

January 2024

Inside this issue 目錄

From the Chairman	1
Welcome Blackhawk Church	1
2023-2024 ANACEFC Board Introduction	2
2024 Budget	6
Recap of 2023 ANACEFC Annual Conference	7
27 Days Ministry Trip to Los Angles, CA and Phoenix, AZ. between November 8 and December 4, 2023	8
The Christmas Journey - 2023 ..	11

2023-2024 ANACEFC Board

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David Tsen

Secretary

Helen Woo

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Director

Jone Lin

Director

Agnes Chiu

Director

Rev. Chi Eng Yuan

(Liaison of ANCEFC and EFCA)

Rev. Anthony Tsang *(Advisor)*

Rev. Dan Wat *(Advisor)*

Kenneth Tsang *(Advisor)*

Joseph Yu

Marketing Web Communication Specialist

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From the Chairman

Wishing the ANACEFC Board and our member churches a Joyous, Prosperous and Blessed New Year. 祝大家新年快

HAPPY NEW YEAR

樂，恩上加恩，愛主更深，廣傳福音。

Yalei Chen, *Chairman*



Welcome Blackhawk Church

ANACEFC New Member Church

教會簡介

Blackhawk教會於1965年由5對夫婦的家庭查經班開始，逐漸擴大發展至今3個堂址，每主日11堂次崇拜的多文化大家庭。主任牧師Chris Dolson於2021年7月退休後，由Matt Metzger接任主任牧師，俞明義牧師接任講道團牧師與駐堂神學家。

華語部是其中第一個，也是目前最大的少數族裔分部。另有非裔、亞裔、西班牙語部（籌備中）事工部，以及韓語、葡萄牙語小組等。

Blackhawk 教會華語部是 Blackhawk教會中的華人事工，於2014年成立，2015年聘請俞明義牧師為第一任牧師，5月開始華語主日崇拜。2017年8月，隨著發展多文化教會的願景越來越清晰，俞牧師領受使命，發展其它語言和族裔事工，成為多文化事工牧師。華語部



由黃尚仁牧師接任。黃牧師著重靈命成長，在教會中推動歸心與歸位的禱告等靈修、門徒訓練，也投入大學校園事工，並在疫情中推動各種Zoom事工。

/Continue on Page 2

/Continue from Page 1

個人家庭簡介



黃尚仁牧師於2017年加入Blackhawk教會，任職華語部牧師。在全職服事前，黃牧師曾在IT產業和連鎖速食業分

別工作了5年和9年。黃牧師與王立亞師母育有一女一子：Kaitlyn(大學)和Kasen(高中)。他們喜歡一起玩桌遊，也每年回台灣探訪家人和朋友。

ANACEFC 2024 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

Date:

September 25-27, 2024

Place:

Vancouver, BC, Canada

Venue:

Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Church (*hosting church*)

Theme: TBD

Keynote Speaker:

Rev. Bill Taylor, *Executive Director of Evangelical Free Church of Canada*



2023-2024 ANACEFC Board Members

ADVISORS



Rev. Anthony Tsang 曾昭陽牧師

I have memberships in two Churches: Hop Yat Church of the Churches of Christ in China (Hong Kong) since my baptism in 1959 and the Chinese Evangelical Free Church of Los Angeles (CEFC-LA) since 1969. I started as a member of both churches and eventually served as an ordained minister. I was ordained by the Evangelical Free Church of America in 1991. I had served in CEFC-LA for 16 years before being called to be the Senior Pastor overseeing the whole Hop Yat Church system in Hong Kong, including four local churches, a gospel center, a center for seniors and several schools. I served there until my retirement in 2010 and returned to the US.

My relationship with ANACEFC started with my attendance as a church representative at the second ANACEFC Annual Conference. Since then, I served in ANACEFC in various capacities, including church planting coordinator, chairman, secretary, treasurer, etc. In addition, I had been elected, at the denomination level of EFCA, to serve on the EFCA Mission Board and the Urban-Intercultural Board. I also served in GLACMA, the Greater LA Christian Ministers

Association, in various Board positions.

