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### Expectation and Fear

After a few months of waiting, our team was finally leaving. During this time, we learned a lot about what to expect of the trip psychologically. We spent quite a bit of time in discussing all the logistics and made some preparatory work for our ministry. But as we stepped foot on the plane, I felt that we had not prepared enough. Also I felt there were still a lot of unfamiliarities with our mission field, which caused me to question our abilities to do anything there. On one hand, I await God's power may be revealed in our serving. On the other hand, I felt great fear that whether our hurried preparation was enough? At that time, I deeply identified with how the prophet Isaiah felt, "Woe to me! I am ruined..." I did not sleep well during the long flight so I could only pray silently to ask for God's forgiveness and for His leading.

### The Witness of the Anointing

We met a sister there in Sao Paulo. She knew we were the mission team from the U.S. so she treated us warmly. She offered up a sizable amount to go towards our team's expenses. This kind of giving led me to think of the woman who poured expensive perfume on Jesus' head to anoint Him. Then Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, wherever this gospel is preached throughout the world, what she has done will also be told, in memory of her." We were amazed that we would come across such an example of giving for the Lord there. This greatly encouraged us and caused us to give thanks to Him for this rich providence. This witnessing of the anointing also became an example of how we give our offering.

### The Harvest Field of Mogi

Mogi is a small city in the rural area of Sao Paulo, about 60 km from its city center. Saturday morning we first went to visit at the Taiwanese-speaking church. Pastor Cheng briefly told us the history of the church. There was not that many people there and they used Taiwanese as their main language and Portuguese as the secondary language. Through the faithful offering of the brothers and sisters, the site where the church is located expanded very fast. In addition to the sanctuary, there is a fellowship hall, classrooms, and even a sports court. This is another fine example of faithful offering.

Our serving in Mogi was coordinated by the CIM coworker in Sao Paulo, Pastor Lee. He told us they had prepared for our team to hold an evangelistic meeting Sunday night for the Cantonese-speaking Chinese around the city. So after visiting the church, we went to the Chinese-owned stores in towns to hand out gospel tracts. The local Chinese mainly came from the areas of Guangdong and Taishan in China. Their main language is Taishan but could also communicate with us in Cantonese. However, they were finding it very difficult to communicate with the Taiwanese-speaking brothers and sisters from the church in Mogi. Most of them operate

snack shops and grocery stores and are open seven days a week, till 8 or 9 o'clock at night except Sundays. Because Mogi is not a big city, they are able to close for business earlier on Sundays. They were all very appreciative of our visits but because it was during their business hours, it was not appropriate for us to have an in-depth conversation with them. After we handed out gospel tracts and the invitation cards to the evangelistic meeting, we quickly left. Some of them showed some interests. Others said they are too occupied with their business to attend. As a result, we had no idea how many people will come to the gathering. We could only lift that up in our prayers.

We went back to the church in Mogi to get ready for the meeting in the afternoon of the next day. As the time got closer, surprisingly more and more people showed up. We had to hurriedly add more chairs. A more pressing matter was that more and more children also came. Some of them were running in and out of the front door. I had to drop what I was preparing to go and tell them to attend the children program that was set up for them in the classrooms. During the evangelistic meeting, about half of the people were listening to the testimonies and the message tentatively. The other half used the opportunity to network. But we thank the Lord nonetheless for their first step into the church.

We saw that the hard-working Chinese in Mogi really need the gospel and they did not show any resistance to the church. There was even one convert after the testimony sharing. This could indeed be a harvest field worthy of the gospel. Oh Lord! May you send your workers for the harvest!

### The Hard Work of the Happy Kids and Happy Teens Ministries

Another important ministry we did in Sao Paulo was to operate a children camp on the grounds of the Happy Kids Center. This is a city with more Chinese living there. The families also worked very hard to earn a living. After they had kids, they would send them back to China to be cared for by family members. After they are more settled, then they would go and bring their children back to Brazil with them (some of the children we met had only been in Brazil for a few months.) The target of the Happy Kids and Happy Teens Ministries are these children who live in a relatively more stable and well-off environment. They teach them Chinese, Portuguese, and other tutoring service. The teachers also use this opportunity to share the gospel with them. Their ultimate hope is that the Good News can turn these families into healthy families.

While their parents are busy making a living, the teachers at the Happy Kids and Happy Teens Ministries become close friends and companions to these lovely children. The staff arrives at 8am and leaves at 6pm. On Friday nights, they have to also help with the youth fellowship. Even though they are busy, they help these children to grow with a joyful heart. During the few days of children camp, we help to sow the gospel seed in these children's hearts as well as allow these teachers to have a few days of rest. When we left with our tiring bodies, we greatly hoped our labor had not been in vain and that God will continue to bless this ministry.

