

# Synergy

*Working Together*



## AUTUMN 2008

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## Message from Senior Minister

If you have ever been to Israel, or if you know your geography of Israel, you will know that there are two big lakes in Israel. One is at the north, the Sea of Galilee. It was around Galilee that Jesus spent most of his earthly life and his ministry. At the south of Israel is the Dead Sea. This is the lowest point of planet Earth. These two lakes are linked by the Jordan River.

The Jordan starts its life to the north of Galilee in what is modern day Lebanon. Mount Hermon is snow covered in winter and the melting of the snow provides much of the water for the river Jordan. The Jordan flows into the Sea of Galilee. From the Sea of Galilee, the Jordan flows southwards until it finally enters the Dead Sea. From there it can go nowhere except much is evaporated by the sun. In the world today, much of the water from the Jordan is now taken for human use and so the flow of the Jordan is getting less. The Dead Sea, now not getting enough water, is shrinking.

The picture of these two lakes has sometimes been given as a picture of being a Christian. There are two thoughts from this picture.

Firstly, are we getting enough input or is our faith shrinking like these two lakes are shrinking? Do we ever open our Bibles to read

God's word? Do you have a programme in your own life to read the Bible on a consistent basis? Or is your Bible kept on the shelf and never opened? The Bible is a letter from God. Imagine if you had written a letter to someone you dearly loved and they never opened it. In addition, do you pray on a regular basis? It has been reckoned in the West that the average married couple has meaningful conversation with each other  
*(continued on page 2)*



## Associate Minister's Corner

# Ablaze for God

This is the anniversary theme of the Lay Speakers Organization this 1st day of October 2008, adopted from the title of the book written by Wesley Duewel. And I would like each one of us to join this group (LSO) in reflection on being a church. Our church has lots of leaders. I do believe that God has given everyone gifts, not only the leaders but also to those who are merely church goers or attendees. Yet, some remain complacent where they are, being a leader doing nothing or not having fruit and a member who is satisfied being just a pew warmer.

The Bible says, "**Fan into flame the gift of God which is in you...**" (II Timothy 1:6). According to Duewel, "Spiritual gifts are endowments for service given through the activity of the Holy Spirit. God provides whatever divine enablement we need for the service to which He appoints us. The Holy Spirit Himself is God's great gift to us (Acts 2:38) but He bestows grace-gifts (*charismata*) providing divine endowment and enablement for serving God and the

Body of Christ." Fan into flame means we have the responsibility to use the gifts in us. We must let the Holy Spirit work within us, to empower us, to guide us, to direct us, to inspire us, and makes us fruitful. Sad to say that oftentimes, we are failures because instead of letting the Holy Spirit control us and work within us, we are the ones controlling the Holy Spirit by not enabling Him to do His part. The tendency is that we are letting the fire go out. Apostle Paul says, "**Do not restrain the Holy Spirit**" (I Thessalonians 5:19). So we must watch the fire on the altar of our hearts. The fanning must be a continuous process. God supplies the fire, but we must keep it burning.

People of God, was there a time when you were more ablaze for God than you are today? There is a need for you to be revived again and again. You must keep the flame burning in your heart. Today's challenge is **Ablaze for GOD!**

**Rev. Jess**

E-mail : [jess@mic-hk.org](mailto:jess@mic-hk.org)

## Message from Senior Minister *(continued from page 1)*

just 4 minutes a day. Do you even talk and listen to God for that small amount of time?

But secondly, which lake are you like? Are you like the Sea of Galilee, receiving God's Word and Spirit, being fed by that word, and then spreading that word as you live your life? Or are you like the Dead Sea, that whatever you receive goes nowhere but eventually just evaporates. To be alive in this world you have to receive but you also have to give.

This time of the year is in many ways like the start of a new year. We are back from holidays, children back at school, and this year in our church will be significant. God has blessed us richly in this church but we have to decide whether we individually and collectively as the church continue to follow the same old ways, or do we do something new that will renew our lives and our witness as Christians?