The words for mutual encouragement are best found in the title of the hymn that I sang in my Ordination and my retirement. The title is "The longer I serve him, the sweeter it grows".

我信主至今只持有兩個會籍：自1959洗禮便加入了香港中華基督教會合一堂；及後1969也加入了羅省華人播道會成為會員。在兩個教會的歷程相仿：先是會友，後是牧師。我是在1991年被美國播道會所按立的。我在播道會事奉了16年後，回應主的呼召，回港出任合一堂主任牧師一職，統領合一堂屬下的四個座堂；一個佈道所；一個長者服務中心及多間學校。在那職位上事奉至2010退休回美。

自我以教會代表的身份參加華聯會的第二次週年大會後，除在港的時間外，至今都有參與華聯會的事工。我除作了華聯會第一任的「植堂主任」外，也在不同屆別中，承擔過主席，文書，財務，及其他的職務。

除華人播道會以外，我也曾被選為美國播道會的差傳部和跨文化部的成員；亦參與羅省華人教會同工聯會多屆理事會的事奉。

我願以我在按立聚會時和廿年後退休餐會時所獻的一首詩的歌名作互勉！歌名就是「越加事主越覺甘甜」！



Rev. Dan Wat 屈志宇牧師

Rev. Dan Wat was an engineer before God's calling to full-time pastoral ministry in South Calgary Chinese Evangelical Free Church, a ministry that he loved and served with passion until his retirement. After retirement, he spent time studying spiritual formation for discipleship and spiritual growth. He also researched integrating psychotherapy and Biblical spirituality in counseling, particularly in healing and personal growth.

Pastor Dan is currently serving as a spiritual director and executive director of Manna Counseling and Educational Center. Their main ministries support the pastors by providing professional counseling and spiritual direction and leading small group spiritual formation and renewal journeys.

For the past ten years, God has used Pastor Dan in counseling, spiritual direction, leading workshops, leading contemplative retreats, and many spiritual formation and renewal journeys. He served on the executive board of ANACEFC for a number of years. He also supported the Ambrose Seminar in Calgary by acting as the counselor and spiritual director among the seminary students for seven years.

Pastor Wat and his wife live in Calgary, Edmonton, and Toronto. They have three adult sons and four grandchildren.



Kenneth Tsang

Kenneth was admitted as a Solicitor of the Supreme Court of Hong Kong in 1982. Before emigration to Canada, he had served as a civil servant in the Home Affairs and Legal Department of the Hong Kong Government, as Company Director of three publicly listed companies, and in leadership positions in his church and denomination, which runs a subsidized school and a nursing home in addition to its eight churches, and as a member in several public committees.

After settling down in Richmond, B.C., in 1995, he felt a call to serve the community, the church, and charitable organizations as part of his half-time career on a voluntary basis. During the past years, he has served as a board member of over ten organizations, including 13 years in Richmond Chinese Evangelical Free

屈志宇牧師簡介

屈志宇牧師曾在工程界服侍二十多年，後蒙神呼召作全時間牧養工作，曾任南卡城華人播道會堂會牧師15年、退休後、致力研究如何用輔導及屬靈塑造的整合及如何幫助個人生命成長。現任卡城恩道神學院校牧、天糧輔導中心靈修導引師、在不同教會帶領生命成長及屬靈進深課程及退修會、也為牧者及教會領袖預備退修營、讓他們可以在主內重新得力。

Church, six years in Evangelical Free Church of Canada (EFCC), eight years in Lower Pacific District of EFCC, 11 years in Trinity Western University and 15 years in Association of North American Chinese Evangelical Free Churches.

