

Rochester Chinese Christian Church

ECHO

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Rochester Chinese Christian Church
羅城華人基督教會



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English Sunday Worship
9:30 am

中文主日學
上午九時三十分

English Sunday School
11:15 am

中文主日崇拜
上午十一時十五分

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

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

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Life Stone Wesleyan Church
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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





What A World!

Pastor Mitchell Herring

"The Lord said to him, go through the midst of the city, through the midst of Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who sigh and groan over all the abominations which are being committed in its midst..."

Ezekiel 9:4

☞ Within the past few days (as of this writing), two more states have fallen under the pronouncement of federal judges that "gay marriage" bans passed by voters in those states are "unconstitutional." Today there is news of more mistreatment of an American pastor of Iranian descent being held in Iran. And there is the tragedy of more than two hundred Christian schoolgirls kidnapped by Islamic terrorists in Nigeria; Rev. Kenneth Bae still being held in North Korea; a Sudanese woman of a Muslim father, raised as a Christian by her mother after said father left them when she was little, sentenced to death for marrying a Christian from the United States and having children. There is the ferry tragedy in South Korea; knifings and bombings in Taiwan and China, and continuing scandals, lawlessness, incompetence, and gridlock in Washington. The church is not immune either, whether from scandal, or ever increasing worldliness and shallowness.

For those who by grace have truly come to Christ and who seek God's kingdom, these things make us "*sigh and groan*." But this is nothing new. The prophet Ezekiel, writing near the time of the exile around 600 BC, likewise laments over ungodly and apostate Judah. God marks out those who sigh and groan over such evil for special grace, salvation, and protection from the coming judgment and disaster. To be sure, the U.S. is not OT Israel or Judah; it is more like the NT Roman Empire. But there is mourning and sighing among God's people there also (Mt. 5:4; Rom. 8:23).

Indeed, given the state of things, it is appropriate that we sigh and groan. If we don't, we better examine ourselves to see whose

side we are really on. But there is more we can do than that.

First, we can remember that God has not lost control, nor are His purposes frustrated. The nations before Him are like a drop from a bucket (Is. 40:15); He *"changes the times and the epochs,"* and *"establishes kings and removes kings"* (Dan. 2:21). From the Word of God we know that evil must run its course until harvest time (Mt. 13:24-30). In Matthew 24, the Lord tells us of the downward spiral when *"most people's love will grow cold"* (Mt. 24:12). Paul describes a similar scenario in 2 Timothy 3-4. So we are not unaware.

Second, remember who we are, as salt and light. Salt means clearly distinct in a good way, and light makes known by example and word. In confronting the immorality and evil of our culture, we don't just condemn. As a case in point, we don't need to get all bent out of shape over "gay marriage." They are not accountable to us. Yes we take our stand on the truth of Scripture. Marriage is what it is, and no human judge, law, or life-style changes that. Christ Himself clearly defined it (Mt. 19:4-6). But since that is the case, shouldn't we examine ourselves first, to seek the Lord's place in our marriages instead of acting like the world? With each state that goes down under some judge's pronouncement, it should be a new reminder to us to repent and re-dedicate ourselves to seek the Lord in our own families, love and honor our husbands and wives, lead our children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, and show what true marriage is. We expose the darkness, not just by rebuke, but also by shining the light in positive example (Eph. 5:6-14; Phil. 2:15).

Third, remember that we need to pray for our country, leaders, churches, and those around us. In ourselves we are just as needy as the next person, but saved and in process of transformation by God's mercy. Instead of being solely absorbed in our own little secular worlds and activities, we need to sigh and groan for the world around us, and cry out to God for it---for the pastors in Iran and North Korea, the Nigerian schoolgirls, the young mother in Sudan, and for other tragedy and suffering, including in our own midst---all the result of living in this "enemy occupied" and sin-cursed world.

Fourth, remember the love of Christ, our Good Shepherd, who knows His sheep by name, and who will never leave you nor forsake you. *"Having loved His own who were in the world, He*

loved them to the end" (John 13:1). He says to you and me, *"do not let your hearts be troubled; believe in God, believe also in me..."* (John 14:1). *"I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you"* (John 14:18). *"Just as the Father has loved me, I have also loved you; abide in my love"* (John 15:9).

