

# Rochester Chinese Christian Church

# ECHO

June 2007 Volume 25 No. 1



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# Rochester Chinese Christian Church Three-Year Plan (2005 - 2007)

## Main Emphasis: Outreach And Evangelism

### 2005

#### Motivation - Focus on equipping our people

Theme: You Will Be My Witnesses (Acts 1:8)

1. Equip every person for short-term missions
2. Every church member serves in at least one capacity
3. Identify outreach ministry groups

### 2006

#### Mobilization - Focus on reaching out to the unsaved

Theme: We Must Preach the Gospel (Mark 13:10)

1. Support and send out at least 30 short-term missionaries
2. Every person brings at least one friend to church
3. Mobilize outreach ministries

### 2007

#### Multiplication - Focus on assimilating newcomers

Theme: Lord, Send Out Workers! (Matthew 9:38)

1. Every person has a short term missionary experience
2. Send out at least one full-time worker from RCCC
3. Multiply outreach ministry members



**Rochester Chinese Christian Church**  
羅城華人基督教會



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**English Sunday Worship**  
9:30 am

**English Sunday School**  
11:15 am

*Call the church for other  
fellowship, bible study &  
youth group meetings*

**中文主日學**  
上午九時三十分

**中文主日崇拜**  
上午十一時十五分

欲知其他團契聚會  
查經班，請電教會

**Rochester Chinese Christian Church West**  
羅城西區華人基督教會

Located at



*Henrietta Wesleyan Church*  
**70 Thompson Road**  
Rochester, NY 14623

主日崇拜  
Sunday Worship  
下午 4:00 - 5:15 pm

主日學  
Sunday School  
下午 5:20 - 6:15 pm



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## My Joy I Leave with You

Pastor Herman Tang

Growing up as a child in a relatively big family, I have always tried to develop my desire to add more joy to those in my home. My parents have six children, three boys and three girls. I rank number three in the birth order. I am not sure if this has anything to do with my personality trait; most likely not. As long as I can remember, I have always loved to do little things here and there to make my parents and my siblings happy. It makes me happy when my family is happy. We are the family of God. We also share our joy and our sorrow.

Many years ago, I was reading Second Corinthians. Something Paul said caught my special attention:

**2 Corinthians 1:24** “Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are *helpers of your joy*: for by faith ye stand.” (KJV; Italics are mine)

**2 Corinthians 2:3** “And I wrote this same unto you, lest, when I came, I should have sorrow from them of whom I ought to rejoice; *having confidence in you all, that my joy is the joy of you all.*” (KJV; Italics are mine)

The Lord has used these verses to teach me an important aspect of the ministry of a pastor. That is to say, being a pastor, I ought to bring joy into people’s life. I really thank God for giving me the privilege to be in such honorable position. Since this will be my last opportunity to say a few words to you through ECHO, I like to leave you with my joy. I hope that my joy will also be your joy.

### The Joy of Salvation

On Christmas day 1968, I accepted Jesus as my personal Savior. For the first time in my life, I experienced the joy of being a child of God. For a couple of hours, I could not stop shedding tears and yet my heart was filled with unspeakable joy. If you

have not accepted Jesus to be your Savior yet, may I urge you to do so as soon as possible?

### **The Joy of Serving Jesus**

There are many things in this world that can bring me much joy. My family has brought me so much joy. I also have tasted so many wonderful moments from doing things with friends and relatives. But nothing can compare to the joy of serving the Lord Jesus. When I know I am doing His will and doing what He wants me to do, my heart is just filled with joy indescribable.

I started serving the Lord as a full time minister back in 1975. People say that good time passed by quickly. If this saying is true, serving the Lord is the best thing to do for me. Honestly speaking, when I look back, I feel these years went by like just yesterday. Better yet, I feel that my time spent in serving the Lord is getting better all the time. I think the song “The longer I serve Him the sweeter it gets” expresses that feeling most accurately.

### **The Joy of Studying the Bible**

Dr. Timothy Lin, my former pastor, used to say to people that studying the Bible is his “hobby”. He also said that he found so much joy in studying God’s Word. When I first heard him say that some twenty-five years ago, I was kind of skeptical. How can someone have joy, fun and fulfillment without some sort of hobbies or entertainments? He must be a “super-spiritual” person. But now that I have personally experienced that joy, I can begin to understand Dr. Timothy Lin’s sentiment. I do not mean to imply that I am spiritual now. Like the Apostle Paul, I keep pressing on toward the goal God has called me to reach.

