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October & November 2024 Prayer Letter

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

After the short-term mission teams left in September, I was finally able to concentrate on preparing for the three winter meetings. Now that everything is in place. The registration forms have been posted on CWC website. Please browse, download, and prepare your hearts and set aside time to come not only yourself, but also invite brothers and sisters and gospel friends. In this and the next issue of the Prayer Letter, I will highlight two special speakers from the Winter Conference and their workshops

He came from the Holy Land and also from the battlefield

Praise the Lord, last June, 52 brothers and sisters participated in the Holy Land Study Tour - "Out of Egypt into Canaan, the Footprints of Jesus". In Israel, led by Teacher Joshua Peng, everyone was very excited along the way, not only did they keep taking pictures in each stop, but also eagerly asked many Bible questions. As the team leader, I said to Teacher Peng, "I'm sorry! We are really like the hillbillies of Grandma Liu entering the Grand View Garden." After a few days, while having a chance to talk, I said, "Teacher Peng, have you ever been to the United States? He replied shyly, "No! I'm also a hillbilly." At that moment, I thought that it would be great if we could ask Teacher Peng to teach in next year's two winter meetings (Winter Conference and December Discipleship Training), not only he could expound the Bible, but take the opportunity to visit his friends in the States. I remembered that a few years back when Cannan Hall was under construction, we have accumulated some frequent fly mileages from purchasing building materials with credit card. And at that time I told Pastor Ko that we were going to save those mileages for "urgent needs or for speakers from foreign countries with expensive tickets." So I thought: we could use the mileage to get the ticket for Teacher Peng to come to the United States. After prayers and seeking, I initially contacted Teacher Peng last December to see if he was also burdened to come. He said: he also needed to pray. After one week, he said "yes" to us. By that time, Israel had already started a war with Hamas (the war had broken out on October 7), but no one has expected that the war is not over yet.

In June of this year, I asked him to give me his itinerary while in the States. When he replied me in August, I was already busy. But one day on the road during August short-term mission trip, I accidentally saw the news on the internet: "Lufthansa Airlines and some European airlines will follow several U.S. airlines to suspend the Israel Tel Aviv route until April next year, or when the war eases". This is really a bolt from the blue. Then Teacher Peng may not be able to come to the United States at the end of the year!

Every time I asked Teacher Peng, "Are you all right in Jerusalem?" His reply has always been "Fine. Please pray for the peace of Jerusalem"; After a few days, God suddenly reminded me that more than 30 years ago, when I was still a seminary student, Pastor Moses Yu invited me to join their study tour to the Holy Land, the whole group was flying with Israel Airlines EL AL (this was the only time I ever flown it). And I thought to myself: Foreign airlines may not dare to fly to Israel, their own airlines must and dare to fly. I consulted with the Jerusalem travel agent we had worked with over many years (and we all became good friends). I said to that agent: "I thought about three options: 1. to take EL AL Airlines; 2. to

have Teacher Peng take the bus to Amman, Jordan, and fly from there to the States; and 3. to cancel or postpone the trip. But with the third option, not only will Teacher Peng be very disappointed, but in such a short period of time, it is also quite difficult for me to find another speaker for the two meetings... The agent replied, "EL AL Airlines is the best choice, but you'd better ask Teacher Peng in advance if he would like to fly because their security is very strict". I said, "If the security is strict, it means that it is safe!" I asked Teacher Peng again. It seem he was not afraid, so it was done. I bought an EL AL Airlines ticket (mileage can only be used for domestic flights in the United States). At the end of August, Israel fought again with Hezbollah in south Lebanon. And on September 21 Hezbollah fired more than 200 missiles against Israel. A few missiles that were not intercepted by Israel's Iron Dome system and hit Haifa in the north. The agent told me: "If the war is really critical, the plane will land at the airport in Cyprus or Amman, and then fly back to Tel Aviv when the situation is stable," Since Teacher Peng is not afraid, we are not worried, and we believe that God will watch over every step. Please cherish this precious opportunity, just as the brothers and sisters who went to study in the Holy Land last June were very grateful to the Lord, because there is no tour group to Israel now except for the locals. There are few tourists from abroad. And we don't know when we will be able to go to the Holy Land again.