Finally, remember that the eschatological harvest is on its way. Violence, ungodliness, deception, immorality, self-righteousness, and arrogance all flourish, but no one will get away with anything. We do not need to worry about ultimate justice. That is God's business, and He will see to it. In His justice, *"what goes around, comes around."* At the end-time *"come around,"* all will be made right. But at the same time our desire is for their repentance and salvation and share in the eternal kingdom of God, and of life to come. So we share the gospel in the love of Christ, clearly and with conviction, but also with *"gentleness and reverence"* (1 Pt. 3:15).

Yes, *what a world!* But this is the world that God loved, and to which Christ came, to seek, save, and give Himself to redeem.☺



The Unanswered Question

Minister David Doty

"We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing."

2 Thessalonians 1:3 (ESV)

✞ This is my first article for ECHO and I am honored to have been invited to contribute. At the time of writing, it has been six months since I began serving as the “English Minister,” or “Minister to the English Congregation” at RCCC. I thank the Lord for this opportunity to serve him and you in this role.

Since the days when we were first getting introduced, a question has been raised and remains unanswered, which I would like to address, concerning the English-speaking congregation, or the English ministry at RCCC. Even if you do not primarily participate in the English congregation, the following is still relevant for all interested in the well-being of RCCC.

The question is what would draw outsiders to join and participate in the English ministry of RCCC? The question arises partly because of the many other English-speaking congregations in the area. With so many choices, why would one choose to attend RCCC English rather than another English-speaking church? We might invite our friends to church, but if they are not of Chinese heritage, the fear is that they would feel uncomfortable and put-off. And the question of what would draw outsiders to the RCCC English also finds relevance today with the reality of the need for more co-workers within the English ministry. The continuation of effective ministries and programs in the church requires a certain supply of co-worker manpower. Yet, in recent times, the English ministry in particular has experienced a number of transitions. Thus, the English ministry has real need for additional co-workers.

In the brief time I have been at RCCC, I have certainly not learned all there is to know about the church and its history. I have not yet visited everyone presently involved in the English congregation, which I should like to do, though the English congregation is, admittedly, a little difficult to delineate. I have a hunch, however, that we already have the answer to the question

of what would draw outsiders to join and get plugged-in to the English ministry of RCCC. You know what it is?

The answer is you.

What? Not Jesus? Let me unpack and explain what I mean.

It's true. The world needs Jesus. Certainly any Christian church worth its salt must have Jesus. Not a sentimental Jesus. Not a wishy-washy Jesus. But the risen Lord, full of grace and truth. Without Jesus, we have no church. Without Jesus we have a social club at best and a malicious cult at worst. But consider Paul's thanksgiving for the believers in Thessalonica:

"We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ" (1Thess. 1:2–3 ESV).

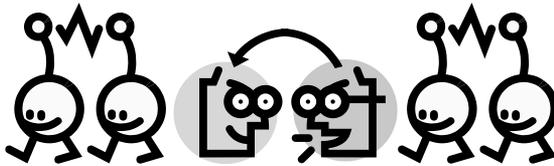
As a newly planted church, Paul thanked God to see the church thriving with faith, love, and hope in Jesus Christ. Paul knew they had Jesus because the Holy Spirit had given the Thessalonians full conviction [of faith] (verse 5). This faith was visible in their turning *"to God from idols to serve the living and true God"* (verse 9). Whatever lesser things they had worshipped before no longer held any interest for them. They had been transformed by the Lord!

But what happened after some time had passed? The church was no longer a church-plant, just as RCCC is no longer a church-plant. Would Paul, speaking for Christ as his apostle, still continue to give thanks to God for the Thessalonians? In his second letter to the Thessalonians, Paul wrote:

"We ought always to give thanks to God for you, brothers, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of every one of you for one another is increasing" (2 Thess. 1:3 ESV).