Presently, he serves as a board member of the Rosewood Manor Care Foundation, Acacia Spring Society, and Acacia Spring Charitable Foundation. He is also an Advisor of the Vancouver Oratorio Society and a committee member of the Vancouver Showers of Blessing Evangelistic Ministry Office.

He is married (wife Mabel) and has three adult children and two grandsons.

于1982年获香港最高法院律师资格。移居加拿大前，曾任香港政府民政及法律事务署公务员、三间上市公司董事、除了八座教会外还经营一所补贴学校和一家疗养院，并且是许多公共委员会的成员。

1995年在不列颠哥伦比亚省里士满定居后，他领受到呼召，以自愿的方式为社区、教会和慈善组织服务，作为他的业余事业。在过去的几年里，他曾担任十多个组织的董事会成员，其中列治文华人播道会13年，加拿大播道会 (EFCC) 六年，EFCC下太平洋区8年，Trinity Western University 11年和北美华人播道会会员15年。

目前，他担任Rosewood Manor关怀基金会、Acacia Spring协会和Acacia Spring慈善基金会的董事会成员。他也是温哥华清唱剧协会的顾问和温哥华Showers of Blessing福音事工办公室的委员会成员。

他已婚（妻子Mabel）并育有三个成年子女和两个孙子。

/Continue on Page 4

/Continue from Page 3

DIRECTORS



Yalei Chen (Chairman)

Brother Yalei Chen is a deacon board member of the Fort Collins Chinese Evangelical Free Church (FCCEFC). He came to Fort Collins, Colorado, from Beijing in 1994 and was baptized a year later at that church. He hosted and led the campus evangelism group at his home right after the conversion. He and the family moved to Boulder, Colorado and worshiped at Boulder Chinese Evangelical Free Church from 1998 to 2000. After graduation, his family returned to Fort Collins and worshiped at FCCEFC. While at Boulder and Fort Collins, he engaged in different campus ministries, including the University of Colorado at Boulder (CU Boulder), Colorado State University (CSU), Wyoming University, and the University of Northern Colorado. He has been on the church board for the last twenty more years and engages in regular evangelizing, preaching, teaching, and pastoral ministry. During the last five years of vacancy as a church pastor, he serves as the church deacon board's coordinator, overseeing the church ministries. He is in the global online program of Reformed Theological Seminary for his Master of Arts (Theological Studies). He earned a Ph.D. in Atmospheric Science from CSU and an MS in Computer Science

from CU Boulder. He works full-time as a staff software engineer at Lockheed Martin in Denver. He is married to Yiping Zhang, and they have three children: Elizabeth, Eunice, and Elliott.

陈亚蕾弟兄

来自科林斯堡华人教会。1994年抵达科林斯堡，和当时在留学的太太团聚，开始参加教会(当时是查经班)周日崇拜，一年后受洗归主。信主后即在教会服事，开放家庭，组织带领教会的校园福音团契。毕业以后全家搬到Boulder，自1998到2000，参加Boulder华人播道会并在University of Colorado at Boulder校园和教会的小组服事。从Boulder毕业，他在科林斯堡工作，全家搬回，此后一直在科林斯堡教会。曾经在CU Boulder, University of Wyoming校园服事，目前仍然负责教会在Colorado State University和University of Northern Colorado的中文福音事工。过去二十多年一直在教会执事会里任职，曾经担任科州华人教会春令会主席，以及多届教会同工会主席。目前的服事包括福音，周日证道，小组教导，牧养关心。过去近五年在前任牧师退休之后，担任教会执事会招集人，负责组织教会日常运作，祷告会，团契和校园事工。他目前通过改革宗神学院的全球线上课程，攻读神学研究的神学硕士。他拥有科罗拉多州五大大学的大气科学博士学位，科罗拉多大学博尔德校区的计算机科学硕士学位。目前他任职于丹佛的洛克希德-马丁公司，为高级软件工程师。他和太太张毅平结婚近三十年，两女一子，均在外读书，Elizabeth, Eunice, Elliott。



Pastor Lorne Trudgian (Director)

Pastor Lorne Trudgian has been serving God and the Church of Christ as a Canadian pastor since 1978 in churches in New Brunswick, Ontario, and Alberta. Lorne sincerely loves God and Jesus Christ, shepherding God's people and preaching God's Word.

