



NEWSLETTER

MSI Canada

Winter 2010

No Expectation is the Best Expectation

Simon Yuen

When I was first approached by MSI, asking me to consider a revisit to the Youth Centre this summer, I was all excited because of the fond memories from the 2007 experience. I really miss the fellowship, the place and the people. The only difference this time is, as a repeater, I am expected to lead a new team of explorers rather than being a freshman myself!

Challenges, when you want them to stay away, they just simply come right at your doorway. Financing the trip, travel arrangement, team recruitment, programme setting, team coordination and H1N1, they all bring me back into full appreciation of how much our administrative leaders have done for the 2007 team.



Nevertheless, our Father is a true provider. He is the planner and we are all simply privileged participants in His plan. When we need a theme, He provided "Going Green, when East meets West" plus a professional

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In 2009, 46 Canadians participated in 15 different programs in South Western of China. Here are some of their stories.



Our Journey from Edmonton to Luzhou

Daniel and Delia Reitsma

Our family has been attending MissionFest in Edmonton for 8 years now and it has been really neat to see how this has led us to where we are today. While walking through the many display booths there, I was always attracted to the ones that were sending people into the Asian countries. One of the ways that many of us were able to make a difference in these countries was by going in as English teachers. At the time I was just a farmer with no post secondary education. The people at the booths said that farmers may be able to get in, but having a teaching degree would be much easier and more effective. These words, plus, a Bible study we were involved in that challenged us to use the many talents God had given us, prompted me to go to university as a mature student and enrol in the four year Bachelor of Education program. As the years flew by, I would tell others that I was getting prepared to go to Asia as an English teacher like they suggested.

They were very excited and many organizations wanted to sign us up. We researched which organization we wanted to go with and began corresponding with a few. It was at this time that they also encouraged Delia to get her teaching degree as well, so she too enrolled in university in the same education program that I had just completed! This was something that neither of us would have ever done on our own, so we knew it was from the Lord. Finally it all worked out this summer to go into China as English teachers, something we had been working toward for a long time.

Delia and I left for Luzhou, China on July 8th, 2009. Luzhou is a city of about 600,000 people located in south/central China. We met up with 6 other teachers from Canada, 5 of who were Chinese Canadians. We taught conversational English to 240 teachers that were from the towns and villages near to Luzhou. The smaller the place they came from, the weaker their

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Delia & Daniel

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English skills were. They ranged from understanding fairly well, to not knowing any spoken English at all, so it was challenging!

We really felt the presence of the Lord every single day while we were gone. That must have meant that you were praying for us during the night because of the difference in time so thank you for that. Our team worked together as if we were one unit so that was a huge answer to prayer. Everyone had strengths in different areas so we accomplished everything we were asked to do and a lot more with a lot of skill and expertise. The officials there were very impressed with how we worked so well together and the students were amazed at the amount of energy and effort we all put into the teaching program.



Exotic foods

No one got sick even though we ate a lot of exotic foods every day (turtle, duck feet, rabbit, goat, etc) another answer to prayer. Travel by plane, bus, van, taxi and on foot was all done safely, even though it was very scary at times riding the bus and taxis where there are no rules on the highway! The students responded very well to the program that was created as we went along. At first some of them were not happy to be there because they would have been on summer holidays, but the government made them come to this summer program instead. By the third day, they had changed their mind about being there, and by the end, they did not want us to leave. We were shown so much love by the students that it was almost

overwhelming! Delia said that we had way more photos taken of us there than on our wedding day. Our team's efforts were definitely noticed and our Christian character stood out to them so much that they asked many questions about our lifestyle including parenting, marriage, beliefs, teaching methods and much more. They were attracted to us because we taught with so much love rather than through the fear and intimidation that they were accustomed to. Everyone wanted us to come to visit them at their homes and to teach in their schools with them. It was hard to say goodbye to them after the program was complete, and we left many friends behind. Several have emailed us since we returned home and we hope to continue to have conversations with them for a long time.