In other words, it was right for Paul (and company) to continue giving thanks to God for the church in Thessalonica because two important things were happening: First, the Thessalonians' faith [in Christ] was growing abundantly. And secondly, this abundant growth of faith was visible in the increasing love that they had for one another as a community.

What does a loving community look like? Surely people who truly love each other love to get together. They love to spend time together and fellowship with one another. They care for one another and hold each other accountable. They love to serve together. They provide for the needs of those in their community. And in dependence upon the Lord, they pray for one another. If anyone wrongs another, they forgive and repent. And as they grow together in faith and understanding of God's word, they speak the truth to one another in love. I am sure there are more things we could add to this list.



Of course, when Paul addresses the Thessalonians, he uses the plural “you” in the original Greek, besides referring to them in the plural “brothers.” It is worth noting this nuance as it gets us back to our original question. What is the draw for outsiders to RCCC-English? It is you, or rather you all, when we, not only individually, but more importantly as a community, are manifestly and abundantly growing in faith in Jesus Christ, and living out our faith in our increasing love for one another.

In considering the possible attraction RCCC-English might hold for outsiders, we might also add that the congregation is predominantly of Chinese heritage or of Asian heritage more generally. In a conversation about outreach we could talk about concepts of hyper-segmentation and strategic marketing, but these are really less important considerations. Most importantly, whether or not the Lord chooses to add to our number, we must strive to be a community of faith in Christ and love for one another, because of the eternal hope laid up for us in Jesus Christ our Lord. May we become such a community, more and more. ☺

You Are What You Eat

Terry Rogelstad

☞ At some point in life, we come to the realization that it takes intentional effort to stay fit and healthy. (For you young readers who spring out of bed each morning, gobble down vast amounts of food indiscriminately and yet remain trim and energetic, don't stop reading because you think this doesn't apply to you. But your day is coming. What we eat, how much we eat, how much we exercise and rest has a dramatic effect on the quality of our lives.

We learn that if we eat certain foods we get indigestion. Other things disrupt our sleep or otherwise make us uncomfortable. If we ignore good health habits long enough we get diseases such as diabetes and heart attacks. And if it gets to that point, we live out our final days unable to live a life of full activity. So we learn to change our habits. We discipline our desires and we become stronger in mind and body. We learn that we are what we eat.

The same principle applies to our spiritual life. Your mind is what you think. Your thought patterns are not random notions. You control your thoughts. So what is it that you think about? Your spirit develops according to what you choose to think about. So if you want to become the person God wants you to become, you need to think about things that encourage that spirit in you.

Paul instructs in Philippians 4:8 *“Finally, brethren, whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honest, whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things.”* But, trying to do that can be a real challenge in today's world. We live in an environment dominated by media. We have TV, the internet, radio, advertisements and a multitude of other means bombarding us with messages. Those messages fill our mind all day long. Those are the things we are thinking about. Those are things that can shape what our minds, our spirits, become.

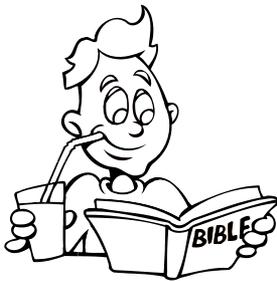
In the course of my work, I go to meetings. At these meetings there are refreshments, which are mostly cookies and soft drinks, lots of sugar. Tasty things, which if taken in excess, can cause health problems. They are just sitting there on the table, begging for me to reach out and take one, or maybe two or three.

Somebody said one time, *“a moment on the lips, a lifetime on the hips.”*

So it is with ideas. We are immersed in a sea of messages all day long. If we are undisciplined, we can take these ideas into our mind, our soul, indiscriminately. And then they lie there, taking up space, growing in influence, festering. They have the potential to create spiritual disease by changing the way we think.

Just as with the way we manage our physical existence, so must we manage our spiritual existence. We need to take charge of what we eat spiritually. We must exercise our minds to ensure that our thoughts are effective and ordered.

