

# 編者的話

年初時, 牧師宣布今年教會全年的主題是「經歷禱告的大能」。轉眼間大半年已過, 不知道弟兄姊妹回顧過去十個月, 是否能夠同心齊聲的說, 「我確實經歷了禱告的大能！」

七月份的退修會上, 中文堂的劉君健牧師, 以及英文堂的Rev. Paul Wolfe的主日證道都再次提醒我們, 合神心意的禱告是放下自己, 「願你的旨意成就」的禱告, 並且在禱告中表達我們對神的ACTS: A (adoration頌讚), C (confession認罪), T (thanksgiving感恩), S (supplication祈求)。除此之外, 我們也要操練隨時隨地的禱告 (pray constantly), 持續不斷地禱告 (pray continually), 以及多方全面性的禱告 (pray comprehensively), 亦即以弗所書 6: 18 所說的, 「靠著聖靈, 隨時多方禱告祈求, 並要在此警醒不倦, 為眾聖徒祈求。」隨時隨地的禱告, 就是說我們不是只在靈修時禱告, 而是一天中不斷的與神交通, 正如我們一直不間斷的在呼吸。持續不斷地禱告, 就是說我們的禱告不在乎一天一個月或是一年, 而是一生之久, 即使不見果效, 仍然堅持不懈。最後, 我們的禱告必須是全面性的, 意即我們不僅為自己也為眾聖徒禱告, 不僅為身邊的也為遠方的禱告, 如此全方位的禱告, 更能反映出肢體之間的彼此擔當。

你願意仔細聆聽你禱告的內容嗎? 你是否只是將一件又一件的困難帶到神面前, 請祂解決? 還是利用這段時間向神傾心吐意, 感謝祂已賜你的那份最大的禮物—白白的救恩?

本期會刊有非常豐富的內容, 包括三十五周年的慶典記錄, 弟兄姐妹的受洗見證, 生命見證, 還有一些不同風格的分享與討論。願弟兄姐妹從肢體的見證中, 看到神在各人生命中的作為, 歸榮耀給祂!

# 牧羊人，你所注目的是誰呢？

陳明志

信主十五年來，老實說，這一路走來不容易，摔過很多跤。上帝用我想不到的方式管教我，也讓我看到自己的罪，我的悖逆不順服跟我的倔強。祂也給我恩典，在自己的過犯中覺醒，再次歸向祂。讓我這不成器，卑微得不得了器皿，可以在祂的教會中服侍祂並祂的百姓。

尤其感恩的是，在我作為基督徒成長的每一個階段，上帝都在我身邊擺下不同的主內弟兄姐妹，幫助我成長。雖然這些基督徒自己也不完全，因他們也是罪人，但是上帝總是在我人生的每一個點，在我身邊放下在當時適合幫助我的人。以我倔強，愛鑽牛角尖的個性而言，相信他們當時對我應該要很有耐心吧。我很感謝神，因為他們總是願意在那裡做我隨時的幫助，對我不厭其煩，跟我談話，與我一同度過生命中困難的那些時刻。

『牧養羊群』不是件容易的事。做牧者的，不能只是嘴巴上做教導而已，也需要常常以身作則，身體力行，按照聖經教導的真理活出基督的生命來，給軟弱的教會肢體做榜樣。對於也是罪人的我們，這實在不是一件容易的事，因為我們也可能會讓軟弱的肢體跌倒。

做牧者的，需要常常眼目注視上帝，而非自己的能力。因為我們在事工中所放下的心血，精力，甚至感情，都不一定會有現時的成果與回報。我們的苦口婆心，徹夜長談，都不一定會帶來羊群立即的改變。在面對所牧養的對象一意孤行，偏行己路的時候，我們會很失望，痛心，難過。面對如此，我們甚至會很無奈，很無力，很沮喪，恨鐵不成鋼。這是正常的，因為他們是主內的家人，我們的主內手足，我們的弟兄姐妹。在教會生活中，我們也放了感情在裡面。

感謝神！上帝就如此讓我們知道，我們不是上帝。在經歷過我們的努力之後，我們做了當做的，該說的，就需要把他們交託給上帝。他們若是上帝的百姓，上帝祂會掌權。祂會根據每個人的不同情況而給予管教。祂也給他們恩典，即便在他們的悖逆不順服中也給他們恩典，愛他們到底，保守他們的信心到底。

我們人有限，我們看不到身後的事情。上帝或許就只是將這些羊放在我們的生命中一年，兩年，或幾年的時間。他們有如匆匆過客，稍作停留，不久就離開了。在牧養弟兄姐妹的過程中，我常常思考的，是我自己的責任。我是否有按照上帝的心意，做到我該做的，來牧養這些上帝所交託的羊。如果

我已做了我該做的，即便在面對羊群的偏行己路的情況下，我也必須堅信，上帝有祂美好的旨意在每一隻祂的羊的身上。他們以後會如何，我們不一定會看得到。這也是作為牧者信心的功課，相信這些走偏的羊，如果是上帝的揀選，祂必保守他們的信心到底。

在開始學習服侍牧養羊群之後，我也開始漸漸體會使徒保羅的心。他面對的比我們更加難了不知多少倍。教會外有迫害，內有紛爭；各地教會建立不久，他要面對並處理信仰教義的問題；面對教會的幼稚，紛爭，他要和解，他要教導；教會中有罪的問題，他要教導處理；其他使徒的信仰與行為不一，他要面對。保羅雖然有權要求以福音養生，但他餐風露宿，沒有溫飽，要自己織帳篷養活自己。他沒有妻室，沒有兒女，孤獨一人。但是他把這些教會，這些羊群，看作是他的兒女，他是他們的父親，這樣關心，這樣教導，這樣鞭策，這樣疼惜，這樣管教責備。相信他也一樣經歷過各種複雜的心情：失望，痛心，難過，無奈，無力，沮喪，恨鐵不成鋼。

保羅的牧羊人生活，就是我們的寫照，我們的榜樣。使他能夠盡忠職守，信心不變的是什麼呢？是他倚靠自己的能力嗎？是他的聰明才智嗎？都不是，而是他在基督裡而有的盼望。如果我們不相信上帝在我們的牧養事工中掌權，我們所做的不但不能讓我們有盼望跟堅忍的毅力，反而會使我們失望，沮喪，無奈，無力。

牧羊人，你所注目的是誰呢？你的信心對象是誰呢？

# 「恩典、更新、榮耀」- 記教會三十五週年感恩慶典

陳曉雲

當摩西帶領以色列人離開埃及之後，上帝為他們定下了不同的節期，使以色列人能紀念耶和華上帝對他們拯救，並使那些未曾經歷過這段歷史的後代子孫們不會忘記耶和華的大能及他的恩惠。因著同樣的原因，我們也決定在今年特別以一連串的感恩活動來慶祝北維州華人基督教會成立三十五週年，希望能藉由這樣的慶典來紀念上帝從教會成立之初直到今日信實的引導，頌讚基督的大能及聖靈的更新，使教會在三十五年中雖經風雨卻仍能持守真道為主繼續爭戰。此外，也希望藉著對教會歷史的感恩及回顧，讓未曾經歷過這段歷史的弟兄姐妹也能一覽神在教會歷史中的奇妙作為，使全教會能同心獻上感恩，同心領受基督的託付，同心建造合神心意的教會。因此，我們特別為這次北維州華人基督教會的三十五週年慶典定下「恩典、更新、榮耀」這個主題，深願教會能在恩典及更新中看到神得勝教會的榮耀。

## 感恩見證會

在七月二十六晚上舉行的三十五週年感恩見證會是對教會歷史的回顧，並透過弟兄姐妹的見證來數算神的恩典，彰顯基督的大能。蔡牧師在一開始時以「恩典、更新、榮耀」為題，從羅馬書5:8, 11:36及以弗所書2:3,4; 1:10來闡明此次三十五週年慶的意義，提醒弟兄姐妹教會是在神的大愛、基督的救贖及聖靈的更新中被建造，因著基督的榮耀，教會是榮耀的教會，而教會從過去到現在到未來都只有一個目的，就是將榮耀歸主基督，這才是我們慶祝北維州教會成立三十五週年的真正目的。之後，見證會就依照教會歷史分成三個階段來進行。每一階段有牧者長老及參與那階段歷史的弟兄姐妹的見證分享。蒙神的恩典，這次的慶典能邀請到邱東陽牧師和師母遠從西雅圖來參與盛會一同感恩。邱牧師本著其一向溫煦的長者風範，帶我們一同經歷他剛開始建立教會的信心之路。他特別強調教會不屬於他，不屬於任何人，乃是單單屬耶穌基督，一切的榮耀都歸給主基督，我們都是神所揀選使用的僕人，為要建立屬耶穌基督的教會。邱牧師也為現任的蔡牧師及長老們禱告祝福，神的僕人一代傳承一代。

聚會中老會友與新會友齊聚一堂，在主裡的相聚美好無比。主恩基督教會(我們的姐妹教會)的陳昌陸長老夫婦及張維漢長老夫婦特別來參加這個感恩聚會，並分享了他們在北維州華人基督教會的一段歷史及他們個人的見證。而許多不克前來的老會友，包括主恩基督教會的潘元裕長老夫婦，居住西雅

圖的陳淦生夫婦，和在中國宣教的孟天夫婦也特別錄製了短片，捎來他們在主裡的問候以及對教會的回顧及感恩。而特地從紐約趕來參加這次盛會的谷定一、吳杰美夫婦，更勾起了許多看著他們在教會成長結婚的美好回憶，杰美姐妹特別預備了一首詩歌，以她優美清亮的歌聲獻上對神的讚美。

除了新舊會友的見證分享以外，我們也特別製作了三段回顧教會歷史的短片。在放映過程中，一個個珍貴的鏡頭，一件件事工的敘述真實地記錄了教會的成長，也將大家帶進了歷史的軌道，在短短的幾分鐘內將教會三十五年來的歷史走了一遍，對在教會二十年以上的弟兄姐妹來說是一個溫馨的回顧，而對近年來才加入教會的弟兄姐妹來說則是對教會歷史的初識。但不論是回顧或初識，教會這個大家庭在這樣的一個感恩聚會中一起領受神在這個家中的奇妙恩典，經歷神「以恩典為年歲的冠冕，你的路徑都滴下脂油。」(詩篇65:11)的信實，並滿滿地被基督的愛所激勵!

