

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

It has been almost a year since I started my studies at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary. I thank God for His provision, guidance and the many learning opportunities over the past year. I am also grateful for your continued prayers, support and encouragement to me over this time. I write to share some updates from the past year and prayer requests.

Winter was a mix of frosty days, icy roads, slushy paths, early darkness and cold dry air. The snow and ice continued well into Spring, before quickly blooming into hot Summer days. Each season brought its own beauty and challenges:

- During Winter, I had a bad fall from slipping on the ice and took a few months to recover. My friend's car skidded down an icy hill on our way to church – thankfully we were unhurt because the car crashed into the snowbank on the side (instead of hurtling straight into an intersection at the foot of the hill). Around that time, I went for a Winter Retreat with the High School Youth in my church and it was awesome to witness the youth growing in their faith and enjoying the time of worship and fellowship with each other.
- Winter and Spring were low points for my emotional and mental states, but as the days got longer in Summer, I felt my spirit lift.
- A number of friends graduated in the Spring – it was bittersweet to experience the joy of friendship and then feel the grief of distance. Yet, I recognize that as is the pattern of life in Christ on earth, we are called and gathered in order to be sent out. Please pray that those who have graduated will be faithful disciples of our Lord wherever they next head to.
- During the Summer, I got to spend a few days with relatives in Vancouver. I thank God for the warmth and welcome of relatives, who make me feel at home even though I'm so far from Singapore.

Studies:

- (1) **Theology of Mission:** During the January Term, I took a class on the biblical foundation of mission theology. We studied the various paradigms of mission theology through the ages (*i.e.* the early church, the Eastern Church, the Roman Catholic Church of the Medieval Ages, the Protestant Reformation, the Enlightenment and the Post-Modern age). The class gave me many areas to reflect on – for example, how the church through the ages has approached missions, evangelism, and inculturation; the separation (or mixing) of Church and State; the role of social justice in missions; and critiquing “*Cultural Christianity*” that has been very much a vestige in Western societies even after the collapse of classical Christendom.

One of my reflections is that in the post-Christendom era, Christians need even more to live individually and corporately with the mindset that they are *sent* (see

John 21:20 (ESV)) into the world as missionaries for God. This means every workplace, school, public arena, home, eatery, recreation center, *etc.*, is a potential place for missions and Gospel conversations. The responsibility for missions is not solely the responsibility of church (e.g. under the Christendom model); instead, it rests on every single Christian, because every Christian is commissioned to go make disciples of all nations (see Matthew 28:18-20 (ESV)). The attractional model of church (*i.e.* a centripetal model, where the church seeks to attract people into its doors as a way to evangelize) should be transformed into a centrifugal model where the church equips, strengthens and sends Christians out into the frontlines of culture to live *attractive* witnessing lives. As missiologist and theologian David Bosch aptly points out, the shift has been from church-centered mission to mission-centered church.¹ The call of the church is not “*come to us*”, but “*let us follow him*”.²

- (2) **Greek II and Intermediate Greek:** During the Spring Term, I took the second of the two required Greek language courses, **Basic Greek II**. During the Summer Term, I continued with a further elective course, **Intermediate Greek**, focusing on deepening my understanding of Greek syntax and discourse grammar. A large part of the latter course was dedicated to translating and analyzing Greek passages in 1 Thessalonians, Romans and Philippians. Studying New Testament Greek over the past year has been both challenging and rewarding. I pray that God will continue to open my eyes to understand His Word, increase my love for it, and teach me to handle/interpret it faithfully, in order to build up both myself and others in their faith in the triune God.
- (3) **Understanding Culture** was a required class that I took during the Spring Term, which aimed to develop cross-cultural competencies for building healthy, God-honoring relationships within diverse communities. Through the class, I have been made more aware of my own cultural assumptions and background and how they might affect my ability to minister cross-culturally.
- (4) **Exploring the New Testament** was a class that I took in the Spring Term, which provided an excellent overview of the major themes of the books in the New Testament.
- (5) **Medieval Spirituality:** I audited this class during the Spring Term. It was a fascinating class, exploring the approaches towards spirituality and spiritual practices during medieval times, like mysticism, monasticism, visions, sacraments, art, and symbolism.

¹ David J. Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, Twentieth anniversary ed, American Society of Missiology Series; No. 16 (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 2011), 379.

² Bosch, *Transforming Mission: Paradigm Shifts in Theology of Mission*, 385.