Given that you are reading this publication, you are probably already doing the basics. Each day you take in good spiritual food in Bible study and devotional reading. You exercise your spirit in discussions with Christian brothers and sisters. You strengthen your relationship with God in frequent prayer. You open your heart to the influence of the Holy Spirit as God wills.



There are several practical things that we can do to enhance our exercise of discipline of mind and spirit. The most important is to put up a barrier between the influences of the world and your mind and spirit. The media is a distinguishing aspect of the modern world. And it is clear that the media is one of the best tools Satan has for selling his goods.

And the public (apparently in all the nations) can't get enough of it. Our children are in particular danger from the influence of the media. The simplest thing we can do is simply don't let it in our house. You may have to go out into the world every day, and be exposed to those messages there, but you do not have to allow it in your home.

If you haven't done it already, shut off the cable TV. It is amazing to me that there can be hundreds of channels, yet there is nothing fit to watch. Even after avoiding what is overtly vulgar and pornographic, the basic message in most of the programming is harmful to your spirit. The messages are about self-gratification, envy, revenge, lust, rebellion, the occult and every other thing

generations of the past were taught specifically are bad. Instead of being taught to avoid the Seven Deadly Sins, we are told to celebrate them.

Just as we must choose what we eat wisely, we must choose the media we consume wisely. Shut off the flow of the profane into your home. But it is true that in this modern world we do need some information services and entertainment. I've found that the internet can be a useful tool. The internet can also be an endless source of evil influence. But there you can choose what influences to which you expose your mind. The cable TV viewer doesn't have much control over what programming is available.

On the internet you can choose the source of your news reports and avoid the liberal editorial slant of the major news networks. There are dozens of good news providers. The one I like the best is World Net Daily, world news from a Christian perspective. There are several entertainment providers (both free and paid) where you can choose what programming you and your family watch. There is high quality, wholesome entertainment available, if you look for it.

When it comes to eating, one of my weaknesses is snacks. I'm very likely during a moment of rest or distraction to stick whatever is conveniently at hand into my mouth. I've found that this one thing is source of several extra pounds over the course of a year. Likewise, it has been a habit in the past that when I'm tired and want to take rest, I plop down in the easy chair and turn on the TV, and the messages of greed, fornication, violence and revenge start flowing into my unguarded mind. Lately I've switched to watching Bible studies and historical documentaries for my idle viewing. (There are hundreds or perhaps thousands, in both English and Chinese.) I still get a break. The change of pace is a rest. The time is well spent. Most importantly though, is that I find that the thoughts that fill my mind later are different. I'm much more likely to do what Paul advised in Philippians if I've listened to a Bible study about Genesis than if I had watched a violent crime drama on TV.

While this discussion has focused on modern electronic media, a good book is still a very good companion for quiet moments. And these are cheaper and more plentiful than ever before as well. So as you discipline your body with good, nourishing food and

exercise, don't forget to do the same for your mind and spirit. You are what you eat, body and soul. ☸

Three Lessons

(Adapted from my Graduation speech)

Janus Chow

☸ This was part of my Graduation night sharing where I wanted to offer the Youth Group a few lessons that I had learned growing up and observing before I left. So this will be mainly directed at them, but I hope that you also might be able to get something out of it.

The first lesson is that people don't last. Now this may sound pretty cynical, and that would make sense coming from me, but I promise it gets better. When I was younger in this church, we had this pastor called Pastor Tang, who is no longer here. We also had another pastor called Minister Wei Fung, who is also no longer here. But God has blessed us and now we have three totally different people, Pastor Herring, Pastor Ho, and Minister Doty. You see, people don't last. We saw something similar in the Youth Group. When I came into the Youth Group, we had five leaders: Dave Bartkowski, Maize Tai, Lawrence Tai, Eric Hui, and Jack Yu. But then Dave went to Browncroft, Maize had a baby, Jeremy came, Jack got a job at Bose, Eric got married, and then Jeremy left. And the only one left is Lawrence (who is an awesome person for actually staying with us the whole time. Seriously, I appreciate him). People don't last. Also, when one comes into the Youth Group, there are all the old seniors that we all look up to. Eventually they all graduate. They all go on their own journey, and a new generation comes and takes their place. People don't last. But the thing is that, God lasts. He is the one constant, and he has His plan. But another thing to take away is that we can't dwell on the past. We can't wish that Dan Herring would come back and play guitar, or for someone else to because they did something really well. That's not the right attitude to have. Instead, we should strive to be the type of person you wish there was. You see a void? Fill it. Be the difference, don't just complain.

