

Giving Our Five Loaves and Two Fishes

– 10th Anniversary of “Living Word” Publishing

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“Living Word” Dedication Ceremony

2006 marks the 35th anniversary of CCL’s establishment. In the same year, one afternoon in October, we performed a dedication ceremony of “Living Word”. Brothers and sisters from Hong Kong and the mainland came up to the stage one by one and symbolically laid up a first edition in three volumes of “The Living Word Curriculum Series” (the five books of Moses) as a sacrifice of first fruits. They also



2006 “Living Word” Dedication Ceremony

vowed to the Lord that we were willing to follow the vision—“living out the word of life, establishing and strengthening the church”—and to make “learning the living truth, living out the truth” an important marker of Bible teaching ministries in Chinese churches.

Ten Years of Growth

“[Blessed is the man who...] But his delight is in the law of the LORD, and on his law he meditates day and night. He is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither. Whatever he does prospers.” (Psalm 1:2-3)

In 2016, we witnessed God leading CCL into its 45th year. In a blink of an eye, it seems, the publishing of “Living Word” has also entered its 10th year. The passage of time has not scrubbed away the marks left on people’s hearts in the “Living Word” ministry. God sent many members of the body to take part in the ministries of “Living Word”—there are those responsible for writing, proofreading, designing, consulting, training of teachers in the

mainland, printing, distributing; some of these people are in distant places, or in the mainland. They are the pastors, teachers and lay leaders of different churches, organizations and seminaries. All of them are silently contributing, and have given us valuable counsel. Of course we must also remember those members of the body who supported this ministry through offering and prayer. We trust that the Lord will remember your offering to Him.

Running Towards the Goal



During the ceremony, the cardboard represented “Living Word” as a first-fruit offering to the Lord.

Looking forward, we appear to still be some distance away from our goal. But the Lord who had led us and protected us over mountains high and valleys low, does He not still go before us? His grace is always the crown of the years.

Facing the unfinished task as strenuous as writing and editing a curriculum, I often feel as though I am trembling. As an editor and writer, hard are

the times when I feel tired or exhausted. Nevertheless, just when I start to worry about whether I can keep going forward, God will encourage me through the feedback from those people who use the curriculum—When I learn that the distribution of “The Living Word Curriculum Series” is growing steadily, when those colleagues responsible for training share the changes brought about in members of the body in the mainland when they use “Living Word” to learn the Bible, I understand how feeble my faith is. The faithful Lord is the only source of our strength.

Lord! Indeed, all we have are five loaves and two fishes. But through your hands, the insignificant can transform into a miracle of providence, filling many people!

Progress

“The Living Word Curriculum Series” contains 28 volumes in total. It covers all 66 books of the Old and New Testament, with 17 volumes on the Old Testament and 11 on the New Testament.

By the end of 2015, we already published 10 volumes on the Old Testament and 4 volumes on the New Testament. We plan to publish *James, I & II Peter & Jude* in the first half of 2016, and *Matthew & Mark* and *Acts* in the second half. If we include the newly edited *Genesis*, then our total available books will increase to 18 volumes.

May the Lord grant us the required wisdom, strength and resources for us finish the remaining curriculum as soon as possible. May the Lord use “Living Word” as a blessing to the Chinese churches. I hope that someday, we can offer the entire “The Living Word Curriculum Series” as a freewill offering (Deuteronomy 16:10) to the Lord on the Feast of Weeks (Pentecost), and praise the grace of the Lord with members of the body inside and outside China.

Acquiring Knowledge and Learning to Be a Good Person!

