

康郡之光

Contra Costa Light August 2012

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甘心樂意的事奉

/馬東俠

我雖行過死蔭的幽谷，也不怕遭害，因祢與我同在；祢的杖，祢的竿都安慰我。

詩人的一生經過許多的苦難，神的護庇與拯救，使他有極深刻的感受與體會。

我一月裡，突然持續嘔吐胃液，送醫院急診，檢查後發現左邊疝氣突然發作，造成小腸扭曲阻塞，使胃液與食物無法暢通。醫生立即插管，用機器排出胃液，並立即開刀修補左邊疝氣，避免了腸穿孔的問題。感謝上帝，一切手術都很順利，醫生後來告訴我們：「你很幸運，沒有耽誤醫治的時機。」我與澤文深懷感恩之心，知道若非神的手護衛，人脆弱的生命隨時都可能受毀壞。

回家修養期間，找到一本儲存的《康郡之光》是1992年12月號，其中一篇是我病後的見證，當年，我患急性閉尿症，引起高燒，進醫院加護病房，神卻奇蹟的醫治了我，使我轉危為安。當時，我們倆同心立志，堅信生命氣息全在乎主，當存感恩的心，甘心樂意的事奉，多多在教會服事，努力傳揚福音。廿年的時光飛快而過，廿年後

，主再次保守我、賜我新生命，我們心自問：「主啊，祢的恩典真豐富，足夠我用，但我們為祢作了什麼？」「這次祢給的功課，要我學習什麼？」

希伯來書告誡我們：「**因為主所愛的祢必管教，祢鞭打凡所收納的兒子。**」（希12:6）每當我們靈性下滑，走向低谷的時候，神總會耐心提醒，給我們當學習的功課，重新挑旺復興的靈火，使我們脫下包袱，再度振作起來。例如這次急症，神讓我認識到，由於對身體上的隱患(疝氣)，以為是小毛病，不去認真對付解決，一旦發作，就成為健康的嚴重威脅。

同樣，在我們的屬靈生命中，也有隱藏的私心雜慾，若不在神面前儆醒、禱告、爭戰、與靜聽聖靈的催促，且真誠的認罪悔改，就會成為心中的纏累或偶像，逐漸與神疏遠，敬畏神與愛人的心就愈來愈冷淡了。

我是1940年信主受洗的，一生蒙神眷愛，因祂親手引導，使我在困難時，也能靠神的恩典走出低谷。多年來，主的真道培育我，如同雲彩環繞般的見證使我甦醒，靠著



祂的恩典，使我有事奉的機會，我也自認為與神的關係良好。但近年來，年歲增長，聽覺與視力漸漸衰退，體力也不如從前，常有退一步之想；另外，信主年日久了，心中有驕傲隱藏，看不到別人比自己強，相反的，動輒看到別人的缺點，卻不見自己眼中樑木。

神這次再給我學習的功課，使我在病中靜養思考，讓澤文有更多的時間與我在一起讀經禱告，彼此提醒、啟發，同心在神面前認罪悔改，求神在我們有生之年賜給我們一顆清潔的心，和繼續事奉的機會，讓我們真摯的用心靈和誠實敬拜祂。

感謝教會裡眾弟兄姊妹為我殷切的代禱、無微不至的關心與照料，至今不斷，深深感受到神家中的溫暖與愛。願神藉著聖靈的運行、和賜給每位弟兄姊妹的基督新生命，使我們在主的愛裡合一，各盡肢體的功能，建造教會，榮耀主名。



曼城寄思

/李月碧

第一次到 Manchester, England (曼城) 是 2010 年的冬天。那時俞培新夫婦與我們正在 Coventry 中宣。俞老師夫婦早在 2002 年就開始了英國的宣教事工，足跡幾乎踏遍英倫的大城市。到 Coventry 還福音的債，便帶我們夫婦前往，讓我們親身體驗英國的宣教事工。就在忙碌中突然接到曼城學生團契的請求，希望我們能有人到他們那分享，後來俞老師決定帶叔為前往。回來後帶來了令大家興奮的消息：曼城是宣教的大禾場。於是我們決定抽空前去察看，要對這個禾場有更多的了解。