**Rev John** (E-mail : [jillsley@mic-hk.org](mailto:jillsley@mic-hk.org))

# Ministries

## Christian In Action – CIA

I am delighted to have the opportunity to work with the youth of our church. Before telling you about what CIA has been up to the last three months, I should first introduce myself. I am from Palo Alto, California, USA, and grew up in the First United Methodist Church there. I am a corporate lawyer and a long time "China hand", having first come to China in the late 80's. My wife Janet and I have a daughter Ella Lee, who is two, and live with my two teenage sons Eugene, 14, and Adam, 12. Eugene and Adam attend Faith Community Church with their mother, where they are members of the church band.

I am very grateful to John and all of you for allowing me to lead CIA; I had been seeking for some time to find a way to contribute to the church and our community, and was very happy when this opening arose. I find parenting teenagers both rewarding and challenging, much like leading CIA. For those CIA parents who struggle at times with parenting teenagers, let me say, I know how you feel! Hopefully CIA will be a positive experience for your children, and will help you all a bit in getting to know and growing with the young adult your teenager is becoming.

The CIA has been a roller coaster this summer. We all had a lot of fun getting to know each other in June, talking about our goals for the group, what people liked and didn't like, what worked and didn't, finding out more about the members of the group. I was excited to get the group started on a program of interactive Bible study and worked with John and Ross to find materials to work from. I readied a couple of lesson plans, including group activities and games focused on having

our teenagers act out, experience and apply lessons from the scripture. And then everyone disappeared. Summer holidays took our group of ten to twelve young people away, so that in July and August, we saw only three to four kids a week. I tried to adapt the lesson plans, but don't expect my group was too impressed with the results. We got by nonetheless.

And then last week, folks came back from holiday, school got back in session and the eleven year olds graduated from their prior group into CIA. Our group went from three to four a week to 25! After moving ourselves into the choir room (thank you Terry for your help), we had a great time playing games and discussing comfort zones in our lives, courage in the face of life's challenges and the importance of having courage to act out for God, all based on the tales of David's heroes in 2 Samuel 23:8-12, 18-23.

I look forward to working with the group on similar lesson plans in the coming months, and welcome input from the parents on what they would like to have covered in the group. Please also ask your young person to tell you about what they discussed in CIA, and talk to them about the lessons learned. Many of our lessons challenge CIA members to take an action or make a change in behaviour based on the scriptures teachings; your support will help your young person to put their Bible lessons into action!

**Gene Buttrill**

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## Filipino Ministry Sunday School

By the grace of God, the Filipino Ministry Sunday School has been opened!

It has started on the 2nd day of March 2008, as a small group of 6 attendees. Praise God, because every Sunday the attendance has increased rapidly. The Christian Education Team and Rev. Jess joined together in promoting the importance of studying God's Words through testimony, preaching, and distribution of invitation slips.

On June 8, the Sunday School was formally launched; Jericho and Jerusalem Group were born! There were 40 people in attendance. Rev. Jess led the Bible Study and everybody was eager to learn more about the Word of God. Refreshments were served and everyone enjoyed the fellowship.

It was a wonderful sight, watching how God touched the lives of His people to respond to His invitation to build a much closer relationship with their God, Creator, and Savior, and to make commitments to grow and become mature together in the knowledge of God's truth by attending the Sunday School every Sunday and bringing people with them.

So what are you waiting for? Come and join the Jericho group at room 8F and Jerusalem group at Room 909 at St. James Settlement right after the 9:30 AM Worship Service. See you there!

**Mia N. de Vera**

## Filipino Fellowship Discipleship Graduation

Graduation has come! This memorable event was joyfully celebrated on August 10, 2008. There were 13 students from Discipleship I and 21 students from Disciple 2 who received their certificate of completion. Ms. Minda Lozada was the invited Guest of Honor and Speaker. She graced the occasion through her challenging message based on the graduation theme, "Follow Christ in Obedience and Be a Salt and Light to the World." The graduates were teary-eyed for they now see and receive the fruit of their sacrifices in studying the Word of God. They had finished another training course that could help them know more about God and help them live a victorious life.

