

NEWSLETTER DECEMBER 2003

In November 2003, 10 Canadians went to China, not to famous tourist attractions for sightseeing, but to remote rural areas to serve the people there. Dr. Po Kee Cheung, Charles Chan and Jeannette Huen from Edmonton, Jocelyn Ching from Calgary and Dr. Wendy Cheung from Hamilton joined 3 eye surgeons and 2 eye nurses from Hong Kong to work in a county hospital for 2 weeks. Josephine Saley, Ron & Beth Boyd, and Beverly Oxman from Toronto and Jelle Bosch from Peterborough taught English in a school near Chengdu. Here are some of their stories.

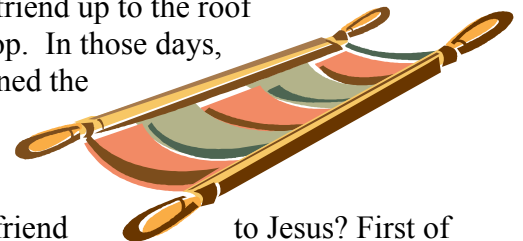
“Because of their faith...”

Charles Chan

The second chapter of the Book of Mark records an amazing story about Jesus during the beginning of His ministry in Galilee. One day, Jesus entered the town of Capernaum. Many people heard that Jesus had come and they brought their moms and dads, their children, their aunts and uncles, and whoever was sick to come to Jesus. They had heard how Jesus had healed the man with leprosy and many other people in the area. They quickly filled the room, so that some had to stay outside. Everybody hoped to catch a glimpse of Jesus, or better still, to be healed by Him. Jesus started to teach the crowd with the Word of God.

Someone in the crowd probably heard how powerfully Jesus spoke and how miraculous His healing was, and decided to bring their friend over. This friend was a paralytic, a man who was unable to walk. These four strong guys knew that Jesus was the true healer. They did not care about the difficulty in getting to Jesus. They just wanted their friend to be healed. This must have been their precious friend—one they loved.

Now, we have a problem here. The house was packed. People were standing and sitting all the way in to the courtyard. There was no way they could get their beloved friend to Jesus. Well, one of them had a crazy idea. “Let’s lower him from the roof top.” Without much discussion, they all thought that it was a good idea. Then one climbed up and helped the other. Two of them hoisted their paralyzed friend up to the roof with support from the other two on the floor. Finally, they got to the rooftop. In those days, the roof of the house was flat. They started to find a place to dig. They opened the roof and started to lower their friend down into the house. Well, it was a crazy idea. Many of us probably would not do such a thing.



Why did these four friends go through all these troubles just to bring their friend to Jesus? First of all, they knew that Jesus was real and had the power to heal. They believed in Jesus. They had faith in Him. Secondly, they loved their friend. They cared for the well-being and the health of this beloved friend. They wanted him to walk like them, to laugh like them and to live normally. Thirdly, they were determined to overcome all the barriers to bring their friend to Jesus. Have you ever tried lifting a person with dead weight? It is not easy at all. They probably carried their friend with two wooden beams with a linen cloth stretched in between. This is not the modern stretcher. It is the most basic way to carry a person. It is not easy to carry a person in this way for a distance, let alone to lift that person up to the roof.



I encountered a similar situation when I joined the medical team to rural China last November. I worked mostly on the surgical ward during our 10 days' stay there, and saw many patients with severe injuries sustained from mining accidents. One of them was Mr. Lei, a coalmine worker who had sustained a spinal cord injury at the level of thoracic 11. His legs were paralyzed and had no feeling at all. He is a young man with a wife and a 10-month-old baby. Mr. Lei had lain in bed since his accident 6 months ago. The surgeon feared that he would re-injure his back, and would not allow him to sit up. Whenever he needs to go anywhere, his friends carry him with a stretcher. They carry him to x-ray and other places by stretcher since the hospital does not have any wheelchair or elevator. Mr. Lei's co-workers carry him voluntarily and without complaint, just like the four friends carried the paralyzed man in the story recorded in the Book of Mark.

Charles teaches a patient how to use crutches to negotiate stairs

The paralyzed man in the Book of Mark was healed by Jesus, and he walked again. **“When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Son, your sins are forgiven.’”** His sins were forgiven because of the faith of their friends. Mr. Lei might never be able to walk again. However, with the help of his friends and his dad, we managed to get him to sit up again. He sat for 3 minutes on the first day and 5 minutes on the second day. He was able to sit up by himself for 10 minutes the day before I left. Isn't it wonderful? For the first time in 6 months, he could sit up by himself! It may only be 10 minutes now, but gradually, he will be able to sit up for longer and longer periods of time. I can imagine that he will one day be able to use a wheelchair to get around. He will be able to hold his baby boy in his hands.

I see myself as one of the four friends recorded in the Book of Mark. I believe that Jesus is real, and that He can heal. Through providing much needed medical services, we allow God to use us in healing others, and to bring His love to them. Those who go also receive healing. We are healed from our blindness, from our self-centeredness, from our complacency, and most importantly, from our lack of faith. Are you willing to take up this call, to go to people who don't know God and show them how much He loves them? Are you willing to go?