在聚會中也穿插了一些有趣的「猜猜我是誰」的遊戲，從教會的一些古老相片中來猜猜看相片中的人物是誰。當那些年輕的面貌被認出來時，不得不讓人感嘆歲月不饒人，時間雖改變了人的外貌，但聖靈同時也改變了我們的生命，使我們心意更新而變化，更多地認識主。

聚會最後大家起立以中英文合唱詩歌「你真偉大」，發自弟兄姐妹內心的敬拜及讚美將整個的聚會帶入高潮。是的，我們的神何等偉大，基督的教會何等榮耀，我們這些蒙召的人在基督裡的恩召又是何等浩大，在歷史的洪流中我們看到人的渺小與短暫，但卻經歷到神的偉大與永恆。

## 感恩主日崇拜

這次三十五週年的感恩主日崇拜，也再次讓我們經歷到我們的神是垂聽禱告的神。在安排這個特別的主日崇拜時，我們希望Springfield分會的弟兄姐妹也能到母會來，一起參加這次深具意義的感恩主日崇拜，因此，我們做了一個嶄新的嘗試，不同於以往的中英聯合崇拜，而是母會國語堂和分會的聯合崇拜。如此一來，所有的弟兄姐妹都在這個特別的主日聚集一堂共同敬拜神。但如此做最大的挑戰就是停車問題，因為教會的停車位有限。除了鼓勵弟兄姐妹儘量共乘一車外，也特別安排同工負責指揮停車，但最重要的是當天要有好天氣，我們擬定的停車計劃才能順利進行。同工們為此事不斷向神禱告祈求，希望主日早晨不要下雨，因為天氣預報是有下雨的可能。感謝神的恩典，賜給我們七月裡難得的一個微風輕拂的早晨，弟兄姐妹在指揮停車的同工幫助下，停車進行的井然有序，大家歡歡喜喜地來到聖殿敬拜神，將榮耀歸神!

為紀念這一感恩的主日，我們特別邀請了邱牧師在廣東堂及國語堂講道，而曾任教會青年團契同工及講道翻譯繼而在Manassas分會牧會的李紹沅牧師則在

英文堂講道。相信兩位曾經在教會牧養的牧師再次回來講道,不管是對牧師或是對弟兄姐妹都有很深的意義。邱牧師在開始講道前特別提到,當年教會剛開始在現址舉行主日崇拜時,他每週日都摸著聖殿中一排排的座位禱告,求神使每一排座位都坐滿人,而今天他看到聖殿坐滿了人,心中充滿了對神的感恩及讚美!

感恩主日崇拜中也有友愛團契及詩班的獻詩,並特別請余慶熙長老對教會的歷史做一個簡短的回顧,再一次讓弟兄姐妹對教會的歷史有一番認識,並在歷史中見證神的大能。

## 感恩餐會

感恩主日崇拜之後,教會在會賓樓安排了感恩餐會。在兒童詩班、英文堂及廣東堂弟兄姐妹的獻詩中感恩餐會充滿了歡樂的讚美。老朋友及弟兄姐妹們歡聚一堂,來自遠方的與近處的齊聚一起,喜樂洋溢於每個人的心中。這次餐會嘉賓雲集,除了邱牧師、師母和李牧師、師母外,還有楊敦興牧師、師母,王志勇牧師、師母,主恩基督教會的陳昌陸長老及在教會草創時期幫助教會建立兒童主日學的David及Beth夫婦和一直以來對北維州華人基督教會的事工及牧師們全力支持的Harvester長老教會的Ron Bossom牧師、師母, Ron Bossom牧師更在餐會中分享了一段信息來鼓勵大家。他特別提到北維州華人教會不是在Falls Church,也不是在Springfield,而是在我們這些教會弟兄姐妹聚集的地方,因為神對教會的心意從來就不是在教會的建築物,乃是在教會中屬神的人。所以教會的目標不在於建造更大更好的建築物,而是在如何建造弟兄姐妹的生命。每位出席的嘉賓也都致詞祝賀,教會更在這個深具意義的聚會中頒發紀念品,給在近年內榮退的周賢德長老及陳祖舜長老,感謝他們多年來在長老的職份上忠心的服事。之後有青少年自編的舞蹈演出,餐會最後在王志勇牧師的禱告祝福及與嘉賓的合影中結束。教會並預備了紀念書籤及紀念筆送給與會的來賓。

這次的感恩餐會原本預計來賓及弟兄姐妹最多會有三百人出席,但沒想到當天參加的人數遠超過三百人,餐館臨時加桌子,但由於人數實在太多,食物供應不及,拿取食物也耗時太長,以致於整個餐會的時間也過長,很多人都提前離開,這是美中不足的地方,有待加強及改進。

三十五週年的感恩活動在與遠方友人道珍重聲中落幕,在離開會賓樓的路上,天空開始飄下細雨,神的恩典在過去,在現在,在未來都是新的。

在這次三十五週年的活動籌劃及執行過程中雖然有許多不如人意的地方,也有許多細節需要改進,但彌足珍貴的是在這過程中,許多弟兄姐妹擺上他們的時間和恩賜,大家分工合作,同心配搭,在最細小的環節上都有人忠心地做好他們份內的工作。弟兄姐妹這樣為主擺上忠心服事,成為我們對神恩典的回應,

使教會的主——耶穌基督得著榮耀。

# 關於耶穌受魔鬼試探問題的討論

林克光

最近泰森團契學習路加福音第四章，就關於耶穌受魔鬼試探的問題，用了兩次查經時間進行比較廣泛深入的討論。大家敞開思想，暢所欲言，圍繞主題，提出許多具體問題，熱烈討論，對一些不明確或有爭議的問題，通過討論初步得到澄清，有較大的收穫。□□首先，有人提出耶穌是神的兒子，神比魔鬼大，耶穌不應該接受魔鬼的試探。是的，神是不能被魔鬼試探。「因為神不能被惡試探。」（雅各書1：13）但是聖子降世為人，祂既有完全的神性，又有完全的人性，祂為了與人認同，「反倒虛己，取了奴僕的形象，成為人的樣式」（腓立比書2：7），通常是以人性出現，暫時隱藏其神性，只在必要時才顯露其神性。祂是以末後的亞當，人的代表接受魔鬼試探的，而不是以神的兒子的身份受試探。「所以他凡事該與他弟兄相同，為要在神的事上，成為慈悲忠信的大祭司，為百姓的罪獻上挽回祭，他既然被試探而受苦，就能搭救被試探的人。」（希伯來書2：17-18）「因為我們的大祭司，並非不能體恤我們的軟弱，他也凡事受過試探，與我們一樣，只是他沒有犯罪。」（希伯來書4：15）可見耶穌是為我們受試探的，是神的計劃，是聖靈主動將他引到曠野去受魔鬼試探的。

有人提問：魔鬼的試探是不是上帝所允許的？當然是，因為上帝不僅創造一切，而且掌管護理一切。「兩個麻雀不是賣一分銀子麼？若是你們的父不允許，一個也不能掉在地上。就是你們的頭髮，也都數過了。」（馬太福音10:29-30）何況是魔鬼試探神按照自己的形象所創造尊貴的人呢！約伯記就是一個典型的例子，神允許撒旦試探約伯，但嚴格限制它試探的程度，不可超越。第一次神對撒旦說：「凡他所有的，都在你手中，只是不可加害於他。」（約伯記1：12）於是在一天之內，約伯所有的牲口全被擄去，僕人被殺，房屋倒塌，全部兒女死光，變成一無所有，但他仍持守純正，敬畏神。神允許撒旦試探約伯說：他在你手中，「只要存留他的性命」（約伯記2：6），可見撒旦試探約伯是經神允許的，並限制它的試探所能達到的程度，整個過程都在神的掌控之下。神說：「你們所遇見的試探，無非是人所能受的，神是信實的，必不叫你們受試探過於所能受的，在受試探的時候，總要給你們開一條出路，叫你們能忍受得住。」（哥林多前書10：13）

接著有人提出：神是無所不能的，為什麼不把撒旦消滅掉，免得它到處試探禍害人？撒旦的命運完全掌握在神手中，神早已宣判它死刑。創世記3：16就對引誘亞當夏娃犯罪的撒旦的化身蛇宣告：「女人的後裔要傷你的頭，你要傷他的腳跟。」就是說將來你要把耶穌釘在十字架上，耶穌再來時



要致你於死地。啟示錄也宣告撒旦最終要「扔在硫磺火湖里」，「晝夜受痛苦，直到永永遠遠」（啟示錄20：10）。但是在耶穌再來之前，神仍允許撒旦存在，並允許它試探人，這必有神的美意。神藉撒旦的試探，使人從苦難中受到熬煉，去除雜質，更加認識神，信靠神，順服神。約伯歷經試探，受盡苦難的煎熬，結果他說：「我從前風聞有你，現在親眼看見你。」（約伯記42：5）耶穌「他雖然為兒子，還是因所受的苦難學了順從」（希伯來書5：8）。「你們要用堅固的信心抵擋牠，因為知道你們在世上的眾弟兄也是經歷這樣的苦難。那賜諸般恩典的神曾在基督裡召你們，得享祂永遠的榮耀，等你們暫受苦難之後，必要親自成全你們，堅固你們，賜力量給你們。」（彼得前書5：9-10）神有祂的時間表，神的救贖有通盤的計劃，撒旦是個反面教員，神可以利用它達到自己的目的，在耶穌再來之前，撒旦仍有存在的必要，人們總是太性急，恨不得馬上消滅撒旦，而跑到神計劃的前面去，這是不對的。

又有人據此提問，受魔鬼試探是好事還是壞事？這要看你是怎樣對待試探的，如果你在真道上站立得住，信靠神戰勝試探，那是大好事；但如果隨從「忍受試探的人是有福的，因為他們經過試驗以後，必得生命的冠冕，這是主應許給那些愛他的人的。……但各人被試探，乃是被自己的私慾牽引誘惑的，私慾既懷了胎就生出罪來，罪既成長，就生出死來。」（雅各書1：12-15）「主知道搭救敬虔的人脫離試探，把不義的人留在刑罰之下，等候審判的日子。」（彼得後書2：9）□□ 有人提問試探和試煉有何不同？試探和試煉的原文是同一個字(test)，但二者有著本質的差別：第一，來源不同，試探來自魔鬼，試煉來自神。所以「人被試探，不可說，我是被神試探，……他也不試探人」（雅各書1：13）。第二，目的不同，魔鬼試探的目的是要引誘人犯罪，遠離神，成為它的奴僕；神試煉人是要煉淨他們，使他們成為神的子民。神說：「我反手加在你身上，煉盡你們的渣滓，除淨你們的雜質，……然後你必稱為公義之城，忠信之邑……其中歸正的人必因公義得蒙救贖。」（以賽亞書1：25-27）「試煉他們，如試煉金子。他們必求告我的名，我必應允他們。我要說：這是我的子民。他們也要說：耶和華是我們的神。」（撒迦利亞書13：9）第三，結果不同，那些順從魔鬼試探的人，就會墮入罪惡的深淵，如果不悔改，最終下地獄受永死；那些經受住神試煉的人，都是蒙受保守的人，必得永生（彼得前書1:3-7），成為神的兒女得永生，在天堂裏永遠與神在一起。