While there, e-mail was hard to get onto, and phoning home was very difficult. We only talked to our children twice in the three weeks that we were away. Upon our return home, Michaela asked us if we missed them and our reply was that we really missed them. She then commented that they did not miss us much because they were surrounded by so many people who loved them. This was a comfort to us as parents and a reminder that God does hear our prayers, as well as loving our children even more than we do. That was the hardest part of the trip, leaving them behind, and maybe the giant bugs, and the heat and the squatty potties and ... Yes, there were some hardships, but the rewards outweighed them and we truly did enjoy our time in China.

Perhaps only God fully understands the significance of our trip to China. As I read Psalm 67 in my Bible I am compelled to thank God for all the blessings he has so graciously given to us and for how he truly has made "his face shine upon us". But, as I continue on in this passage I am reminded that it is my part to give him the credit as it is for his glory: for verse 2 states that his blessing bestowed upon us is for the benefit of others: "that [his] ways may be known on earth" and "that [his] salvation among the nations". In verse 3 and in the rest of the passage we are all reminded that God's desire is that "all the peoples" and the "nations of the earth" will praise him. We are called to serve him because, because, because! He is worthy of our praise and then all the ends of the earth will fear him" and then, "all the peoples will praise him". It is our prayer that God will continue to "be gracious to us and bless us". We also pray that we will not hide our talents and gifts to store for ourselves but that we will be generous and give much glory to God through the gifts and talents he gives so freely. BECAUSE HE SO WORTHY!

Lu Zhou 瀘州
Lu Zhou

Zhao Jue 昭觉
Zhao Jue

Chong Qing 重庆
Chong Qing

Chinese Character: Simplified or Traditional
Can you tell the difference?

Joy of the Lord is My Strength

Jeffrey Kung

“Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than what we ask or imagine according to the power that is at work within us” Ephesian 3:20 had been the key verse that guided my wife and I throughout 2009. Ephesian was studied in our group and was often referenced by a number of others that we met during 2009.

This verse became even more real and relevant as my wife and I went on a short term BAM trip to Chongqing, China during October 2009. It was our first serving trip together.

BAM stands for Business Administration Management and the objective of the program was to teach the students how to raise funding for a business of their choice. At the end of the course, each team would make a presentation of their business plan. The BAM team goal was to share the love of Christ through our deeds.

I had gone on a previous BAM trip in 2005 and I was richly blessed by the experience. I wanted my wife to experience the same joy of the Lord but somehow circumstances and timing never aligned until now. The blessings we received were so abundant and bountiful that shortly after our return to Toronto, my wife resigned from her job to pursue more meaningful and purposeful priorities that are Kingdom oriented.

While we were in Chongqing, my wife and I were humbled by the 13 students that were assigned to us. We observed that even though the students were not materially blessed, they were always happy. They were hungry to learn and soaked up the knowledge that we shared with them. They displayed passion and intensity in their pursuit, yet did not lose their innocence and kindness. They shared sincerity and genuine warmth that is often absent in Toronto. Despite their busy schedules and modest finances, they took the time and sacrificed financially to treat us to a sumptuous hot pot lunch. The cost of the meal was 5x the cost of a regular lunch on an individual basis at the university cafeteria. The occasion was to celebrate the successful conclusion of the BAM program.

Although it has been three months since leaving Chongqing, we are still able to have regular correspondences with them. We are also thankful that our emails have transformed into more personal sharing, deepening our bond. It is our prayer that if the Lord is willing, we shall see them face-to-face again this year. It is our hope that we may once again experience the joy and blessing of our Lord so as to be encouraged and be an encouragement to them.



Jeffrey and Alvina (middle, both in black dresses) with the joyful students



Canadian BAM team member (from left to right): Simon, Eric, Edmund, Alvina, Jeffrey & Wichai

BAM Trip Reflection

Eric Ma

I went on a Business Administration and Management (BAM) trip 2 years ago. We went to teach a course on business planning to a group of about 80 students. During the week I was there, I got to know the 10 students in my group very well. I was amazed by their willingness to learn and how hard they worked; I was touched by their warm and genuine hospitality. I promised them that I would try to go back to see them before they graduate.

