



基督工人中心 CHRISTIAN WITNESS CENTER

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Dear Brothers and Sisters, Peace to you in the Lord!

When I was a child, I always felt that time passed so slowly, and wished that I could tear up more calendar pages in a day so that the Lunar New Year could come quickly. But as I got older, it felt like I was constantly chasing time and didn't want it to pass! Either way, when the monthly calendar has only one page left, we know that 2023 is about to say goodbye to us.

Looking back on 2023, "recovery" is the word in my mind, for the whole world had been seriously impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic since its outbreak in 2020, but starting from this year, many restrictions have been lifted up in most countries, and the Chinese churches have been willing to take great steps to resume physical meetings. Compared to the American churches in the US, although our pace is slow, our worries are slowly decreasing, and the Chinese churches are revitalized, for which we thank and praise the Lord! Similarly, looking back on the year, through the "recovery" after the pandemic, I also see two sides, namely: "gains" and "losses" in the ministry of Christian Witness Center.

Gains:

(1) Holy Land Study Tour (6/19-6/30)

Thank the Lord! Maybe been shelter-in-place too long, with the border-opening in many countries, a record high of fifty-five people participated this Holy

Land Study Tour. During the whole journey we have followed the footsteps of the Israelite's exodus of Egypt, into Canaan, and the footprints of Jesus. We climbed Mount Sinai, visited Moab, Edom, and set foot in the cities of Israel: Jericho, Jerusalem, Galilee, the Dead Sea, the plains of Megiddo, and even as far as to Caesarea Philippi, etc. The itinerary was quite tight, but everyone felt worthy. We thank the Lord for His provision and protection, and for the abundant blessings to the brothers and sisters! Especially after the outbreak of the war between Israel and Hamas on October 7, many brothers and sisters shared that they were thankful to the Lord for having the opportunity to go to the Holy Land this year. Indeed, when I contacted our travel agent, and our tour guides in Jerusalem and asked them if everything was okay? They told me that October to December was supposed to be the peak season for tourism, but now all the tour groups have been cancelled and the attractions, even though still open, have no tourists. At this time, we especially need to pray for peace in the area since the war is still on-going.



Some Holy Land Study Group members at Mount Sinai



Short-term mission team's gospel meeting in Columbia, MO

(2) August and September Short-term Mission (8/18-27, 9/8-17)

In the summer of 2020 when all were shrouded in the fear of the pandemic, and Pastor Ko had just diagnosed with cancer, yet we still fearlessly sent out short-term mission teams to share the gospel in different places. Since then, the number of short-term mission teams and members coming to the Midwest has increased. I, with little faith, have speculated: Perhaps because of the pandemic, many long-term missionaries around the world have retrieved from the field, also because of the restrictions that made churches dare not send short-term mission teams out, these have made CWC's short-term mission program in the Midwest stand out. When reflecting that difficult time, I thank God for constantly strengthening us with His Word: "For God has not given us a spirit of timidity, but of power and love and discipline." (2 Tim. 1:7), "Reach the word; be ready in season and out of season." (2 Tim. 4:2). This year, the number of mission teams and number of team members have reached the peak: twelve teams (August 6 teams, September 6 teams), 85 people participated. In addition to the California and New Jersey teams, five teams were from Texas. As the pandemic is nearing the end, more and more students have returned to campus. These short-term mission teams have brought great encouragement to us! May the Lord help us to take up the gospel baton and light the fire of revival everywhere.

Losses:

In the past two years (2020-2022), because the U.S. government has not issued student visas, and diplomatic relations between China and the United States have been quite strained in recent years, which has affected the number of students and visiting scholars on all campuses, which has affected the number of churches and Bible study groups in various places. In addition: Because of the pandemic, churches have held online meetings,

and some people are used to "surfing the Internet at home", so there is even more reason for brothers and sisters to be lazy and not want to go out to come to the physical church meetings, let alone enthusiastically serve in the churches, so the spiritual atmosphere of the church is very low. All of these have affected the number of people attending Discipleship Training and Bible Camp (especially August Discipleship Training) but thank the Lord that CWC coworkers have still been tirelessly and faithfully serving brother and sister who came to the meetings.