耶穌靠什麼勝過試探？耶穌靠兩大法寶勝過試探。第一，靠著神的話，耶穌面對魔鬼的每一個試探，祂都恰當的引用聖經上神的話擊敗仇敵；第二，靠聖靈的能力。路加福音第四章開頭就說「耶穌被聖靈充滿」，祂順從聖靈的帶領到曠野，四十天受魔鬼的試探。最後「魔鬼用完各樣的試探」都被祂一一擊敗。當祂取得完全勝利之後，14節又說「耶穌滿有聖靈的能力回到加

利利」，可見祂是靠聖靈的能力取勝的。□□ 最後一個問題：路加為什麼要在這一章開頭詳述耶穌受試探的事蹟，要教導我們什麼？主要有三點：第一，告訴我們，魔鬼的試探是普遍經常存在的，每一個人都免不了受試探。「並要謹守，警醒，因為你們的仇敵魔鬼，如同吼叫的獅子，遍地遊行，尋找可吞吃的人。」（彼得前書5：8）魔鬼的工作就是專門引誘人犯罪離開神。我們要高度警惕，準備隨時應對魔鬼的試探。第二，教導我們正確對付試探和勝過試探的方法，就是祈求聖靈充滿，依靠聖靈的力量，正確應用聖經神的話就能勝過試探，為此平時要多讀聖經，牢記於心，才能純熟應用，並要放下自我，順服聖靈的帶領。第三，以耶穌戰勝魔鬼試探的事蹟，為我們樹立光輝的榜樣，激勵我們要像耶穌，以祂為榜樣去戰勝試探。

於是有人聯繫實際，談自己面對試探的經歷。例如有人過去曾把玉蘭花瓣裹麵炸了吃，很清香可口，看到泰森老年公寓有一棵玉蘭花樹花朵盛開，就想偷摘幾朵，炸了給團契作點心，這時魔鬼乘機誘惑，說滿樹玉蘭花，摘幾朵不會受影響，沒關係，偷偷的摘沒有人看見，沒人知道；再說「又不是給自己吃，是給團契大家吃。」這時他心中受到聖靈的責備，想起神的話，十誡的第八誡是不可偷盜，第十誡是不可貪戀別人的財物。猛然醒悟，若去偷摘就是犯罪。好險，差一點就上了魔鬼的當！我們真該隨時警醒。

# 不要拒絕神的愛

易丹軒

## 「神就是愛」-- 約翰一書4:16

我於2002年秋天決志信主，至今已有十年半，期間雖然從未懷疑自己的信仰，可總覺得有點缺失，就是尚未受洗。每當被人問到宗教信仰時，我總回答我是“未受洗的基督徒”。我是一個不注重形式的人，但在受洗一事上，深知這是不可以省略的聖禮。

之前，我曾經有過兩次受洗的機會，以及一次要求受洗但被拒絕的經歷。

第一次是2000年夏天，我應邀參加中國福音會創辦人趙天恩牧師在洛杉磯附近主持召開的基督教信仰與中國未來研討會，會議最后一天快結束時，趙牧師問在座的與會者有沒有願意當場受洗的，我那時雖然有感動，但內心剛硬，拒絕了他的呼召。現在想起深感愧疚，寫出這段經歷，也算是對已經歸主多年的趙天恩牧師的紀念吧。

第二次是決志后不久參加一個退修會，課間休息時我向主講牧師表達希望受洗的要求，但被拒絕，理由是他已經不再在退修會上施洗，勸我參加當地的教會，以便鞏固信仰。然而，這位名校畢業的名牧師十多分鐘回到課堂繼續講完道後，問眾人有沒有感動並願意決志的，又表示除了他自己，還沒有看到有主動要求受洗的。我當即離開課室，為自己、也為他做了一個禱告。

第三次是有一年復活節前，一位和我相識、並且在朋友聚會上就基督教義有過討論和分歧的牧師給我打電話，說他的教會復活節那天有一批受洗的，「你過來一起洗了吧。」很多年後，我把這事告訴我太太，她笑著說，聽起來怎麼跟趕業績一樣？當時，我確實沒有感動，所以也就沒有去那位牧師那裡受洗。

現在回想，這三次每一次都有神的用意。第一次的時候，我正在忙於政治活動，試圖探尋在中國推行民主的各種途徑，但從未想到首先應該改變的是自己。神通過趙天恩牧師發出呼召，可惜我還不認識神；第二次，我剛剛經歷政治上一個重大的挫折，陷身於罪和人性的黑暗，正深感無望，神及時伸出手，將我拯救並引領我通讀聖經、指明道路，又通過退修會上的那位牧師來破碎我心中的偶像，比如名聲、名校和學歷；第三次，神要繼續磨練我，促使我思考哪些是祂所喜悅的，哪些不是。雖然我至今也還不能確定每一次的選擇和決定都能遵循祂的旨意，但內心明白，只要信靠主耶穌，就會越來

越接近。

這次在北維州華人基督教會申請受洗，我相信也是神的安排，而祂的安排總是最好的。經過一年多的定期接觸、觀察和一起敬拜，在這裡我深深感受到了基督的愛，體驗到為什麼祂是一位又真又活的神。就如最初閱讀聖經，剛開始覺得枯燥，難以繼續，可一旦仔細研讀，慢慢體會，便會感動、明白，心中充滿認識神的感恩和愉悅。同樣的，初次接觸這個教會時，星期天的敬拜表面看來如同最初讀聖經一樣枯燥，但漸漸地，透過更多活動和日常生活中的點滴，以及在我最困難、我太太坐月子時眾多兄弟姐妹的雪中送炭，讓我體驗到平凡生活中基督徒不平凡的愛心、奉獻和堅守。

教會中兄弟姐妹的這種愛心、奉獻和堅守將神的愛表現得如此的真實和具體，讓我這個不重視形式的人學習到：神的愛是有載體的，並且通過具體的形式真實地活在我的生活中，脫離具體的形式，將只是空談。約翰一書第三章第18節講到：「小子們哪，我們相愛，不要隻在言語和舌頭上，總要在行為和誠實上。」我期望通過受洗，使我的信仰和實際的行為更加一致。今後，如果再有人問起，“未受洗的基督徒”前面“未受洗的”幾個字便可以去掉了。

最後，我要向長期以來為我代禱的兄弟姐妹致謝，並用以下禱告來結束我的見證：「感謝父神的安排，在受洗一事上給了我很多的時間；感謝神的恩典和憐憫，對我一直沒有放棄，把我從罪和黑暗中拯救出來；感謝神的公義，不但指明道路，而且讓我有信實的期盼。希望神繼續引領我前面的路，跟隨主耶穌。以上禱告奉主耶穌們的名，阿門。」

# 蒙恩見證

陳超

感謝神能讓我有機會與大家分享我得救的見證。坦白說，我的心情是又喜悅又緊張，因為馬上就要接受洗禮，成為神的兒子。這一切的一切，我都要感謝主，感謝主一直保守著我。信主以前，我一直在尋找人生的意義，覺得自己是個不算太好，也不算太壞，很平庸的一個人，但我卻渴望不平凡，到最後卻發現我和大家沒什麼不一樣。

兩年前有人問我，你信主嗎？信這個世上有神存在嗎？那時我的回答是三個字「不知道！」當時的我覺得有沒有神和我有什麼關係嗎？假如有的話，那為什麼我從來都沒感覺到呢？我就告訴我自己，神和我沒有關係吧。如今，若有人再問我同樣的問題，那我的回答就是「信」。從「不知道」到「信」，為什麼會有這麼大的變化？那就要從兩年前說起了。

那時我剛來美國不久，還不太適應這裡的生活，不過在親人的照顧下，日子過得還算安逸，可是心裡總是感覺空空的，而這個空好像找什麼都填補不了，結果姐姐就幫我找到了我們教會的地址。現在想想我可以確定的說，這一切不是偶然，而是一位全能的神降福與我。□□傳揚弟兄是我在教會裡認識的第一個人。記得那時我第一次來到我們這個教會，我迷迷糊糊的就找了個空位。說來也巧，就坐在了傳揚弟兄旁邊。那時我沒聖經，傳揚大哥就把自己的聖經與我分享，牧師講到哪頁，他就翻到哪頁，一次又一次的翻好了，就把聖經遞給我，就連詩歌本也是如此。當時我好感動，有一種說不出的滋味。「基督徒都這麼樂於助人嗎？」那天我也從傳揚大哥口中得知慕道班的事情，說像我這樣還不認識主的慕道朋友，可以先從這裡開始。那天離開教堂後，我感覺心情特別好。我心裡就告訴自己，今天來對地方了。當然，這都是主的大能在引領著我。

日常在看聖經時學到的，和慕道班裡所了解的，給我帶來了很大的影響，這影響是正面的，它也給我帶來了改變，讓我從新認識我的生命。感謝傳揚大哥的一席話，他為我講的道，讓我心裡的冰雪被融化了，心鎖終於被打開。□□感謝天父，您是位偉大的父親。您一直都沒放棄您的每一位孩兒，從來都沒放棄過。記得三年前的一個聖誕節，是主的生日，就連當時還不認識神的我也知道那是個神聖的日子，是個對基督徒來說是個很特別的日子。就是那天，我的一個基督徒朋友邀請我去參加聖誕節特別活動，我就第一次踏進了教堂。她跟我說基督徒都很友善的，不像社會上的那些人一樣，他們不認識上帝，只知道滿足自己的慾望，盡是虛偽。她還問我要不要繼續來教

堂，不如也做個基督徒好了。但是我想我是不會改變的，怎麼可能成為基督徒後，人就會變得完美無缺的，變得不嫉妒，不怨恨，不浮誇，不虛偽？不可能的！這些本來就是我們人的缺點，更可以說是特點，是其它動物所沒有的，但是因為這些特點，反而使我們的生活水平得到提升，不是嗎？現在看來，就算神再怎麼愛你，你若不承認自己的無能，若不認清，不依靠神的能力，我們是什麼也辦不成的。我想那時神已經在我心裡了，只是我還不認識祂而已，也就沒有依靠祂，做祂所喜悅的事。

