

**Arise, new generation of teachers!**

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*Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and all that is within me,  
bless his holy name!  
Bless the LORD, O my soul,  
and forget not all his benefits (Psalm 103:1-2)*



**Learning in Mutual Trust**

I have been involved in the teaching of Christian education for the last two years. I have had the opportunity to come into contact with a number of students who are passionate about Christian education, for which I am very thankful to God. It is not as though I have been giving a lot of effort, but let us call it learning from each other. Naturally students can learn from the lives of their teachers, gaining different expertise and professional knowledge; they can also be inspired by the lives of their teachers. On the other hand, teachers can also expand their horizons through teaching. They can learn about different perspectives and experiences of Christian education from students from different regions, situations, age and gifts. For example, were it not for the sharing of students, I would not have known which villages still had pastors who raise their families on a salary of \$1000. Nor would I have known that many Sunday schools still had no teaching



materials, nor the fact that many Sunday school teachers serve without a break for many years, without other teachers who could replace them. Many churches still see Sunday school as child care centres.

In the blink of an eye, two years have passed. In this time teachers and students have not only

built solid relationships, but also witnessed mutual growth. In this relationship of mutual trust, students slowly opened up and were comfortable to say what was in the bottom of their hearts. Though they may not be able to express with words the struggle that is in their hearts, nor the problems they encountered during ministry, yet through assignments they are able to speak more freely. Thus teachers can better understand their needs. Though they always had an attitude of respect, never wishing to offend their teachers, the students experienced their teachers' identities in a new way. Conversely, from them, I started to understand the specific backgrounds and reasons for them to implement Christian education. This also helped me reflect on what adjustments I had to make to what I had learned, or the theories that I had put into practice -- based on what different cultural backgrounds and contexts -- in order to give actual help to the students.

When the course was initially being designed, we had hoped to provide more experienced teachers with the principles and ideals of Christian education theory so that they could better grasp the techniques that they were already using. But throughout the course, we frequently made adjustments to respond to their actual needs, in order to help more advanced developments in their education ministry.

### Words to Students

As the course <sup>1</sup> comes to an end for this session, here are a few things that the teachers hope to give to the students. May it serve as a reminder for us as well:



Students touring a church in Hong Kong

1. We hope that this course will be more than just about issuing a certificate to the students, or the sheer teaching of some knowledge and theories. We hope that they can continually deepen what they have learned, and continually reflect on where they can improve. We hope that they will adapt what they have learned, and teach according to the abilities of their future students. As teachers, it is unavoidable for them to teach others through the classroom notes they have made with us, but unless there is digestion, trials, implementation and clarification of those areas where it is muddled, it will be hard to understand where problems may arise when teaching students.

2. Whether it is through studying the Bible, or studying in classes, knowledge is not just for storing in the brain. It needs to be practiced in life. We believe that the life lived in Christ -- whether it is some small actions or words uttered without thought— can have a positive

influence on the family, church and society. Therefore do not compare with others, but do your part, so that you glorify God with your own unique personality. Thus, when everyone is carefully cultivating their life and character, people will see that we are Christ's disciples.

3. We must always strive to improve and mature, but we must also always be humble and be pure in heart. We must be strong, but not for our own sakes. We must have self-confidence, and never see ourselves as too inconsequential, yet we must never be proud nor conceited, nor show indifference to the advice of others. As Paul had reminded Timothy, "Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity." (1 Timothy 4:12) In truth, it is easy for those who are teachers to fall into the trap of becoming proud, feeling that students must completely submit to our authority. I hope that students can understand after completing this course that what is important is not so much about leaving an impression of what is taught, but whether they live a life that is worth emulating. May we all be such that we can say with Paul, "Be imitators of me, as I am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1)

4. This course is merely a station in life. Students must continue to work hard. In the process of practicing what they have learned they will discover what they lack and persist in learning. As it is said, "Live and learn"! We do not necessarily have to study one course after another. Whether it is through books, those around us, or events that happen -- these can all be our teachers. If only we paid attention, keeping God's commands as our standards, and sharpen our sensitivity and thinking, then every day will be a lesson in growth.