If there is one outstanding blessing the Lord has graciously bestowed upon me during my time in Rochester, it would be the special blessing of leading the Tuesday Bible Study. There I have systematically studied almost all the Old Testament books with brothers and sisters. As we humbly and diligently study God’s Word, God reveals Himself to us more fully all the time.

Dear Brothers and Sisters, I wish that you take my advice and give your utmost efforts to study the Bible. Go to Sunday school. Attend Bible Study class. Do your devotion. The purpose is to know God through knowing the Bible. You will experience great Joy. I can guarantee it.

### **The Joy of Doing the Work of Evangelism**

I used to say there is joy of winning a soul for the Lord. Now I prefer to say there is joy of doing the work of evangelism. No doubt about it, there is great joy in seeing a lost person coming to know the Lord and get saved. Yet I believe that it is a greater joy in making God happy when we obey His commands.

Paul exhorted Timothy with these words: **2 Timothy 4:1-4** “<sup>1</sup>In the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who will judge the living and the dead, and in view of his appearing and his kingdom, I give you this charge: <sup>2</sup>Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage--with great patience and careful instruction. <sup>3</sup>For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. <sup>4</sup>They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. <sup>5</sup>But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.”

In conclusion, I like to quote from an anonymous person who said, “Only one life soon will pass; only what’s done for Christ will last.”

God be with you till we meet again.





## **Standing Firm in One Spirit**

Pastor Mitchell Herring

"Then those who feared the LORD spoke to one another, and the LORD gave attention and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for those who fear the LORD and esteem His name. "They will be mine," says the LORD of hosts, "on the day that I prepare my own possession, and I will spare them as a man spares his own son who serves him." So you will again distinguish between the righteous and the wicked, between one who serves God and one who does not serve Him." --- Malachi 3:16-18

Today is Pastor Tang's last Lord's Day here among us as our pastor. He and Mrs. Tang will be departing Rochester this week for their new ministry in Irvine, California. We have been greatly blessed by their ministry in our midst over these past ten years. So many have been built up by Pastor Tang's empathy and encouragement, exhortation to Christ's service, tireless enthusiasm, and devotion to the Lord and His church. He has reminded us time and again what a great honor and privilege it is to serve the Lord.

It takes much love, patience, and wisdom to encourage and train up new people to serve in the various ministries of Christ's church. As more of us take an active role, this not only lessens the burden on the others who are serving, but also facilitates the work of the gospel and the kingdom of God which He has entrusted to His people. I was very happy to see many more of our brethren serving now in the different areas of ministry than ten years ago when we left. This is what stood out to me most of all upon returning to Rochester. This is one of Pastor Tang's great gifts---to see the potential in every believer for useful service in the work of Christ, and to help us develop and realize that potential, and to be all that the Lord wants us to be. What can be more honorable than this, to be looked upon by God, and be counted worthy by Him to be entrusted in these things that will not pass away, but have eternal value?

Serving together also affords the opportunity for the training of our spiritual lives, to help us know ourselves better, to work together as a team with others, and increase in the knowledge of God. As we give ourselves to the service of Christ, there may be times when the task seems overwhelming. At times we may be faced with situations that we simply do not know how to deal with. There will be times we make mistakes. But it is then that we really begin to see our own weakness and perceive the power of God to accomplish His purpose. In serving closely with others there may even be times when our own sinful nature will get in the way. But it is then, when we are confronted by our sin, that we can humbly and courageously deal with it and be cleansed from it. It is only in all of this that we really begin to understand what it is to lean on God, to rely on His power and His direction to accomplish His work.

Indeed, whatever you do in the service of Christ, your part is just to be a vessel through which He works. We are but doing the outer things. The hard part and real burden is borne by God Himself. He is the One who effects the life-changing inward results. In an eloquent devotional, the great pastor F.B. Meyer wrote, "Man builds; God hallows...man performs the outward and mechanical; God the inward and spiritual. Paul plants, Apollos waters; but God gives the increase. We elaborate our sermons and addresses, building them up with careful, eager thought; but God must work in and through them for His own glory in the salvation and building up of souls. We must be careful to do our part with reverence and godly fear, remembering that God must work in realms we cannot touch, and to issues we cannot reach, before our poor exertions can avail." And so it is with all our service for the Lord. This takes the burden of results off of us and puts in where it belongs, with the Lord. But we must be faithful in what we do, as Pastor Meyer wrote, "with careful, eager thought...in reverence and godly fear."