During the discussion about the topics, Teacher Peng asked me, "What do brothers and sisters in the U.S. want to know?" I said, "It's exactly what you wanted to know about Israel when you first went there from Taiwan 20 years ago!" When we study the Bible, we often do it as book knowledge because we don't know about the culture, geography, and history of the place. For example, why is the fig tree cursed when it is not the season to harvest the fruit? Jesus didn't stay in the tomb for three days and three nights? Is mustard a tree or a vegetable? Is it abnormal and heretical if it grows as a tree? Why did Jesus say so ruthlessly: Let the dead bury the dead? What is called a camel passing through the eye of a needle, ... and there will be more that Teacher will share during Winter Conference. [For detailed information about the Winter Conference, please click here.](#) Teacher Peng will continue to share more, such as: God's plans for the Jews, and His thoughts for the gentiles (Romans 9:3) in the following [Discipleship Training](#). Please do not miss out these two winter meetings. [For all information, please click here.](#)

This year's prayer letter messages have been focusing on the theme of "Turn to God for Revival". This issue we have Pastor Charles Huang, CWC coworker, share a message.

Return to and Love God

The church in Ephesus lacked love for the Lord

The Apostle John wrote to the church in Ephesus in the book of Revelation, "But I have {this} against you, that you have left your first love." (Revelation 2:4) As a Christian, one should love the Lord with all his/her heart, but the Ephesian church's zeal for the Lord has become dull, mechanical, and doctrinal. Their works, their labor, their patience, and their perseverance in the truth could not be a substitute for their love for the Lord.

Examine whether we truly love the Lord

The church in North America today is similar to the church in Ephesus, where we pursue truth, exalt the Bible, and serve disciplinarily, yet we have reservations of our love for the Lord. There are three things that we, the Chinese, may have a hard time to overcome: money, our children, and death. We need to ask: First, whether our monetary offerings are pleasing to God. The amount of our offering is far less than the American believers. The church usually recommends the basic tithing (one-tenth), which most brothers and sisters may not have met. Second, do we make our children, a gift from God, first priority over God? It seems that we care about our children's study and their future achievements in the world more than pursuing God and tithing. Third, do we love our lives so much that we have been delaying to resume attending in-person gatherings at church after the pandemic? As a result, the church has suffered a loss that the number of people attending church services not being able to reach as the pre-pandemic time because brothers and sisters were cold in their hearts. Haven't we been compelled by Paul, who "having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for {that} is very much better"? (Philippians 1:23) Jesus said, "He who has My commandments and keeps them is the one who loves Me; and he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and will disclose Myself to him." (John 14:21) Much love abounds in obedience; little love, less obedience. Do I really love the Lord?

The apostle Paul's counsel of full dedication

After explaining the gracious gospel of God in Romans, the apostle Paul said: "Therefore I urge you, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, {which is} your spiritual service of worship." (Romans 12:1) In the Old Testament, God accepted dead animals as sacrifices. But Jesus' sacrifice on the cross

became the ultimate sacrifice, and the Old Testament sacrifice was no longer needed and had no effect anymore (Hebrews 9:11, 12). In Christ, the only acceptable sacrifice to God is to dedicate ourselves completely to the Lord. Under God's Lordship, our unredeemed flesh can be used by the Lord as instruments of righteousness to serve Him and worship Him. It is pleasing to God that we love Him, commit to Him, and respond to His love in this way.

Love for the Lord is the foundation of growth

The natural motivation for full dedication is the love for the Lord. Love is the force that moves us to run the heavenly path on earth. If we do not love the Lord, Bible truth is only the head knowledge, not in the heart, and we have no thirst for the Word of God; serving becomes a heavy burden with no passion; evangelism becomes drudgery with no enthusiasm or even not doing it at all; living a holy life becomes an ideal, not able to hold on to. Loving the Lord is the foundation for a lively spiritual life, and without loving the Lord, no matter how many things we do in the church, they are only religious activities.

King David, who loved the Lord, received grace of God

King David is portrayed as a man after God's own heart, who did God's will (cf. Acts 13:22). God chose him, not his brothers, through the prophet Samuel because God saw David's heart. King David was by no means perfect, he had committed great sins, but he loved God and pursued God's will. King David's heart desire was to build a temple for God, God promised to establish his house and his kingdom, and that David's descendant, Jesus Christ, would sit on the throne, and His kingdom will be forever (cf. 2 Samuel 7:13). God looks upon and blesses those who love Him and pursue His heart, just as God did to David!

The sin convicted woman loves the Lord more

In the New Testament, the example of a sin convicted woman anointing Jesus showed her love for Jesus. In the house of a Pharisee, this woman wet Jesus' feet with her tears and kept wiping them with the hair of her head, and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. The Pharisees despised her and her act because she was a sinner. Jesus defended the woman because she loved Jesus more than anyone else. Jesus said, "For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little." (Luke 7:47). Only when we recognize what a sinner we are, we will realize how much God has forgiven us, so that we will be more grateful and love God more.

