

Rochester Chinese Christian Church

ECHO

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Church Goals (2008-2010)

Glory to God Alone

“Whether, then, you eat or drink or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Corinthians 10:31)...

* by **growing** in our understanding of and love for the great doctrines of Scripture and the knowledge of Christ (Ps.119:97);

* by **honoring** the Word of God and prayer in humility, conviction of sin, and repentance, as the means of grace for the transformation of our lives (Rom.12:2);

* by **developing** a biblical world and life view, a heavenly-minded outlook, and personal character worthy of the gospel of Christ (Phil.1:27);

* by **encouraging** mutual exhortation toward each other's spiritual welfare, as well as concern for each other's all-around well-being (Heb.10:25); and

* by **strengthening** our conviction that the gospel of Christ is the only means of salvation, and our proclamation of it locally and worldwide (Acts 4:12).



Rochester Chinese Christian Church
羅城華人基督教會



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<p>English Sunday Worship 9:30 am</p> <p>English Sunday School 11:15 am</p> <p>Call the church for other fellowship, bible study & youth group meetings</p>	<p>中文主日學 上午九時三十分</p> <p>中文主日崇拜 上午十一時十五分</p> <p>欲知其他團契聚會 查經班，請電教會</p>
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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



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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



Glory to God Alone

Pastor Mitchell R. Herring

Recently we introduced our new set of church aspirations, which are intended to build upon previous goals and provide a clear direction for what the Lord would have us be and do. Since the cross, the Lord Jesus Christ is in the business of building His church, i.e. His people. (Mt. 16: 18). When we are being built up as He intends, God is glorified because it shows He is living and moving among us, and accomplishing His work through us. God is glorified when others see that "God is certainly among you" (1 Cor. 14:25). The Bible says that even the most ordinary things should be done in a way that shows something of what God is like, for this is what it means to glorify Him. *"Whether, then, you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."* (1 Cor. 10:31).

This is the main purpose for your life and mine. We know this from Genesis 1:27, which tells us that we were created in the image of God. It is the purpose of an image to reflect its nature. If something does not do what it was designed for and intended to do, we say that it is defective. Since the fall the image of God in us has been defaced by sin, and so to that extent man is simply unable to glorify God and live as intended. Out of a fallen humanity God called out a people for Himself, in Abraham and His descendants, who pointed to Christ and all who would come to Him. The main purpose was to restore the image of God in them and therefore show His glory in them, that is, His nature, what He is like, as a witness to the nations. As Christians we recover this purpose, and as we are mindful of it, it anchors our lives and provides the proper perspective and direction for everything we do.

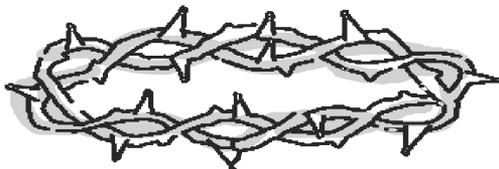
That is where we would like these ideals to take us. They involve a return to the nuts and bolts of historic, biblical Christianity. In this context an interesting item came out this past October concerning a study led by Rev. Greg Hawkins, one of the pastors of the Willow Creek "mega church" in the Chicago area. Willow Creek became the model for thousands of churches that sought to attract the multitudes by becoming "seeker-friendly" and program-driven. Success was evaluated by measuring levels of participation. However, their study showed that "increasing levels of participation in these sets of activities does NOT predict whether someone is

becoming more of a disciple of Christ. It does NOT predict whether they love God more or they love people more.” Commenting on this, Senior Pastor Bill Hybels said, “Some of the stuff we have put millions of dollars into, thinking it would really help our people grow and develop spiritually, when the data actually came back, it wasn’t helping people that much. Other things that we didn’t put much money into and didn’t put much staff against are stuff our people are crying out for...we made a mistake. What we should have done...we should have started telling people and teaching people to become ‘self-feeders.’ We should have gotten people, taught people, how to read their Bible between service, how to do the spiritual practices more aggressively on their own.”