曼城是英格蘭的第二大城(但伯明翰的居民認為伯明翰才是第二大城呢)，位於英格蘭的東北角，距離南邊的伯明翰只有兩小時的車程；Coventry 就在伯明翰東南邊上。我們那次的探訪沒有驚動華人教會裡的任何人。俞老師聯絡上了 OMF 的歐洲事工負責人 Mark Muller，他便熱心的帶我們四處參觀，細心的介紹曼城華人教會和學生學者團契的歷史，以及學生福音事工的現況。之後便放我們在校園裡，讓我們親身體驗。

從 Mark 的介紹我們了解到：曼徹斯特華人基督教會現有三堂，其中粵語和英文部已有 45 年歷史；國語部是源自一個 19 年前由英國宣教士帶領的學生團契，加入教會大概有 10 年之久，現今約有 60 人參加主日敬拜，由一位女傳道負責帶領，有很多個家庭團契，其中學者團契就有三個，可惜多半參加團契的人不來教會。St Peter's House (SPH) 是學生團契聚會的地方。曼城是英國中國學生最多的城市，市中心牛津大道兩旁就有三所大學：曼大、城市大學、和皇家音樂

學院曼城分校。保守估計牛津大道方圓一公里內就有超過七千華人學生，還不算附近其他大學及語言學校。因此在當地有不少英國宣教機構積極的推展華人學生福音事工，如：OMF (English Corner)、Friends International (Globe Café)、及曼大基督校園團契等。這群外國宣教士默默的苦心想借學英文來吸引學生學者，也帶領了不少人信主；但比起廣大的禾場仍是有限，因此 Mark 極力邀請我們加入這個宣教事工。當地華人教會雖然在 SPH 辦有學生團契，聚會時却不超過二十人。當我們漫步校園中，聽到周遭不只英語，更多的是鄉音；閉上眼睛，彷彿置身香港。牛津大道號稱是歐洲最多公交車的大道。兩旁除了學校、醫院外，還有不少中國餐廳。

這次的探訪令我們留下深刻印象。從 Coventry 回美後，我們兩家便為英國的學生事工迫切禱告，每次禱告都有共同的看見：曼城的事工最為迫切。我們於是在二零一一年三月到五月間，有了為時十一週的“探水”之行，借著傳道，主日學，家庭團契查經和 MCCC 華人教會建立了美好的關係。更重要的是在 SPH 學生團契中，與當地學生領袖們更建立了神國戰友的關係。就這樣更確定了曼城事工的方向。二零一一年五月底，俞老師向教會的宣教同工們提出曼城事工計畫時，教會不但撥款補助，牧師更積極的培訓我們。

去年九月我們再次去到曼城。透過事先與當地教會的聯繫，已安排妥住宿。曼城因為大學多，外籍留學生也多，因此出租房子供不應求。這個城是英國的工業大城，號稱是化學工業的起源地，曾經有非



曼城 SPH 學生團契

常輝煌的歷史。可惜這幾十年，由於經濟衰退，建築物老舊，移民多，失業率高，因此犯罪率也高。五月在曼城時，我們所住的地區是移民雜陳的地區，據來看我們的人的說法，是全曼城最危險的區域。而我們卻與鄰居相處融洽，偶而也會有鄰居的孩子來串門，內心很有平安。但是顧慮到來往學生們的安全，常常他們晚上回家時，我們總是叮嚀他們要小心。九月再去曼城，便迫切禱告，希望能找到一個對學生比較安全的住處。感謝神，MCCC 正好有位弟兄空出一間房子，便以最低價租給我們。不但如此，並且家具廚具全留下給我們，一應俱全，弟兄姐妹們的愛心令我們倍感激勵。

我們的住處離教堂、團契稍遠，無法步行前往，但我們天天都有“奔馳”汽車接送。英國的公車多半是“奔馳”汽車，且是雙層車廂。住處巷口轉角就有 111 號公車站直達教堂和 SPH，每十分鐘一班。我們每次上車就往上層車廂坐，如果幸運還能坐到最前排，一路風光盡入眼簾。只是英國巷弄狹窄，公車卻很大，司機開得兇猛，第一次上車真是坐得心驚膽跳。記得我們第一次出去探訪，回來時竟認不出站牌，十分著急，緊緊張張的站在司機後座。司機看出了我們的情形，問我們要到那裡，我們報了個路名，沒想到司機竟然不知道，但他卻安慰我們不著急，等坐到終點站再幫我們查地圖，我們可以坐回頭車。當我們下車時，司機