Each student was asked to bring someone to attend their graduation day, so that they could also be encouraged to enroll in this training course for the next batch. Everyone was blessed through the testimonies from the graduates. They proclaimed how God changed and shaped their lives. They were not ashamed to tell about their past lives because they wanted others to see the transforming power of God in the lives of those who trust and obey Him.

Do you also want to experience the power of God in changing and shaping your life? Do you want to know more about God and live a victorious Christian life? And do you want to be a person who could be used as a salt and light to others - family, friends, neighbors, co-workers, community members, and the world? Then, come and join us in our next training course!

**Meriam S. Gabin**

## Alpha

In our last issue, we shared how Alpha, as a ministry in our church, has impacted many lives to Christ.



As in previous years, we again join Alpha HK in their yearly initiative to "Explore the Meaning of Life" through Alpha. This year, our Introductory Dinner on Tuesday, September 16, will hopefully see us inviting 90 people. We hope that besides enjoying a nice meal together, lives will indeed be touched to want to know of Christ and His love.

Our course starts on September 23. It will run for 11 sessions to December 9. If you are reading this and have not experienced the touch of God's love, we invite you to join us each Tuesday from 7.00 – 9.00 p.m. Alternatively, if you know of anyone who needs the security that is in Christ, please encourage them to join Alpha.

In addition, we felt the need to bring Alpha to the Workplace and have started to explore this avenue as well. In the busyness of the workplace, our aim is to bring God to the people where they are. Our hope is to see the workplace transformed to be a more pleasant environment to work in and where God is in the centre.

Jesus said "Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he with Me." (Rev3:20 NKJV) Are you willing to let Jesus in?

**Jasmine**

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## Women's Ministry

Our Women's Ministry is moving forward with baby steps. The Tuesday Bible study has grown into a time of finding God and us in a whole new way. The lunchtime meetings twice a month bring fellowship and sharing to a few women who have attended so far.

A Summer break meant rest and also regrouping and getting ready for the last stretch of the year. We are praying for a lot more women to join and share in activities. We have thanksgiving coming up and then advent and Christmas time. Please let all your creative ideas flow in and help us to prepare celebrations for the last few weeks of the year.

Are the women taking part in Women's Ministry blessed? Yes – definitely. God is waiting for us to say yes. He wants to pour out His blessings and gifts on us. We receive it the moment we step out of our comfort zone and into action zone. Do you feel left out and unbled? Step in then. We do not ask for qualifications – we ask for a willing heart. The blessings start automatically with equipping and joy when the willing heart gives the first steps towards action.

Mary, Mother of Jesus, did not say to the angel – "wait, I still need to be equipped." She said: "Here I am, the servant of the Lord, let it be with me according to God's word." Let us also be willing servants – ready to go for God!

**Dina Chamberlain**

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## Around the Circuit

### MCFM – Methodist Church of the Filipino Migrants

## God appoints everyone who is in charge

Watchman Nee wrote: "Before a man can subject himself to God's delegated authority, he must first meet God's inherent authority. "Submission to God Himself must be accomplished before a man can move on to submit himself to delegated authority.

Romans 13:1-2 exhorts us: "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore, whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgement to themselves."

A heart to honour authority should permeate our behaviour, for we honour the Lord's appointment. God called those in authority His "servants" and they are worthy to receive respect (Romans 13:3-7). To honour, therefore, the newly elected servants of God at MCFM, this article was written.

Eighteen church stewards were elected on February, 2008 for a two-year term. They were consecrated to lead the church life through worship, fellowship, discipleship, ministry and mission by Rev. Jesus De Los Santos on May 25.

They met for the first council meeting under the chairperson, Senior Minister Rev. Dr. John Illsley, on Sunday, August 17, 2008.

To all the elected servants, Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes you welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me." (Matthew 10:40)

To the church, Jesus said, "Whoever welcomes God's messenger because he is God's messenger, will share in his reward. And whoever welcomes a good man because he is good, will share in his reward. Whoever gives even a drink of cold water to one of the least of these my

followers because he is my follower, will certainly receive a reward." (Matthew 10:41-42)

May our triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit be pleased in all we do and will be doing still for the sole purpose of giving Him glory! Amen.