This is exactly what these aspirations seek to accomplish; yet these are not ends in themselves but means to an end: to glorify God. If we are to reflect the image of God, we need to know of what that image consists. It consists of everything that God has revealed about Himself in His Word, in the great doctrines and truths of Scripture. And so we glorify God **by growing** in our understanding of the great doctrines of Scripture and of Christ, and by coming to love them as very precious (Ps.119:97) because they are the expression of the very nature and work of God Himself. We glorify God **by honoring** the Word of God and prayer, because these are the God-ordained means, or instruments, by which we lay hold of His grace for the transformation of our lives (Rom.12:2). If we ignore these, we despise God’s grace. The word “honor” here means we really do these spiritual practices, not just pay them lipservice like so many in the churches today. As the Word of God richly dwells within us, we glorify God **by developing** a biblical life-view and world-view, so that we see all of life from a biblical perspective, to which also our own characters increasingly conform (Phil. 1:27). We also glorify God **by encouraging** mutual exhortation and holding each other accountable in our spiritual growth (Heb.10:25). What a fellowship that would be! At present this may seem difficult, but as we seek this and grow in grace, the culture of the church can change so that it becomes more natural. Finally, we glorify God **by strengthening** our conviction that “there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must be saved (Acts 4:12). If we are firm and unwavering in this basic biblical truth, we will be more ready to seek ways to share it with others.

We hope these ideals will provide a focus and direction for us to strive for, to the glory of God. By understanding and seeking the glory of God, and holding onto it as our guiding principle, things

become clearer and decisions easier. In whatever we do, let us do it so that the truth of Christ and His gospel be seen in some way. May this become a place where grace is in abound supply, so that God may add to the number of those being saved and transformed in our midst, and we realize the purpose of our existence, both individually and as a church---"Glory to God Alone"!



For Good

Linda Lee

Many of you, who are part of the Rochester Chinese Christian Church family, know quite well the struggles that my family has had to face through the years. It has not been an easy road to travel. But, I would like to share with you the faithfulness of God through His Word. *"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."* (Romans 8:28). How the promise of this verse has become so real to us this past year. Some of you who have known us for a while may recall that six years ago I went through a major struggle concerning my health and how God in His mercy and grace brought me through and the lessons that I learned by going through that experience.

One of the important things that I learned back then was not to take life for granted; *"Teach us to number our days a right that we may gain a heart of wisdom."* (Psalm 90:12). Everyday be prepared to finish the race well; make every day count for God because we do not know what tomorrow will bring. Much of what I learned came from the story of Joseph and the famine. He saved up and prepared for the seven years of famine before the famine hit. Well, I had six years of relatively smooth sailing trying to be diligent in studying God's Word, building a closer relationship to Him, a stronger faith....then fast forward six years later....when my faith was once again put to the test.

December 27th, 2005 we were awoken by Pastor Tang who was calling frantically to see if we had the cell phone number of my good friend Susan Wang. He had heard that they were in a car accident in California and wanted to get in touch with her. Ten minutes later Pastor called us back, they were gone...the whole family (Susan and her two girls, Christina and Diana) had died in a horrific head-on car crash. Words cannot describe the grief our whole family felt. We were forced to face the realities of death, loss of a deep friendship and struggling with questions of why this had to happen to such a beautiful, faithful family. Our only comfort was that they are all believers and are with the Lord now. My daughter Olivia, who was one of Christina's best friends, gave one of the eulogies at the Wang memorial service where almost 700 friends attended. Olivia's strength and faith in God even amidst the grief was so evident as she testified about her friendship with Christina and Diana, and how much their lives had touched her. That strength and faith of a young teen was then put to the fire once again...when four months later, Olivia was diagnosed with Lupus which is an autoimmune disorder. It is an illness where your body's own immune system gets off track and starts to attack healthy organs and cells.

In the beginning it was terrifying to me and to be quite honest, I was a total mess. The combination of a mother's heart and being a doctor took a heavy toll on me emotionally. As a physician, I knew too much...I knew exactly the ramifications of the test results that came back...I of course braced myself for the worst... Unfortunately I have seen too much in my years as a practicing physician...I've seen some of the worse possible cases, and the suffering involved. As each test result would come back...with "bad news" and her worsening condition, I felt like I was being punched in the stomach, a sickening nauseated feeling of despair. I kept crying out to God for mercy because I didn't know how much more I could take. I felt like I was barely holding on by a thread. I was afraid to pray, because...well what if God didn't give me the answer that I was looking for? To heal my daughter, keep her safe. So, I asked others to pray for me, because I was too weak and felt I had such feeble faith to pray myself. The situation was out of my control and no matter what I tried to do to help my daughter, it didn't seem to make a difference; she kept getting worse. Then, the turning point came...it was only when I was able to give up my daughter to the Lord and entrust her to His full care that the tide started to turn. This is a big deal for someone like me. We doctors are used to having control over most things, we see sick patients, diagnose them, treat them and they usually get better. I'm used to being in