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In March, a total of 29 pastors and church leaders from North China, South Central China, East China and Northeast China came to Hong Kong for a five-day leadership training program. Through watching videos of leadership seminars hosted by world-class speakers in “The Global Leadership Summit 2015” and having exchanges facilitated by



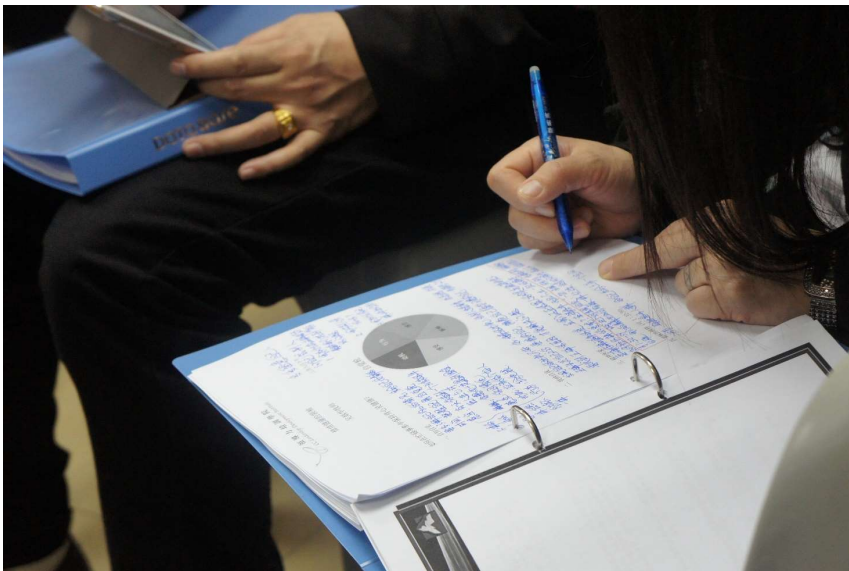
local leaders, these pastors and church leaders had interactive learning and broadened their horizons.

Church Management is Not Just About Knowledge

The training program was not just about acquiring knowledge on church management. More importantly, participants learned how to be a good person. A veteran pastor couple had this sharing, “The sharing of Dr. Chung-ming Lau was most inspiring. As church leaders, we must come to accept failure and understand that failure is the driving force for

us to pursue success. In addition, the speech of Bill Hybels reminds us that David's team initially consisted of just 400 mediocre people. The group later grew to 600 in size, and ultimately became the courageous fighters who built the nation of Israel. Therefore, leaders should not look down upon themselves! There are no born leaders!" As long as one is willing to be used by God, anyone can serve God.

As a CEO of a hotel chain, Horst Schultz spoke on the subject of "Creating World Class Services". In a hotel, it is essential to offer customers world-class, high-quality services. Although a church is not a hotel and brothers and sisters are not our customers, such service attitude should also apply, and individuals' needs should be well taken care of. Such attitude is crucial to pastoral work. A pastor couple said they were inspired by the attitude of Jesus towards Zacchaeus. Jesus was always people-oriented and served based on the needs of those to be served, not distinguishing among people based on their background or status.



Another pastor who is in the post-90s generation shared that from the speech of Liz Wiseman on "Rookie Smarts: Why Learning Beats", she came to understand that learning is better than knowing. It is preferable to be a "rookie" who is well aware of his inadequacies and continues learning rather than being an "old

hand" who is experienced but refuses to learn. She started serving God full-time since 2011, and the training program reminded her of the need to always harbor a love for the souls of people.

Experience in Devotional Time

During the intensive five-day training program, the pastors were also arranged to have some devotional time when they could do some soul-searching. One pastor shared that during the devotional time, he had come to discover the reason for him to be so afraid of dealing with his church's elders and deacons. It was mainly due to the fact that while he was growing up, he was rather ashamed of his shorter build and always lost in fights with children who were stronger. He was also brought up by parents who were

traditional-minded. These were problems that the pastor must face. He must seek God's help in alleviating his burden. In his reflections, he also came to realize that it is important to be in God's presence all the time. God does not just ask us to "do" things for Him, he also cares much about who we "are".

Conclusion

When we serve, we should serve from our heart and try to put ourselves in the shoes of those whom we serve. This is about taking on certain attitudes and not just acquiring knowledge. It calls for an enhancement in our inner spiritual life, and is an important lesson for pastors and leaders alike to learn!

