit of God based upon your Director's daily quiet times, inter-personal relationships with youth and parents within CCCGA and the influence of Godly leaders and Christian literature. The true impact of these messages will never be measured on this side of eternity ... but it is my prayer that many will have experienced a similar growing faith and commitment to living for Christ as the messenger has in the course of preparing each sermon. This is a brief outline of the themes and topics presented during 2003:

#### Series

Christian Discipleship - 18 Parts on total commitment to Christ

Let Freedom Ring - 5 Parts on the freedom we have in Christ

The Keys To Spiritual Growth - 9 Parts on spiritual maturity

Thy Will Be Done - 8 Parts on knowing and submitting to God's will

The Christ of Christmas - 4 Parts on focusing upon Christ in Advent

#### Single Topics

Living Memorials - using the "memorial stones" of our lives as a witnessing opportunity for Christ.

Standing At The Door - Christ's call to open the door of our lives in order to have an intimate relationship with Him.

The Perfect Gift - the gift of peace that comes with the absolute assurance that Christ has "paid in full" the price God requires for our sins.

The Truth Shall Set You Free - the contrast between the slavery associated with sin versus the freedom we have in Christ.

Reflections on Youth - Paul's instructions to Timothy concerning his daily walk.



## II. Teaching

During the first half of 2003, the Youth/English Ministries Department provided two Sunday School classes: one for the Junior High School; the second was a joint class of the High School/College-age students.

- **Junior High** - The theme for the younger group was “Knowing God,” a course dealing with the attributes of God — His holiness, omnipotence, sovereignty, etc.. Blossom Woodrow was the primary teacher, with back-up provided by Yu-ling Li and May Wong.
- **Senior High/College** - The older group began the year with a video series entitled, “That the World May Know,” produced by Focus on the Family, covering the historical and spiritual significance of God choosing a people and nation ... Israel ... and locating them in a strategic geographical location that all the peoples of the earth may know of His salvation plan through His Son Jesus Christ.

This series was followed by studies in the Gospel of John and the Epistle of 1<sup>st</sup> Peter. Teaching during the first half of the year was equally shared among Jonas Chang, Lisa Lui, Andrew Wong and Phil Woodrow.

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Half of Year** - With all of the Junior High students moving up into the High School ranks, and no new Juniors coming into the Youth Program, the remainder of 2003 saw a single class being offered to a joint class population. Though small during the Summer vacation months, once school began, the class had as many as 13 students. During the Summer, they studied the Second Epistle Of Peter and also finished the study of “Knowing God,” started by Blossom Woodrow earlier in the year. With the onset of the new school year, we began a weekly study of Rick Warren’s Christ centered best seller, “The Purpose Driven Life.” This has sparked a great deal of interest and much discussion on the part of our youth and will be the focal point of our study for the remainder of the school year. It has been gratifying to work with a gifted team who have committed themselves to sharing the teaching responsibilities over this 40 week period. They are: Joel Lee; Jennie Ng; Ping-Zhon Tan; and Blossom and Phil Woodrow.

### III. Youth Activities

Social events during the year were much more consistent than in the past, primarily due to an increased cooperation from the parents. Recognizing that our youth are unusually busy in their respective schools (academically as well as with extra curricular activities), music lessons, plus involvement with the various CCCGA Fellowships and attending Chinese School classes, the Adult Leadership Team has been careful to plan and coordinate our special events through the direct involvement of our families.

With this as background, it is gratifying to acknowledge that a number of meaningful events were carried out by our youth during 2003. They include:

- EXCEL Weekend, sponsored by the Capital District YFC
- Family Mt. Willard Snow Boarding Day
- Snow Camp Weekend, sponsored by Word of Life
- Family St. Patrick's Day Celebration at the Woodrow's
- Visitation to Albany Cty. Nursing Home
- Family Fishing Trip to Jefferson Trout Preserve
- Family Day Trip to Word of Life Family Campground
- Church Sponsored Family Hofstra Retreat Weekend
- Family Cook-out/Swimming Party at the Daly's
- Family Mt. Climbing Day sponsored by Chinese School
- Family Ice Skating Party at the Daly's\*

Many thanks to the Chen, Hsia and Wong families for their consistency in providing coordination and transportation.

(\* To take place during Winter Break).



#### IV. Summary & Acknowledgments

The following summary consists of praises offered to our Most High God for the abundant grace and mercies extended to those who have had the privilege of serving with the Youth/English Ministries during 2003.

- for physical health, spiritual growth and a sense of wonder and joy that has allowed us to teach the word, preach the gospel, counsel, and work with those for whom we are responsible.
- for a pastor and Board of Deacons who are committed to lifting up the name of Jesus Christ within and beyond the bricks and mortar where the CCCGA meets for corporate worship.
- for improved communications between the adult and youth leadership, and the encouragement received during our meetings together for prayer, sharing Scripture, planning and, often, the breaking of bread.
- for the privilege of preaching at the joint worship services of the CCCGA on Easter and Fourth of July Sundays, with the creative support of Dr. James Li as interpreter.
- for the working of the Holy Spirit among some of our youth that has been demonstrated through their commitment to personal, daily quiet time, group study and discussion of God's word, and the exercise of their gifts in ministering to others.
- for the commitment of 15 youth and adults (to a group called "The Breakfast By The Sea Fellowship,") who have pledged themselves to daily quiet time with the Lord in seeking a greater intimacy with Him and as preparation for beginning each new day.
- for those parents and other adults within the CCCGA who have demonstrated their support of the Youth/English Ministry in many ways: by consistently bringing their youth to Church each Sunday; by serving on the Leadership Planning Team; by communicating with other parents and providing transportation to Saturday afternoon practices and special events throughout Northeastern New York.