In this regard we need to realize that to truly serve the Lord is not just to do a certain task, but to give of yourself first to Christ. As Paul says of the churches in Macedonia, "...for I testify that according to their ability, and beyond their ability...beseeching us with much urging for the favor of participation in the service of the saints...and this, not as we had expected, but they first gave

themselves to the Lord and to us by the will of God...” (2 Corinthians 8:3-5). To serve the Lord involves the willingness to first give of ourselves with conviction, humility, and love; to honor the Lord and our brothers and sisters; and to see our role within the greater context of the church, and the church in turn within the even greater context of the gospel and the Kingdom of God.

Let us remember to pray often for Pastor and Mrs. Tang in their new ministry in California. And let us also pray for our ministry here in beautiful Rochester, that we can be as Paul admonishes the Philippians, “...standing firm in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel” (Philippians 1:27).



## **I Thank My God in All My Remembrance of You**

Tony Wong

*Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God. – Gen. 6:9*

*The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him." – Gen. 2:18*

There are those who will say that first impressions are strong ones, maybe even lasting impressions. I am not sure that this is always true, as our concepts or images of people whom we meet for the first time may change over time, based on new or additional experiences we have with them. However, as I reflect back on the more than quarter of a century that I have had the blessed privilege to know Pastor and Mrs. Herman Tang, I find it both ironic and reassuring that my initial sense of them has persisted, reinforced by my many subsequent encounters with them. Although I can easily share multiple anecdotes that would testify to the quality of their respective characters, I think that all can be captured, very simply, by my first recollections of them.

Although it has been many years, my recall of the first time I saw, heard, and met Pastor Tang, and the circumstances surrounding this, comes very easily. I was a member of the First Chinese Baptist Church of Los Angeles (FCBC-LA), and a graduate student at USC then, when I had heard that this Reverend Tang from Chicago was coming to preach at FCBC as part of his candidacy for a position on the pastoral staff. I have to admit that I had some mixed emotions when I had first heard about this. On the one hand, this was exciting, as this would be the first potentially “new” pastor for me since I had become a Christian and joined FCBC, and the prospect of participating in the calling of a pastor was appealing. On the other hand, I was very comfortable with the pastors I already knew (Lin, Lum & Ouyang), and wasn’t quite sure how this would all work. I was also asked to help drive him between FCBC and our branch mission at that time in Orange County, so I knew that I was going to have an opportunity to interact with him at a closer, more personal level.

When the morning that Reverend Tang was to speak at FCBC's English Service arrived, there was an air of anticipation and excitement. What was he like? How was he going to sound? What would his preaching be like? Would we like him? I remember sitting in one of those orange vinyl chairs in the multi-purpose room at 942 Yale Street in Chinatown, towards the front, slightly to the right (kinda like where I sit nowadays!), where we had our services in those days, when Reverend Tang came up to the pulpit to speak. I remember being slightly, but respectfully, amused by his appearance, as it was clear to me that he "dressed for the occasion," with a dark suit that just didn't quite fit right, and a white shirt and tie underneath, that also, quite honestly, didn't look comfortable on him at all. That was the visual image. What I heard has last a lifetime. I heard loud, and I heard conviction. I listened to a message about Noah. I heard an unmistakable love for and deep belief and faith in the Word of God. The Noah of the Bible, the Noah that Pastor Tang preached about that first sermon at FCBC, not the Noah of Hollywood exaggeration or childhood story embellishment, was not a very complex man. He simply "walked with God." We are not told much else about Noah. We really don't know what his personality was like, what all his strengths and weaknesses were, but we were told the most important characteristic – he "walked with God."

Following that Sunday morning sermon, during the ride I gave him between FCBC and the branch mission in Orange County, and in the more than 25 years since that time, I have had many opportunities to fellowship with Pastor Tang and to get to know him better. Like many at FCBC and at RCCC, I have come to appreciate the many qualities that God has given him: love, compassion, selflessness, generosity, faith, enthusiasm, humility, friendliness, supportiveness, and many other attributes. He is not only my dear pastor, but I consider him one of my true friends, and definitely a friend to my family. He helped bring my parents to the Lord and has helped and encouraged them tremendously to grow in Him. Yes, much has gone on, much has changed since that distant Sunday morning. Pastor Tang had moved on from FCBC to RCCC, and soon he will be leaving us also to return to California to minister at another church. His suits, shirts, and ties now adorn him comfortably and handsomely, and his hair is as gray now as it was black back

then. We have together and independently experienced some of the most rewarding and some of the most grievous experiences in life that one can encounter. However, through it all, I always come back to the Sunday morning years ago at FCBC, when he preached about Noah. Although he would probably be too humble to agree, after all this time, I can think of no Biblical character more appropriate to compare with him than Noah. Pastor Tang simply wants to walk with God. He wants you and I to join him in that walk with God.