control...but I realized that I was powerless to do anything...and only the Lord God Almighty could intervene and have full control. I can remember praying "Lord, you created Olivia, you know her far better than I do, you know every cell in her body...you know exactly what she needs and how to fix it. She is your child, so I entrust her to you." I took each day one day at a time...and prayed this constantly...and I truly witnessed the hand of God intervene and turn the tide.

Olivia started to improve and after a few months, she went into complete remission. Her doctor was able to take her off of her Lupus medication (steroid medication) and she still remains in remission now almost one year later. She has absolutely no symptoms of Lupus and her blood work all normalized. I truly thank God for His mercy and Grace.

Whenever one has to go through a fiery trial, God molds you, teaches you and changes you. He has truly molded me and changed me. The pivotal verse for me this year is Romans 8:28 *"And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose."*

It is amazing to me to see how God can take a situation that normally would be construed as tragic and unjust and have it "work together for good". Truly I can see the fingerprints of God in all circumstances. God's sovereign hand in all that has happened to our family. I could go on and on about various ways that the Lord has brought good out of this situation...but here are a few major blessings...What I call God's "for good"

The first "for good"...Remember six years ago when I got ill? I had every test you can imagine done on me to try and figure out what was wrong. All the tests were negative, except for one...A nonspecific screening test for Lupus. Although I thankfully was not diagnosed with Lupus because all the other confirmatory tests were negative, and by God's grace I got completely better...it was because of me getting ill, that when Olivia started with some vague symptoms, this was checked right away. She was diagnosed very quickly and treatment started right away before any long term damage was done on any major organs. I believe this made a huge difference in the overall outcome. So, even in the events of six years ago, God was already preparing us to be able to deal with Olivia's diagnosis and He was already protecting her.

The second “for good” is to be able to see how much going through adversity has deeply impacted my daughter’s faith. When Olivia was first diagnosed...and I was feeling like I had hit rock bottom...the Lord gave me someone to greatly encourage me. An old acquaintance of mine whom I knew from my late high school/college years, called me. Her name is Tina, and she was someone who developed Lupus at age 14 just like my daughter. At the time when I knew her, I had no idea what Lupus was...so I never thought too much about it. I just knew her as a vibrant Christian girl whom everyone looked up to because she was one of the leaders in her YG. When Tina heard about what had happened to Olivia, she called me and we had a long heart to heart talk. She shared with me her story of what she has been through living her life with Lupus. She didn’t sugar coat it, it truly has been a long hard road for her...with several set backs with her health. But, her faith in God has brought her through. It was so encouraging to hear that God blessed her with a husband who is a pastor and they have two healthy children. I needed to hear a positive story...that life can go on as normal even with Lupus. But what really touched my heart was when she told me that she is truly thankful that God allowed her to go through her life with Lupus. She was glad God had allowed it. She said that it has changed her, helped her to have so much more compassion for others, which is so vital to her, because she and her husband are both serving in the ministry. After I got off the phone, I can remember thinking and praying. “If Olivia someday turned out to be the amazing woman of God as Tina has become...I would be so happy.”

As it turns out, I can already see the tremendous effects that having Lupus has had on Olivia’s faith. From the very onset she has always been so positive and optimistic. Just the opposite of my attitude! As I would walk around overcome with anxiety and worry, she was actually the one who comforted me, telling me “Mom, don’t worry about me, God will take care of me.” Talk about role reversal! Her unwavering child like faith encouraged me so much. Last May, her YG surprised her on World Lupus Day and all wore purple ribbons and bracelets in support of her and presented her with a painting of a butterfly (symbol of the fight for the cure of Lupus) with the words Hope on it. She also gave a testimony about how Lupus has affected her and how she is a better person because she has had to go through it. And how she would never be able to do it on her own without God and the encouragement and prayers from all her friends and family. It brought tears to my eyes to hear her testify to God’s faithfulness....I cannot help but think that God must truly

have some special things prepared for Olivia in the future to want to grow her faith so much at such a young age.