- for Sunny Shih who has demonstrated significant spiritual maturity and, over the past year, committed himself to becoming our volunteer Worship Leader. This has, in turn, resulted in a more proficient and cohesive Music Worship Team that provides leadership in the worship of our Lord each Sunday morning.
- for Clifton Park Community Church, our home church, who have designated the Woodrow's as their missionaries to the CCCGA and provide prayer support as well as the use of their facilities, some teaching materials and their copying machine in partnering with us in this ministry.
- for the three dear brothers in Christ, George Bailey, Dr. Gary Griffith, and Dr. James Li, all of whom love the Lord and serve him faithfully in many ways, including as guest preachers at the Youth Worship Hour during my absence.
- and, finally, for my dear wife, Blossom, for her many gifts, both as a supportive spiritual partner, a devoted teacher and exemplar to our youth, and for being a gracious hostess at the many gatherings held in our home involving youth, college students and adults. Without her, the CCCGA Youth/English Ministry would be sorely lacking.

## V. Looking Ahead to 2004

This final section of the Annual Report is a combination of concerns, wish list and suggestions for consideration. It is offered as the result of much prayer, with the hope of stimulating open discussion among the CCCGA leadership as it goes through the process of planning for and presenting its final recommendations for 2004 to its membership.

- **Location:** the past year has been a pleasant one in terms of the space made available to the Youth for their Sunday activities at Mt. Ida Baptist Church in Troy. The rearrangement of the morning schedule, allowing the Youth Worship Hour to take place in the main sanctuary has been of real benefit to those in attendance and has resulted in a more meaningful time of corporate worship.



Recognizing that the CCCGA will soon be returning to its Madison Baptist Church home in Albany, there is concern as to what this will mean to the weekly youth Sunday School and Worship Hours. It is hoped that either the sanctuary or a similar space in the upstairs portion of the Madison Avenue Property will be available for Youth Worship as a planned part of this move, and that quality sound equipment will be considered and built into the Church's 2004 budget to provide the acoustical benefits experienced at Mt. Ida. Having received a recent estimate, the cost for such equipment (microphones, stands, speaker set, mixer and wiring) would be between \$1,600 - \$2,000.

#### ■ **Spiritual Theme for 2004**

Last year's stated goal was to promote the theme — "Know, Grow and Show!" Based upon I Peter 1:13 - 2:10, it was a call to know the living Christ, to grow in Him, and to show (proclaim) Him by the way we live as a "chosen generation." Early in the year, Pastor Hsia shared with me that the adult congregation had adopted a similar theme ... that loosely translated stated: "Be a Disciple/Make a Disciple. Since the youth will be studying Rick Warren's book, "The Purpose Driven Life," it is recommended that the Church, along with its youth, continue to pursue this theme toward the goal of being and making disciples and working within and outside the walls of our church to fulfill the great commission commanded by our Lord. This, in truth, is the ongoing responsibility of every true disciple of Christ.

#### ■ **Calling All Parents**

One of the major discouragements within the Youth/English Ministry has been our interaction with those gifted youngsters with superior intellect and a keen interest in the things of God ... yet who attend Sunday School infrequently and, when they do, are seldom allowed to remain for the worship hour. Their participation in the class discussions and significant questions are clear signals of their interest in the spiritual realm, yet this is limited by either the inability of or lack of commitment by their parents to bring them regularly to church.

This is a matter of great importance and should be addressed as a priority concern of both the Youth/English Ministries and the entire CCCGA Leadership. Though a delicate matter, the future of our Church is dependent upon encouraging, supporting and transporting our youth to where the gospel of Jesus Christ is being taught, preached and, hopefully, lived. It is recommended, therefore, that the parents of all our youth be lovingly challenged to work with the church in reaching their children for the Lord and encouraging them to become supportive toward this goal.

### ■ **Worship Leader**

As mentioned earlier, Sunny Shih has, over the last year, shown significant spiritual growth, matched by a stated desire to seek God's will concerning a future in full-time ministry as a Worship Leader. I have had the privilege of meeting with him, almost weekly, usually after regular working hours. These have been precious moments during which time we have shared ideas on how to improve the worship experience for our youth, often coordinating plans for Saturday's Worship Team practices and the music for Sunday's message. The transformation in his involvement from an faithful facilitator of musically-talented youth to a committed leader of a Youth Worship Team has been a joy to behold. His dedication has, in turn, motivated those who have worked with him, resulting in the Team's leadership in the act of praise and worship every time we meet.

Based upon what he has demonstrated since the worship team was formed 18 months ago, it is recommended that a formal volunteer position of Youth Worship Leader be created in some form within CCCGA to recognize and encourage Sunny until such time as the Lord moves him to the next level of service.

### ■ **Youth/Parent Worship Service**

It was suggested at the last Adult Leadership Meeting that the parents of our youth be invited to an occasional Sunday morning youth service, enabling them to personally share the worship hour with their children and hear first-hand what they are being taught.



Since this would have an impact on the Adult Sunday School Hour, it seems appropriate to discuss this with the CCCGA Leadership before proceeding with such a plan.

This annual report, including the above five recommendations, are submitted with the intention of providing both an account of ministry accomplishments during the past year, as well as stimulating ways to improve the Youth/English Ministry in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Philip W. Woodrow  
Director of Youth/English Ministries