**Myrna N. Osorio**

#### MCFM Council Members for the year 2008 - 2010

##### Duty Stewards

1. Loida Ramilo - Music Ministry Coordinator
2. Myrna Osorio - Worship/Christian Education Coordinator
3. Revelina Balisalisa - Prayer Ministry Coordinator
4. Melba Nicolas - Assisting Church Custodian

##### Mission Coordinators

1. Nora Asuit - Social Concerns (UNIFIL)
2. Mira Flor Manangan - Worship (Liturgical/Sanctuary)
3. Nimfa Natividad - Outreach/Evangelism Assisting Coordinator
4. Mary Ann Ocampo - Church Custodian

##### Congregational Representatives

1. Gasat Guerrero - Welcoming Assisting Coordinator
2. Gina Esteban - Worship (Sanctuary)
3. Florencia Lozano - Welcoming Coordinator
4. Mayla Umaoing - Worship (Rota/Sanctuary)
5. Yolanda Bernales - Outreach/Evangelism Coordinator

##### Finance/Stewardship

1. Jasmin Ramilo - Church Treasurer
2. Vangie Biado - Missions Treasurer
3. Bella Miguel - Assistant Auditor

##### Membership

- Jonalyn Tolentino - Church Secretary  
Precy Miguel - Missions Secretary

## Children's Work

Many of our congregations only see the work of the church on Sundays. However, during the week we have sought to offer a whole range of activities for children. For some years, our church has run a Playgroup – the "Alice Playgroup." Sadly, this closed a few years ago as numbers dropped. Then we have had a Toddlers group where parents and/or helpers with little children can bring them. That too closed last year as numbers declined.



However, since then we have started new children's work. This is being managed and staffed by Methodist Centre, a Methodist Church Social Service unit. Initially it was on a Wednesday. It is now every morning of the weekdays:

**Mondays:** Jump, Jump, Musicland – in Cantonese

**Tuesdays:** Putonghau Smartkids – in Putonghau

**Wednesdays:** Native English Playgroup – in English

**Thursdays:** Multi-intelligence Playgroup - in Cantonese

**Fridays:** Native English Playgroup – in English

Some of these sessions are now full and it is great to see the building used in this way. More details from the church office or Methodist Centre – 2863 5677.

## Youth work

Every Sunday morning from 11.15 to the close of the service our Youth Group, CIA (Christians in Action), meets. It now has a new leader, Gene Buttrill who brings experience and gifts to this work.

## Sunday school



Our Sunday school continues for its different age-ranges under the supervision of Ross Vermeer and Ken Pemberton. This is for Primary age children.

**Rev John**

(E-mail : jillsley@mic-hk.org)

## Prayer — ‘Hot Spot’

Do you know we have a ‘hot spot’ in our Prayer Room? It has been termed that by our Senior Pastor! Well, what it is actually, is the spot where we ask the person who wants to be prayed for to stand in the centre and those present will lay hands and pray for him/her. There is nothing magical about the ‘hot spot’ per se but it is where we believe as we come together in unity to pray, there is power and something that pleases God.

Weeks ago, someone came to our Thursday Prayer Meeting needing prayers for a health situation. She came trusting in the power of prayer and to find solace in her time of need. Thanks be to God who has answered her prayers. She has been healed and more than that, she has witnessed God’s miracle work in her life. God has done more for her than she has imagined.

Then two weeks ago, we had another person coming for prayer. Our Pastor said “alright, you need to go to the hot spot!” Again, may I reiterate there is nothing magical about that but it is about us gathering together as a people of God to pray for our brother/sister for God’s intervention. This time, I left the Prayer Meeting thinking this is so special and something I want as well. So I changed my travel plans the following week from Thursday to Friday instead as I did not want to miss the Prayer Meeting. I wanted to be in that ‘hot spot’ as I wanted to seek God and meet with Him first before I embark on another visit to my husband.