One last “for Good” that I would like to share is the impact that Olivia’s story has had on my medical practice and my patients. I am not the same Dr. Linda Lee as I was a year ago. This experience has made me a much better doctor not only because I feel God has given me so much more love and compassion for my patients who suffer with chronic illnesses, but it has forced me to become an expert in a field that few physicians understand much about. While the latest research in Lupus treatment is very promising, the medications used to treat Lupus are so toxic with some very scary side effects (as they are chemotherapy medications). I prayed that God would show me a better way. I started to search the medical literature and attended many medical conferences to see if there was some way I could optimize her immune system in a way that wouldn’t harm her. What I discovered is a whole other testimony in itself which I don’t have time to go into. But suffice it to say, it transformed my whole way of thinking and the way I practice medicine because God used it for good to help put Olivia into remission and help keep her there. Many of my physician colleagues have heard about what happened to my daughter and the success of her going into remission. Some have referred their Lupus patients to me to see if I can help. I feel privileged that God has allowed me to be able to try and help. I can only pray that God will help me to use what I have learned to help others in similar situations.

Truly God works all things for good to those who love Him and are called according to His purposes. I am not glad that Olivia has Lupus. It is heart wrenching for any parent to have to see their own child suffer with a serious illness. But I can honestly say that I am glad that we have been able to witness and experience the mighty hand of God in our lives. It is an amazing thing to personally experience this through adversity and through it, we have been changed to be more like our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

We have a long road a head of us and I continue to have to take each day one day at a time. Everyday I give Olivia and the rest of my family up to the Lord and have to learn daily to entrust them to the Lord. I’d like to say thanks to so many of you who have prayed so diligently for me and my family. We continue to covet your prayers as we continue to stand solely on the Grace of God for our future.

We give God all the Glory.

A Short Lesson in Psalm 37

Aileen Chow

A true character of a Christian is described in Psalm 37. This is a Psalm by King David. David lived his life around evil men. Before David became King, he served King Saul as a young commander going out to battlefields. He slaughtered the Israelites' enemies, especially the Philistines. He had no fear of killing them and so he won every battle. When he came back to the palace he had to face the wrath of King Saul because he was jealous of David. So, King Saul ordered his men to kill David.

In Psalm 37, the very first words are: "Do not fret." In other words he says, "Do not worry." David had nothing to worry about because he knew they would all pass away. They would die and withered like the green grass or plants. He also said, "Do not be jealous of men who do not love God because they will pass away." David had such strength and hope because he was in the Lord. He truly lived a godly life of putting his trust in God.

In our lives today we are surrounded by wickedness. Everywhere you see and go there is sin. Do you think that we can be like David? Can we as Christians let our light shine through the darkness? As Christians we should not be angry or jealous of the wicked.

A true character of a Christian is to "**Trust**" (vs. 3) in the Lord. Trusting is putting your confidence in the Lord. It is having faith that God will reward you in due time. While you live your life, "trust God" and "do good".

A true character of a Christian is to "**Delight**" (vs. 4) in the Lord. Delight is having a great pleasure of living a godly life. Do everything you can to serve and please God. He will give you the desires of your heart. God knows what you want if you ask him and seek him with all your heart.

Once you have a trusting and delightful relationship with God, in its next step, a bond is formed. Employ yourself to become God's servant. A true character is to "**Commit**" (vs. 5) your way or relationship to the Lord. It does not say, "Commit to sinful ways." It says, "*Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this.*" As God is like the Father, we are his children. He loves us so much. The Lord will lead the way. You follow Him and He will help you.

A true character of a Christian is to have the "**Innocence**" (vs. 6) of

a child. Your innocence or righteousness will be known to everyone. Your love for God will shine 'like the dawn' and that the light of your justice (righteousness) will shine high like the noonday sun.

A true character of a Christian is to **“Wait”** (vs. 7) for the Lord. Resting in the Lord is fully depending on Him to show you from right or wrong desires. And then also, be **“Patient”** (vs. 7). Waiting patiently for the Lord to act is being able to bear all trials with faith and not worrying or being anxious about it. This is a difficult practice, but in the long run God promised us that those who “wait” will get the best.

So, in this short lesson from the Psalm of David, it is a guide for us to live a truly Christian life. We should wear this around our neck and always remember who we are



My Return

Eunice Leung

A lot of aunties and uncles, who have been attending RCCC Sunday morning services for more than 10 years, may remember me being a mischievous little seven year old girl running around with other kids in church back in 1996. After moving to HK and having lived there for 11 years, here I am back again to Rochester, yet this time returning as a college student.