And so I went back again in 2009, fulfilling my promise. The course was structured the same way as 2 years ago, but I went back with a little apprehension. The course content may be the same, but I am not the same person 2 years ago. I had retired from the business world for almost 3 years now, I wondered if I could still teach business subjects competently and confidently. My health condition is not and will not get better. This could be my last trip, I told myself.

It wasn't off to a great start – the plane was late arriving in Beijing, and I missed the connecting flight to Chongqing. I took a wrong turn in the airport and was briefly lost. When I arrived at the hotel in CQ, it was a 30 hours after I left Toronto. I was totally exhausted. I wondered if it was all worth it.

It did not take me long to know the answer - it is! The greatest thrill I had is working with my students. I could not imagine how much they grew in the course of a week. When we started on the first day, the students did not know how to work as a team, they only talked to the people they knew well. Some students were left alone and unengaged. As I helped them work together, the team dynamics started to change – people started to listen to each other, and natural leaders surfaced and they took ownership of the assignment and coordination of tasks. At the end, everyone was engaged and was doing their parts; they worked together beautifully as a team.

They worked together so well that they grew confident that their project would win the competition. Well, my team did not win the competition, and I could see the disappointment on their faces. After the competition, the teachers handed out little gifts to the members of the winning teams. One member of my team got a gift from her roommate who was on one the winning teams. (continue on page 4)

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Then one of the most striking things in my trip happened – she decided that she would give me her gift. I do not know exactly why she did that – maybe she felt sorry that our team didn't win, maybe somehow she thought she may have let me down. I don't know why exactly, but I do know that this would never have happened in Canada. Totally caught off guard, I declined her offer, but she insisted that I should take it.

While I don't think I fully understand exactly what her gesture means, I do pick up that she and the whole team cared about me deeply. And they did so probably because they knew that I cared about them deeply, that I wanted the best for them. And I felt God's pleasure because I was doing what he wanted me to do.

I learned that God would always have a place for us to serve Him. I may not be able to do great things, but I could always do little things with great love. And when I do so, I could experience God's presence and His pleasure.



Eric was leading the team building game and delivering a lecture on entrepreneurship to 3rd and 4th year university students at CTBU

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environmental engineer for elaboration. When we need an interpreter, He just sent one of the greatest and funniest to us at the very last minute. We never know we will be needing artists until requested by YC staffs to help produce promotional posters for 2 unexpected major events in 2 weeks time. Yet, He prepared us with 5 trained artists in our team for the job nobody ever expected. We eventually designed and hand painted 13 giant posters! Besides, this is mainly done while we were under the unexpected 3 days quarantine due to our Canadian origin and the H1N1 concern.

Life is beautiful when we can focus purely on serving our Lord and people around us. Yes, not everything is according to plan. In fact we were not even certain if the trip was actually on at the very last day. However, one by one we reached the town that most of us have never been to, meeting with team members we never even met before. There was someone we nicknamed our Totoro who we are still very much missed! We managed to finish the job our 2007 team not able to complete by setting up the wireless routers on site, produced one of the most simple and comprehensive presentations on green energy I've ever seen, teaching Electrical lessons and fixing fences in Sunshine farm. We danced, sang, share games and life with our new friends. Do you know that with the local grown potato you can bake the best tasting Canadian favoured fries and with some tattoos on the arms you can bring the meaningful message to our new found friends? We found that out too, unexpectedly.

The last word I taught during the phonic lesson was "Beautiful" and it became one of the most popular English words within the students. It is beautiful, beautiful place, beautiful people and a beautiful team. It really takes us courage to give up our expectations to fully appreciate. No Expectation is truly the Best Expectation!



Simon Yuan (2nd on the right, 1st row) was a leader of 2009 Canadian culture exchange team. It was his 2nd time to Youth Center

For Short Term Teams 2010:

<http://www.msicanada.org/events/>

Other Upcoming Events in 2010:

- MissionFest Alberta
February 19 – 21, Edmonton, AB
- MissionFest Toronto
April 16 – 18, Toronto, ON
- MSI Canada Annual Retreat
June 4 – 6, Toronto, ON

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