I do not quite remember as clearly when I first met Mrs. Eleanor Tang, but what I do know is that, as with Pastor Tang, my image or impression of her has not changed over the years. Just as my image of Noah and Pastor Tang has become inextricably intertwined over the years, I have this abiding association in my mind of Mrs. Tang with God's provision of a "helper suitable" for Adam in the first woman. Make no mistake – while one may, for whatever reason or motive, insist on attributing to Eve a lesser position than Adam, it is clear from the Biblical narrative that this is not the main issue. What is of greater importance is that Adam was not completely healthy, not fully functional, without a "helper;" and not only a helper, but one who is "suitable." Like hammer and nail, one can argue until kingdom come which is superior, but the fact is one cannot do its proper work without the other. Likewise, Mrs. Tang has been clearly that "suitable helper" for Pastor Tang over the years. Quiet, unassuming, and seemingly in the background, she has nevertheless been a powerful and steadying influence to her family and to Pastor, and by extension, to the church. Without her abiding faith in God and love for her husband, it would be difficult for Pastor to walk with God. Every church needs someone like Mrs. Tang.

I am grateful to God that he has brought Pastor and Mrs. Tang into our midst for the last ten years to serve with us. I will miss them terribly, but I will not forget the lessons they have taught me through their lives. *I thank my God in all my remembrance of you (Phil. 1:3)!*



## Round Trip

Jack Yu

Several years ago, my family was comfortably settled in the Rochester area. My wife Cathy and I had both been working at Kodak for a number of years, and we were raising our two children in a house we had built. Then God shook things up for us a bit. Several things happened at once.

I had progressed in my career to a point where a business degree would really help to open opportunities for me to grow and do new and different things. However, I had put this idea on the “back burner” because I had too much going on in my life to go to school part-time while working, and was committed to a multi-year project at Kodak. Then, a downsizing at Kodak brought my role in the project to an end – I was able to keep my job, but had to be reassigned. This presented an opportunity to take a break and pursue that business degree.

After much discussion and prayer, Cathy and I decided to take leaves of absence from our jobs and uproot our family so that I could go to school full-time out-of-state. In turn, this disruption opened up the possibility of doing something considerably different once my schooling was done. And, in fact, I had something different in mind.

Having led four short-term youth missions to serve the urban poor in the Name of Christ, I had been considering the possibility of making such service my full-time job. I had been touched by the needs of the poor I had witnessed on these missions, and frustrated by the fact that I only spent a week out of each year doing something about these needs. And even though I knew that God could call His servants into a variety of different careers, I personally felt restless applying my energy to what I felt was “non-eternal” corporate work. I thought it would be more efficient to serve God by doing work that directly furthered His kingdom, like caring for the poor.

Making such a dramatic change had seemed out of the question while I was working at Kodak, but now that we had already made a dramatic change in our lives by leaving our jobs and moving, it became a very real possibility. So after my first year of business

school, again after much discussion and prayer, Cathy and I decided that instead of returning to Kodak, I would seek employment among Christian non-profit organizations serving the poor.

This was not an easy decision to make. Both Cathy and I recognized that it meant much more than a different career path for me; it meant a major lifestyle change for our entire family. Not only would a non-profit career pay much less than a corporate career, it would probably also require a transition from suburban living to city living, since much service to the poor takes place in urban neighborhoods. It was also possible that I might have to fundraise my own income. Cathy and I decided that we were willing to accept all these changes if God was truly calling me down the non-profit path. Armed with what I believed were strong credentials, God-ordained motives, and openness to God's leading, I plunged into the job market.

Before long, I'd found a posting for exactly the kind of job I wanted, with required skills/experience that matched my background perfectly, at exactly the kind of organization I wanted to join. I even managed to network my way into the organization to get an interview for the job. Before long, the organization was flying me out to their headquarters for more extensive interviews with various teams. Everything seemed to be going exactly as I'd planned.

Only I wasn't offered the job.

That was a shock, since everything had seemed to fit together so perfectly. From that point on, no matter how hard I looked, I couldn't find anything else that fit nearly as well. Some job postings interested me, but I wasn't able to generate any interest in the hiring organizations. Other organizations were interested in me, but didn't have positions that fit what I wanted to do. All in all, after about twelve months of earnest pursuit, I had to admit that my job search was not working out. Through God's grace, I was able to return to the same corporate job I had left.

