



January, 2016

Dear brothers and sisters,

Happy New year! May the Lord's blessing be with you every day, with peace, joy and grace upon grace. My New Year resolution is to write to you, my church family, every month. I am a letter writer. When Mrs. Tran whom I met in high school went to Hong Kong for further studies, I had to stay in Vietnam for my military service so I wrote to her everyday for three years. During the years I ministered to churches in Hawaii, New Jersey and New York, I wrote to brothers and sisters every week. So, starting from January of this new year, I pick up my pen again to write to you, my church family. My hope is that I can share with you, my family in Christ, what is in my heart and also talk about what's happening in the family of God. I know all good things must end one day, but I hope I can continue to write to you until the day God leads us on to different paths. We can never have too much to say to the family we love, isn't that so? Since we are family, I'll talk about little heartwarming things and also touch on matters in our church family. For the latter, I'll be mindful to stick to the matter at hand and avoid mentioning or hinting at anybody.

When my daughter was a college sophomore in Boston, she wrote her mother and me a letter which I have kept and treasured to this day. In the letter, she started by apologizing to us because she knew she brought her parents many headaches and much heartache during her teenage years. She hoped now that she was grown up, she would not cause her parents anxiety any more (What do you think?) Then my daughter said she felt she was very fortunate because most of her school friends' parents were in broken relationships, while her parents were growing closer and closer. She could see that the mission from God was keeping her parents together and for this, she was grateful and wanted to express how blessed she felt. Well, where do you find a couple that never fights? When two people of different personalities and from different backgrounds live with each other everyday, how could conflicts be avoided? But if the couple's relationship is built on a God-given mission, these conflicts become minor disturbances that do not cause real damage, but may actually make an otherwise uneventful life more interesting. Making up after a fight even increases intimacy. Do you agree? In the same way, my hope is that the vision and mission God gives RCCC would become our shared vision and mission and thus hold us closely together. Several hundred people under one roof naturally have many viewpoints and ways of doing things. May our vision and mission turn these differences into opportunities for us to understand and accept one another.

Do you still remember the memorable Christmas Cantata? On stage was the Mandarin and Cantonese choir, with the youth orchestra below them. All of them are of different ages, different backgrounds and mother tongues. However, their love for God and man joined them together and they gave us song after song of worship and praise. This year our church is heading in a new direction of change. By God's grace, the church expansion project in the works for so many years will soon come to fruition. May God's love and the mission entrusted to us join us together to make us a bright beacon in the Research Triangle area, shining on the countrymen God brought to our vicinity, so that in future they will bring the light of Christ's gospel to the global mission field.

"Thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him." II Corinthians 2:14

Serving together with you in Christ,

*Pastor Calvin Tran*