不但仔細的告訴我們如何轉彎，並且不收我們票錢，都說英國人冷漠，我們卻感受到十足的人情！神眷顧我們的軟弱，總在需要的時候差祂的天使來說明！還有一次，我們在公車上遇到了一對中國夫婦，相談甚歡，還邀了他們來參加聚會。下車時丟了手機竟不知道，等發現時已過了半天，根本不記得丟在那裡。這手機是女兒剛送我的，為的是方便跟她聯絡，這一丟真叫人焦急。我們趕緊回想曾到過什麼地方，沿路找回去，到了公車站，正好有個執勤人員，我們便向他打聽有沒有失物招領處，他便仔細問我們搭過那幾班公車，什麼時間，手機型號…於是撥了個電話，幾分鐘後告訴我手機正在總站的辦公室，辦事非常有效率。手機不但尋回來，還多了兩個慕道友！以後還常常在公車上遇到年輕人，邀他們來團契，來教會，曼城的公車也成了我們服事的同工。

牛津大道的兩旁還留有幾棟古老建築，街樹在秋風中漸轉金黃。有一天，在大道上往團契的方向走，正四面觀看想捕捉這古老城市的昔日風采，突然對街響起了一陣輕笑夾雜著模糊的鄉音；定睛望去，看到五六個年輕華人嬉鬧著走向一家外觀豪華的中國餐廳，有男有女，有刁著香煙的，有拖著拖鞋，有幾個還穿著睡褲！看看腕表，才五點多，不知他們是來用晚膳或剛起床用早點。曼城的中國餐館都生意興隆，按當地人的說法是留學生養的。那天我們急著去團契，沒有跟著進去看，幾週後終於找到一個夜晚，到那餐館用膳。當我們踏進這家餐廳，真懷疑我們是在曼城，倒像是在臺北，在上海，在北京。一屋子的中國學子，穿雜著少數其他國籍的學生談笑風生，好不熱鬧！我們坐下後，也不知怎麼點菜，看到鄰座兩個女學生吃得開心，聊得投入，忍不住傻傻的看

她們幾眼。或許是我們的滿臉笑容，她們居然回頭朝我們笑，就這樣打開話匣子跟我們聊了起來。中間有一個已經畢業馬上要回國，另一個正在醫學院第四年。我們邀請了這個醫學生來參加團契，也答應要為即將回國的畢業生找工作禱告，希望她還能回曼城。聊得開心，分手後竟忘了留下她們的聯絡電話。原不期待會再見到她們的，沒想到下個星期的團契，這個醫學生竟然來了，且帶來了好消息，她的好朋友拿到曼城的工作，六月份就會回來！感謝主，在我們想不到的時候，想不到的地方仍然使用我們！我們巴不得每份每秒都能為祂所用！



（海外學子喜樂的家 曼城 SPH 學生團契）

留在曼城的學者家庭不少，常來 MCCC 團契的就有四五十家，可惜只有三分之一來教會，其他多半都曾來過但不再來了。他們之間有一個共同點：都有兩個孩子，老大和老二相差十來歲。顯然老二是出國定居後才生的。因為週五常常一起查經，彼此也就熟悉了，我們總找機會邀請慕道友到家吃飯；可他們總是客氣，每每要等到請過我們之後才肯來。我們知道這是他們“敬老”的一種方式，所以也就樂意接受，目的是要多找機會傳福音。在這些家庭中，有一對夫婦最叫我們感動。先生學生物，在大學裡做博士後研究，薪水有限。太太一時找不到合適的工作，但為了給女兒有一個更好的學習環境，竟不

惜丟下自己學位，在校園的學生宿舍做清潔工。其實夫婦倆都來自書香門第，先生的父親是國內生化科學的大師，所寫的教科書廣為各大學所用；太太的母親是虔誠的基督徒，在國內除了忙教學研究外是從來不做家事的。那天在他們家吃飯，聽了他們的分享，格外敬佩。