My college friends often ask me where I'm from. I would tell them I'm from HK. And they would then say, "Well, your English has a noticeable American accent though!" I would then tell them, "That's because I was born in US, specifically speaking, right here in Rochester, and grew up here until I returned to HK after 2nd grade."

They would be surprised, as much as I am myself.

It's amazing how out of so many schools, I've ended up coming back to Rochester for college. While choosing US colleges last year, the University of Rochester wasn't any one of my picks because I wanted to go to a different city hoping to obtain new experiences; but my mom persuaded me into choosing it. Now I can slowly come to understand why God put me here; He knew I would be placed in good hands. I thank Him for so many aunts and uncles in RCCC who take great care of me, offering their hospitality and telling me to call them whenever I need help and assistance.

Looking back during the years after I returned to HK, I would always look forward to coming back to Rochester during the summer holidays, to hang out with my friends, to go to Music and Bible camp, and to eat "American food." I still remember when I was in 4th grade we were going back to Rochester for summer vacation that year. My brother and I were so excited; we had already packed our backpacks in April when the trip would be made in August! And after each vacation, I would frantically wait for the next summer to come, hoping the year would pass by quickly. Over the years, this craze died down as I began to enjoy my life in HK more and more. Now, it seems like God has granted my biggest childhood wish. However, Rochester now has a different meaning; it has become a place for my academic pursuit, a place requiring serious studying, instead of entertainment and fun.

RCCCF is definitely one of the biggest blessings to me here. The upperclassmen in RCCCF helped me a lot with my transition and adjustments to college, showering me with love and care in times when I missed those from my friends and family back home. Bible-studies on Friday nights and during Sunday schools are always very thought-provoking, very in-depth at times but yet just the right level for me to reflect upon my spiritual life, and what my faith really means to me.

Coming to US for college is certainly a very eye-opening experience for me. There are such large cultural differences in such a racially diverse place, but we all learn to respect each other. College is also the beginning where one learns to manage her own life. There are so many decisions to make and so many paths to choose. In the midst of all these, I will always try my best to do everything which pleases God and glorifies Him.

Cross-Cultural Couples Ministry

Bob & Annie Disch

Twice each month on Sunday evenings, the Cross-Cultural Couples small group meets at the Rochester Chinese Christian Church-West. The group gathers together in Pastor Matt's office after the worship service, and prior to dinner being served. The RCCC-W ministries are conducted in the Henrietta Wesleyan Church building at 70 Thompson Road.

This ministry is new to RCCC, just beginning during the past year. Many brothers and sisters in RCCC are not aware that it is available. Bob and Annie Disch are presently leading the small group; which also includes James and Guilian Brancato, as well as David and Siang Grenn. The group is using material from the Family Life Ministries "HomeBuilders" series for the study.

Approximately three years ago, several cross-cultural couples began appearing with more frequency at RCCC worship services. By cross-cultural, it generally means a European-American husband and Chinese-American wife. The couples could actually be from any number of divergent backgrounds.

Marriage in present-day America is difficult to maintain even under the best circumstances. When the couple enters into the relationship with little in common culturally, success in marriage can be a huge challenge. Living in the United States, we are distracted by television, print media, advertising, shopping at the mall, and other quick fixes for happiness.

In today's society, we have seen increases in divorce, abortion, and out-of-wedlock births. Many parents are overworked on their jobs, with little time to spend at home with their families. Children watch MTV to find out how to live in the "real world". What is the world's solution for these problems? The husband and wife should each give 50/50! "You do your part, and I'll do mine".

Consider a marriage relationship where the husband was brought up watching or playing baseball or football constantly. There was little discipline in the home, and the diet consisted of pizza, hamburgers, French fries and soda pop. Growing up in a small city, very few knew the differences between Chinese, Japanese, Korean or other Asian nationalities. English was the only language spoken, except perhaps a European language used occasionally by a grandparent or uncle from the "old country".

The wife was raised in a small apartment in a large over-crowded city. Education was highly valued by the parents, who were strict disciplinarians. Diet consisted primarily of seafood and rice. There was no time for recreational entertainment, only extra study of educational materials. The most enjoyable time of the week occurred when the family gathered with uncles, aunts and cousins for dim sum on Sunday. English was only heard by a few in the huge metropolis.

