

The Journey of English Ministry

“And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” Colossians 3:17, 23, 24

The resignation of Pastor Jason Quah in June, 2005 is a wake up call for many of us. Are we doing church or are we living as members of the body of Jesus? God has called Pastor Jason to lead another smaller church and He has His own plan for us. As we reflect upon the journey on which we had traveled through the last 18 months, we realize that we have, to our surprise, experienced much fruitfulness and joy in our ministries that we had never planned for. We can only contribute to the perfect plan of our God and with a heart of gratitude and appreciation we want to give Him all the glory that belongs to Him.

At that time, Brother Michael Leong was the only fulltime staff member but he was studying part-time in Bible College of Malaysia (BCM). He had to hold the fort as brother Eric Tan had just gone through a triple-heart by-pass and was not able to work anymore.

Brother Anand, William Goh and myself, without knowing the extent of what we were getting into, had on 15 May, 2005 asked the church board to appoint us as the core transition team to take charge of the English Ministry while looking for a suitable pastor to lead.

On 21 May, 2005 Brothers Vincent Low, Steve Lam, David Yong and Michael Leong joined the core team. We spent two week-ends in Brother Anand's office to pray for the future of English Ministry. Subsequently, English Leaders Breakfast Meetings (LBM then, now called English Leaders Meetings or ELM) were initiated so that we could meet to discuss and address the various issues and challenges faced.

In August, 2005 Brother William Goh took sabbatical leave to come into the church office to help for 3 weeks as a volunteer. Later Sister Christine Lee with the support of her husband, Brother Viknas, volunteered to come to the church office to help in the administration of the English ministry for half a day since 29 August, 2005. At the same time, Sister Evelyn Lai offered to help on Saturday afternoons. Meantime, Brother Eric Tan returned to the church office to help initially for half a day each week, and then on alternate half days and now every morning. At the beginning of this year, Sister Priscilla Yong with the support of her husband David Lee volunteered to join the volunteer team to help in administration too. Meantime, Brother Michael Leong is able to study fulltime in BCM and will complete his course next year.

Let us not forget Brother See Chor Bill, Sister Elaine Wang, Sister Jessica Teh and others who have worked quietly and provided the leadership and support in the children ministry. Brother Phoon Yew Sang and Sister Audrey Siow together with





their core leaders have pioneered the First Men Club and Women Ministry respectively beginning this year.

Today, so many of us have volunteered to serve in various different ministries that we now have 110 volunteers. Not only have many of us offered our time to serve, some of us have even walked an extra mile of spending additional money for the sake of ministries. Those of us who travel to Cambodia mission trips pay for their own expenses. Many prizes in the recent Amazing (G)race are donated by leaders of First Men Club. We can only acknowledge that God's way is higher than our ways and God's thoughts than our thoughts (Isaiah 55:9). Let's appreciate the commitments and the extra miles put in by the volunteers and give all glory and honor to our God the almighty.

The 3-minute rule and refreshment after the English Service have helped to foster warm fellowship. This has brought a positive effect to our church life too. However, we need to look beyond being just Sunday fellowship Christians. We need to go beyond merely greetings and casual conversation and seek to learn how to care for others and let others care for us. This requires changes in what we do everyday: our thoughts, attitudes, habits and deeds. This requires us to take an active role in calling up others to express our care. This requires us to let others express their care for us. The theme for 2007 is "Mutual Care, Stronger Bond" – building genuine fellowship. We need to build up another key component of church life – genuine fellowship. A genuine fellowship is key to both our witnessing to the world as well as helping us to go through the turbulence of an ever changing 21st century.

Jesus teaches us to love one another. "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35). Making a call to a person or asking another person to pray for your needs is the first step to establish a closer relationship. However, let us learn not to gossip but to care. If we are not part of the problems or the solutions, let us learn not to talk since otherwise our talk becomes gossip.

Some of us attend small groups while many of us do not. Small group activity is a vital part of church life where genuine fellowship germinates. Let us make every effort to cultivate the habit of meeting in small groups to share, learn, minister, pray and witness together as well as for one another. As we enter 2007, let us acknowledge that God will be able "to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to His power that is at work in us, to Him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."

Elder Ee Chong Kang
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