5. We must understand that we do not fight alone! Students must transfer what they have learned to others, build up a team that is united, whose members fight together and help each other complete the great commission given by Christ. As Paul urged Timothy, "You then, my child, be strengthened by the grace that is in Christ Jesus, and what you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also." (2 Timothy 2:1-2)



Learning through role-play with the help of group members.

We live in a complex and ever-changing world, and we are faced with all sorts of challenges. Let us remember the words of Christ, "Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves." (Matthew 10:16)

May the power of God be with you always!

### **Constant Care through Prayer**

1. Students must complete a planned internship to test what exactly they have learned. Please pray that the Father grants them the wisdom and intelligence to plan courses, prepare for classes, recruit students, etc. Pray that they will use what they have learned in a flexible manner, and teach according to the ability of the students.

2. Students face complex, severe and ever-changing challenges. Pray for the Father's mercy to help them stand firm and face adversity with courage.

3. Pray that the Father molds the lives of the students to become vessels for glorifying God, blessing others, making disciples, and pray that more people will become teachers and take up the mission of training the next generation.



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Note 1 There are 20 students in the first class of Professional Diploma in Christian Education Course (Putonghua). Their graduation thanksgiving service was conducted on 28th October 2017. This course is offered by the Leadership Development Institute, which is an affiliated partner of CCL.

#### **Professional Diploma in Christian Education Course**

Operational needs in 2018: US\$64,000

Following-up 20 students from the first graduating class with church internships, good mentors; training 14 students from the second graduating class completing their second year of the course.

Take action: Go to the CCL website, click on "GIVE" and enter the "donate" page. Click on "web donation" and then select "China Church Ministry"

## **Bible Study Is Not Just About Doing Assignments** **- Learn Scripture in a Lively Way**

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**Associate General Secretary (Publishing)**

Extensive winter sunlight brings warmth to the cold, dry inland regions. In the absence of heating facilities at some seminaries and church classrooms, hot potable water is the means to give warmth and hydration to the students. The Lord's provisions are not limited to bodily needs. His churches, as the incarnation of Christians' sincere interaction and mutual love, have strengthened our faith in Him, helping us to face our own weaknesses and external challenges through Him.

### **Back to the Basics – Study Well the Bible**

Living Word small groups have witnessed the changes in their group leaders and members. Thanks be to God, over one hundred thousand copies of Living Word (comprising 10 units in the Old Testament and 7 units in the New Testament) supported our weekly learning platform. Rev. Li is responsible for the ministry of a coastal city with scores of gathering points, and the work of



of coordination of weekly preaching duties alone is already a heavy burden on him. In his first contact with the Living Word materials, he immediately saw that these were suitable for the fostering of church leaders, by means of small groups to help Christians study the Scripture and grow in spirituality. Initially, the materials were introduced to a few groups and tried for a while, but group members' eagerness to learn was not as expected. Rev. Li proposed some adjustments, re-assessed the learning progress and exchanged ideas with us. Group members were then able to finish the assignments and grasp the basic contents and teachings. However, the vital part in the Living Word, the Scripture messages, was not well understood, and thus the drive to read and study the Bible was still weak.

Change needed to start from the leaders. After a review, we carried out the study with the leaders together on the Book of Hebrews; they participated in reading, observation and interpretation of the Book. In a lively way, they did not just read and analyse the verse structure, but produced diagrams and handicrafts to expound succinctly the important points and messages, as well as the Book's relationship with the Old and New Testaments. We thank God especially that the urge to read and study the Bible of the leaders was revived; and they were not satisfied with just completing the assignments but were concerned with finding out the interconnections among the different verses. We have also observed the active cooperation of the leaders in the Bible study, which is a positive attitude important to leadership of the Living Word study groups; preparation and teaching of the courses together has built up their teamwork spirit.