He holds a Bachelor of Theology and Master of Religious Education degree (London Baptist Bible College (83') and Seminary (86').

He is currently serving as the English Pastor at Calgary Chinese Evangelical Free Church in Calgary, Alberta, Canada since 2017. Previously, he served as Senior Pastor at Calvary Baptist Church in Drayton Valley for eight years and Parkland Baptist Church in Spruce Grove for thirteen years.

They have been married, serving together in the pastorate since 1978 and have three daughters and eight grandchildren. Lorne enjoys participating in triathlons, travelling, and spending time with their grandchildren. He and his wife, Cindy, currently live in Calgary.



David Tsen (Secretary)

David had served for several terms on the ANACEFC board for a total of 8 years. He also served as the steering committee chair of ANACEFC's Itinerant Pastor Project and helped to further Pastor Chi-Eng Yuan's ministry to ANACEFC churches and fellowships in need.

In the early days, his family helped with the local tri-college Chinese fellowship ministry at Fargo. Later, they founded Red River Valley Chinese Christian Church (RRVCCC) with two other families. At church over the years, he and his wife Yuhjen (Kathy) served faithfully and fruitfully in many different capacities, including deacons, teenager ministry, Bible study leaders, Sunday school teacher, and liaison to the EFCA local district, and the Northern Plains District.

Professionally, David had served for several years as the Surgery Department chair and subsection chair, as well as the chair of his department. He had also served as a board member of the local Dakota Medical Properties and on the hospital medical executive committee.

David is happily married to his wife, Kathy and has three grown children, all of whom actively maintain their Christian faith.



Helen Woo (Treasurer)

Helen came to Calgary from Hong Kong as an international student in 1989. She received her Bachelor of Commerce degree from the University of Calgary. She attended fellowship, accepted Christ, was baptized and has become a church member of the Calgary Chinese Evangelical Free Church since 1989. Helen has continued to serve at church as a choir member, conductor, song-leader, children's Sunday school teacher, and leadership roles in different committees. She is influenced by her husband, who always says CCEFC is his home. Their family is dedicatedly committed to the church. In addition, she became a deacon of CCEFC's board in the past eight years and has served on the ANACEFC Board since 2018. She serves as Treasurer of the ANACEFC Board and is in charge of the logistics for all the ANACEFC conferences.



Jone Lin (Director)

Brother Jone came from Taiwan in 1983, and his wife Daisy joined him in 1984. He was trained in mechanical engineering but has worked as a software engineer. He has two grown sons. Both are married with a granddaughter and a grandson.

He came to Christ when he was 15 because of the warmth I experienced in the school fellowship with little knowledge of salvation. Faith became a personal experience in his sophomore year. They have been attending CEFC Santa Barbara since 1991. He has served in various ministries: choir, worship, youth, college campus, Sunday school, and currently serving as an elder of the church.

Serving other member churches is his way of showing how God had blessed them through the help they received from ANACEFC when the church did not have a pastor.

/Continue on Page 6

/Continue from Page 5



Agnes Chiu, Ph.D. (new Director)

Agnes Chiu is our new board member. She became a Christian at 19 and received her bachelor's degree in social Ecology, specializing in Criminology from the University of California, Irvine. Subsequently, Agnes received her Juris Doctor degree from the University of California, Los Angeles, School of Law. After practicing law for 20+ years, in response to God's calling, Agnes enrolled in Fuller Seminary and received a master's degree in biblical studies and then a Ph.D. degree in Christian Ethics. Agnes is an assistant professor and Director of Research and Strategic Initiatives at the Center for Public Theology at China Evangelical Seminary North America. Agnes has been a long-time member of the Chinese Evangelical Free Church of Los Angeles and currently serves as the chairperson of the Mission Committee.

