

Case Sharing

## **Bible Teaching Re-ignites Ministry Commitment**

© Compiled by: Yin Qing

In this and the next issue of the newsletter, we will share how teachers in China use bible teaching to support churches. The case shared in this issue focuses on the needs of the ministry team.

### **Current situation: Lack of support, risks of dropping out**

One church in the Eastern region has a ministry team comprising 30 members (including volunteer evangelists, Sunday school teachers, and small group leaders). The team encountered difficulties in their ministry. The Bible teaching teacher met with the team several times before giving lessons. Below is their observation:

**Inadequate knowledge and technique:** Members of the ministry team have been serving for a long time. They work continuously, yet they are not refueled. When leading small groups, they struggle with not knowing what to say, how to lead, and explain clearly what the Bible says.

**Physical, mental, and spiritual exhaustion and loneliness:** Due to their busy schedules, members of the ministry team find it hard to finish their own tasks, not to mention maintain connections with one another. They expressed feeling helpless and weak. The teacher even heard that most of them wanted to be excused from the ministry.

### **Solution: Reaffirm commitment and mutual support**

In light of the current situation, the church invited the teacher to give training to the ministry team, strengthen them in Bible teaching and team communication. The teacher provided training to them on a weekly basis over a three-month period (during the first quarter of this year), using the Bible study material "Living Word: Ephesians."

**Bible Learning:** Members of the ministry team studied the overall message and individual passages of Ephesians together. At first, they found it hard to understand or digest the

material, but after three months, they were able to go deeper into the text, gradually regained their spiritual strength, and even proposed extending the study to other books, such as the epistle of James.

**Team Communication:** After participating in the training, the cohesion within each small group has improved, including Sunday school teachers, group leaders, worship service members, and worship teams. They used to serve independently, but now their mindset has changed and they are willing to try “working together” as a team as well as support and facilitate one another.

**Practical Action:** The teacher reminded participants that only specific actions can bring about renewal and change.

**Prayer**—Arrangement is made to have church-wide prayer meetings held monthly and prayer meetings before Sunday worship held weekly. Each service team needs to pray persistently to sustain their spirit and effort.

**Bible Study** — The 25 members who have completed the “Living Word Bible Teaching Series” will assist individual group leaders in using the “Living Word” teaching materials to prepare lessons and re-establish a systematic approach to studying the Bible. This initiative is currently being piloted by one group consisting of pastors.

**“Trial Lectures”** — In each class, the teacher arranged for two students to give a 15-minute trial lecture. The content of the trial lecture is determined based on their ministry roles, such as Bible study sessions, Sunday school lessons, or personal testimonies. The purpose is to strengthen their courage and confidence. For some participants, it was the first time they spoke in front of a group. There are also some who remained tense and sweaty throughout the entire presentation. After completing the trial presentation, they realized that they had achieved a major breakthrough; what they once believed to be impossible had now been accomplished, with both the presenters and the listeners deeply touched and enriched by the experience.

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The teacher from China summarized this Bible learning experience for the ministry team as follows: *“After completing the study, the ministry team members made improvement in their handling of bible passages. They used to simply read from a script; now they are able to expound the passages on their own and reflect on how to apply them. At the same time, their confidence and skills in leading small groups are enhanced. Finally, the experience has made the ministry team stronger and more cohesive. We are so grateful!”*

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## **The Family Concern of the Pastor in Urban Church**

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Associate General Secretary (Ministry)

Meeting and having dinner with Teacher Jin and his family of five for the second time in Hong Kong is a sweet surprise for me.

It has been quite a while since I listened to Teacher Jin share his family situation, including his relationship with his wife, the education issues faced by his children, and so on. I got a deeper understanding of the family issues and the situation of pastors in China. The last time I saw him, he was clearly distressed. Later on, I learned from another partner that his daughter had to undergo surgery due to a sudden illness, and he was deeply concerned about her health and the surgical costs. Thank the Lord, everything is now settled. Seeing his active 8-year-old daughter running and jumping around in front of me, enjoying her time in Hong Kong with her older sister and younger brother, I noticed that Teacher Jin and his wife are no longer sad.

### **Raising children is stressful**

Raising children is a major issue for families in China today. Having different opinions on how to educate children can strain marital relationships. For example, what is spoiling or being too harsh? How should boundaries be drawn?