我漸漸變得驕傲起來，常自我宣告說：「這個世界沒有神，只有我自己才是最值得相信的。」這種驕傲抵擋神給我帶來的後果是，從小學我就染上抽煙，初中慢慢的學著酗酒、賭博等種種惡習。信主之後，我煙和賭全都戒了，酒看情況才喝，但不再酗酒，真的是有很大的改變。還有信主以前，坐公車我會給老人和兒童讓座，但不是十分情願，甚至還在心裡埋怨這些老人，這麼大年紀了還擠公車。現在我坐公車，如果有人上車，我總是看有沒有老人和小孩，如有，我就第一個站起來讓座，而且是心甘情願的。當我讓座後別人說聲謝謝時，我心裏特別激動，因為我知道是主一直在施恩與我，也在用主自己的話語，讓我得到真正的改變。信主以後，由於聖靈進入我的心靈，我自己在面臨困難和挑戰時，戰勝困難的決心和勇氣也大大增強了。現在遇到困難總要在心裡默默地禱告，求主賜給我智慧、力量和勇氣，以致做一些較難的工作和事情時，總是能夠順利的完成。感謝主！

信主以前，我就是這樣敗壞，但現在我知道每個人都是罪人，只有主才能赦免我的罪，只有依著這世上唯一的真神，我才辦成我想要做的任何事情。如果靠我自己的意思去行我想要行的事的話，我將無能為力。我必須承認在信仰的道路上，我還是一個嬰孩，還需要不斷的增長。希望神的話語能打開我的心門，引導我繼續邁向成長的路程，讓我更存一顆敬畏謙卑的心，時常保持警醒。

# 認識至聖者，便是聰明

陳美釵

上帝賜給我諸多恩典，是我述說不盡的，但今天我只訴說一件。

我是在銀行做台前工作的，每天與現金支票打交道，數額大大小小，進進出出，十分繁雜，一不小心是很容易出錯的。所以銀行規定出錯次數不得超過25%，如果超出就會被解僱的。

就在去年的四至十月間，我因晚上咳嗽厲害，影響睡眠，第二天工作精神欠佳，導致出錯率已達19%了，叫我十分擔心！就在這種狀況中，卻出現一件奇妙的事。在一個星期五的晚上，我工作一天已經很累了，此時進來了兩個顧客，他們拿著駕駛執照，前一個是德州的駕照，後一個是佛羅利達州的，都要提巨額現金五千元，這引起了我的警惕，心中也不平靜。我就一面問他們幾個問題，一面在電腦裡查他們的資料。就在這拖延的時間中，這兩個人似乎是做賊心虛，竟都悄悄的離去了。稍候我把所查到的資料轉給經理，讓他打電話到銀行的詢問處查詢，結果查出這兩人竟是偷人家的ID卡和帳號，冒充領取存款的慣犯。在那危險的時刻，若我稀里糊塗照證件付款，就會鑄成大錯，一使銀行受虧損，二使我被解僱。

感謝那看顧保守我的上帝，祂叫我能臨危不亂，不上當受騙；同時，神也叫那兩個作惡事的知難而退，使銀行和我同得保全。若不是神的保守和看顧，我哪有處理險事的聰明智慧呢？所以，我要用詩篇121篇來表達我感恩讚美的心聲：

我要向山舉目，我的幫助從何而來。

我的幫助從造天地的耶和華而來。

祂必不叫你的腳搖動，保護你的必不打盹。

保護以色列的，也不打盹，也不睡覺。

保護你的是耶和華，耶和華在你右邊蔭庇你。

白日太陽必不傷你，夜間月亮必不害你。

耶和華要保護你，免受一切的災害，祂要保護你的性命。

你出你入，耶和華要保護你從今時直到永遠。

# 經歷神

余曉艷

我信主已有四年半了，當初信主的理由很簡單。我覺得主應允我的禱告，也對福音沒有疑問，就受洗了。可是我一直沒有得救的確據，時常覺得自己信主前後沒有多大改變，只是多了一些宗教行為而已。現在想來，主對我的帶領是一步步的。因為人是健忘的，所以我們要時常數算神的恩典。我寫下這篇見證，一方面為神作美好的見證，另一方面也是為了日後提醒自已，不要忘記神的恩典。

我現在深刻體會到兒女是神給我們的祝福。我當初信主是因為大女兒（見2009年12月會刊上見證），這次經歷神主要源於小女兒。

我是2008年底在本教會受洗的，那時大女兒三歲半。我們覺得可以再要一個孩子，可是卻查出我的甲狀腺有問題。經過一年的治療，各項指標才趨穩定。又經過一年的漫長等待，我終於在2010年感恩節前幾天發現自己懷孕了。當時欣喜不已，真是很感謝神，可是好景不長，不知什麼原因在聖誕節那一天我流產了。當我在2011年再次懷孕，並於2012年三月生下小女兒，我再一次認識到神的主權。

流產後我一直小心翼翼，生怕再次發生。在2011去Virginia beach 海灘玩之前，我還特意確認了自己沒有懷孕，所以在海邊衝浪沒有什麼顧忌。誰知，玩回來幾天後竟測出懷孕了。當時我心情很複雜，一方面感謝神的保守，一方面還是擔心重蹈覆轍。接著是難熬的早孕反應，胃口很差，每天中午我都要回家吃一點，躺一會兒，再回去上班。很多人也許還記得那年在維州發生的地震，因為我的辦公大樓蠻高，震感非常明顯，事後聽同事提及有些人閃到腰或者受到驚嚇，但因為神的保守，我那時正在從家返回公司的路上，所以什麼感覺都沒有。然後在20周例行檢查時我的小女兒被查出是單臍動脈，從此我開始看高危產科醫生。此病對胎兒最大的影響是營養供應不足，以致有一些例子是生出死胎的。但那段時間我因為認識到神的主權，所以沒有過多的擔憂。快到預產期的時候，我卻突然對生產有一些恐懼。總覺得生老大的時候太順利，害怕生小的很難，不料老二的出生比老大還順利。我從破水到小女兒降生只用了四個小時不到，而且給我接生的值班醫生是位經驗豐富的婦產科主任。小女兒的出生體重比大女兒當年還重，醫生的檢查報告紀錄小女兒的唯一缺陷是耳廓上有一個針別兒大小的坑。神真是對我們一家太好了！

小女兒是上帝給我們的一個天使寶寶，大部分時間她都能吃能睡還能自己



玩，所以直到她三四個月時我都過著舒心又舒服的日子。可是從去年七月開始，因為工作上的壓力，我漸漸地抑鬱起來，夜裡驚醒，發現自己在想著工作上的難題，無法再次入睡。有段時間，我更是一到快睡覺的時候就感到恐懼，因為知道自己又很難有個好睡眠。那時公司因為擴展新的利潤增長點，開始做新項目，我因在學校時做過一些有關項目，因此也被換到新組。真正做的時候才發現自己只會皮毛而已，要學很多新的技術。這裡提一下，我是做軟件開發的，新的技術日新月異，雖然很多都是換湯不換藥，但是一方面需要有紮實的基礎，一方面還需要花時間學這些新東西。因為最高管理層對新項目抓得很緊，所以很多員工都是披星戴月的趕工。小女兒那時還在哺乳期，我在公司還要花時間泵奶，而那短短的半小時常常是我腦子唯一休息的時間。漸漸地，我發現自己的腦子不夠用了，新的知識無法掌握，還暴露出很多基本功不紮實的問題。這對我是個不小的打擊。以前總是覺得自己工作能力蠻好，因此還在心裡瞧不起很多人，現在發現那些人好像都比我強，但我顧著自己的面子，不肯虛心請教別人，特別是資歷比我淺的年輕人。慢慢的，我開始對自己全盤否定，覺得自己再也不能做軟件開發了，所以開始想著轉行，可是想來想去覺得自己哪一行都幹不了。最後開始思考要不要回歸家庭，做家庭主婦，但發現自己連家庭主婦也做不了。一是因為我不太會做家務，二是我不太會帶孩子，三是我不太愛說話。

說到不會做家務，每次看到我媽媽悉心的準備出香噴噴的食物給小女兒，或者看到教會育嬰室裡其他媽媽給孩子們帶的食物，我都羨慕不已。記得有一次家裡買了鱈魚頭，媽媽想把上面的一點魚肉給剛剛吃副食的小女兒吃，我就自告奮勇去檢查裏面有沒有魚刺。我左摸摸右摸摸，覺得查得差不多了，誰知媽媽戴上老花鏡竟挑出兩根刺，還囑咐我以後千萬別給女兒做這種魚，以防扎到。平時家裡的活大都是老公在做，父母也在我們最需要的時候來探親，給與我們很多的幫助。這一切都讓我覺得在家務上插不上手。

說到不會帶孩子，很大程度是緣於我喜歡看連續劇和長篇小說的這個嗜好。過去的兩三年裡，我常常藉口工作太辛苦，或著身體不舒服，把大女兒推給老公，然後自己倒在床上看連續劇或者小說，沉浸在主角的故事裡。我和老公結婚十年，吵架屈指可數，但這幾年吵架大部分都是因為我看連續劇引起的。有一次老公半開玩笑的說，可以想像我們老了之後，就是每人各自面對一台電腦，終日無話可說。我有時也會有所醒悟，立志不再看了，找時間來陪女兒。可是因為不常參與大女兒的活動，一方面沒有能力參與其中，比如陪她練鋼琴，另一方面大女兒也不太習慣我的參與。所以，我又覺得家裡也沒什麼要我照顧的，沒過多久，我又回到了讓我覺得舒服的故事裡，這像一個惡性循環。慢慢的，我不太知道怎樣和大女兒有很好的交流，變得能少說一句就少說一句。直到抑鬱的那段時間，我才把這個嗜好戒掉了。這次我清楚的看到因為別人的故事，尤其是虛構的故事，而放棄了自己真實的生

活是一件很傻的事。不過我還記得在這段時期，有一次我主動提出要陪大女兒玩，她也很高興，可是兩個人想了半天，竟不知玩什麼，最後不了了之。然而沒過一會兒，她就和老公興高采烈的扔起了橄欖球。因此，我對在家帶孩子也沒信心。

說到不會說話，我的表達能力很弱，常常詞不達意，中文如此，英文就更差了。但因為面子，不願示弱，所以能不說話就不開口，很多人都以為我很文靜。在信主後很長時間，我還給自己在聖經中找到依據，像箴言17:28說到愚昧人若靜默不言，也可算為智慧，閉口不說，也可算為聰明，卻忽視神讓我們說造就人的話，讓我們傳福音的大使命。一想到在家帶孩子，會有更多時間和家人朋友在一起，要說更多的話，我怕自己沒法融入。