What had happened? I'd thought I had good motives for pursuing a Christian non-profit career, and that my family and I

had resolved to accept what such a career would mean. Why hadn't God provided?

There was another part of the story that I've left out, and that I have not shared broadly until the publishing of this article. During the last few years leading up to business school, I'd felt that my spiritual life was inconsistent, and often stagnant. I'd found it easy to ignore God when my full-time work seemed to have nothing to do with His kingdom. I thought that if I could immerse myself in "Christian work", where everything was done in the name of Jesus, with much prayer on the part of the workers, it would force me to walk more closely with God. I wanted a career that would keep my spiritual life in line. I thought: "If only I was doing God's work full-time – then I'd have to walk with God constantly, because it would be built into my job – and then I'd do well spiritually."

Looking back on the experience, I see how unsuited I truly was for full-time "Christian work". I'd wanted to put myself in an environment where I'd be forced to seek God in order to do my job, since I wasn't otherwise motivated to walk with Him. Instead, I believe God wants me to be able to walk with Him no matter what my job is. As Oswald Chambers observes in his classic devotional, *My Utmost for His Highest*:

"[We like to think:] 'If God gives the call, of course I will rise to the occasion ... I can't be expected to live the sanctified life in the circumstances I am in; I have no time for praying just now, no time for Bible reading, my opportunity hasn't come yet; when it does, of course I shall be all right.' No, you will not. If you have not been worshipping as occasion serves, when you get into work you will not only be useless yourself, but a tremendous hindrance to those who are associated with you."

"Ministering as opportunity surrounds us does not mean selecting our surroundings, it means being very selectly God's in any haphazard surroundings which He engineers for us. The characteristics we manifest in our immediate surroundings are indications of what we will be like in other surroundings."

"Never make this plea - If only I were somewhere else!"

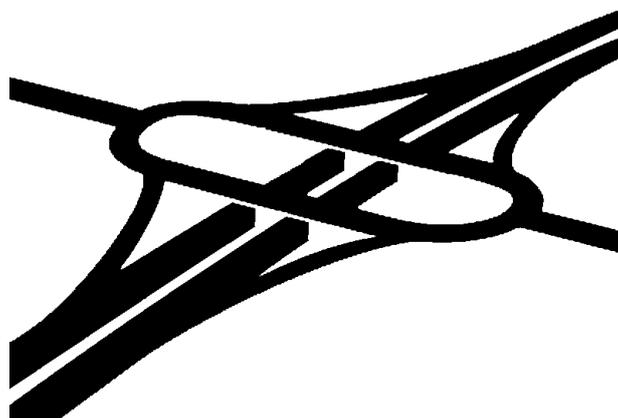
In other words – if I had not been walking with God in my corporate career, it was foolishness to believe that I would start walking with Him by changing to a “Christian” job.

I am now learning to be very selectly God’s in my corporate career – not denigrating the so-called “non-eternal” work I’m doing, but putting to practice the admonition, “Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.” (Colossians 3:23-24) I am now comfortable with the knowledge that I can serve God full-time in a corporation just as well as if I were caring for the poor.

The Lord had put a burden for the poor in my heart, but clearly not for the purpose of taking a job in a Christian non-profit in the timeframe I was looking for one. I take comfort in knowing He will use this burden in different ways, and that if He does call my family and me to do something drastically different in the future, it’s something we’ve considered before and not a totally foreign concept.

An outside observer might conclude that my family and I took a wasted trip that left us right back where we started. But we have no regrets. On the contrary, we rejoice and give glory to God for the many things He has taught us on our round trip. He is good!

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.” (Romans 8:28)



## **Blest Be The Tie That Binds....**

Linda M. Lee

Some of you may not know this about me, but I have been with Rochester Chinese Christian Church long before it even existed as a church. Believe it or not, I was part of the original Youth group that started as part of the Rochester Chinese Christian Fellowship way back in the 70's! Growing up here in Rochester in the Youth Group was wonderful, and was the formative years for me as I grew in my fledgling faith as a Christian. I had many role models and aunts and uncles within our church....but one thing that I never really had was someone whom I considered my pastor. Back in those days, our church did not have a pastor for our church. They were always looking and praying for someone to come along side our church and help shepherd us...but God did not provide for that at that particular time. I went away to college and medical school and of course was involved with other churches that had a pastor. However, I never considered these churches away from home as my own church. Also, I was never close to the pastors of those churches. It wasn't until the Lord led me back home here to Rochester with my husband Ben and our first child Olivia that the Lord provided for me and my family with a pastor whom we have grown so close to over these past 10 years. This was Pastor Tang and his wife Eleanor.

