



Serving and Learning

~Pastor Alex Ko

This year is my fifth year serving in the mission field. Although I have completed theological equipping in Taiwan before entering the field, I cannot deny that I still have a lot to learn.

In serving, there will be obstacles, and there will be times when you are weak, discouraged, and want to give up. But thanks to the Lord who empowered me to keep me serving Him today. I also realized that the grace of the Lord is sufficient for me, because the power of the Lord is made perfect in the weakness of man. The Holy Spirit also continued to teach me life lessons through the people and things I encountered in my ministry.

I serve in the Chinese community in Pretoria, South Africa. In the absence of pastoral coworkers at the local church, I need to prepare sermons; lead Bible studies and small groups every week; have daily spiritual sharing, carry on visitations, caring for members and Gospel friends etc... I often feel that I am being pushed by something in order to move forward, and I will encounter some difficulties and setbacks in my ministry. For a period of time, I really felt that I needed support, guidance and reminders in spiritual matters.

Thank the Lord for giving me the opportunity to study in seminary again in 2019. At the time, through the introduction of a pastor, I learned that the Truth Theological Seminary in North America has opened online synchronous teaching in order to meet the needs of overseas brothers and sisters. The class time is in the evening or early morning in South Africa, so there is not much conflict with my time for serving. After prayer and consideration, I enrolled in the "Master of Church Ministry Studies" program. Even though the lessons were online, I was able to communicate directly with the teachers and fellow classmates, which is exactly what I needed. Each of the teachers not only taught us their theological knowledge, but also frankly shared their life and service experiences. From the sharing of teachers and classmates, I can see the abundant grace of our Lord. The teachers are very caring for the students. They often gave valuable suggestions and reminders for the situations and problems we encounter in our ministry. I also got a lot of help and encouragement from them. Especially serving in foreign missions, sometimes we need leaders in different environments to help us think about problems from a more objective perspective.

Heraclitus, a Greek philosopher of Ephesus who was active around 500BC, said: "*No man ever steps in the same river twice, for it's not the same river and he's not the same man.*"

After serving for a period of time, I studied at the seminary again. What was very different from before was that I knew more about my shortcomings and what I needed in my ministry, and I also had different expectations to study. God's words and truth have not changed at all, but they have brought me more new understandings and a deeper understanding of serving.

Thank the Lord that after three years, I successfully graduated in June this year, and I was filled with the Lord's grace along the way. Although I am a preacher and teacher in the mission field, I am constantly learning, so I often share my learning with brothers and sisters in the church. No matter how long you have known the Lord and how much of the Bible you have understood, we still have to learn to pursue the Lord, because the lessons of life are never finished. As the apostle Paul said, "*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me.*"—*Philippians 3:12*. Thank God that later on He also moved two brothers and sisters in the church and they were willing to study and observe together in the seminary. May the Lord move their spirits and move more other brothers and sisters as well.

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I would also like to praise the Lord for He is Jehovah Jireh. Financially, the Lord provided my tuition fees through the scholarships provided by CIM, the Truth Theological Seminary and the Los Angeles Mandarin Baptist Church. Although the various ministries and preparations for my serving were already very busy, and the class sometimes started late or started in the early morning, God would always give sufficient grace and energy during this time. Thank The Lord He is Yahweh Ezer, the God who has helped me until now. In the days to come, I hope to be used more by the Lord. May the Lord continue to

PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Please pray for the quick restoration of normal working condition for government offices in South Africa, especially for the stable power supply, because that affects traffic, public security, daily living, and gatherings, etc. Several Chinese expats were robbed and killed this month. Even Rustenberg had gunshots in the main street of the central business district. May the Lord grant peace in this "dark continent".
2. Please pray for Rev Douglas Wu's ministry of visiting and contacting new friends. Ask the Lord to grant them the grace to sow seeds on "good soil", and to balance the ministry of visiting brothers and sisters. The Holy Spirit will grant good results and protect their bodies and minds, and the safety of those coming and going.
3. There are voices discouraging Rev Douglas Wu not to take the third dose of Pfizer's vaccine. Please ask the Spirit grant him sign(s) to let him know which way to go.
4. The PECCC will hold the Mid-Autumn Festival Gospel Sunday on September 11, and there will be a barbecue after the worship. May the Lord lead brothers and sisters to actively participate and serve together, and invite more Gospel friends to participate. Ask the Holy Spirit to work in the hearts of Gospel friends. .
5. Please especially pray for the Gospel friends in the Youth Fellowship and Children's Sunday School at PECCC. Hope they can participate stably, and they and their families can believe in the Lord one day. Also ask the Lord to continue to lead the Gospel friends to the church.
6. September 1-15, the CIM team will come to Brazil for a short-term mission. They will serve Chinese churches in 4 different cities: Belo Horizonte, Belém, Porto Allegre, and Campinas.
7. From September 23 to 27, for Rev Jorge Loo and his wife going to Teresina, the capital of Piaui state in northern Brazil, to do the first medical evangelism, targeting the overseas Chinese in the city. They will use the local Brazilian Baptist Church as a free clinic. From the 28th to the 30th, Rev Loo will head to São Luís, the capital of the state of Maranhão next door, to conduct free clinic.
8. Pray for peace in Ukraine and for safety for partners at House of Mercy. The Russian invasion continues. Though it is not the top story in the news anymore, countless lives are still being lost everyday. Praise God that many refugees are coming to the Lord through the work of House of Mercy.
9. Inflation, the depreciation of the Ghana cedi, and added government fees are severely affecting the lives of the pastors and teachers that we support. Please pray that they will be able to make a living and also support their families.
10. Pray for our international worker Janice as her mother-in-law passed away recently in Ghana.
11. **Pray for the recruiting effort underway to fill job vacancies in CIM for a Director of Ministry to oversee STM and daily operations**, and an Executive Director successor. If you know of anyone who is interested and qualifies, please contact us.
12. Pray that God will move more brothers and sisters to join the ministry so God's kingdom would be more prosperous. Pray for God's abundant provision for all the financial needs of CIM.

NOTE

Please call 408-596-4567 to contact CIM for questions or comments. Thank you for your continual support.

FINANCIAL REPORT

July 2022

	<u>Income</u>	<u>Expense</u>	<u>Balance</u>
General	\$42,446	\$12,628	\$29,818
Missions	\$83,924	\$68,734	\$15,190
Total	<u>\$126,370</u>	<u>\$81,362</u>	<u>\$45,008</u>

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- 1) Make checks payable to "CIM" and mail to: P.O. Box 700185, San Jose, CA 95170-0185, USA
- 2) Donate online via credit card, go to: www.cimusa.org Click on "Give" and follow directions. Thank you!



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