As you receive this letter, we are preparing all of our meetings this winter, so please come out of your comfort zone to attend at least one of the meetings to be equipped for the future mission God has destined for you.

(1) December Winter Conference (12/22-12/26)

In the 2021 Winter Conference, under the pressure of the pandemic, we still had more than 400 people attending. Last year, despite a snowstorm rarely seen in the Midwest in recent years (even the water pipes at the main door of hotel were burst), nearly 1,000 brothers and sisters braved the snowstorm in attendance. Hopefully, this year we will see another "recovery" after all the difficulties! We pray that our brothers and sisters regain their intimate relationship with God and to love the Lord more deeply. And of course, don't forget to invite your gospel friends to hear the gospel, because they will be the new force of the church when they accept Jesus as Savior. This year, the Lord has prepared for us a group of His faithful servants and maidservants, so please don't miss this "Responding the Mission with the Kingdom of Heaven in Heart" Winter Conference.

(2) December Discipleship Training (12/26-12/31)

Speakers are: Pastor Larry Wong, Brother Balex Sit and CWC coworkers. Topics include: "More Excellent Ministry"; "How Does God Shape Christians?"; "Parables of Jesus" (interpretation &

application); "See Life through Book of Proverbs", etc. Brothers and sisters may consider attending this meeting held at CWC after the Winter Conference. Registration deadline is 12/17.

(3) January Bible Camp (12/31-1/6/2024)

We will continue to study the Books of History – "The History of the Exile and the Return of Israel". Near S70 brothers and sisters have registered and begun to write their assigned topic reports. Please pray for them. If you missed the deadline for this Bible Camp, please join the December Discipleship Training so that you will be eligible for the August Bible Camp next year.



2022 CWC Winter Conference



CWC coworkers and some board members

Paul's Epistles often end with references to his co-workers (Romans, 1&2 Corinthians, Colossians, Philemon, etc.), but alas: we often skip this last part quickly! I noticed that Pastor Ko often liked to share the last chapter of those Pauline Epistles, and the truth is that we actually would learn a lot from reading them carefully. Now, at the end of this letter, I would like to introduce the co-workers who have been quietly serving at Christian Witness Center:

(1) Brother Liang Qinglong and Sister Mu Yu: Brother Liang is a fellow coworker who loves to share the gospel and enjoy praying, he is a diligent, humble, and pure-hearted co-worker. He is not willing to sit in a house, but always like to take brothers and sisters "out and about" (that is, to go out and see if there are any opportunities for evangelism), and he always wear smile on his face

with great knowledge that led many people, especially the intellectual, to believe in Jesus.

(2) Pastor Charles Huang and Mrs. Hu Yi: Always have a smile on his face, and is gentle in manner, Pastor Huang had been pastoring the church in Taiwan for 12 years. Shepherding, teaching, and counseling are his gifts. Although he may seem quiet on the outside, brothers and sisters can always get a lot of help from him when they come to him.

(3) Scott and Becci Jerome: Scott is an extremely conscientious and gifted staff member who has a knack for maintenance. He got up at 5 o'clock every day, and after morning devotion before the Lord, he begins to work without rest until dark. Their family is God's grace and blessing to the Center. Scott not only loves the Lord, but also loves people. He has a compassionate heart and likes to help others. So the pastor's wife of their church calls him "Old Soul" which is rare but much needed character of a servant in today's ministry. We thank the Lord for their faithful service.

Every month we publish a prayer calendar and prayer letter. If you are not on our mailing list, please feel free to read them online and pray for us. Your prayers remind us to keep our eyes fixed on the Lord, to be obedient to God's will, and to serve Him diligently without laziness.

May the Lord bless you richly!

In Christ,
Sister Cindy Chiang