

August 2018

Dear friends,

Since joining Back to God Ministries International in October 2013, I have worked with my colleagues on developing the agency's new media ministry and have promoted it among Chinese-speaking churches worldwide. But new media has changed dramatically in the past five years and continues to change, especially in China.

This development has been particularly evident as the use of new media becomes more common among churches and Christians in China. Thus we face the challenge of positioning ourselves anew in terms of our role within new media ministry.

In late June I made my third trip to Asia this year. This time I visited Hong Kong, Taipei, Wenzhou, Shanghai, and Hangzhou to visit churches, organizations, and ministry partners, to share vision, to hold lectures, and to follow up on projects. Near the end of the trip, I joined the annual retreat and writers' camp for our Chinese staff and pastors, where we discussed our new positioning as a ministry (pictured above).

Romans 12 guided much of our discussion. Verse three says, *"For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you."*



In the Chinese Bible, the phrase "in sober judgement" is 合乎中道, or *"in line with the middle."* This phrase has a classic sense, similar to the Confucian idea of 中庸之道 "the doctrine of the mean." This is comparable to the *golden mean* that Aristotle praises as the ideal midpoint between two extremes. For example, the virtue of

courage lies between the vices of recklessness (too much courage) and



cowardice (not enough courage). In fact, this *golden mean* is a positioning. The context of this verse provides a good guideline for our positioning as a media ministry.

In an era of rapidly changing new media, we are reminded of Romans 12:2, "*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind,*" in order that "*you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—good, pleasing and perfect will.*" In other words, if we just follow the trends, it is easy to get lost in all the changes around us. The key to positioning is to understand our goals and our mission first.

Finally, Romans reminds us not to think of ourselves too highly, since "each member belongs to all the others" (verse four). We must understand our limitations and prioritize our efforts. Furthermore, we must actively cooperate with other Christian media organizations and churches to share our experience and leverage our combined resources to empower the church. In this way, we will serve as a pioneer, think tank, and leader of Christian new media ministry.

Thank you for continuing to play your role in this work as we reposition for the season to come. I will close with a prayer from a Chinese-speaking believer who you have helped encourage.

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Thank you, Lord. All glory goes to you, Lord. I want to lay hold of my time with the Lord, to seek the Lord's help and the Lord's leading. Amen.



Pastor Jerry An
BTGMI Chinese ministry leader