總而言之，我看到自己離才德的婦人（箴言31章10-31節）差了十萬八千里。□□我本來一直覺得自己是個大大咧咧，還算樂觀的人，過去的一年裡我才意識到自己還是以前那個我。我樂觀的來源是在不如意時，主動轉移自己的視線去找自己的優越感。可是這次抑鬱的時候，我什麼優越感也找不到了，覺得自己一無是處。□□從實際情況來講，因為綠卡的緣由，我確實需要這份工作。雖然老公的公司也在幫著辦，可是排期稍晚一些。經歷過長時間辦綠卡的人都清楚，排期差一兩個月，有時就會差出一兩年才能拿綠卡。雖然老公一再表示自己工作穩定，我卻無法心安，因為想到在幾個月前還覺得自己事業蒸蒸日上，現在卻是這樣。再者，對離開美國回去中國也很恐懼，覺得在中國祇靠老公一人工作養兩個小孩對我來說就像天方夜談。所以我就煎熬著，想著拿到綠卡就是我對我們家最後的貢獻了。□□沒有了屬世的盼望，我才第一次對天堂有了嚮往。以前雖然肯定天堂比地獄好，可是不確定天上的日子比地上的日子好在哪兒，成天唱讚美詩多沒意思啊，喜怒哀樂只剩下喜多單調啊。在苦難時才開始渴望在天上的日子：在鳥語花香的伊甸園享受神的同在，數算神的恩典，讚美神的美善。我也開始渴慕神的話，一有空就翻聖經，比較有規律的禱告，特別是去上班的日子，每次都要在車上禱告一番才有勇氣下車進公司。去聽主日講道都常會流淚，看別人的見證也常有啟發。平時，也主動和家人及主裡的兄弟姐妹分享，常常感到溫情。可是，我的情況還是沒有好轉。現在想來，那時的我只是換了一種方式去解決問題，並沒有真正的依靠神。我把聖經當成了參考書，需要時才想著去找答案。我積極的到處找辦法來改變自己的處境，沒有存著喜樂的心等候天父的時間。漸漸地，我對神的信心變得微乎其微，我的心剛硬起來，我對神的話不再感動。記得有一次看著清晨明亮的陽光，我竟想到如果我死了該多好，就不用這麼難過了。可是轉念一想，神現在會讓沒有信心的我上天堂嗎？於是趕緊向上帝禱告，懇求多一些時間。我相信在我心裡剛硬的那段時間，是聖靈用說不出的嘆息為我禱告。依稀記得有幾次在入睡前我對神的禱告變成了簡短的，“神啊，救救我吧，請不要放棄我！”那時還有很多兄弟姐妹

都在為我禱告，那確實是大有能力的。

事情終於在今年四五月間有了轉機，我突然意識到自己的工作是神保守的，如若祂給，有誰能拿走呢？認識到這點，整個人輕鬆了不少，知道自己只要盡自己的本分就好，同時也意識到自己的一切都是神給的，包括聰明才智。既然這樣，我又有什麼可誇口的呢？漸漸地，我對自己的不足也不再遮遮掩掩了，有不懂的地方就會虛心請教。現在我的工作壓力還是很重，可是沒有了心裡的擔子，每天過的都很輕鬆。我也體會到福音的力量，我是蒙恩的罪人，只有耶穌基督的寶血才能將我潔淨，我才能在父面前稱義。那時最觸動我的一句經文：“要常常喜樂，不住的禱告，凡事謝恩，因為這是神在基督耶穌裡向我們所定的旨意。”（帖撒羅尼迦前書5：16-18）讚美我主我神，慈愛美善全知全能，依靠祂，我就可以常常喜樂。我知道神還是會給我苦難，我也還會跌倒，因為自己還有很多不合神心意的地方，還需要神來破碎。雖然我還會害怕，但我相信經歷過神的我會成長，長成耶穌基督的樣式。透過這次經歷，神讓我對祂有更大的信心，可以面對下一個試煉。感謝讚美主！

# 耶穌基督是唯一的救主

劉曉蓉

我叫Lily, 來自中國重慶, 經朋友介紹認識了我丈夫Robert。經過三年時間的了解, 我們於 2011 年 五月 十二日在重慶結婚, 2012 年 三月 十一日來到美國。來美不久, 在去辦事回家的途中, 我從車上看見了北維州華人基督教會的招牌, 就請丈夫停車, 說我想進去看一下教會。但那天是星期六, 教會沒人, 我就留下一張紙條。幾天之後, 接到曉雲姊妹的電話, 邀請我們參加一個聚會, 我們非常開心, 隨後就去參加聚會, 感受很深。

從此我們每個星期天都去教會敬拜, 每個星期五一定去團契查經; 教會的活動跟聚會成了我們生活中不可缺少的重要部分。通過學習跟敬拜, 我們家庭有了很大的變化。過去我丈夫性格非常急躁, 經常在家裡發脾氣, 我問他為什麼這樣, 他告訴我他無法控制自己的情緒。他每天向神禱告, 求神拯救他。真的很奇妙, 神在他身上做工, 他有了很大的變化。感謝主! 只有耶穌基督是唯一的救主, 是聖靈住在心中的感動。我以前做甚麼事情都要求完美, 希望大, 奢望也多。通過學習聖經和教會的活動, 我在處理很多問題時, 心態非常淡定, 而且效果很好。這也是我們追求聖潔, 親近主的結果, 唯獨靠耶穌, 接受神的拯救, 我們的罪才得以赦免。神讓我們明白祂的心意, 順服祂的心意。通過學習, 我們知道悔改不是後悔, 悔改不是靠自己的本事改好, 悔改是離開罪惡, 歸向神, 信靠耶穌, 悔改的心是神所賜的。我深深的感嘆「神的意念高過人的意念, 神的道路高過人的道路」。信主得救, 千真萬確!

# 永遠的平安和喜樂

張美雲

感謝神給我這個機會，讓我有信心和勇氣接受耶穌做我的救主，開始我的新生命。我願與弟兄姐妹們分享我是如何信主的。

我和女兒來美國快五年了，經歷了許多坎坎坷坷。記得剛來美國時生活很不穩定，常為一些小事和家人計較，甚至和老公、婆婆鬧情緒，心情糟透了。有時，為了賭氣兩個月不打電話回國，還挑撥女兒以後不要理他們。這樣，我們的夫妻感情急劇下降。當時，我的心裡完全沒有平安和喜樂。接下來，我好不容易找到了一份在家樂福超市的工作，可是，又發生了一件意想不到的事。在2009年七月的一天晚上，我正在工作時，突然感到全身不舒服，嚴重過敏，心臟劇跳，呼吸困難，全身發冷，於是老闆就打911。最後，醫生診斷是食物中毒。這事之後半年多，由於超市老闆捲款逃跑，店關了，我又失業了。之後，我就在家學開車。考到駕照後，我原以為可以去賺錢了，可是剛找了一個保姆工作就又出事了。就在感恩節前兩天，早上出門準備上班時，不小心左腳踩了樹葉扭了一下，腳面骨折了，只好在家休息了兩個月。

就在我為自己未來擔憂的時候，神把我帶到了一位非常愛主的姐妹家做保姆。在她的引導下，我才知道什麼是查經，什麼是團契。但那時的我根本不認識神，也對宗教不感興趣。只是聽說教會有很多樂於助人的人，我就想碰碰運氣，看看是否教會的人可以幫助我。到了教會後，我果真感受到了弟兄姐妹的愛和大家庭的溫暖。從此，我不再寂寞，也不再想家，而且心裡也有了平安和喜樂。在慕道班裡，我聽到了福音，認識了那位創造宇宙萬物的神，也認識到了自己是個罪人。後來我就越來越喜歡去教會。神不僅引導我，看顧我，而且還看顧我女兒。記得在2011年暑假，就在我們要去看大瀑布的前一週，我女兒洗完澡後暈倒了。當時還認為是沒休息好，所以才臉色那麼蒼白。可是醫生驗血後告訴我，她是嚴重貧血、低壓，最後只好去住院輸血。我真的非常感謝神，是神拯救了我女兒。如果不是神及時阻止我們遠行，那麼後果就不堪設想。

經歷了這件事，我深深體會到神的愛。在神的大愛下，我女兒的身體已經恢復了，我也有了一份新的工作。同時，我也要感謝神，在這幾個月裡，我學會了彼此相愛和寬容忍耐。現在我和我丈夫的關係越來越好；我正在努力地用神的愛去愛他，理解他，不再像以前那樣無端猜疑他了。而我和我婆婆的關係也比以前更融洽了。神的話改變了我的生命和生活，我願意順服神，

常常思考神的話語和常常感恩。沒有神就沒有我今天的平安，我深信只有在基督的愛裏，才能有永遠的平安和喜樂。因為主說：「我把平安留給你們，我把我的平安賜給你們。我給你們的，不像世界所給的。你們心裡不要愁煩，也不要膽怯。」（約翰福音14：27）

# 我的婆婆

于艾真

婆婆是一位典型的“平凡中的不平凡”的婦女。她的平凡在於她樸素平實的外表，那麼的不起眼，在群眾中幾乎會遺忘了她的存在。她的不平凡則在於她單純、誠懇、謙卑、不與人爭的個性。即使面對譏諷、委屈、強言，她也總是以微笑慈容來回應對方。她一生就是默默的付出，從不求回報。年輕時行醫，收入豐厚，卻將薪水交給丈夫，由公公全權處理，對於丈夫用之去幫助夫家的親戚，她也毫不吝惜或發怨言。後來移民美國，她就全心全意的在女兒家看顧孫輩。數年後公公中風，行動不便，婆婆又義不容辭的擔起照顧公公生活起居的責任。公公是空軍飛行員，體格高大，婆婆體型卻是矮小，每回看到她讓公公雙手搭在她肩上向前移步時（她則向後退步），我真怕她會支撐不住公公，向後仆倒，但神一直保守她。□□有一段日子公婆與我們同住，看到婆婆對中風後脾氣大的公公，不僅沒有不耐煩或嫌棄，反而溫柔有加。她細心的將水果磨成泥，一勺一勺的餵公公，又唱詩歌給他聽，還為公公洗臉，梳頭，洗腳，更衣，難得的是，在做這一切時，婆婆臉上從未有一絲的勉強與不耐，而是面帶微笑的服事公公。雖然他倆不再用言語來表達愛意，但我可以看出婆婆心中對公公充滿了愛與尊敬。□□在與我們同住的日子裡，少則兩週，多則數月，婆婆從不以慈禧太后自居，反倒像是來服事我們似的。她一輩子當醫生，不會做家事、做飯，就甘心“打雜”，幫忙洗菜洗碗。對於我們教養孩子，婆婆也從不批評，總是誇我們做的好，也遺憾當年忙於工作，未能全心撫養五個孩子。常聽人說婆媳關係是很複雜棘手的，但我在二十多年與婆婆的相處中，卻沒有受過她一句數落或責備。