What are the chances of a successful marriage between these individuals? The cultural and language differences are huge. If they behave as the world teaches; looking for their own happiness and fulfillment, they will grow apart. It is impossible for one to know when their mate has given a 50% effort to keep the relationship together. One partner will likely focus on weakness in the mate, and eventually be disappointed. Not surprising, considering that we are all sinners and have many faults. When one party feels wronged, or short-changed, they may even seek revenge.

A look at the scriptures can shed some light on God's plan for marriage. In a reply to a question by the Pharisees about divorce, Jesus (in Matthew 19:4-6) said *"Haven't you read, that at the beginning the Creator 'made them male and female', and said 'for this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh'? So they are no longer two, but one. Therefore what God has joined together, let man not separate."*

Paul, in Ephesians 5:25, wrote *"Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her."* It doesn't appear that Jesus or Paul spoke about giving 50% effort. A successful marriage requires 100% effort by both partners, all the time. Jesus Christ must be at the center of the relationship, or the partners will continue to be selfish and drift apart in their own worlds.

The HomeBuilders small group study utilizes material that spurs communication between husband and wife, emphasizes practical application, and provides for mutual trust and accountability. Couples are encouraged, as they realize others experience similar problems and issues. The study guides are all based on scripture, and can help reclaim troubled marriages, as well as providing a tool to reach out to non-Christians and unchurched couples.

Having a Christ-centered marriage will increase the joy that each partner has in the relationship. Diversity is one of the delights of a

cross-cultural marriage. Differences can enrich and broaden our lives. If God has called you into a cross-cultural marriage, He will use your partners' culture to be a balance and blessing to you. He gives good gifts and He knows the kind of person and the kind of culture that is a perfect complement to you. Trust Him to help you overcome the special challenges that are associated with such a marriage. Believe Him to make the two of you into a complementary team, *"so that with one heart and mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ"*. (Romans 15:6).

May the Lord continue to bless and strengthen all marriages in the RCCC congregation, cross cultural or not. There remains room for additional couples in the Sunday evening small group, as two or three additional pairs would fit in well.

Please pray about this opportunity to see if you and your spouse or fiancé are led to join.



Journey through the Wilderness

Jessica Kuo

Grad school has been a huge trial for me. Even though I go to the same school for grad as I did for undergrad, somehow I found grad school to be a lot more exhausting. I became so caught up in worldly worries that my whole life started revolving around school. "Will I pass this class? My listening test? Jury? My recital? etc." I found myself doing fewer devotionals and even spending less time with friends.

During this time I felt farther away from God than I had in a while. My prayers were becoming more of a wish list; asking God to help me pass whatever obstacle before me and just get through each

day. As I struggled with school and my lack of trust in God became more apparent, my sinful nature seemed to stare me straight in the face. I started becoming more depressed and I would often call home, crying on the phone and asking my mom if I should just give up music because the pressure was getting to me. I felt like I was living each day just to survive and everything seemed so pointless. My mom would always comfort me and tell me that I should persevere because she felt that God has always made my musical path very smooth. He always made it clear to me that I should go to Eastman for undergrad, and even though some of my friends didn't make it back into Eastman for grad school, God let me pass and get back in. So why do I still doubt that this path is for me? Why can't I trust God and believe that since He got me into Eastman, He'll help me get through as well?

When I went back home for Thanksgiving break, a guest pastor spoke on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. He preached about Moses and the Jewish people as they wandered in the desert for 40 years. He explained that their deliverance in Egypt was like our salvation, while wandering in the desert represented life's journey and the Promised Land stood for Heaven.

He explained how the wilderness reveals three things. First, it reveals our wicked hearts. Although the Jewish people were finally freed from slavery, they still complained while they wandered in the desert. "Did God save us to let us die in the desert?" they would ask. Even though God would provide them with food, they still continued to be skeptical and constantly lost their trust in Him.

However, just as much as the wilderness reveals how wicked our hearts are, it also shows just how holy God really is. As we realize just how sinful we are, the distance between us and God only grows larger, which brings us to the third thing that the wilderness reveals: How much we need our wonderful savior Jesus Christ.