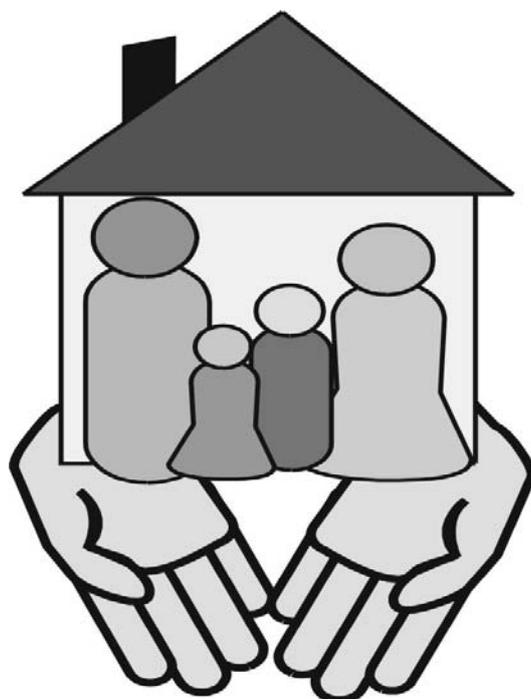
I feel truly blessed to have had the opportunity to know and grow close to Pastor Tang and Eleanor. I was able to see his true heart and love for God and His people. Our family has gone through so many hard times these past years that I never even imagined could happen to us....yet the Lord provided for us in our time of need with the love and support of Pastor Tang and his family. He was always there for us, whether to pray for and with us, comforting us, always directing us to seek God in all of our struggles and to never lose faith. He has also encouraged our family to serve the Lord together as a family and it is exciting to see this happen as our girls grow older and are able to serve along side us whether it be in worship, special music (the Lee family quintet!) short term missions trips or music camp. Even as I have brought some of my patients to our church, Pastor Tang has eagerly reached out to them, visiting them in the hospital, praying with them in times of need. One of my patients recently told me that he has never had a pastor do this for him in

all of his life, and he is deeply touched by Pastor Tang and his love and care for him.

As Pastor Tang and Eleanor leave us, I am very saddened because I will miss their love and fellowship. I feel that they have been by our family's side through both joy and pain these past 10 years, and a close bond has formed that can never be replaced. But, I know that God has great plans for these precious servants of His and I know we will see them again, whether it is here on earth or in heaven for all eternity.

"I thank my God in all my remembrance of you always offering prayer with joy.... in view of your participation in the gospel from the first day until now. For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." Phil 1:3-6

Thank you Pastor Tang and Eleanor, for serving God so faithfully among your church here at RCCC and having such an impact on so many people, especially our family...for the Glory of God!



## Lesson from A Baby

Anna Choi

This past summer I was on my way to help take care of my eighty-seven year old ailing mother. My mom was independent and energetic all her life until her visit to the emergency room at the beginning of this year. Since then she has lost a lot of weight to a mere eighty pounds; she is frail and has trouble moving around.

The loss of independence was a major blow to her, and she is not her usual vibrant and self-confident self anymore. She now retreats to her room most of the day. Although we were fortunate to find a lady to take care of her during the day, mom is seldom happy and seems to be frustrated with everyone. It has been a hard time of adjustment for her and for the people around her.

It was with this sense of sadness and struggle to accept the reality of my mom's deteriorating health that I got on the plane to visit her. I honestly did not know what to expect when I saw her and how best to help her to regain the self-confidence and hope in the Lord she once had. I sat down on my seat, hoping to get some rest during the flight. It was a busy Saturday morning, and the plane was pretty full. As passengers were filing in to find their seats, a lady holding a seven- or eight-month old baby stopped in the seat right in front of me. A passenger who was right behind the young mother passed by her and wished her good luck, before he walked ahead to find his seat. At that moment, all I could think of was, "Yes, good luck to all of us who have to sit around her and the baby." My past experiences with babies riding on the plane have been memories of their crying and screaming. I could understand the anxiety babies have - they are tired, uncomfortable with the change in air pressure, and restless from being cooped up in a seat around other people. I told myself to say goodbye to my planned nap, and to get ready to take my medicine for a headache that would sure to come.