早期移民來的學者家庭，當年都是一位英國宣教士名叫“道格拉斯”帶領信主的。他們不但信心堅定，而且熱心服事，可以看得出來這位英國宣教士對他們的影響極深。還沒到曼城前就聽到“道格拉斯”這個名字，很多我們認識的朋友到曼城宣教都受到他的接待。他們夫婦已有七八十歲的高齡，不再做帶領教會的事工，但一聽到中國人有困難，仍半夜出門，竭盡所能來說明。我們一到，就很希望有機會能認識這位宣教的前輩。那一天好不容易大家湊對了時間，請到了道格拉斯夫婦在一位弟兄家見面，我卻感冒了，去不了！叔為回來後很興奮的告訴我，原來道格拉斯出生在重慶，他父親當年在中國宣教。日本侵佔東北時，他還是個孩子，珍珠港事變後就被送進山東濰縣的集中營，和李岱爾同關一處。李岱爾是位英國奧運金牌得主，在一舉成名後就回中國，抗戰時被日本人關進集中營，他雖然有機會逃離，但卻把機會留給婦孺，自己情願留下來照顧無法逃出的一群宣教士子女，道格拉斯是其中的一位。我們過去幾年的宣教中常用李岱爾的見證來勉勵年輕人。當聽到道格拉斯分享他集中營的故事時，內心激動萬分；深深感受到：有這許多的見證人，如同雲彩圍著我們。

在日軍集中營裡，還有一個孩子也是大家熟悉的宣教士，戴紹曾牧師。戴牧師的曾祖父戴德生是英格蘭人，年輕時就到中國內地宣教，是第一位留長辮，穿長袍與中國勞苦民眾認同的宣教士。他曾說

我若有一千英鎊，中國可以全部拿去；我若有千條性命，沒有一條不留給中國。哦！不是中國，是耶穌基督！因愛耶穌而願意將他的性命給耶穌所愛的中國人，戴德生就來自曼城附近的伴斯禮小鎮。當我們十一月要回美前，想到團契剛開始成長，需要有人照顧，於是請來了戴牧師所創辦的內地會（OMF）英國同工來分享宣教士的故事，並鼓勵學生去探訪戴德生的出生地伴斯禮小鎮。沒想到這一小群中國人的探訪，給這個小鎮帶來了大震撼！

今年一月間從曼城傳來了令人興奮的消息：英國兩家報紙爭相報導伴斯禮小鎮的探訪。戴德生，這位早被英國人遺忘的宣教士再一次引起大家的注意。當年英國差遣宣教士到世界各地，正是他們靈命復興，國富民安的世代。如今信仰低落，道德淪喪國勢也衰頹。回頭看當年頹廢的中國，因著他們帶來的福音，現在有幾千萬的基督徒，且正走向繁盛，怎不令英國人深思…。

二零零六年王永信牧師在紀念基督教來華兩百週年的紀念會上曾

說：神藉著許多西方宣教士讓中國領受了兩百年福音的嗎哪，現今是我們回饋西方國家的時候。回想曼城的點點滴滴，小小團契的這一群中國人所帶給伴斯禮小鎮的漣漪，深深領受到：我們是神手中的一顆小棋子，不論祂將我們擺在那裡，為的是要讓我們得益處，正如聖經所說：…萬事都互相效力，叫愛神的人得益處，就是按祂旨意被召的人。感謝神給了我們這個機會服事祂，叫我們經歷了這一切後，信心更加堅定！



從西到東十二籃 / 王蔚蔚

從中國的最西邊 - 西藏，到最東邊 - 台灣，30 天的旅程，除了欣賞異地的風景、人物、文化外，更珍惜一路上神對我的眷顧、保守、主耶穌的大愛。

1.入藏許可：中國政府視我們這批美籍華裔13人為「外國人」。去西藏旅遊，除了需要一般的中國簽證外，還需要「入藏許可」。出發前兩個月，中國政府突然停發入藏許可，以致我們考慮是否要更換行程。奇妙地，在出發前兩周，中國又開始批准入藏，我們順利取得入藏許可，得以成行。

