

LETTER FROM NATHAN TO THE CHURCH

He answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind"; and, "Love your neighbor as yourself." (Luke 10:27).

One of the most used and abused words in the English language is the word "love." Everyone from the educational elite to the illiterate blue collared worker talks about love. Everyone from China, to India, and even the West wants to understand and experience love. It is one of the most common languages in the entire world. Millions and perhaps billions of dollars are spent in the name of love as people give gifts to loved ones, to their special charities, as well as to neighborhoods that need help. All of this is done in the name of love.

However, as we think through the issue of love, is there a way to understand love that is more objective. In the plethora of information and practices in the name of love, are there issues that characterize true love and consequently call out fraudulent love? I believe the answer to that question is a resounding YES. Love and be objectively understood and experienced during our lifetime here on earth. How then can someone understand love objectively? The answer begins with the person of Jesus and is experienced in His church.

As I was interacting with some young people from our church I realized that everyone is very familiar with the gospel of Jesus Christ. If we went around the church and asked people around us whether they recognize the sacrifice of Christ, then we would find that many of our fellow brothers and sisters are familiar with the gospel story. But the gospel story goes beyond a clear understanding of the gospel, even though this is the beginning. The gospel continues to shape our community into a community of love for God and love for others. Without this kind of love, there is really no clear understanding of the gospel.

So as I think about what to report for this year's ministry I want to thank God for three things. First, I want to thank God for fellow brothers and sisters who are striving hard to love God more than anything. Sometimes this is hard because we have to sift through difficult issues. But the reason we are God-lovers is because we seek Him first and His kingdom before our own desires and wills.

Secondly, I want to thank God for the love exhibited in this community of believers. It is no surprise that I, an Indian, and my wife (an American), are sometimes a "fish out of water" in a Chinese Church. However, thanks be to God for those brothers and sisters in our congregation who have loved us with the love of Christ more than their ethnicity. It is truly the love of the brothers and sisters in our congregation that keeps us motivated to work hard in this loving community.

Finally, I want to report that it is such a joy to see the Lord answering prayer. It reiterates the reality that prayer is not just a "Christian Discipline" but it is also the means by which God can do great and mighty things. After six years of prayer and pleading with God, God has been so gracious to answer our prayers and provide us with Pastor. Wong. I look forward to working with this godly man for God's glory and the good of His church.

Soli Deo Gloria

Pastor Nathan