The plane set off, and the baby started making some sounds, possibly trying to adjust to the bumpy takeoff. After the plane ascended to the sky and had been flying for a while, I dozed off. When I woke up from my nap and checked my watch, the plane

had only been flying for about an hour. Surprised by the silence, I got up on my feet to find that the mother and her baby were sound asleep, and so were the people sitting next to them! This was unusual, I said to myself. I sat down, and before long dozed off again. The stewardess woke me up to ask what kind of drink I would like. I looked over and this time I saw the young mother talking and lifting her baby up and down from her seat, and the baby was smiling! He was looking around and smiling to anyone who talked to or looked at him. He was not fussy or agitated; rather, he was happily cooing! I took another nap, and only woke up to the captain's announcement that we would be landing in fifteen minutes.

We all got up from our seats after the plane landed. The baby was smiling at everyone around him. He was happy, and so was his mom! All of us who were sitting around them were so thankful for how pleasant the baby had been during the flight. We were all rested and did not seem to be suffering from any aggravating headaches. We left the plane in a cheerful mood, and were ready to move on with what was waiting for us in our destinations.

I, for one, felt recharged and renewed – thanks to the good nature of the baby who sat in front of me. The baby could have been loud and caused a miserable flight for everyone else; he could have cried and screamed. Instead, he chose to be happy with what he had – his mom, the bottle, and some simple toys – and he chose to be pleasant to the people around him.

Though he is only a baby, he taught me an important lesson that day – to be content and cheerful despite the circumstances. His positive character made him a much more lovable baby, and helped those around him to have a much more enjoyable flight. As I headed out of the airport, I left with a determination to make this visit to my mom a memorable and pleasant one. I was grateful for the lesson I learned from the baby.

Thank you Lord, for giving me this valuable learning experience!

## **A Tribute to The Rev. and Mrs. Herman Tang**

Lucy Woo

I still remember vividly, the picture of Pastor Tang standing at the front door of the Rochester Chinese Christian Church (RCCC) to greet his new congregation. That was in 1997. He carried a fresh and exciting expression on his face greeting everyone who came through that door, many of them by their first names. (He had met only a handful of people during his prior visits.) I was so amazed that I lingered around for a while just to observe. Mrs. Tang was standing close by. As if she knew ahead of time when her husband might have difficulty remembering some names, she was always just in time to come to his rescue. I said to myself, "What a team!" I was amazed and walked into the sanctuary with thanksgiving and a joyful heart.

A few weeks later, at a Wednesday night prayer meeting, an incident happened that took me by surprise. Someone actually attacked the Pastor verbally. It was rude and uncalled for, regardless of what had happened earlier. I felt so bad for Pastor that when I got home I felt compelled to call him to apologize. "He is so new! What does he think of the congregation now?" There is no perfect church, but I certainly did not want him to be discouraged or hurt so soon! The pastor was not home yet when I called. A short time later, Pastor Tang called back. We did not talk much. Neither did I find out what had happened earlier. But when I hung up the phone, I had only one conclusion --- Pastor Tang is a forgiving and understanding person! I was relieved and thankful.

Very few people have the gift of relating to people from all walks of life. Pastor Tang has this unique gift. He is free in spirit and looks so at ease when talking with people! Background and education do not affect him. How blessed a church is to have a pastor like him. After all, the church is for everyone---there is no social, economic or ethnic "diwei" (rank) in Christ. Like Christ, Pastor Tang welcomes people from all walks of life.

Pastor Tang models servant leadership, constantly attending to the needs of the church body, be they spiritual or practical. He often goes out of his way to help people. He counsels, engages in chitchat to put people at ease, helps people move, visits

congregation members at their homes, and prays for people. Pastor Tang does not say "no" if there is something he can do. He also does not say "no" if he is unable to meet a need--- Instead, he has a habit of finding some way or someone to meet that need. He has ministered to our spirits, souls and bodies by going out of his way to help us. The Good Samaritan story comes to mind when I think of Pastor Tang's ministry.

It is often said, "The pastor is the loneliest person in the church". Not so with Pastor Tang. Friends surround him. His sincerity and warmth draw people to him. Most important, people do not feel intimidated by him.

As I was putting my thoughts on paper, I asked my husband to contribute his thought. He said, "He is not afraid or reluctant to ask for help." Not quite sure of what he was getting at, I asked, "Is that good or bad?" "Good! He gets to know people this way, and people get to know him!"