For pastors, they have to set their own families as “role models”, and this constitutes great pressure. Their children's behavior in public settings subjects the pastors to evaluation by believers. What is good testimony? Their children are expected to excel academically, be respectful and obedient, read the Bible and pray every day, stay away from electronic games, never idolize celebrities... Since children cannot attend church, their spiritual nurturing becomes the responsibility of parents. Some enthusiastic believers may only know how to serve in the church, but do not know how to be good parents at home. How can this be tackled? Some pastors' families are facing the same problem, perhaps even worse. Pastors are busy at work, and by the time they return home, they are exhausted. They have no time for family bonding, not to say providing pastoral care to their own children.

## The passing on of faith in changing times

Besides, the nurturing of the younger generations in today's urban churches is more complex than in previous generations. Teacher Jin is a third-generation Christian. He has family members who are pastors or church elders. From a young age, he saw the seniors in his family serve faithfully and lead a frugal life; he also vividly witnessed how suffering can make one grow. Now, however, he is unsure how to preach the message of suffering for Christ within his own family. The loving donations he received enabled him to pursue education abroad, and his eldest daughter has lived overseas for five years and is currently attending a private school. For the eldest daughter and her younger sister and brother, the rural church is only a place they occasionally visit; the capital city where they now reside is relatively abundant in terms of its material provision.

Teacher Jin recalled his childhood experience; he saw the hardship of his older family members, yet they remained joyful at heart, and they taught their own children biblical truth at home. For Teacher Jin's generation, they were still able to attend Sunday school. Now, his own children do not have Sunday school, and he admits that he is not doing enough to nurture his children's spiritual growth. This sense of guilt manifests itself as hesitation when he teaches believers about nurturing families. However, Teacher Jin remains deeply grateful as his wife stays home full-time to care for the children, and I personally witnessed their children's obedience. The older children care for the younger ones, this is good testimony.

## Shepherding occupies the pastor's mind

After spending half a day in Hong Kong discussing family ministry within the church and the needs of his own family, I sensed another source of pressure on Teacher Jin. Besides attending the conference in Hong Kong, he also had time to rest and take his children out to tour the city. It was a nice vacation.

When he said he wanted to go to the bookstore, I heard his wife say in a semi-protesting tone that no more books should be bought, as the luggage was already overweight. I could see in Teacher Jin's eyes that he was debating, *"Coming to Hong Kong is about finding resources to teach and shepherd the flock properly when I return!"*

Finally, I took him to the bookstore!

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Contemporary Church leaders in China can be grouped into the following generations  
(Simple Classification)

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| <p><u>First Generation</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They started serving at the church in China when it was reopened and was in need of a major overhaul</li> <li>• They became Christians before the Cultural Revolution</li> <li>• They received basic training (provided by western mission organizations)</li> <li>• At the beginning of China's reform and opening up, they led the church, tried their best to spread the gospel and plant churches</li> <li>• Now these leaders have either retired or rested in their heavenly home</li> </ul> | <p><u>Second generation (over 60 years old)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They grew up during the Cultural Revolution, had minimal education, and attended churches in rural areas</li> <li>• They started serving at the church in the 1980's</li> <li>• They learned how to preach and nurture the congregation through apprenticeship with older pastors</li> <li>• They witnessed the rapid growth of the church</li> <li>• Most of them have now retired</li> </ul>                           |
| <p><u>Third generation (41-60 years old)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• They were born in the 1970's and grew up in the city</li> <li>• Most of them have a college degree, some even have a Master of Divinity degree or higher</li> <li>• They have difficulty adapting to the traditional (apprenticeship) mode of training</li> <li>• They are often busy juggling work and academic advancement</li> <li>• They are the current church leaders</li> </ul>                                                                                           | <p><u>Fourth generation (30-40 years old)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Most of them were born in the 1990s and are mostly the only child in the family</li> <li>• Many of them have travelled or lived abroad or have exposure to foreign churches and access to theological information through social media</li> <li>• They have no experience facing major political campaigns against the church of any kind</li> <li>• They have a strong desire for role models and peer support</li> </ul> |



# We sincerely invite you

To support...

## Top Priority – Nurturing Local Workers

We invite you to provide resources to support local workers in their ministries.  
Thank you!

Target group: 100 experienced pastors

Provide: Bible teaching resources

**Funds needed: USD 205,128**

### Bible teaching resources include:

1. Publish Bible teaching materials “Living Word Bible Teaching Series” (64 volumes already published)
2. Supplemented by quality devotional literature (obtained through the book gifting program)
3. Bible teaching videos (under production)
4. “Living Word” Bible training sessions (approximately 300 sessions per year)
5. Online advanced Bible study (new session starts in September)



~ The above is part of the content of PFC issue388, if you would like to read the full newsletter, please contact us at [pfc@ccl.org.hk](mailto:pfc@ccl.org.hk), thank you! ~

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