趙李秀珍是我們新任的成員。她19歲時成為基督徒，並獲得了加州大學爾灣分校社會生態學學士學位，專攻犯罪學。隨後，趙姐妹獲得了加州大學洛杉磯分校法學院的法學博士學位。從事法律工作二十多年後，趙姐妹回應上帝的呼召，考入富樂神學院，獲得聖經研究碩士學位，隨後又獲得基督教倫理學的神學哲學博士學位。趙姐妹現是北美中華福音神學院的助理教授、前瞻事工及公共神學中心主任。趙姐妹是洛杉磯羅省華人播道會的會員，目前擔任差傳部主席。

2024 ANACEFC Budget

	<u>Budget 2024</u>
CHURCH PLANTING	\$ 18,000.00
MINISTRIES and/or SPECIAL PROJECT(S)	
<i>Dorcas Ministry</i>	\$ 6,000.00
<i>Itinerary Pastoral Program</i>	\$ 8,000.00
<i>Church Visitation(s)</i>	\$ 1,500.00
<i>EFCA Liaison</i>	\$ 2,500.00
<i>Seminarian Funds</i>	\$ 15,000.00
<i>Pastors & Spouses Retreat Sponsorship</i>	\$ 5,000.00
<i>Hub Center(s)</i>	\$ 1,000.00
Total	\$ 39,000.00
CONFERENCES	
<i>Mini-conferences</i>	
<i>Pastors & Spouses Retreat</i>	\$ 5,000.00
<i>Annual Conference</i>	\$ 6,000.00
Total	\$ 11,000.00
BOARD MEMBERS TRAVEL & MEETINGS	\$ 22,500.00
OTHERS:	
<u>Operations:</u>	
<i>Zoom annual subscription</i>	\$ 180.00
<i>"Turbify" Domain annual subscription</i>	\$ 50.00
<i>Website Domain subscription</i>	\$ 225.00
<u>Administrative Charges:</u>	
<i>EFCC Ministry Allocation Fees</i>	\$ 1,400.00
<i>Bank Charges</i>	\$ 5.00
<i>Postage or Mailing Fees</i>	\$ 100.00
<i>Office Supplies</i>	\$ 40.00
Total	\$ 2,000.00
CONTINGENCIES	\$ 10,000.00
TOTAL BUDGET 2024	\$ 102,500.00



Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, location for ANACEFC 2024 Conference (Sept. 25-27, 2024)

Recap of 2023 ANACEFC Annual Conference

We had the annual Conference in Chicago, USA, at the Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (TEDS) this year. Our keynote speaker was Rev./Dr. David W Pao, Dean of TEDS, and the theme was “Subversive Orthodoxy 顛覆文化的真理.” The theme song was “In Christ Alone 唯有基督”. Rev. Pao led four main sessions of:

- (1) Emperor and Slave 帝王與奴僕 (1 Tim 2:1-7; 6:1-2);
- (2) Good Work and Good Confession 好事與好見證 (1 Tim 6:3-19);
- (3) Grace and Suffering 恩典與苦難 (2 Tim 2:1-3); and
- (4) Power and Weakness 權能與軟弱 (2 Tim 4:6-18).

Rev. Chi Eng Yuan was our workshop’s speaker with the topic of “Burn for Christ just ... don’t burnout 為主燃燒, 但不要燒成灰燼”.

