



March, 2016

Dear brothers and sisters,

Cold winter will soon be gone and spring is around the corner. After all the ice and snow, the sunshine is especially welcome. Living in NC with its clear seasonal changes and no extreme heat or cold is really a blessing. The trees all over our state and the fresh air make NC even greener than the “Garden State” New Jersey. We are so blessed to call NC home. God established the big church family of RCCC here so that brothers and sisters can come together and grow. This church is the household of the ever living God and the pillar and foundation of the truth. May the Lord use this church not only to bless the brothers and sisters who come here, but also as a base for global missions, so that those who are equipped in this church will go all over the world to be a blessing to many.

Do you still remember the combined worship on February 14? That was our church’s first Youth Sunday. Its purpose was to let brothers and sisters see what God has been doing among the young people of our church, what direction our Youth Ministry is heading, what needs our younger generation has and also to recognize the people who have been faithfully laboring in this ministry. The worship service and all the activities before and after it were designed to make one point: our young people are able to serve. First of all, they stood in teams at the church entrances to welcome worshippers. That morning was very cold indeed with bone-piercing winds. But they still stood at the doors to welcome everyone who came. After the worship service when our congregation sat down for lunch, the youth served everyone with food and drink. The young people who led the various aspects of our worship service did a fantastic job: leading worship, being the moderator, reading Scripture, ushering. When I heard the worship team on stage sing in Mandarin, I knew that they had grown up already. Young people nowadays are generally self-centered. The decisions they make in their daily lives, how they treat others, what they think or say often stem from their own likes and dislikes. But that was not the case with the young people of our church. They were sensitive to the feelings of our Chinese congregation and took their preferences and habits into consideration by selecting a few traditional hymns and singing in Chinese. Then there was that young sister who gave her testimony. Using her own experience in dealing with health issues, she talked about how a Christian in adversity looked at God’s work in her life, how to rest under God’s sovereignty and recognize that He is God. In ten short minutes of moving witness, this young lady reiterated a phrase that captured how God worked in her life as she battled her illness: “the mysterious work of God”. Most young people think highly of themselves, but she submitted to God in her trials and admitted that God worked in mysterious ways. I was very touched.

Then there was the young man who interpreted the English sermon into Chinese. Were you moved by him? I learned later that our youth pastor Rev. Miller had not approached him specifically. Pastor Miller only shared with the youth the need for an interpreter. This young man heard it, was moved and went home to talk it over with his mother; and just like that, he stepped up and took on the job of interpreting. Anyone who has done interpretation on the pulpit knows it is by no means easy to stand in front of an audience and interpret on the spot. When this young man was interpreting, my heart was deeply touched by the scene. I thought of Jesus dividing the loaves of bread. A child was willing to hand over all he had: five loaves and two fish. Jesus used this meagre supply to feed five thousand and the leftovers filled twelve baskets. This young man saw the need, and of his own volition stepped up in an attempt to serve. He was like a first fruit offered to the Lord and at the same time was testament to the fact that all the nurturing and training on the part of his parents and mentors was not in vain.

We will soon have the groundbreaking ceremony for our church building expansion project. An endeavor to build or expand a church facility is an opportunity for our brothers and sisters to take part and be blessed. That is also true for our youth and children. I remember when the New Jersey Chinese church where I served had a church building project, the youth took on the task of raising funds for the largest classroom in the new church building. I forget what the exact amount was; must have been tens of thousands of dollars. The youth washed cars (guess who were their most generous customers?), held bake sales and book sales, did yard work and landscaping for people..... Many saved their pocket money to add to the church building fund. In the end, they raised enough funds to meet their target. Then the young people invited their friends to the dedication service of the new church building. After the service the youth gathered in front of “their” classroom and had a ribbon cutting ceremony and a celebration of their own during which they told their friends about “their church”. As a result, the church building project became an opportunity for the youth ministry to grow, for the youth to come together, and for the church to become their church, their home. Do you think this is feasible?

Dear brothers and sisters, God has put almost a hundred youths in our midst. These young people are like sheets of blank paper or pieces of clay. We have to get to them before the world does and imprint on them the image of Jesus. We must let the truth of the Bible take root in their lives so that they can be strong in the word of the Lord. Only in this way can our church grow and mature, and then we can give a good account of ourselves to the Lord.

“I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one. Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him.” I John 2:14-15

Serving together with you in the Lord,

Pastor Calvin Tran