Charles Chan is an Occupational Therapist who joined the 10 member medical team to rural China in November 2003. He is also MSI Canada's Director of Mobilization. (Name in the article is not real).

Making Toast in China

Ron Boyd

The end of the trip & breakfast in a reasonable hotel, I see a fried egg and a toaster with bread. Things are definitely looking good.

Ah, there is the 'toast girl' who will make me toast on demand. 'Toast on Demand' is a great thought. But, wait a minute look how she is doing it. She puts the bread in and then while it is cooking she takes her wooden chopsticks and checks the bread. The toaster is new and has a dial control for automatic pop-up. I don't think she understands how it's supposed to be done. Someone should tell her.

I must confess that a Western person will laugh a little at seeing this; and it would not take much effort to ridicule the young lady making toast. But, the more I think about this 'toast girl' the more I realize that she is teaching me how to understand & appreciate China.

1 Corinthians 13:12 For now we see in a mirror, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know fully even as also I was fully known.

The toaster would cook the bread by itself; but that's her job. She is doing it diligently. She is doing it faithfully. It's boring work but she is doing it with zeal. Even though this is not a high paying job, it is important to her and she acts like it. My goodness the 'toast girl' is a great employee.

And as for the toaster, what actually was my complaint? That she did not let the technology determine her job? That she decided how the technology was going to be used? Perhaps the difficulty here is that *I* love the technology too much.



I have to wonder which of us is more human. The one who changes their life to use the machine or the 'toast girl' who has decided the role of the machine not based upon its capability but on her need.

The 'toast girl' is a challenge to me to appreciate her admirable qualities and the way she thinks & the way I think. China is a good place to look into a mirror And I like the 'toast girl'.

Ron's ready to enjoy his scrumptious breakfast... but where's the toast?

ESL teaching in China

Beth Boyd

After several months of monthly, then bi-weekly and finally, weekly **meetings**, our ESL team was ready to leave for China. At times the preparation seemed long and repetitive, a little frustrating, but in the end it paid off, as we were well prepared and able to adapt our materials and lesson plans to the needs of our students. **Pre-trip work** included prayer times, singing, lesson prep and presentations, role-playing, and the gathering of materials, visual aids and gifts and rewards. We always had at least one, if not two, MSI people attending the meetings with us. They were very helpful and encouraging to us with suggestions, power point presentations and training. Other aspects that I really appreciated pre-trip, was all the **information** available to us in the form of handouts, videos and through the web site. I felt very informed about the logistics and challenges I would encounter. I was particularly grateful for the information about the squat toilets as I would have had no idea about them otherwise and would have been in for a rude awakening. It was good too, to **spend time** with our teammates to get to know them a little better before we were living in close contact with each other in China.

Issues that were of concern to me before we left for China: (1) the long travel time; (2) the new foods; (3) had we packed enough or too much; (4) and finally, would I be effective in showing the love of Jesus to my students?

The team arrived at our destination amidst a mixture of relief and excitement: We met the **long-termers**, who turned out to be people that I came to admire very much: their love for the students, their availability to spend time with the students, their dedication to God and the work He has given them in a difficult place. His wisdom

and her gentleness—what a team! In spite of their already demanding schedule, they made time for us and made us feel that we were important to them as well.

What a privilege it was to teach these young nursing students! Their English was more advanced than we expected. They were eager, attentive and really tried hard to speak with us. I found that the morning session went by quickly. The songs, skits and lessons went well. The small group time was valuable for discussion and enabled us to get to know the girls better. Afternoons and evenings were usually filled, so there wasn't much down time, which probably helped with getting over jet lag at the China end. There was never a time that I was bored or had nothing to do.



Beth (second from left) and team singing an ancient love song from Corinth... in Mandarin!

English corner was a very interesting experience – it made me feel like a movie star! We were literally swarmed by students to converse with them in English. Later they wanted our autographs, pictures, and addresses and to give us gifts. After a while, it was draining to be in the limelight. But it was certainly easy to love the students as they poured out so much love to us.

Before the trip, the thought of going to China had not even entered my mind. As I prayed about it, I came to believe that God wanted me to go, if only to test my faith in His ability to take care of me in a far away land. I didn't think that I had much to offer the team, except my ability to talk in English. But it worked out that I felt very much part of the effort and had great joy in teaching the nursing students and I sense that my parts went over well.

China at the beginning of the 21st century is a mixture of old and new, East and West. People there are looking for meaning and fulfilment. These are yearnings that materialism cannot satisfy. It certainly was a challenge to live and work in China, but the opportunity to guide the next generation is precious. I do believe that God wanted me there for purposes that are greater than I will ever know here on earth.

Ron and Beth Boyd from Toronto joined the English team to teach in a school near Chengdu in November 2003.