A special thanks to the event team of TEDS, Trinity International University,



ANACEFC
Association of North American
Chinese Evangelical Free Churches

顛覆文化的真理
Subversive Orthodoxy

Date 日期: October 4-6, 2023
Where 地點: Chicago, USA 美國芝加哥
Meeting Venue 聚會地方:
Trinity Evangelical Divinity School 三一福音神學院
Accommodation 酒店:
La Quinta Inns & Suites Bannockburn, IL, USA
USD \$92 + taxes per room night
Registration fee 報名費: USD/CAD \$120 per person
Registration Form 報名表格: 
Scan QR-Code 掃二維碼
Deadline 截止日期:
September 20, 2023
Enquiry 查詢: admin@anacefc.com | www.anacefc.com

Speaker 講員:
Dr. David Pao
鮑維均博士

Workshop speaker
工作坊講員:
Rev. Chi-eng Yuan
袁奇恩牧師

provided the conference place with excellent hospitality services. We particularly appreciated Rev. Vincent Leung, the Deacon Board, and the church members of the Chinese Evangelical Free Church of Greater Chicago, who hosted the Conference, provided all our needs, and gave a warm welcome and hospitality to our board directors. All of our conference attendants (69 pastors and church leaders) enjoyed the 3-day Conference and the fellowship time.

ANACEFC’s Annual Business Meeting was also held during the Conference. We had 36 delegates representing 26 member churches. In the meeting, we accepted last year’s (2022) minutes and financial statements and heard the sharing

and/or the reports of the ministries supported by ANACEFC.

We also had elected new board member(s). Yalei Chen is the Chairman of the Board together with Pastor Lorne (Canada), Dr. David Tsen (USA), Jone Lin (USA), Dr. Agnes Chiu (USA) and Helen Woo (Canada) will serve as Board of Directors in 2024.



We’re glad to have Rev. and Mrs. Chi Eng Yuan continue to serve as our

/Continue on Page 8

/Continue from Page 7

Liaison Officer of EFCA and three board of advisors, Rev. Anthony Tsang (USA), Rev. Dan Wat (Canada) and Kenneth Tsang. (Please see their respective “Bio” from Pages 2-6)

Blackhawk Chinese Ministry of Blackhawk Church, Madison, Wisconsin, voted by acclamation as a new member to ANACEFC, and Pastor Charles Huang presented.

The 2024 budget was approved in the meeting. The total budget amount is \$102,500.00 in USD. With our regular supporting ministries, we will launch a new scholarship fund of \$5,000.00 in partnership with the China Evangelical Seminary North America 北美中華福音神學院; a new pilot project of starting “Hub Center(s)” in a major city to connect member churches and have a better fellowship.

We announced the Annual Conference of 2024. It will be held in Vancouver, BC, Canada, on September 25-27, 2024. Keynote speaker is Rev. Bill Taylor, the Executive Director of Evangelical Free Church of Canada. The Conference Theme will be determined. We're glad to have the Vancouver Chinese Evangelical Church to be the hosting church.

27 Days Ministry Trip to Los Angeles, CA and Phoenix, AZ. between November 8 and December 4, 2023

By Chi Eng and Kar-Shan Yuan

Ephesians 1:18-19

“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is the same as the mighty strength,”

Before this ministry trip, we always prayed that the cleansing of the blood of Jesus Christ for our sins would make us instruments for His kingdom. We also prayed that all the preparation in terms of preaching and teaching would be relevant to those we serve. We prayed for the Holy Spirit to work in the lives of those we reached.

During this ministry trip, we experienced that the Holy Spirit gave power to our preaching and teaching, and the hearts of the brothers and sisters in Christ became receptive to the message of the Bible and the Gospel.

We have repeatedly experienced the power of the Holy Spirit in the four churches listed below:

1. Evangelical Free Church of Walnut

We were invited to be the speakers at the retreat of the Evangelical Free Church of Walnut, which had four sessions in three days. During the retreat, an older man wanted to become a Christian. Chi Eng led him in a prayer of decision for Jesus Christ. During the testimony time at the retreat, many shared their testimonies of how God moved their hearts through the preaching and fellowship. Two of them shared that it was the first time they were able to publicly share the evidence of what God had done for them. They all glorified God and spoke of His greatness.



