

Location, Location, Location

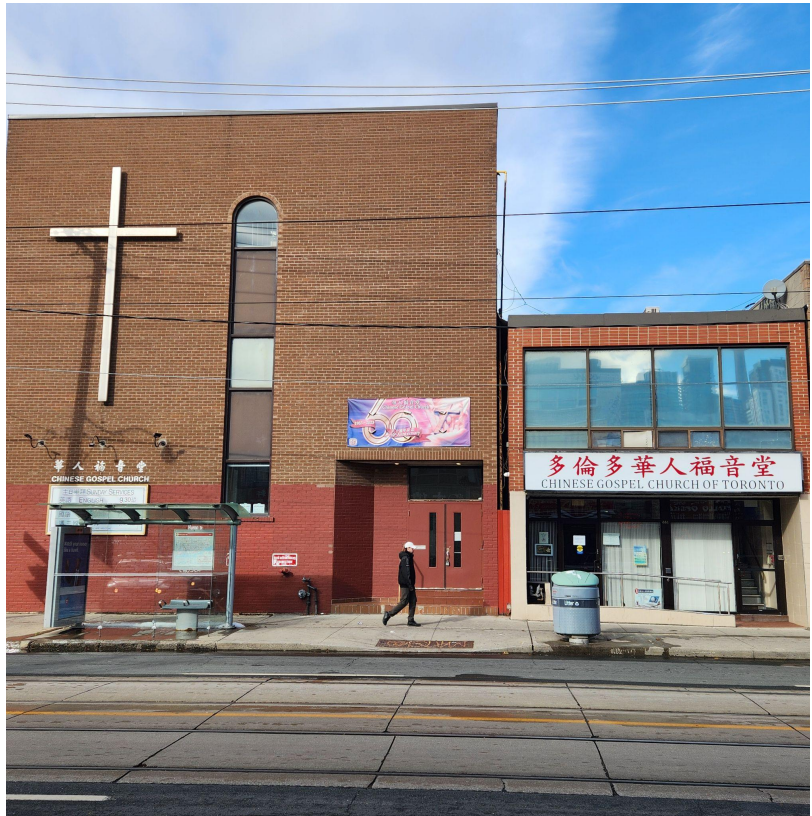
“Reflections” Where are we going?

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In our last instalment, we explored the history of Chinatown and the purchase of our property 60+ years ago, contemplating the wonderful truth that God has uniquely blessed us with a high visibility building fronting on Dundas St W., a building in the heart of what is now Chinatown. We were also reminded that those who founded our church had a clear vision to reach the Chinese people. In fact, their vision was often expressed as “If we don’t reach the Chinese for Christ, who will?”

This burden was *the* defining purpose that brought about the founding of our church, so it’s critical to reconnect with God’s original purpose for us as a church. But knowing the purpose for which God established and blessed us must lead us to ask the question, what exactly does that mean for us as the English congregation? So many of us can only speak enough Mandarin or Cantonese to order something at the restaurant – I obviously fail miserably at even that. How does that original vision apply to us? Does it apply at all? Maybe you were asking yourself that same thing after reading last month’s letter.

Well, the answer is, yes and no. As the English congregation, many things about us make how we ‘do’ church distinct from our Mandarin and Cantonese brothers and sisters, but we are still one church, so there’s an important duty or responsibility to walk and serve alongside them, yet freedom in defining what form our ministries take on a larger scale.



One of the responsibilities we have, a real need of the other congregations, is to provide spiritual care for their children, to help them bridge the culture and language gaps they're experiencing, and to build their faith so they can face the realities of our culture. What a privilege that is! At minimum, that means an intentional Sunday CE program in English. Another responsibility would be to make sure that the other congregations are spiritually strong and not struggling. If they are, we need to respond by helping in any way possible.

Notwithstanding these responsibilities, and because we're predominantly English-speaking and ineffective in Chinese ministry, we have great freedom to *enlarge* our missional vision; to use the God-given location we have and reach people, or even other people groups, who are geographically close by. God has blessed us with an amazing location that we are to exploit for his Kingdom. Close by, we have a world-renowned university with students who, while they may only be here for 3-5 years, need a spiritual home. Four blocks away, we have



Kensington Market, one of the most multicultural corners of Toronto, if not all of Canada, where people from around the world showcase their culture and food. We're also close to Bay Street, the financial heartbeat of the country, as well as some of the greatest hospitals in the world. Let's not forget OCAD, Adam House, Scott Mission, and ICC, the only indigenous church in the city. Truly, the needs and opportunities to serve God are almost endless. While people may gravitate to the suburbs, there's something special and unique

about worshipping and serving downtown...something that's unmatched anywhere else. Even the greatest threat to the long-term existence of Chinatown, the encroachment of new development, is a wonderful opportunity for us. Within one block of the intersection of Spadina and Dundas, there's planned development of over 1,000 condominium units, some of which are already under construction. Most of these homes will be occupied by young professionals and families working downtown. Again...location, location, location.

In truth, the vision of our church founders provides us with a foundation for context, identity, and continuity in God's work downtown Toronto, yet it doesn't constrain us. We walk alongside our dear Mandarin and Cantonese brothers and sisters, building and strengthening where we can, yet free to exploit our location to serve God. We have a

limitless mission field literally at our doorstep. Our next step is to discern where God wants us to focus our attention, time, and energy for his service. Even if the lord should tarry in his return, we are called to follow his leading from our home base in Chinatown, to reach people for his glory.



Pastor Kevin

We have a limitless mission field at our own doorstep.

May the Lord continue to strengthen and use you this week to bring glory to his name.