婆婆年邁後，生活非常簡單規律，三餐定時，做晨操，午後小憩，閒餘就是讀經與寫日記。神非常恩待她，使她老年時仍然耳聰目明，讀聖經不必戴老花眼鏡，又有一口人人稱羨的好牙齒，夜裏睡得也很好。她曾謙虛的說讀聖經常有不懂的地方，要我解釋給她聽。我感到非常困惑，何以看不懂聖經卻能將神的道在她生命中流露出來呢？我深信婆婆的生命已牢牢地與基督聯合，所以活出基督的生命是如此的自然，已不需要透過聖經知識了。□□我曾問婆婆，她何以能用如此的寬容之心對待他人，她告之自小祖父母即教誨要「隱惡揚善」，這也成為她一生的座右銘。對於他人的惡，婆婆總是默默承受，不去張揚；對於他人的善，她則大以鼓勵。她的一生確實是一個榮神益人的人生。我非常有幸能做她的媳婦，在她身上看到諸多的美德。□□如今婆婆息了地上的勞苦，她身邊的人都可以見證，婆婆在世確實達到基督徒在世上做塩做光的責任，也確實是神賜給每一個接觸過她的人的一個祝福。婆婆沒有好的口才，沒有什麼令人羨慕的恩賜，然而神所託付她的，她已忠心

完成，以致得以進入榮耀，那裏是一個好的無比的地方，不再有死亡、悲哀、哭號、疼痛，有的只是神的同在，永遠的喜樂。



# 生命的改變

鐘爾璉

我生於一個不認識上帝的家庭，長於一個因各種運動而造成人與人之間外面熱情裡面冷漠，表裡不一的社會裡。自己一直覺得知音難尋。我在2008年前一直是一個沒有信仰的人。在2008年底時，獨身女兒突然在美被查出得了癌症晚期，這對我打擊很大。在女兒住院期間，我們因為不會英語，與醫院的溝通很困難，使我們感到非常，需要有人幫助。這時惠婷，天罡來到醫院探視我們，並答應為我們提供幫助。幾天後女兒過世。接著我又認識了維凱，唐大哥和田大姐，陳大哥。維凱，唐大哥將我們帶到北維州華人教會春田分會，在那裏我得到了教會弟兄姊妹們的安慰和關心。期間惠婷又拿了很多有關耶穌基督的書和一些人得救後生命改變的見證給我看，使我認識和了解到耶穌基督是我們唯一的救主，也讓我深深明白唯有在主面前真心悔改，求祂赦免我過去因為不認識祂所犯下的所有過錯，才能獲得重生。與此同時，我又得到北維州華人教會春田分會弟兄姊妹們的各種幫助，以及蔡牧師，蔡師母的指教，也看到了教會裡弟兄姊妹之間不計回報的愛，使我十分感動。不久後我就決志信主。□□回到中國後，我在悲傷、哀怨、絕望和無助中生活，整天眼淚流淌，又得了嚴重抑鬱症，我走在死蔭幽谷裡不能自拔。

在美的教會姊妹們又幫助我找到中國教會，中國教會很多的姊妹和牧師到家裡來探視我，牧師又開導我，並且給我細講詩篇23篇，並要我背誦，「耶和華是我的牧者，我必不至缺乏。祂使我躺臥在青草地上，領我在可安歇的水邊。祂使我的靈魂甦醒，為自己的名引導我走義路。我雖行過死蔭的幽谷，也不怕遭害，因為你與我同在；你的杖，你的竿，都安慰我。在我敵人面前，你為我擺設筵席；你用油膏了我的頭，使我福杯滿溢。我一生一世必有恩惠慈愛隨著我；我且要住在耶和華的殿中，直到永遠。」（詩篇23：1-6）我堅持每週日必到教會去參加主日敬拜，參加青年團契，並聽一些耶穌基督的專題講座。我覺得唯有將自己完全的交給主耶穌，才能安心的面對人生的一切的災難和痛苦。我的心情與病痛慢慢有所好轉，使我對生活又有了信心，對聖經的教誨也有了更深刻的認識。

這四年來，北維州華人教會春田分會裡的弟兄姊妹如維凱夫婦，田大姐夫婦，趙長老和趙太太，惠婷夫婦等等幾家人，以及主恩教會裡何春一家，一直幫助我們每年我為女兒掃墓和我們來美的住宿接待。正如聖經所說，「親愛的弟兄啊，我們應當彼此相愛，因為愛是從神來的，凡有愛心的，都是由神而生，並且認識神。沒有愛心的，就不認識神，因為神就是愛。」（約翰

一書4-7) 他們真正體現了主裏無私的愛。真的就像是一家人一樣。

通過四年來參加教會的敬拜，團契和讀經學習，我在各方面都有了不少改變：我多了一份仁愛，少了一份冷漠；多了一份和平，少了一份爭鬥；多了一份忍耐，少了一份紛爭；多了一份良善，少了一份醜陋；多了一份信實，少了一份浮誇；多了一份謙卑，少了一份驕傲。

我慕道四年了，剛開始也有起伏與爭扎，因為自己是一個做事認真的人，總覺得自己離一個真正符合主耶穌要求的基督徒還有差距，經常很軟弱。去年一位牧師證道時說，要做基督徒連洗禮都不受，怎麼能在主裡得完全的生命，做一個新造的人呢？我想既然神揀選了我，我必須誠心領受，所以我願意接受洗禮，我知道這是神給我的恩典。本來今年復活節時我將在中國的教會受洗，但在三月底時我意外遇到車禍，被電瓶車撞倒，在床上躺了三週，沒辦法受洗。一個多月後又靠著主的恩典，神奇的恢復了，使我能如期的來到美國。我想這是神的安排，讓我到這裡來受洗。

最後，我要再次感謝長期關心和幫助我的北維州華人基督教會的牧師，長老和弟兄姊妹們，願神祝福你們！

# My Spring Break Trip to Puerto Supe, Peru

Deborah Yuan

Over spring break from March 8th to 16th, 2013, I had the opportunity to be part of a short-term missions trip to Puerto Supe, Peru with fifteen other UVA students. During the week, we worked with the UVA alum, the missionaries, construction workers, and kids at local schools. I wanted to briefly share with you about my experiences and what I have learned as well as how God has changed my heart following the trip.

Puerto Supe is a very small town located about four hours from Lima, the capital of Peru. We spent almost every morning visiting schools in the area, including one preschool, three elementary schools, and one high school. We shared the gospel through singing VBS songs to the kids in Spanish, performing a few dances, acting out two skits, and sharing student testimonies. By the end of the week we had reached out to over 1,000 kids in Puerto Supe. Even though we had the language barrier of having full conversations with the kids in Spanish, our physical presence and the way we presented the gospel spoke directly to their hearts. We knew that we planted seeds in each of these schools, regardless of how many people were actually listening and paying attention. During our stay at the preschool on the first day, we painted a mural on one of their walls with Genesis 1:31a, And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good. We were so glad we had the opportunity to leave a mark for them, that God's word would be able to shine in this school and be a light for all the children.

Another part of our ministry involved helping the missionaries, Grace and Cesar, with their church construction project. They have been working so hard with a few of the local construction workers to build a place next to their house where the people of the town can gather together and worship the Lord. We spent several afternoons digging dirt, moving rocks, and pushing wheelbarrows. Even though we were only there for a short time, we could see the progress in the project and we knew that God was with them every step of the way. It was so great to be able to take part in the project and rejoice with the locals there in working so diligently all just to glorify God.

On the first Sunday we were in Puerto Supe, we attended a very small church

service in Spanish, which consisted of about eight people total. Shelly, the UVA alum who was serving there long term, translated the message for us. I loved seeing her passion for God and how much time she was willing to devote to the ministry there. I enjoyed worshipping the Lord with those eight people, and I saw that even in the small rural town in Peru so far away from the norm, there were people who loved and worshipped the Lord just like we do. God's light was being ignited there and it was burning continuously among those people's hearts. There was so much joy among our team to see their love for Jesus, while spending time and praising the Lord with them.

I think one of the main things I learned on this trip was to be more humble and thankful to God for blessing me with what I have. I was constantly reminded that He always provides and He never leaves us alone. As Americans, we are so blessed to be living in a place with hot water, food, comfortable shelter, and all of our daily possessions. This trip exposed me to a community that was the complete opposite of what we have and depend on. As the week passed, I loved how peaceful and quiet the town was and how real life was among the people. They would wake up and walk to the market, where farmers sold their crops and meat. Relationships and friendships were so much more simple and personal. The culture in Peru was so different, and I loved how welcoming and friendly everyone was there. They always greeted us with warm smiles and a kiss on the cheek, and I could see how much love these people had for one another. Here in the U.S. we depend so much on technology, our computers and our phones, and we rarely think about how blessed we are to have these things that other people in the world may not have.

On our way to the beach one day, we met a 15-year-old boy named Sergio as well as his mom and older sister. They lived in a straw hut with a dirt floor, and that was all they had. Sergio got up every morning at 5AM and went fishing to feed his family, and his mom worked so hard every day to make these candies that she would sell for one soles, which was equivalent to about 50 cents per bag. Despite his situation, he was the nicest boy we met there. He played Frisbee and soccer with us at the beach, and he was so generous in collecting shells for the sixteen of us on the team. I loved his enthusiasm, his kindness, and his pure joyful heart. On the way back, one of the Spanish speakers on our team asked him what he was having for dinner that night. He told her that his family no longer had money to buy food for dinner. We saw how much energy he spent while playing with us on the beach, yet he was not walking home to the nice dinner we were having that night. His story really moved all of us, and I was able to see the difficult life that many of these people were living. Our team gathered some spare change and bought groceries that

would last them at least a week and donated all our airplane snacks to the family. This was really just one small example of how God used us to reach out to the people there. I saw time after time that He was working through us to not only share the gospel, but to love on the people, care for them, and touch their hearts while they touched our hearts as well.

During our free time we had the chance to welcome a few locals in the area to hang out and spend time with us. One guy named Jose, who was close to our age, joined us when we watched the sunset, played at the beach, or even sang worship songs at our nightly devotionals. Even though we had the language barrier, he was able to connect with us so well and get to know each one of us individually. After we left Peru, he sent us an email saying that his life had been changed after meeting us because he saw us as a group of people who seemed different from others and shined the light for Jesus. He did not have the chance to experience that kind of love before. Now he is more willing to take part in the church ministry and prayer meetings that they have in Puerto Supe. I was so amazed at how God was working in his heart, and I am so grateful that He is doing great things in this town and bringing people like Jose closer to Him.