Having prepared myself in prayer and coming with expectancy to receive from Him, I will say I was not disappointed. As I was being prayed for, His presence and power was so

evident. I was so satisfied by His Spirit in me – there was love, joy and peace in my heart. I went home and felt an overflow of His Spirit in me and the words “joy of your salvation” suddenly came to me and I was overwhelmed by His love for me. I knew I would go in His strength and that He would guide my steps. Indeed, He did and I believe that prayer time was a significant step I took. I know it pleases God when we seek HIM first and trust in HIM to put things right for each one of us.

Won’t you experience the touch of God in your life through prayer time with us? It is special. Come join us as we seek God together.

Thursday Prayer Meeting: 7.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m. – Prayer Room

(Go in the sanctuary – it’s on the left side near the choir section )

To Him be all glory, honor, power and praise! Amen!

*Jasmine*, written on July 12, 2008  
Email: [jasminechew.tan@gmail.com](mailto:jasminechew.tan@gmail.com)

### Marriage

We are blessed to witness Joel and Samson Jeremiah’s wedding on 7th June.

May God’s mercy, love and kindness be shone upon this newly-wed couple and share their happiness with all of us in their days ahead. Thanks to the Lord. Amen



## Testimonials

### The Visit from Atlanta

As a young girl, I have always wanted to visit Hong Kong and Australia. I met my best friend Christine Lie (Michell’s sister) in a boarding school in England 1983/1984. We ended up attending the same university in Miami several years later. We lost track of each other for about 20 years after she graduated and moved back to Hong Kong. I searched for her on Google after so many times, and I finally found her last year. I decided to visit her and her family in July 08.

During my visit to Hong Kong in July, I was invited by Michell to join the Tuesday Bible studies at MIC Church. I was really tired after a whole day of sightseeing with Michell as my “Ambassador” and being 12 hours jet lagged. I ended up forcing myself out of bed to come out that evening to a great group of fellow Christians. The message at the Bible study was praying on a request consistently for 60 days. My husband and I established a retirement home in Atlanta, Georgia, about a year ago, and we went through the state to get licensed and we got our permit in August 2007. Since that time we had not had one single client, but God had told me this was the right business for us. My husband and I have prayed and prayed and after awhile got weary, but after I attended the Bible study my prayer for the business was intense again until about three weeks ago, when God did it and answered our prayers. We signed up three clients in one day, clients are rushing to bring their deposits so that their rooms will be reserved for them. Isn’t that God, isn’t that a Power of Prayer? He promised He will never leave us nor forsake us. I thank God and His mercies endureth forever. Stay prayed up and do not let circumstances change God’s direction and purpose for your life.

*Abby Ebodaghe* – a full time engineer and mother of two at hometown Georgia, Atlanta

### Not by might nor by power but my spirit

What does it mean “to believe?” This question came to my mind that Monday morning as I lay in bed and reflected on Pastor John’s sermon from Sunday June 1st. Then as I thought about the miracles in our church, my thoughts went to two recent events where God’s hand had worked mightily: Rev Jess’ gift of twins and my recent letter to Steven’s employer.

So here I am to share my story of our amazing God and what it means to believe, to trust, to have faith, and to obey.

The company Steven worked for thought they could get away with just severance pay. However, God led me to find his appointment letter, which led the company to help our family financially until Steven is released, or until February 14, 2008, whichever would come first. That day of February came – no release, no more monetary help.

On February 15th I wrote my letter to the Chairperson of the company. A month later, I received a reply which was quite amazing in itself. That day, I sensed God telling me that I would receive a reply, and when I saw it in my inbox, I almost fell off my chair! Nothing prepared me for what I was about to read. There was no mention of money but merely that they would look into this matter again. I was overjoyed and felt that the reply in itself was of more value than anything

else, although I cannot explain why. We gave thanks and continued to wait and trust in God.

Two months went by and still no word from the company. The night I came back from my trip to the US (which was in May), I knelt before my Lord and cried out to HIM. I shared many things with HIM.....

The following night, a reply came in from the company. Wow!...(read the full story by going

to our website: [www.mic-hk.org](http://www.mic-hk.org) (Testimony)

Who could imagine it could come to this but God Himself, who has promised HE is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine (Ep 4:20)?

Glory, honor, power and praise to HIS Holy Name.