### **Mission Unchanged - Follow the Lord's Will**

Seeing church leaders leading group members to learn and live out the truth is very gratifying! This year, we plan to add two more units on the New Testament in the series, bringing the total number to 19 units (the complete series will contain in total 28 units - see progress in publishing in the chart below). The upholding of Christian Education is the key to effective teaching and learning, on top of the work of authoring, publishing and distributing teaching materials.

Education is a long-term initiative and will have far-reaching impact. However, relative to the history of the Church and the Kingdom of the Lord, the work in developing training courses in the past 10 and more years does not count too much. In the beginning of the year, we cordially invite your continuous company and support to witness the changes of lives and glory of the Lord!

## Progress Chart

Course Unit	Year Target	Completion Time	Fundraising Target	Fund raised up to December
Acts	Published	3 <sup>rd</sup> quarter 2017	US\$96,000	Falling short of US\$19,000 (before Feb 2018)
Genesis (revised edition)	Printing & distribution	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2017		
1 & 2 Corinthians	Authoring	4 <sup>th</sup> quarter 2017		
Romans, Galatians	Authoring	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2018		
Isaiah	Information sorting	1 <sup>st</sup> quarter 2018		

We will update the progress regularly, and release the new status and funding needed. We hope you will pray for the ministry, pay attention to its development and donate to us the necessary resources. Thank you!

# Prayers

## 1. Learn through teaching

While students can gain different knowledge from their teachers, the teachers themselves can also learn, broaden their horizons and be exposed to the views of people from different backgrounds, age etc. through interacting with their students.



May the Lord let teachers become enriched and gain new insights in their interactions with students; help them nurture a future generation both loyal to God and capable of teaching others!

## 2. Liar's trap

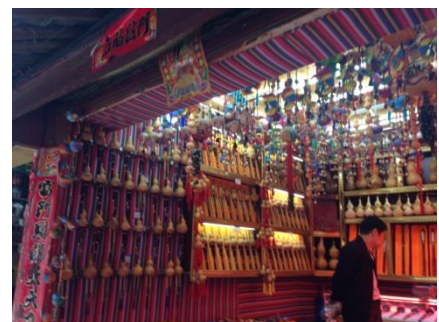


In the second half of November, a church member from Hubei told us that he and about 400 other mainland believers had visited Hong Kong upon the invitation of a pastor surnamed Ng who claimed to be a famous musician. But after their arrival, contrary to their expectation of a Christian event, they found that they were taken to an open concert held to celebrate Hong Kong's handover anniversary, followed by a visit to a jewellery shop, as in the itinerary of dubious tours joined by mainlanders.

May the Lord give believers wisdom to discern the truth, and not be cheated by unscrupulous individuals. May mainland believers still be willing to attend suitable training in Hong Kong to equip themselves.

## 3 Not to be fooled by false Gods

The NaiNai Temple in Hebei is built with shrines for various man-made idols from the Goddess Queen of the Earth, the Mad Mink to Confucius. There is also a statue of Jesus. During major festivals, more than 1 million people go up the hill to worship at the temple. Nearby villagers make RMB440,000 a year from managing the temple, and





almost RMB10 million a year managing the more than 30 other temples in the area.

May the Lord show mercy to the people, help them not to be fooled and instead discover the true God. May He also uphold justice, let the authorities investigate the villagers who tried to make profit from creating different Gods. May He awaken churches to actively spread the gospel to win back souls.

#### **4. Reduce white pollution**



The National Development and Reform Commission is reportedly studying the implementation of green logistics to control the waste created by takeaway foods. Packaged rubbish currently makes up a large proportion of daily rubbish, damaging the ecological environment.

In order to reduce the white pollution caused by takeaways, it is necessary to manage the root cause of such pollution. The regulatory department should strengthen its inspection and penalty on enterprises which produce the waste.

May the Lord help people treasure resources, control their desires and understand God's will for the earth. May the Lord lead churches to teach believers to be environmentally conscious, bring their own utensils when out shopping or dining.

*~ THE END ~*