As I heard this message, I realized how much it applies to my life right now. Just like the Jewish people, I am currently wandering in the desert. I am going through life's trials and temptations and I am having a hard time seeing the end of the journey. However, it is only through these trials that I have been reminded just how sinful I really am; how holy God is in comparison, and just how much I am in need of a Savior. Lord, You are so good. I thank You for sending Your Son to die for me on the cross. Amen.

From Double Team to Man-to-Man

Sam Ng

Dear RCCC:

Greetings from Baton Rouge. I just realized that the last time I put the letter “R” with 3 “C”s together was a long time ago. Still, you can be assured that at least two people here in the bayous are constantly thinking of you. Thanks to the editor’s invitation we are sending you a quick and short year-end update on our lives in the Deep South.

As I am writing this I am still ecstatic about the announcement that LSU has been given a spot at the BCS Championship game in January 2008. I never expected that I would get so excited about college football. After all, Eastman didn’t have a football team (they did have some big tenors that even the Big Ten-ers would covet), and UR didn’t have a real one either. Two years into our relocation to Baton Rouge we have finally made some progress in feeling excited about things that people here are excited about and oblivious to things that people are numb about. Still to work on: Cajun food, tailgating, big ditches, and dangerous drivers.

The biggest event for us this year was not the success of the LSU Tigers; nor was it my passing the mid-term review of my teaching position at LSU. It was not our migration from the Chinese to the English ministry in our church, nor was it Elias’s beginning of pre-school in September (even though this last one is still pretty big). It was the birth of Charis on 7/24. We thank the Lord for our lovely baby daughter, who is such a real bundle of joy. She cracks the prettiest smile every time I say “papa” to her.

Charis’s birth is important to us in many ways. It brings out the special qualities in Elias, who, like the mother, has the gift of compassion. He constantly watches out for his sister, helps get the things she needs (diapers, wipes, cloths), becomes really concerned when she cries, and gets agitated and upset when Charis sucks her thumb (because we tell him that he could get sick when he licks his filthy fingers like they’re popsicles). Charis’s birth also brought about the best time I have ever had with my parents. During the two months in summer when they were in town, I got to talk to them in ways that I had never been able to before. I sensed that they had finally managed to see me differently—not an immature rebel any more, but a father of two taking care of his family by the grace of God. And I realized I had come to see them

differently too; they were once parents of two young children, and they managed to raise them up and provided for them—no easy task.

Most importantly, Charis's birth brought Wendy and I even closer together. It was of course a big change with the first child, but the adjustment from one to two is no less a challenge. With Elias, Wendy and I were at least double teaming him. Now we're playing man-to-man defense, which is not only physically more taxing, but also allows much less time for the two defensive players to communicate with each other than when they were double teaming. The defensive players find themselves exhausted physically and mentally every night after a long day of exciting match-up with two offensive talents. It is during these times that they know they really need each other and have to work together as a team. Still, they get so much excitement and joy out of the match-up that they wouldn't mind defending in a power play situation one day, if God willing.

It sounds like a cliché, but parenthood does make me think about my relationship with God. I would not trade anything in this world for that sweet feeling when Charis cracks a smile at me or when Elias lovingly gives me a hug. There is nothing remotely close to satisfaction and fulfillment when Elias obeys my commands because he trusts that they are for his own good. In Elias's stubbornness and disobedience I also see my own transgressions against God. It seems to me that God gives us parenthood to help us know His heart more intimately and examine ourselves more closely. I pray that in raising my own children I will continue to try to be not just a better parent, but also a better child to my Father above.



AM I

Johnny Lynn

*I walk jocundly, toying with the idea
 That Life fares merrily to our family;
 Being able to purchase a ranch to fit our need
 And accommodate my father-in-law to live with us.
 Ever dawns on me
 The insidious plaques build up privily
 And gnaws my right coronary artery.
 Ostensibly mimicking a heart-burnt syndrome
 In reality a full blown heart attack on Sept 18.
 All at once was sent to the hospital for angioplasty
 In which it was found there were four blockades.
 I lay petrified, knowing the latent possibility
 That I might leave this earthly tent quietly
 Or else it might involve a more invasive surgery
 To do a "bridge over" operation.
 Nevertheless, instilled into my heart
 Was a peace that the world cannot give;
 It is tranquil and transcends the patent worries.
 No sooner had my chaotic mind been bombarded
 With hopeless dregs
 Than I was wheeled out of the operation room.
 With the placements of four stents in my artery.
 Immediately I could feel breathing more easilty
 Without a dull pressure sitting on my chest.
 Looking back -
 I thank the Lord to have my cardiologist
 Making such a prompt and decisive decision
 To keep my fist-sized heart from being further damaged;
 I thank the Lord that in every blade of grass
 There thrills the forces of His life,
 Patiently and persistently He allows my heart
 To continue pumping,
 Shouldn't I sing the songs of His glory!
 With this "new" new creation (a heart with four stents)
 Gingerly I pray how to number my days. Amen!*