My mind flashed back to the time when Pastor and Mrs. Tang first moved to Rochester. Mrs. Tang had moved with her a lot of orchid plants from California. Because of the Rochester's severe winter, the plants needed to stay in-doors. The Tang's basement was the only place that could accommodate all the plants. However, lighting was a problem. So Pastor Tang asked Woo whether he would be willing to install some shelves for artificial lighting. I chuckled when I was informed of this. "You are not that handy! It takes you forever to put up anything in the house!" I proclaimed. But off he went and he completed the work. It did not take him as long as I thought it would. But more important, he was happy he could do this for Pastor Tang. He got to know Pastor Tang a little better and I am sure the Pastor got to know him too.

Making the elderly feel valued is definitely one of Pastor Tang's gifts. Consequently, my parents have warm feelings toward Pastor Tang. Simple gestures such a note or verbal expressions made them happy. At a dinner on one of Pastor and Mrs. Tang's visits to Maryland, he was so attentive to my parents at the table, my father talked about it afterwards a few times. "No pastor has ever served me!" My father beamed happily.

Pastor Tang is always fast to give thanks to God. His close, loving relationship with the Lord is evident as I observe how he stands in awe of God. This is very precious and we can all learn from it. He seems to always have fresh and exciting ways to bring glory and pleasure to God.

If Pastor Tang has a fault, it might be the fact that he does so many things to try to cover so many areas. My prayer is that he will not exhaust himself before his time. RCCC is going to miss Pastor and Mrs. Tang, but they are really only moving on to serve another part of God's family. I fully expect that God will continue to bless many more people through them. God bless you Pastor and Mrs. Tang! We will miss you!



## Sweeping The House Clean

Aileen Chow

I love to clean my house. I have a daily cleaning schedule that I go by most of the time. Every week, I love to sweep under my bed and collect all the dust bunnies there in my room. I like to clean the bathrooms and freshen up the room with a lemon scent. Maintaining a good appearance and keeping up housework is a very important duty for a housewife. But, there are some areas that I missed cleaning. For instance; the toaster oven, how many times have I baked chicken and the roof and sides of the oven gets all stained with grease and burnt marks. That's a pretty tough area to clean especially when you don't see it from the outside and you let all the burnt and dirty marks stay there for all eternity.

It was like when Jesus saw filth among the Pharisees. They had a clean and righteous appearance from the outside, but on the inside he compared them as a dirty cup and dish. (Matt. 23:25) Their hearts were full of greed and self-indulgence. The Pharisees did not have a clean or spiritual heart. They only cared how they looked and how they would appeal to others.

Are we sometimes like the Pharisees?

What I learned from house cleaning is that the house will always get dirty no matter how many times you clean house. And there will always be spots that you'll completely miss. A dirty house is like your own heart. It always needs housekeeping.

One day, my husband, Barry asked me if I asked God to forgive my sins each day. I know in my heart that I don't every day. It made me think how much dust bunnies have settled in my heart. I have been thinking of things that were not good and it was collecting there like the grease stains of my oven. So, from there I asked God to sweep my house clean, which is my own heart. Jesus said to confess your sins to each other and pray for each other. 1 John 1:9 says, *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

The sins around us will creep in at anytime at any day. In Matthew 12:43, the evil spirit coming out of a man will return to the house it left. When the spirit returns, it will find the house swept clean and in order. The spirit will leave the house and return with more wicked spiritual friends. And then they'll live inside of you, making you feel horrible, but on the outside, you think you're okay. The sins in your heart are really there, even though you don't know it. And that is why we, as Christians, should confess our sins each day – because we're weak and we allow sin to come in when we don't know it.

So, how can you keep your hearts clean? In James 1:21, it is written that you need to *“get rid of all moral filth and the evil that is so prevalent and humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”* Once you get rid of the filth, replenish your life with prayer. I always ask God of my desires. I firmly believe that if you ask it will be given to you. If you seek, you shall find. And knock and the door shall be open. But things like that won't happen if you think God can help you instantly. Humble yourself and ask God forgiveness first. Begin your life with a clean slate. Moreover, you must live your life according to the basic doctrine of the Christian faith. God doesn't like the crooked and depraved generation of this world. That is why he wants you to become his shining Star. (Philippians 2:14-16) But on any given day, your heart can become so filled with things of this world. It could be pride, jealousy, anger or depression. It's time then to sweep your house clean of the dirt and dust bunnies hidden there. Ask God for his forgiveness so that He can live in your heart today.