Love the Lord and be His channel of blessings to others

This year, the CWC arranged August and September short-term mission to the Midwest teamed up with local churches and Bible study groups to evangelize and held evangelistic meetings on different campus. I feel that there are more new Chinese students this year than last year, and people's hearts were softer. The number of people who came to faith led by the mission teams was significantly higher than last year, and even tripled. Praise the Lord! This may be a sign that God is reviving the North American church after the pandemic. We cannot predict when God will bring revival, but we can prepare ourselves and wait patiently for the time of God's revival. When we are ready, God will be able to use us in the hour of revival effectively and greatly, otherwise, we will miss out on the opportunity to be used by God. Now is the time to love the Lord, to commit ourselves to the Lord, and to be equipped by the Lord. May the Lord help us to learn to be disciples of the Lord so that we may be a blessing to others.

Future Meetings

(1) Winter Conference (12/21 evening to 12/25 noon)

This year Winter Conference will be held at the Embassy Suite Hotel in Rogers, Arkansas. Please reserve your schedule early and invite brothers and sisters and your gospel friends of the church to attend the meeting. God has prepared many new speakers for us: Pastor Mingpeng Gong of Canada, whose burden and gift is to evangelize gospel friends from mainland China; Pastor Larry Wong of SAGOS Institute of Preaching & Bible Exposition will share revival messages: Reflecting the workmen of the Lord in a crooked and perverse generation from 3 judges in the Book of Judges. Another feature of this year is that we have specially invited Teacher Joshua Peng, who led our Holy Land Study Group last year and has been in Israel for 20 years, to speak about the Holy Land and the Bible; Pastor David Lu will still be preaching his specialty: the messages of eschatological prophecy: Times of Trouble for Jacob (Israel). In addition, Pastor Andy and Hilary Tso from the Brooklyn Pastoral Church in New York, who emphasize parent-children relationships and home school, will share the topic: Church and Family Fusion. Elder Daniel Luan of the Rutgers Community Christian Church in New Jersey will also come and share messages: "A Christian-centered Worldview". The speakers in the English group are Pastor Paul Sin, Pastor Andy & Hilary Tso, Pastor Steve Tan, and others. [Detailed information has been posted on the CWC website.](#)

[Please click here.](#) The online registration will be from November 16 to 4pm on December 15. Please do not miss out.

(2) December Discipleship Training (12/25 evening to 12/29 noon)

As soon as the Winter Conference is over, December Discipleship Camp will be held at the Center that evening. Due to the schedule of the Winter Conference and January Bible Camp, we have compressed the December Discipleship Training to four days. However, it still requires full-time attendance. Thank the Lord that Pastor Mingpeng Gong and Teacher Joshua Peng will come to teach. Pastor Gong will teach: “The Victorious Life of a Christian” and “Be a Doer of the Word”. Teacher Peng will answer questions that buzzle bother our hearts with Romans 9:3 (especially the events in Israel that appear in the news every day): God's heart for the Jews? What is God's heart for us Gentile saints? In addition, he will teach how to study the Bible with exegesis in contextual exegesis, contextual principles, and Hebrew exegesis. [For registration form, please click here.](#) Please not only reserve time for yourself, but also invite the brothers and sisters of your church to participate and be equipped. The deadline is December 14.

(3) January Bible Camp (12/29 to 1/4/2025)

This time we will study “the Book of Acts and Life of Paul”. Praise the Lord, many brothers and sisters has tasted the sweetness of God’s Word studying the Life of Jesus-The Four Gospel in August Bible Camp and committed to continue the study of Book of Acts. Currently over 50 brothers and sisters have already signed up for the January camp. Pastor David Su and Sister Grace Lee will come to teach. Assignments on how to read the Book of Acts and mapping Paul's four missionary journeys have been sent to the applicants. According to the syllabus that they will start writing the designated special report from November 1. If you want to participate but haven't signed up yet, please register as soon as possible The deadline for registration is November 15. The application form and schedule have been posted on the CWC website, [please click here.](#)