**Jasmine Chew**

Email: [jasminechew.tan@gmail.com](mailto:jasminechew.tan@gmail.com)

## Re-Development

Every so often, I am asked, "What is happening to our redevelopment scheme?" It has been going on a number of years and we have had a couple of false starts. However, things are now getting ahead. We need to remind ourselves why we do this. It is so that we have more space for what we do now and more space for what we hope to do in the future as we seek to obey Jesus' command to *go and make disciples*. So what is happening?

- We have already agreed on the outline of what we need – a bigger worship area, a second worship area, better children's, youth, teaching rooms; a better hall, offices, and welcome area; a better entrance on Queen's Road East; a building that looks like a church – so many pass our doors and do not realise this is a church.
- We have an Architect working with us, Nelson Chen, a Christian and member of St. Andrews Church, Nathan Road
- He has shown that what we need can be accommodated on our plot – we can get a 700-seater church onto our piece of land.

Now things are moving again. The Church Council unanimously agreed to invest some

more money to get better drawings, and even a model, so that we can see and almost feel what it will be like in the new place. Nelson is also discussing the situation of our trees and is working to investigate what is under our building so that we can plan for construction.

We now have a timetable. If all goes very well, we will have to move out of the building in early 2010, into somewhere temporary for two years while demolition and building takes place. We then move into the new building two years later. All this depends on a number of things:

1. Our acceptance and commitment and unity as a congregation of the plans
2. Government approval
3. Our ability to raise what is a very large amount of money
4. God to make it happen and that means prayer, prayer, and prayer

I hope that very soon, we will have more ideas to share and then we need to come together with a vision not for what we want but for God's Kingdom.

**Rev. John**

Email: [jillsley@mic-hk.org](mailto:jillsley@mic-hk.org)

## Sunday Worship Services

**Wanchai – 271 Queen's Road East, Wanchai**

9:30am Contemporary Worship Service in English  
(With Communion every 3rd Sunday)

11:15am Worship Service in English with children leaving after talk for Sunday School and CIA  
(With Communion every 1st Sunday)

**Shatin – Shatin Methodist College Chapel, Sun Tin Wai Estate**

9:00am Worship Service in English

## Adult Sunday School at Wanchai – 271 Queen's Road East, Wanchai

10:45am 20 min led by Rev. John

## Weekday Worship Service at Wanchai – 271 Queen's Road East, Wanchai

Every Wednesday, 7:45 – 8:30am English service with Communion  
A short talk given by Rev. John (With Communion). Free breakfast provided.

## Bible Studies at Wanchai – 271 Queen's Road East, Wanchai

Every Monday, 7:00 – 9:00pm Bible study with dinner  
Every Wednesday, 7:30 – 9:00pm Bible study

## Prayer Meeting at Wanchai – 271 Queen's Road East, Wanchai

Every Thursday, 7:00 – 8:00pm Prayer meeting

## Filipino Ministry Sunday Worship Services

**Wanchai – 271 Queen's Road East, Wanchai**

3:00pm PAGSAMBANG TAGALOG (Traditional Style)

**Wanchai – 4/F St James Settlement, No. 85 Stone Nullah Lane**

9:30am Papuri't Pagsambang Tagalog (Contemporary Style)

**North Point – Methodist Church of the Filipino Migrants,**

**Fortress Hill Methodist Secondary School, 19 Fortress Hill Road, North Point, Hong Kong**

10:00am Worship services in Ilocano

2:00am Worship services in English and Tagalog (Bilingual)

## Weekday Worship Services at Wanchai – 271 Queen's Road East, Wanchai

Every Saturday, 3:00 – 5:00pm Tagalog Worship

## Contact

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### Senior Minister

Rev. Dr John Illsley

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*Synergy* is prepared by the MICHK Admin Team.

Advisor: Rev. John Illsley

*Volunteers are always welcome to join the team.*

Contact Michell Lie ([snowiiii@hotmail.com](mailto:snowiiii@hotmail.com)) if you are interested.

***We welcome your contributions!***

Please send your articles to the church administrator  
by email at [admin@mic-hk.org](mailto:admin@mic-hk.org)

Articles should be no longer than 250 words.