- (6) **Aging, Death, and End-of-Life Medical Ethics:** I audited this class during the Summer Term. The class raised important issues and questions, for example, having a theological framework for aging, dying, and the experience of dementia with implications for how this impacts ethics and pastoral care, as well as end-of-life decision making.
- (7) **Fall Term:** During the upcoming Fall Term, I will be taking the following classes: (a) **Hebrew I**; (b) **Interpreting the New Testament**; (c) **The Church to the Reformation**; and (d) **Mentored Ministry** (see “*Church*” below). Please would you pray that I would be able to manage my time well and learn fruitfully this term.

Church:

- (1) **Mentored Ministry:** Over the Summer, I did my Mentored Ministry (*i.e.* internship/practicum) at the church I attend – First Congregational Church of Hamilton (“**FCCH**”). Since Spring this year, I have been serving with the High School Youth Ministry as an Adult Leader. It has been a joy to be serving at FCCH, and I will continue doing my Mentored Ministry at FCCH this Fall Term too, focusing on serving in the High School Youth Ministry and learning more about the Children’s Ministry. I am thankful for wonderful mentors, Pastor Kevin and Pastor Matthew, who have been regularly meeting with me, giving me feedback and sharing their experiences so that we can learn from each other. Please pray that God will work in and through FCCH to call and make joyful disciples, particularly among the young people. Please pray that the leaders and volunteers will have wisdom and unity as we serve together. Please also pray that God would grant me discernment about what gifts He has given me to serve His people and how these can be further developed and stewarded well.
- (2) **Preaching:** Earlier this year in April, I was invited to speak at the Good Friday service in FCCH. I am thankful to God for such an opportunity, and for the guidance and encouragement that I received from many along the way. I have been scheduled to preach again in FCCH this coming November. Please pray that the Holy Spirit would guide my preparation and that God would speak to those who hear in order to convict their hearts of His generous love for them, and that I would have sufficient time and energy to prepare for it amidst the busy school term.
- (3) **High School Youth Ministry:** The High School Youth Ministry at FCCH is a vibrant ministry with around 50 youth attending the Tuesday evening youth group. Typically, during youth group, we begin with a time of games, then songs of worship, have a lesson time (based on the bible passage we study that

evening) and then split into small groups to read and discuss the passage and pray for one another. During the Spring Term, we completed a Bible study series on the book of Exodus. In the Fall Term, we will study the book of James. As an Adult Leader, we meet with the student leaders to prepare for the Bible studies, help to facilitate the small groups, teach the lessons, and also have one to one discipleship meetings with student leaders each month. Please pray that God would work in the students' lives so that they would grow in knowledge and understanding of His Word, and in love and hospitality towards one another. Please also pray that I would continue to form good connections with students, that it might open up more doors to honest and robust discussions about life and faith.

- (4) **Sunday School:** Apart from the High School Youth Ministry, I will also be involved in more teaching roles in Sunday School this year. In the upcoming Fall Term, we will explore the Christian perspective of identity and idolatry during the High School Sunday School.

School Life (non-academic):

- (1) **Living space:** Due to various circumstances (which are too lengthy to write here), I have moved into three different dorm rooms within the past year of being on campus. Each move has been, thankfully, smooth, but a hassle. There will be an upcoming move this Fall Term again. Please pray that it will be a smooth move.
- (2) **Leadership role in Women's Dorm:** I have been appointed as the Resident Life Coordinator of the Women's Dorm on campus. The RLC role is both administrative and pastoral, with responsibilities involving administering and managing the dorm spaces and community (e.g. kitchen, cleaning rosters, events), liaising with the school and students to advocate/feedback, and relational matters (e.g. orienting new students, listening to concerns, mediating). Please pray that I would have wisdom and administrative effectiveness to carry out the responsibilities of the role well.
- (3) **Running:** A couple of students and I have been meeting to run on campus over the Summer. It has been a fun way to get fresh air, enjoy time with the families on campus and motivate each other. Some of us signed up to run either a half marathon or 5km race this November. Please pray that we'd be safe from injuries during our training and on the race day.
- (4) **Car:** During the Summer, I managed to procure an old pre-owned car. After some repairs and maintenance work, I registered it and now have a working car. Thank God! It has greatly helped my food security situation and the ability

to regularly go to church/ad hoc activities. It still has some engine problems – the engine is unusually loud. Please pray that the car and I (and the other road users) will be kept safe.

Thank you for taking the time to read these updates and for your prayers. If you would like to have a chat or share how I can pray for you too, please feel free to contact me.

May God be glorified in all things.

In Christ,
Jean Chan
September 2025

p.s. Below are some pictures.



Winter scenes on campus



Youth playing during free time during a High School Youth Winter Retreat at a campsite in New Hampshire



The second dorm room that I was shifted to



Life in the dorm kitchen: scene of a typical game of fridge "Tetris" that we have to play every time we need to use the fridge



FCCH church picnic after Sunday Service at the start of Summer



Running with friends