Special Offering for the Winter Conference

All the CWC meetings are by free-will offerings. Not only because we are totally convicted that our God is faithful, but also because our thought is: We hope that our brothers and sisters and gospel friends will not be held back from pursuing the Lord because of the expenses. But this year, the cost of a room in the hotel is about \$150.00 a night, almost 2.5 times that of previous years; plus the fact that the state of Arkansas does not give tax exemptions to any non-profit organizations (not even to local churches in the state). So funding has become a heavy load this year. We would like to practice being a good steward of money earlier. If you are burdened for the funds of the Winter Conference, whether you attend or not, you can start your support by designating your offering to the Winter Conference so that Gospel friends and students will not have pressure when they participate the meetings. You can give by using the new Zelle transfer designate to Winter Conference, [please click here.](#)

Sunday Online Bible Study & Prayer Meeting

During the pandemic, many churches’ meetings were held online, that was why Pastor Ko started this Sunday evening Bible study and prayer meeting to lead brothers and sisters continue to have a life of Bible reading, prayer, and spiritual sharing as a group. To help the participants into deeper study of the Bible, we will teach how to study the Bible, how to do the outlines, and how to write a topic reports, etc. We will be studying “The Book of Acts and Life of Paul” to prepare brothers and sisters for January Bible camp, we will also spend some time to pray for the need of CWC ministry. We will shorten the meeting to one hour (7:00-8:00PM CT) so that it will not affect your next day schedule. We will study “the Book of Acts and Life of Paul”. Zoom ID is: 85888709271, passcode: 567482. Please come and study the Bible together that we will be equipped in the Lord.

New Online Donation

In the past few years, brothers and sisters have asked whether they can make donation online. However, because the Christian Witness Center is located in a rural area. The local bank we have is small and do not have the advanced fund transfer systems. Now we finally opened an account that allows using Zelle to make donations in a larger bank in Kansas City (Missouri) so that we could save brothers and sisters the trouble of writing checks and mailing them. For how to do this, [please click here.](#) In the past months, not only we have seen brothers and sisters donating with QR codes from their cell phones when they came to the meetings, but also using Zelle transfer from their homes. Please make good use of this channel of contribution if your heart is burdened to support the CWC financially.

Thanksgiving and Prayer Requests

1. After half a year of prayer and searching for a venue, with your prayers, God has provided a venue for this year's Winter Conference, the Embassy Suites in Rogers, Arkansas. Please mark your calendar and reserve time (December 21-25) to attend. This is a new change. Please continue to pray for the adaptations we have to the new venue, and for a good working relationship with the hotel.

2. Thank the Lord for leading the August and September short-term mission teams. Not only all team members were physically, mentally and spiritually healthy, had a safe path along the way, but also have borne many fruits in different places. Please continue to pray for the follow-up work to the new believers.

3. For Coworkers:

* Mrs. Ko: Thank the Lord for blessing my daughter with a baby girl on October 18. Both mother and daughter are doing well. I am currently in California undergoing acupuncture treatment. My physical condition has improved, and I need to continue the treatment to stabilize the efficacy. I recently attended a conference where God strengthened me through His Word. Thank the Lord for His abundant grace, and thank you for your prayers.

* Sister Cindy Chiang : From now until mid-January, she has been concentrating on preparing for the three winter meetings. Please pray that the Lord grants her wisdom and knowledge from above, good health both physically and spiritually so that she will be clear about God's guidance and setting her mind on God's interests. Please also pray for her for the administrative work during the weekdays and for weekend's ministry on campus that she can be a blessing to all.

* Brother Qinglong Liang: Pray that the Lord gives me a willing heart to obey Him and be filled with the Holy Spirit in all circumstances. May the Lord help me manage my own household according to His will, and prepare for the three winter meetings faithfully. Strive to work together with brothers and sisters in Columbia Chinese Christian Church; continue to pray for the green card application.

* Pastor Charles Huang: Pray for the preparations for the joint Chinese New Year Evangelistic Gala in Champagne on January 25. May God bless the Chinese churches and fellowship groups with witness of unity, inspiring each other to preach the gospel. Pray that God gives me His Word and gift to feed churches in Champagne and the surrounding area. Pray that the Lord will lead my parents to the saving grace of the Lord, bless my three children in their study and growth in school.

* American coworker Scott Jerome: Pray for Scott's dad who starts 3-round of radiation treatment for lung cancer, and for Scott's mom who has Alzheimer. Pray that God will prepare children with workers' hearts for the Winter Conference.

4. Pray for the CWC monthly financial need (General fund, Building fund, Training fund, etc.) asking the Lord to manifest His abundant provision and allow more brothers and sisters to experience the blessings of giving.

5. For CWC: Pray that the Lord will bring more co-workers to the CWC ministry for the furtherance of the gospel ministry in the Midwest.

Emmanuel

In the Lord,

Sister Cindy Chiang