2. Chinese Evangelical Free Church of Phoenix

Rev. Anthony Tsang, Rev. Minfu Hsu and Rev. Chi Eng Yuan were invited to participate with different responsibilities in the special Sunday service for the installation of the new pastor and rededication of the church building for the Chinese Evangelical Free Church of Phoenix.

On November 19th, while challenging the congregation, most of them made the decision to follow God's Word "...to press on toward the goal, to win the prize for which God has called me in Christ Jesus". Philippians 3:14

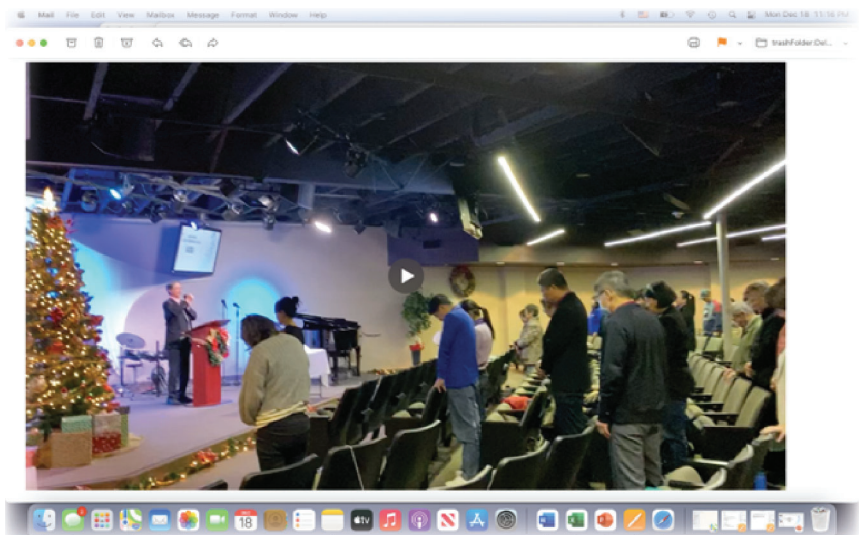


3. Chinese Evangelical Free Church of Santa Barbara

We were invited to attend a student fellowship on the Saturday after Thanksgiving. During the time of fellowship, the Holy Spirit moved the group of students as they went deep into conversation. The next day (Sunday), the student who asked the deep question told Kar-Shan that he found yesterday's discussion very helpful and that he would apply what he learned in his life. The Sunday service was a bilingual service, during the altar call most of the congregation responded with the desire to "have the same mind as Christ Jesus in your relationships with one another" (Philip 2:5).

4. Chinese Church of Calvary Community Church

We were invited to be the speakers for a joint fellowship on Friday evening. The attendees were very actively involved. During the Sunday service, the congregation was very involved in the worship. At the end of the Sunday service, the Holy Spirit moved the hearts of the congregation and almost all of them stood up and declared to follow Jesus Christ with all their hearts.



/Continue on Page 10

/Continue from Page 9



VISITATION

1. Chinese Evangelical Free Church of Los Angeles

Pastor Paul Yang, Agnes Chiu and us were invited to share about ANACEFC with some pastors and some board members of CEFCLA. The discussion and communication was very fruitful. The advisor of ANACEFC, Rev. and Mrs. Anthony Tsang joined us for lunch.

We also visited the Advisory Senior Pastor of CEFCLA, Rev. and Mrs. Hsu at their home. We were grateful to have fellowship with them.

2. China Evangelical Seminary North America

Pastor Paul Yang and we were invited to attend the chapel service and have lunch with the President, Rev. Samuel Liu and the Academic Dean, Rev. Raymond Hsu and Professor Angles Chiu. For the sake of partnership between ANACEFC and CESNA in supporting those churches whose members are called by God to serve the Lord in the churches, mission field or workplace to equip themselves with seminary training, we had a fruitful discussion from different perspectives.