The second lesson is about humility. I would say that humility is the best and most desirable trait to have. Everyone knows what it

is, but it's hard to internalize. There is a quote by CS Lewis, "*True Humility is not thinking less of yourself, its thinking of yourself less*" which I think is a great summary. God's desire is for us to be humble and he tells us multiple times; don't be prideful, don't boast, don't judge, and consider others better than yourself. The reason I think humility is important is because when you are humble, it leads you to self-reflect. The self-reflection leads to vulnerability. When you are vulnerable, that is when God can speak to you most clearly, and that's when you can open yourself and pour out yourself to others. This leads to true fellowship, which we all should strive to do as the family of Christ. This fellowship, when we resolve not to judge each other for our shortcomings, this humility should lead us to serve one another. When we serve one another in this way, we no longer think that certain jobs or tasks are "*not for me*". Putting away chairs is not just for the young adults. Teaching children's Sunday school is not just for the moms whose kids have already grown up. We should serve with an open heart at whatever task God has led us to do.

Last Point. Change. I hate change, but change is good. It's a fact of life that everything will and must change. Everything will tend towards disorder, or maximum entropy. Because of this disorder, we have to learn to adapt and act accordingly. When we learn to act and adapt, that is when we grow, and when you grow, that is how you live. In our lives, we all have our own comfort zones and they're really nice. But it's not really a good thing. Change gives us the opportunity to learn new things, to do new things, and to share the gospel. Obviously, lots of this will not be in our comfort zone, and that is how it should be. Change is good and it's a tool used by God to get us on our way. ☞



A Quiet Gentleman, A Giant in Christ – A Tribute to Brian Glass

By Snow 白雪



“So when you give to the needy, do not announce it with trumpets, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and on the streets, to be honored by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you give to the needy, do not let your left hand know what your right hand is doing, so that your giving may be in secret. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.”

Matthew 6:2

☞ When I opened my company’s E-mail while on the business trip January 30, I saw the news that Brian Glass, the colleague whom I worked with, had suddenly passed away due to flu, leaving a wife and an adopted daughter of 12 years old. I was broken down with tears. How could this happen? I could still picture him sitting at the corner of the table every Thursday lunch time for Bible study. He was only in his 50s and was such a healthy man. How could this happen to him? I had so many unanswered questions but in my spirit, I knew that I should not ask why, I should ask what I should learn from it.

At the memorial services, numerous people went up to offer Brian their heart felt homages.

A group of Rwandan refugees paid tribute to him with a song. Later we learned he was the treasurer for the Foundation of Hope ministries which made it possible for those Rwandan refugees to come to America.

We learned that while at a conference in Chicago, he invited two homeless people to have lunch with him.

We also learned that he shared his faith with a man over several months through the NPR website and in the end; this man commented that Brian was a good man, a genuine Christian.

Brian and his wife adopted Nina four year ago. One day at the dinner table, Brian thanked God for the precious gift (Nina) that God has provided to him. Overcome with emotion, Nina had to excuse herself and retrieve to her private quarter. Later, she told

Brian that she had never heard such praise before. She always felt she was the one that no one wanted, not by her foster parents, not even by her own birth parents.

As the tributes went on, Brian, the quiet gentleman, became a giant in front of me.

I learned from Brian to always smile and be gentle to others, significant or not. I learned from Brian to give to the needy in secret. I shall always remember him, wherever I will be, to put the lamp on the table, and to let others see the beauty of Christ. As a good and faithful servant, his job was well done on earth and now he is in heaven with our Lord.

He is the most blessed one among us all.

Revelation 21:4 – *“There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.”* ☞

