

Baptist Union of Great Britain Hong Kong Response Project Newsletter 15 – May 2024



Sharon Shek writes:

Filling the gap in language

Ephesians says: 'One Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.'

We have one God and one faith even though we have different nationalities, cultures, colours, history and languages etc. Hong Kongers are very different from locals. These differences and variety help me feel and see God's creativity. God shapes humans through their histories and stories. We are all shaped by God and he shows his love, mercy and power through our experiences. All these different experiences are valuable, even though they can be difficult and take time to overcome. Now, numbers of Hong Kongers have gone into local Baptist churches. We are happy with the numbers but at the same time, we face some difficulties in the integration of Hong Kongers in the local culture.

The way we look at the difficulties is important. In human history, it has not been easy to go through: it wasn't easy for the Israelites heading to the Promised Land. It wasn't easy for Christians to build up the Church in the first century. It was not easy for Jesus going to the cross. It's not easy! Today, it's not easy for Hong Kongers to integrate in local churches and be disciplined. However, it is not the end of the road. It is the time to experience God's grace and mercy, it is the time to experience unity between different nationalities.



In the journey of integration, we may feel tired, lonely or think of giving up. However, God's wisdom is higher than us and he knows us. He prepared somebody to accompany with us. Also, he talks to us through prayer and worship.

In November last year and March this year, we had a worship event in Leeds and Derby. We gathered Hong Kongers for worship in Cantonese. At

the one in Leeds at Lister Hill Baptist Church, it was special that the pastor, Matt Powell and his team prepared all the sound, visuals and refreshments for us. The

preparation and their hearts made us feel their love and companionship. We shared communion and Matt also shared and prayed for the Hong Kongers. It was moving and encouraging. Pastor Vivian Chan, one of the worship leaders, said, "It was a wonderful time to meet brothers and sisters from Hong Kong and worship together in our two gatherings in Derby and Leeds. Just like going back home. The support from local churches was touching." Pastor Andrew Chu shared, "In the Bible, when Abraham entered into Canaan, he built an altar to worship the Lord wherever he settled. Our gatherings are just like the altar in a new place where we settle, and God really spoke to us in our previous gatherings. Praise God and thanks for all the people who helped to make the altar possible."

Meanwhile, to fill the gap of language, we encourage churches to hold a bi-lingual service from time to time. It can help the Cantonese speakers when they sing and worship in their first language, as part of the way of integration.



For helping with bi-lingual services, we have put links to some YouTube worship videos in Cantonese, which have been recorded by the lyric writers, onto our website (see www.baptist.org.uk/cantoneseworship). You can also use your CCLI licence to access a number of worship songs which have already been translated into Cantonese. For other worship songs, we have been advised by CCLI that individual churches can make their own translations – if you'd like help with this, please contact Sharon Shek directly.

And, for bi-lingual Sunday services, we have some experience in Bicester and Nottingham, and we will do another one in Leeds. **If you are interested in holding a bi-lingual service, please ask Sharon Shek on Sshek@baptist.org.uk also.**

Prayer

- What can I pray for you and your ministry? How can I support you? You are welcome to get in touch at SShek@baptist.org.uk
- Very excited that our project will be extended for another two years and extend to Wales, where we will start up some hubs with Hong Kong congregations and local pastors. Please pray for wisdom and love, hope we can walk along in the future.