Notes

The Christmas Journey

Rev. Lorne Trudgian, ANACEFC Board Member, Canadian Ministry

Last year at this time, for several weeks, my wife and I joined a small private Facebook group following our friends on their bucket-list goal of journeying to Australia. They left their home in Alberta in October with that “down under” destination in mind to hook up with friends there.

I have been thinking a lot this Christmas about another “journey.” Of Jesus, the Son of God, journeying from heaven “down under” to earth. In fact, the Christmas story IS a destination story. It is a story about a place left (heaven) and a place arrived (Bethlehem). It is about an amazing story that changed everything. Only God could author this amazing story of the two destinations of grace.

Consider how the Apostle Paul (not Facebook) summarized this Christmas journey of grace in Philippians 2:5-8. This incredible Christmas journey would not have happened, with all the resulting grace that flows to us daily, if it were not for two divine actions: the sacrificial love of God the Father and the humble willingness of God the Son, Jesus Christ.

The Sacrificial Love of God the Father – His loving generosity and gracious plan made him willing to send his only Son from the glories of his perfectly holy place in heaven to the broken, dysfunctional environment of a little blue planet called Earth. What love and grace!



The Humble Willingness of God the Son – Jesus did not resist the plan; he did not fight to hold on to what was rightly his. He did not negotiate the terms; he did not counter with a list of demands. With every inch He descended to earth, Jesus allowed His glory to leak away until His arrival in a lowly manger found Him empty. I love how the Apostle Paul captures it here in this sixth verse **“Jesus did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped but emptied himself.”** Praise God that he did not! If Jesus had held on to his rightful position in heaven, you and I, as sinners, would be without hope in life and death. If Jesus had not been willing to leave the splendor of glory to make the earth his destination, we would have no hope whatsoever of heaven being our eternal destination. **“by taking the form of a servant.”** If Jesus were not willing to take on the limits and frailty of the human body and to be willing to be obedient to the point of enduring a cross of crucifixion, we would be forever lost in our sin. But praise God, we can have eternal life because Jesus was willing to take that Christmas journey. Something we should be celebrating not just during this season of Christmas but every single day of our lives. The Christmas journey is a journey of hope, peace, love, grace, and joy!

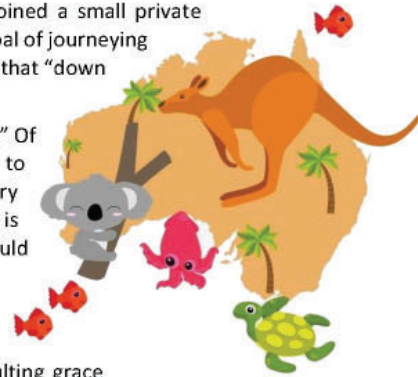
Why did our retired friends set out on their travel adventures at great personal and financial cost and sacrifice? What motivated them to embark on their three-month adventure? Why would they do that? To visit and experience far away exotic places and spend time visiting friends in Australia.

What motivated the Messiah’s earth-destination? We do not expect powerful leaders to be humbled. Why did He do it? Not because of something special he saw in us. There was and is not one person who has any ability to earn or deserve this greatest gift ever given. He embarked on this Christmas journey of incarnation, death, and resurrection to Earth, to become one with us as a human because, do not miss this: the One who owns everything was willing to live with virtually nothing and willingly expose himself to human rejection to rescue sinful man. That is the reason. Jesus was born to be our Savior. Jesus’ humility is our hope. Jesus made our broken world his destination so that our final destination would be a heavenly place of perfection where we would live with him in complete peace for all eternity.

This Christmas, let’s remember that what we celebrate is a destination story. It is a Christmas journey of hope, peace, love, grace, and joy. If you are planning to travel to be with family this Christmas, as we are, may God bless your journey with safety until you reach your intended destination. May we, as Christians, also remain faithful until we reach our heavenly destination.



Merry Christmas.



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