Every night during the week, we spent a few hours as a team worshipping together, reflecting on what happened that day, and talking about how we saw Jesus. We listened to and shared about how God was working in every single person we encountered and interacted with during that day. At the schools, we were able to let the gospel speak on its own and plant those seeds among the people. At the construction site, we were able to experience the power of teamwork and cooperation and how we could work together for the sole purpose of serving the Lord. I think I also learned to really put all of my faith and trust in God throughout our trip. A few of our team members got food poisoning and all of us got really bad sunburn and mosquito bites, but God provided for us every day. He gave us energy and strength to perform at the schools every morning, talk with the local teens, and work together with the construction workers every afternoon. I loved seeing such joy in everyone's hearts as we participated in the daily activities and glorified God in our actions.

At devotionals, one of the song lyrics that really spoke to my heart says,  
There is power in the name of Jesus to break every chain. We knew that our stay was so short, but we had planted seeds and we had impacted the lives of the people there. The Gospel will flourish, as God is still using Shelly and the local missionaries in Puerto Supe to reach out to the people there through their ministry. I ask that you join me in prayer for the town of Puerto Supe that God will break every

chain, and He will move every heart to follow Him. That now that we have left, more and more people will get to know Christ, and that this can be a place where the name of the Lord is able to shine and grow stronger each day. Matthew 17:20 says, ...if you have faith like a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move, and nothing will be impossible for you.

# Repent and be Baptized

Meekhol Lu

Growing up in a Christian family, I learned about God and the Bible even before I can even remember. From a young age, I attended church and was exposed to the stories in the Bible. It has been a blessing but it has also been difficult. As I grew up, I fell into the motions of reading the Bible every night and going to church on Sunday mornings. If I was asked why I went to church on Sundays, I could immediately give the Sunday school answers but didn't truly understand any of it. My perception of faith was very knowledge based. Church played a huge role in my life; however, I wasn't convicted in my heart.

Being in high school has really made me realize how weak and insufficient I am on my own. I breezed my way through middle school with top grades and went into high school with the mindset that it would be just as simple. Very quickly, I learned that this was not the case. I was constantly discouraged with school work and had a lack of motivation. And just when I thought I was doing alright in school, there was always another kid who had higher grades, more talent and better test scores. Compared to the other kids, I had nothing—no aspirations and no clear direction. Last year was especially hard because there were nights when I stayed up trying to finish assignments and felt defeated at the end of the night. Nothing I did was ever right and became angry and frustrated at God. But once I started to realize that on my own I was nothing, God reminded me of His son, Jesus who took my place upon the cross so that I could be released of everything that held me back—my sin, my anger, my frustration. He taught me that even though I felt alone, I didn't have to do it all by myself. As I look back, I realize it was in my insecurity that God showed me His faithfulness and it was then I could fully surrender myself to Him.

Since then, I have learned that I have to serve God in all aspects of my life, not only when it is easy. I still struggle with being motivated in my school work; but slowly, God is teaching me to be grateful for every opportunity in life, even the little things. The things that used to pass me by as coincidences or I took for granted are now reminders that God is still holding my hand every step of the way, no matter how big my circumstances are. “For from Him and through Him and for Him are all things.” (Romans 11:36) Through these things, I recognize that God is not finished with me. He has called me for a greater purpose which is to serve Him and make His name known.

When I was younger, I thought that because my parents were saved, I would automatically receive a free pass into heaven. Now, I realize that while my parents can lead and encourage my faith in Christ, ultimately, this is a decision I have to make with God. I understand that I am a sinner but in my sin and misery, God has sent Jesus to die in my place. And although I am so undeserving and full of faults, Jesus looks at me with love and calls me to be closer to His side. God calls all believers to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ so by partaking in baptism I am reminding myself and proclaiming to the world that my identity resides in Christ. As Acts 2:38-39 say, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off – for all whom the Lord our God will call.”



# God's Amazing Grace

Allison Spindler

I was born on July 18th, 1997 and was baptized as a baby. My father passed away when I was two and I grew up in a Chinese church that hurt my mom with their judgmental words and actions. Even when I was young I always felt God's presence and I always knew that there was someone to fear. Although I did not have a personal relationship with God, I knew in my heart that He existed. The Bible verse Ecclesiastes 12:13 always stuck: Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man.

In 7th grade I switched to a church called Hanmaum. My mom did not join me but I had a feeling that this church was right for me. The atmosphere was always so happy, so spiritual, and so loving. The youth group bonded very well and they incorporated God's word in every action. I admired them. This period was the first time I ever saw God as my father, someone not only to fear but to love.

I remember going to a retreat and the topic was new life in Christ. I remember we studied the book of Ephesians focusing on Ephesians 2:4-5, "But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions - it is by grace you have been saved." I was very touched that the all powerful and mighty God loved us so much that he gave his son Jesus, the most pure, to go through so much excruciating pain on the cross just so that some of us will be saved. This truth hit me very hard at the retreat. I am so undeserving of God's love yet he still made the ultimate sacrifice for me. Isaiah 53:5 says, "But he was pierced for our transgressions, he was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed." This is just another reminder that Jesus was hurt for us and because of it we get the chance to be in heaven.

At the last day of the retreat there was a very long prayer session. I still remember vividly that it was 2 am in the morning and some people from the English Ministry picked up their guitars and started to play the song "At the Cross". The pastor was standing with his hands held and said that this was a time to repent for all the sins that we have committed. Slowly, the youth group that I admired for being perfect and holy was on their knees, praying out loud, and crying. I suddenly came

to realize that God not only saved me but also the ones around me, and just like Ephesians 2:9 said, "It is the gift of God -- not by works, so that no one can boast." I understood that the people around me had their faults but they acknowledged their sins, repented, and were saved. So I wanted to pray for God's forgiveness for my sins too. But at first I didn't know what to pray for. I knew I did wrong things in my life but were they important enough to pray about? Finally the lyrics from "At the Cross" helped me realize that my sins are the worldly things that I do that pulled me away from Christ. I thought of my relationships with people and that I don't love them the way God loves me. I repented for being a sinner, I repented for all the wrong things that I did even though I couldn't remember all of them. Finally I prayed that God be in me so that I can realize faster when I sin and turn back to God.

Now I am at the point that I know for sure that Jesus is my Savior. I love Him so much and I want to share the Word with others. When I read John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." I had to think that life without God is very pitiful, and if the only way to heaven is through Jesus Christ then I want to tell people about Jesus and how He died on the cross for us. Once I spoke to Josiah and he said it would be very sad if he was at one side of heaven and seeing his non-believing friends not being able to pass through the gate. He reminded me once again that I should share the gospel with others to let them know what God has done in my life. God is great, He is powerful, and His love is what gets me going in the morning. Even though it's hard to keep up with Christ, 1 Corinthians 10:13 has always given me hope. It says, "No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it." I know there will always be times in my life that I will feel very lost, or I will feel like giving in to temptations and not caring about the wonderful things I am blessed with. But this verse reminds me that I am not alone in going through life's difficulties and someone else is going through the same thing. And nothing is impossible with the Lord because He knows my limits, even though I am not strong but with Christ I know I can make it through. I believe that this church family is something God has placed in my life to help me grow and learn. I am proud to call every single one you my family. I love all of you very dearly.

# Grace Alone

Maria Lee

I grew up in a Christian family, so I was blessed to have Christian values instilled into my daily life since childhood. At the age of 7, I had already developed a fundamental understanding of the Gospel. I would regularly attend church with my family, and participate in children's Sunday school activities after service. However, at that age, I had not fully grasped what the Gospel really meant, and what Jesus really meant to me. Sure, I could recite John 3:16 when prompted to, but knowledge does not equate to faith. As I grew older, I fell into the routine of the stereotypical Christian kid – I would wake up Sunday morning, ride my parent's car to church, attend morning service in the sanctuary, and then Sunday school afterwards. My family told me to read the Bible in the morning daily and to meditate on words of the Scripture, but honestly – that didn't work out very well in the long run. I kept up with it for about three days, and then I just resumed sleeping in. The passion to know Christ wasn't there and looking back, that should have been a warning to me that my heart wasn't with Christ, either. However, I simply ignored the signs and continued my lukewarm lifestyle, because I thought I had already received the salvation promised by the Gospel.

When freshman year of college came along, my faith was truly tested. College was such a liberal environment. I was pelted with questions from friends and fellow students regarding Christianity, forced to make choices against the current of peer pressure, and decide if I loved Jesus enough to follow Him. In college, it was all or nothing – I could no longer live as a passive Christian. Through tumultuous trials and numerous obstacles, God humbled, molded, and shaped me more fervently than ever before.

But it was in my weakest moments that God manifested Himself to me. The words of Jesus that come to mind lie in Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." At that point in my life, I finally exercised faith when I gave up my worries, my burdens, and my sins to Christ, trusting that He would reconcile the stunted relationship between God and me. My innate pride had prevented me from realizing that I was a sinner in need of a Savior, destined to hell and an eternity devoid of God. Up until then, God had helped me an

immeasurable amount of times in my life, but my hateful pride had given the credit to myself instead of to Him. God opened my eyes to His grace, His mercy, but most of all to His perpetual and unchanging love for me. He truly loved me. In my state of rebellion against Him - He loved me even then.

I thank God for His precious gift of salvation and reconciliation through Jesus Christ, and His equally precious gift of the Holy Spirit, who continually guides and directs me towards God's will. I am ready to publicly acknowledge what Christ has done for me, and what I hope to do for Him and in His name. I am ready to be baptized into His family, and to be His faithful servant for the rest of my life. In the words of Paul in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me."

# CYIA Testimony

Melody Day

I did not want to go to the Christian Youth in Action (CYIA) training camp at first because I would have to miss my final two days of elementary school, write a testimony (and I wasn't even sure if I was saved), and send out support letters to raise money. The one-week camp was to train teens to teach God's word to younger children. So when I talked to my mom about my hesitation, she said we should pray. I did pray about it but I still did not know what God's answer was. My mother prayed with me and said sometimes we just have to step into the Jordan River first then God would open the way for us; this is how we walk with God by faith.

I was fine to miss the last two days of school but I felt it would be my last chance to say good-bye to my some of my friends who I might never see again. For testimony, my mom told me to just write what God has put in my life. As I started to write, I found it went quite smoothly since God was guiding my fingers and heart.

I also wrote a support letter and sent it to people in our church but I was not sure if God would move peoples' hearts to support me. However, I should've known that God would always provide. To my amazement, my mom received an email a few weeks later saying I had raised the full amount! The email included a list of the people who had sent money and as I read the list my heart was filled with joy, gratitude, and awe. Only a few weeks had passed yet I had already raised more than enough money! I knew God wanted me to do this camp for His glory.