Please Support: Mainland Leaders Coming to Hong Kong to Have Exchanges

We cherish the uniqueness of Hong Kong. Today, we still have the freedom to invite mainland church workers to come to Hong Kong to receive training. Through case studies and visits, these church workers can reflect on how to apply what they have learned to their own churches.



From 2010 to 2015, we have organized six programs for mainland churches to come to Hong Kong for exchanges, which saw the participation of 115 pastors from Northeast China, North China, East China, Northwest China and South Central China.

In 2016, we plan to organize more of such exchange programs, including one leadership training program, three "Living Word" Bible camps, and two "Christian Education Professional Certificate Courses". A total funding of US\$115,000 is required. If you would like to make an offering, please contact us for details, thank you.

Prayers

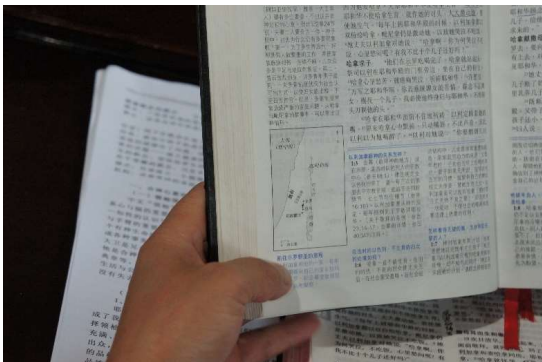
1. Pray for Pastors' Families

Under the influence of Chinese culture, mainland pastors tend to share more about the needs of their ministry, rather than personal issues such as family problems. Some Christians even think it is unspiritual for pastors to talk about issues of their own families. This results in a neglect of pastors' own needs.



May the Lord help mainland pastors open up themselves, and share their needs more often with brothers and sisters. May He also renew their inner lives to bring blessings to their families and brothers and sisters.

2. The Need of Continuing Education for Pastors

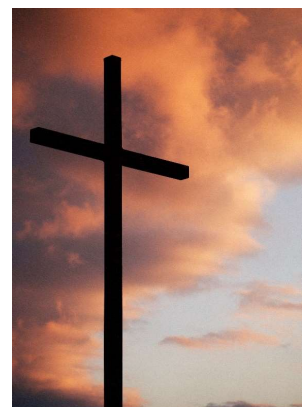


Having served for some time, some mainland pastors feel the need to broaden their perspectives. Since theological training at mainland seminaries focuses on meeting the basic needs of the church, continuing education is indispensable for helping pastoral staff minister in today's fast-changing world.

May the Lord provide more opportunities for brothers and sisters in the mainland to get further education outside of China. May He also raise up more brothers and sisters to share the load of church ministries, giving pastors the time to study.

3. Sharing the Faith Despite Restrictions

At the National Religious Work Conference on April 22-23, President Xi Jinping emphasised the importance attached to the problems of religion online (referring to the sharing of faith by religious organizations or believers on the Internet). He pledged to resist infiltration of religion by foreign forces, urging party members not to “find any value or belief in religion”. After the conference, the



standing committee of The National People's Congress passed the *Law on Management of Foreign Non-Governmental Organizations in the Territory of Mainland China*, under which foreign NGOs will have to register with the public security bureau, posing further restrictions on Christian organizations in the mainland.

May the Lord give Christian organizations wisdom to share the Gospel with mainland people, and open more widely the door to ministries.

4. Sharing the Gospel Through Social Services

Churches in Southwest China have run ministries in hospitals, caring for different people including those made orphans in the 2008 Sichuan earthquake. Some doctors and nursing staff have also been converted as a result of the ministries.



May the Lord open the way for more church involvement in community services; may the resources and professionals in mainland churches be well-utilised to build up the faith of needy souls and help the communities experience the love of Christ.

~ THE END ~