My Urbana Experience

Michael Lin

First off, I want to say, thank you all for supporting me in prayer and financially! It has been a long road to Urbana '06 beginning just half a year earlier on the opposite end of the spectrum (not wanting to go) to where I am now. However, God had other plans and since He desired that I go, He brought me. I am grateful to each of you for partnering with me for the sake of the Gospel, and I would like to mention a couple of things that God showed me during the conference. I won't go into a play-by-play commentary since a lot happened and it is already becoming blurred in my mind, but, anyway, the important thing is where to go from here.

To begin, I have to say that Urbana was much different than I had expected. I thought it was going to be just about missions in the literal sense of getting people to go. I was wrong. In order to fully comprehend missions, and God's will, we needed to grow in our vision of God's plan, and along with it, to see a bigger God. If there is one thing I that I can say Urbana fully exceeded is providing a realistic, Christian worldview that I should presume to say is crucial to understanding the full Gospel. The days are evil indeed (Eph. 5:16)! But the good news is that the church is, through our Lord and Savior, is big enough to tackle these problems (Eph. 1:19).

Much of Urbana was purported on what I will term "comprehending the fullness of the body of Christ throughout the world". It is often said that seeing is believing. Well, in this case it is true. To worship and spend time with 20,000+ members of the body across the world is indeed a unique experience that can hardly be expressed through words. From the speakers to the multi-ethnic praise team, I was brought to the realization that I truly am living in a bubble. Not to mention that I came to terms with the fact that I am an ignorant subconscious racist (if I may be so blunt). To know the conditions of citizenship in the kingdom (Eph. 2:12) is to know the saving grace of the Lord. Obviously, it may take a lifetime to understand that, but I will take each lesson as one step in the right direction.

Why is this important, you might be asking? Eph. 1:9-10 says

"he made known to us the mystery of his will according to his good pleasure, which he purposed in Christ, to be put into effect when the times reach their fulfillment - to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ." God's will is to bring unity in His name. When we phrase it this way, we realize that it is impossible to do missions without also tackling issues of unity within the body of Christ.

"So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming." (Eph. 4:11-14)

A part of the body that does not recognize another is damaged! It is faulty. Therefore, we must *"make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."* (Eph. 4:3). If not just for our own sake, then for the sake of the Gospel. I should think that even many non-believers often times treat their own better. In any case, we have much work to do, but we also have a big God directing everything for us.

Now that you are all bored of listening to me, I'll start mentioning some of how this ties into my life. Well, the difficulty is that I am not sure yet of the avenues of grace by which God will have me work in, so I cannot give any specifics for the coming semester or anything like that. Nevertheless, I am attempting to become more and more flexible and silent to listen to His calling, rather than my own. This is one thing that I definitely have been convicted of. To serve where God does not will it is NOT worship! In fact, it is detrimental to one's physical and spiritual health.

There is one concrete thing I will mention. At Urbana, I had an opportunity to make a commitment to my campus and to God's plan for the world. I'll tell this flat out. I don't make commitments lightly. Probably you've never heard me make one before, but that's because I'm the type of person who tries not to do things half-heartedly. I decided at Urbana to seek out God's will for me

now (on campus), and I made a commitment to serve overseas for at least 1-3 years. For the former, I can only say that I will be satisfied wherever God places me. For the latter, I may seem presumptuous but I fully believe that it is the Lord's will for each and every one of us to know and take part in the global church at some point in our lives. Just as I have prayed (Eph. 6:18), and so God has placed it on my heart a desire to experience His glory, His greatness, and His plan to save the nations. If nothing else, please pray that I keep my commitment before God!

Thank you again for all your prayers and support. May God bless you as He has blessed me. *"Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, honor and glory forever and ever! Amen."* (1 Timothy 1:17)