I was skeptical when I first arrived at the pre-training session. There were people who had been there many times and I felt out of place and awkward. But I recognized some people (besides Amanda and Joanna) there. One of them was a girl named Alice who had been there for four or five years and I used to play with her a long time ago since her church and my church were sister churches. She was very welcoming and kind and told me she would help me if I needed it. Another person named Henry was one of the assistant leaders and he came from the same church as Alice and was my older brother's best friend a long time ago! I had not seen them in so long yet God had guided me here to meet them. One of the things we were supposed to do at the session was to create a Wordless Book to share the gospel with the kids and I was surprised that it was a lot harder than I expected and I failed horribly. I felt discouraged afterward but I vowed to work harder.

Finally the real training week came. It was difficult at first to make new friends but soon everyone in our dorm were best friends laughing and joking and I also settled into camp life quickly.

I can't exactly call it a camp as it was more of a training school. We had classes about the missionary story that first-years taught, as well as how to effectively teach songs, memory verses, and how to run the 5-day clubs. We had practicums where we would present the lesson we prepared for in front of leaders to be evaluated. These were nerve-wracking but I found myself improving. We also had chapel, devotions, and praise time. I loved the praise time and I would sing my heart out to the Lord every time. One night I felt particularly moved during praise time and later on Henry gathered only the people from Northern Virginia (NOVA) and we sang "Here I am to Worship". I felt tears in my eyes as we sang it but he suddenly stopped playing his guitar and said we had run out of time. I was a little disappointed and wondered why God would stop us. Later, I realized God was saving my tears for something else.

Later that week, during group devotions my friend Angela suddenly burst into tears and one of the leaders guided her out. As I watched, I wondered what had happened to the joyful and cheerful girl she had been before. After group devotions we crowded around Joanna who had run out to see Angela and found out what happened – Angela's brother was suicidal. When I heard it my heart was filled with sadness and my instinct was to run out and comfort her but our dorm leader said the best thing we could do was to pray for her. When the dorm leader saw tears forming in my eyes she pulled me to her and I just couldn't stop crying. I can't imagine how much pain my friend must be feeling. After all, if my brother had chosen that dark path I would feel so much pain as well. I just cried and cried as my friends were chatting quietly. Finally I returned to my dorm, brushed my teeth in silence, and went to my bed while my friends laughed and talked. Two of my friends and I tried to gather everyone together to pray for Angela and her family unsuccessfully so we decided to pray ourselves.

I wasn't exactly looking forward to seeing my friend again the next day but to my surprise she was so cheerful (although her face was a little red). Then something amazing happened. During one of the breaks Angela ran up to me and said, "My brother came home!" I was so excited and I hugged her tight saying how happy I was for her. Lots of girls in our cabin ran up to her and hugged her and I could see joyful tears in her eyes. When I told Angela that several of us prayed for her brother she was so excited because God had answered our prayers so quickly!

Finally, the last full day arrived. The director announced that there were two circles up in the front and if you would like to give your whole life to God to step in the circle and pray to Him. I decided to do it and I waited in line feeling the tears coming once again. Finally I arrived at the circle and I stepped inside and knelt to pray. At first, I didn't know what to say but I just talked to God and told Him I would give my whole life to Him. I knew God would hear what I was trying to say.

As I stepped out of the circle tears just kept coming and I could not stop. I kept on hugging my friends and comforting them as they walked back. The girls from NOVA put their arms around each other as the praise team started singing and playing. As soon as the words "Where you go, I'll go, where you stay, I'll stay ..." I choked and cried even harder. My friend hugged me saying "It's okay Melody, it's okay." But I just kept on crying so hard that I could barely sing. When we headed out after the praise to play a fun game, a girl before me turned around and saw my tear-stained face and she said, "I know you've changed today and will give your whole life to Him." We hugged and I thanked her for her encouragement. The game was so much fun and we returned to the dorm tired, physically and emotionally.

This training school was such a blessing as I was able to interact with so many people who loved God and served Him. Also, I learned so much and will be able to serve God better. Best of all, I know my life has been changed.

# Blessed in a New Marriage

By Bruce McLeod

I never imagined that a Christian woman would make a leap into my world from China of all places. One day as I was exploring the various profiles on a Chinese dating website I saw this lovely smiling and friendly face which attracted me to read the accompanying profile. The very first words were – “I am a believer in Jesus Christ”. I could hardly believe it! How is it that a woman deep in central south China has such a dramatic experience with salvation and boldly declares it for the entire world to see? I thought – didn’t the Chinese authorities have something to say about this kind of statement? But my curiosity could not be contained – this was someone I definitely wanted to reach out to –even if it was just for an on-line chat.

Her name was Mingyi, and from the very start we both felt that this “meeting” was something special. We had both been trying to find Christian people to have a friendship and relationship with that was Christ-centered. Our experiences in life and faith seemed to match and complement each other. Our priorities were God focused and family focused and we communicated very well even though neither of us spoke the other’s language at all. The amazing computer translation tools allowed us to communicate quite effectively if we were patient and persistent. We found that we each wanted to communicate daily even though there was a twelve hour time difference. And, we did connect on a daily basis for many weeks until we realized there was something very special and real about our developing feelings for each other.

How could this be? We were quite disparate in age and our cultural backgrounds were quite different as well. Mingyi had a son who was starting university in China and I had three married sons from my first marriage who were now grown with families of their own. I even had eight lovely grandchildren – six boys and two girls. Mingyi was more in line with the ages of my three sons. One of my sons said: “Dad, she is my age!” I said: “No, she is a year older than you”.

Needless to say, the attraction grew to the point that after we shared our family and life experiences in on-line chatting and video sessions for several months, we had the urge to meet somehow, somewhere. We had stopped “looking and chatting” with others on-line at the dating site just a few weeks after we first met. This was an easy step for both of us because we apparently had each decided that this new



relationship took a high priority in our hearts and minds. We had committed to pray about this relationship and ask God to show us His will and direction for this relationship and the possibility of our deepening friendship.

The next step soon appeared to be the selection of a meeting someplace. Oops! It had to be way into China – I was hoping for Hong Kong, Seoul, Tokyo or even Hawaii – all places I had been before and felt somewhat familiar with so that I didn't have to venture so deeply into China. But, Mingyi insisted that I should come to Chengdu in Sichuan province. Where was that and how would I get there...and, get back again? Well, at the very least, I would get a chance to see the very famous giant panda bears that were in a facility nearby Chengdu!

To fast-forward, we were married just after Mingyi and her son, Haocheng, arrived in the US on December 2, 2011, by my pastor, John Hutchinson, at McLean Presbyterian Church (MPC). John had only a few minutes on a Friday afternoon to marry us because he had a previously scheduled wedding rehearsal at 4PM and a big wedding the next day. Ours was a small affair attended by a dozen close friends in the prayer room at McLean Presbyterian Church. I had asked a Chinese couple from my ESL language classes that I taught at MPC to stand up for us – they had both recently accepted Jesus Christ as Savior and had been baptized and joined MPC. It was a good thing I had a Chinese-speaking couple there because Mingyi did not seem to understand the questions the pastor asked in the ceremony so the Chinese woman translated for Mingyi until we got a resounding “I do”!

Well, that was the beginning of the language challenge we have faced in our marriage for over the last one and half years. Although, the English is coming along slowly it has changed the tempo and progress of our marriage in many ways. Most dramatically, my new son, age 22, has become a semi-permanent resident of our household and it now looks like the mother/son relationship is critically essential to both of them for some time to come. Mingyi cooks the best Chinese food I have ever tasted (Sichuan style) and Haocheng is Mingyi's English-speaking assistant in all matters where English is required. Of course, they speak Mandarin at home which has slowed the assimilation process and made it harder for them to learn to speak English. I tried making a rule that only English was to be spoken in our home on Thursdays but, of course, that did not last more than a couple of weeks.

I have come to highly respect and love my wife's indomitable spirit which manifests itself in so many ways. Obviously, this was a key motivation and driver to leave her native land, home and family to arrive in the US to a new life in 2011. Mingyi is thoughtful and purposeful about all that she does. Sometimes I do not

understand what she is thinking and what drives her but more and more I see the reason behind her actions. She prays several times each day about every aspect of our lives together. Short of a moderate fluency for her to engage in English conversation with me, I am relegated to a mysterious wonderment and guessing game to determine what Mingyi is doing and thinking. But, I am confident she has spent much time in prayer about every decision and initiative she undertakes. The future is bright, though, as she will undoubtedly achieve a better English language capability and may astonish me with her conversations and chatter. She is certainly not reticent – at least, in Mandarin. Some of my Chinese acquaintances have labeled Mingyi as quite “chatty”. This actually gives me great hope for our future together since communication is so essential to a successful relationship. Our son says I may regret it when Mingyi becomes more fluent in English. I don’t think so – I married her partly for the joy of sharing and communicating together each day of our lives.

The challenge of seeking a marriage partner through on-line profiling is not that unique. Lots of information and pictures are shared and there is ample time to communicate over a period of time to get better acquainted. But, like more traditional dating and courting avenues there is the real possibility of creating an image in your own heart and mind of a person that truly exists only in your imagination. Dreaming of the perfect match will only lead to disillusionment or uncertainty about marrying at all. Aren’t we many times looking for someone to complement us and make us whole? We can only find our completeness in Jesus Christ. As Christian believers, we must turn to God’s word to ascertain and understand something of the “profound mystery” that Paul speaks of in Ephesians.

Not only is marriage turning out to be a profound mystery but also some very hard work. I am finding that I must change my thinking and ways to conform more closely to God’s divine plan. I am seeing what Tim Keller means in his book on the meaning of marriage when he states that “marriage is a major vehicle for the gospel’s remaking of your heart from the inside out and your life from the ground up”. Our sinful problem of self-centeredness flies in the face of the Bible’s teaching to “submit to one another”. The servant attitude of Jesus Christ must be emulated in our marriage to make it work the way God intended. We must also be willing to change.

So, we are very thankful for the Biblical teaching we have received from our leaders at CCCVA. This church and its stand for the truth of God’s word are essential to our spiritual lives and the growth of our marriage. We are encouraged by the many couples in a church fellowship we have been attending who have discovered that God’s principles are the best way to build sound and strong

marriages. We have come to the right place to learn and grow in our faith in Jesus Christ and to build our marriage and family relationship by allowing the Spirit of God to dwell in our hearts and guide and change us to His will for our lives. Praise be to God!

Mingyi and I both look forward to growing in “one flesh” in this adventure of marriage. Brothers and sisters, please pray with us for God’s abiding love and Spirit to dwell in our hearts as we look to Him for the power and pattern of our marriage.