## The Contradiction of the Old and the New

Belo Horizonte is a famous tourist town in Brazil. However, there are not that many Chinese living here. Most of them came from the area of Wenzhou in the Zhejiang Province of China. There are also some from the Fujian Province. They mainly engaged in some trade and wholesale business. According to the coworkers there, these Chinese have traditional family ties. There are three Chinese churches that are located in the more centralized area but none of them is big. Because there was a lack of time to make arrangement, we were only able to connect with a smaller church. Pastor Suen and a few coworkers welcomed us. Even though we have different background, they treated us generously to lodging and food.

During the evening of the first gathering, because of the different background, the local believers did not know how to sing the hymn songs we chose. The songs they were used to singing are from the Canaan Hymns written in China. Once in a while they would also sing some praise songs. The traditional hymns we sing overseas are foreign to them. After that night, we changed all the hymns to those they are familiar with but the result was still not very good. There were only about fifty people at their Sunday service. Even though the number was not big, there was still the need to use both Mandarin and Portuguese. Like us, the younger ones use Portuguese while the older ones use Mandarin. The younger (in comparison) ones like the more modern style of worship while the older ones prefer the more traditional style. Even though this is not a big church, these contradictions were unfortunately enough to hinder unity.

## The Call of Curitiba

Our last stop was the city of Curitiba on the south side. Compared to Sao Paulo and Belo Horizonte, this is a small city but the safety and environment are better than other cities. The Chinese there can be grouped into three groups: the first group came from those who had to flee to Brazil from Mozambique in the '70s. They originated from Guangdong and Taishan but are probably second and third generation immigrants from Mozambique. Basically they can speak fluent Portuguese, know a little bit Taishan and some Cantonese but cannot read Chinese. They have lived in Brazil for many years. They lead quite a stable life and their children are blended into the local society. We visited two such families. One is a well-off family with the younger daughter giving piano lessons. The other one has leukemia but has no families to care for her. It was quite sad. The second group of Chinese immigrated mainly from Taiwan in the '80s and '90s. They all speak Taiwanese and Mandarin. The extent of their Portuguese depends on their age and their level of education. They live a fairly stable live. The Chinese church was founded by this group of immigrants, with Taiwanese Presbyterian as their denomination. The third group flooded to Brazil from Guangdong, Taishan, and Kaiping during the last 10-15 years. They speak Taishan and most of them speaking Cantonese. The younger ones can also speak Mandarin. Most of them work in snack shops or clothing stores. Even though Curitiba is not as big as Sao Paulo or Belo Horizonte, it is still much bigger than Mogi. As a comparison, it is still rather prosperous. Therefore all the Chinese-owned stores are open seven days a week with 15-16 hour-days. As their sales increase, so is their costs and as a result have to work even harder.

There is only one church in Curitiba. Even though they have the desire to spread the gospel to other groups of Chinese, language is a big barrier. The busy lives these Chinese lead is also a great hindrance. When the coworkers brought us to visit those stores, they are not able to have an in-depth communication with them even though they were not strangers. When we were there, it was very easy for us to chat with them at first and then discuss their needs. Some of them were believers originally but because of the language barrier they were not able to attend that church.

Reportedly there was already a Brazilian missionary who can speak Chinese sent by the Jehovah's Witness to begin work in Curitiba. There is also a missionary from the Church of God of Hong Kong working among these Chinese. When I visited the lady with the leukemia, I saw her reading a Portuguese-language pamphlet issued by the Jehovah's Witness. Two other young ladies told us they have started meeting at the Church of God. Curitiba is a difficult and poor field for the gospel. But we also saw that the same was heard from the call from Macedonia. Who is willing to respond to this call?

### The Spiritual Response

This trip gave me a great shock. In the U.S., we live in a most comfortable and abundant environment. Even those who work in manual jobs have a lot of time to rest and faith is one of the things we have the freedom to choose. However, with most of the Chinese in Brazil, they only have one choice: to work hard for their living. The gospel and the belief is something that is very far away for them. They do not have, nor do they see the importance, of the Good News. Unless someone can bring the gospel to their midst, unless someone can share God's love with them. Oh Lord! Where are your workers?

### Suggestions for STM

Many things happened during this trip that were not planned. Some of them were not avoidable but some could have been arranged better in advance. Perhaps because of Rev. Law's hectic schedule, other than Sao Paulo area, there were problems with contact in the other two places. Even Sunday service was changed to an evangelistic meeting. Perhaps in the future, the STM teams can directly contact the various churches in Brazil to avoid these problems.

During our time of preparation, we spent too much time in figuring out our itinerary but not in our serving. As a result, our lack of readiness showed up in every place.

We were not familiar with the local environment. Therefore, as we had to make last-minute changes in arrangement, we went up spending extra time and still with less than effective results.