2.西藏天氣：五月至八月是去西藏的月份，溫度暖和些，但也是印度洋暖流雨季的時候。出發前兩周天氣報告，拉薩天天下雨。感謝主，我們在西藏的十天，每天都是豔陽高照。

3.青藏鐵路：外國旅遊團的火車票似乎是一票難求。本來預計搭晚上8:00的火車從西寧到拉薩，導遊一直到中午才確定我們有車票了。晚上7:30到西寧火車站時，發現火車要晚一個鐘頭。心裡正在咭咭，驗票員突然說我們的火車票有問題，訂票用的護照號碼和我們護照上的號碼不同，不准我們進月台。導遊要我們在候車室裡等待，旅行社的三名職員不停地跑來跑去，時有耳語，也不知到底出什麼問題。上不了這班火車，會擾亂

全部的旅程。我只好禱告。火車快要進站時，導遊說問題解決了，是電腦出的問題。西寧車站的站長親自帶我們去月台。火車進站後，站長交代列車長說我們的票沒有問題，這才安心。感謝主，如果當初火車準點到達的話，我們根本上不了車。這一小時的延誤反而幫了忙。

4.高山反應：提到西藏，就怕高山症。出發前，我們都取得預防高山症的藥。入藏前兩天大家開始服藥。整個春天我每天都在吃花粉敏感的藥，實在不想再多吃另一種藥。我禱告神，求問是否需要服用。晨更的時候，唸到箴言3:5「你要專心仰賴耶和華，不可仰賴自己的聰明」。於是我決定不吃高山藥。感謝主，西藏的十天，我沒有發生高山反應。有幾位弟兄姊妹有些不適，一兩天後也都恢復，沒有影響到後面的行程。讚美主。

5.西藏公路：在西藏真正感覺到什麼是地廣人稀。地是那麼的大，了無人跡；山是那麼的高，毫無綠意。西藏人築路不喜歡開山洞，所以綿延的公路，盤纏而上。我們乘坐西藏唯一輛有廁所，50人的旅遊大巴，比單行道稍寬的公路彎來彎去，稍稍不留神，就可能翻到路旁的雅魯藏布江裡。還好，神給我們一位開車技術高明的司機，十天下來沒有出事。



6.藏人藏廟：我們團員平均年紀67歲。考慮到我們的體力，所以我們只去了西藏三個大城，參觀幾個最有名的宮（廟）。看到大群的藏男藏女，右手拿著小經輪，不停地轉，左手拿著串珠，不停地捻；雙腳繞著宮不停地走。也看到藏人三步一跪地朝著宮前進，他們的衣服、膝蓋與額頭都破了、黑了。

我感謝神，我們基督徒是多麼的幸運，我們沒有這些儀文，我們不須朝拜聖地，我們只要心裡誠實，隨時隨地都可以敬拜神。我們的神是活的靈，不是兇神惡剎的偶像。

7.拉薩飛機：中國的民航班次，平常就聽說有誤點的習慣，更何況是出入西藏的飛機！只要天氣一不好，氣流不對，就停飛。但那天，飛機準時出發，讓我們平安地從拉薩到了成都，沒有耽誤後面的旅途。

8.禱告盾牌：出發前，許弟兄話重心長地提醒我們，此行要小心邪靈的入侵。因此我們請求相識的朋友，在北美為我們禱告。郭姊妹更是利用在旅遊車上的時間，讀聖經並為團隊

禱告。感謝這些禱告，成為我們抵抗邪靈的盾牌。

9.再度戒嚴：我們離開西藏的第二天，看到報導，又有兩名藏人自焚，西藏又開始緊張。不久又看到報告，政府暫停批發入藏許可，不知道何時會再開放。感謝神，給予我們這個短促的機會，來到這偏遠的地方。

10.咳嗽不已：不知道為什麼，我們夫婦在台北突然都開始咳嗽，咳得很厲害。藥店買的消炎片、止咳藥都壓不住。感謝主，在台北餐福特會上碰到李弟兄，他非常有愛心，為我們帶來了台灣製造的甘草止咳水，很有效，服用之後，我們馬上好多了，否則根本沒有體力與心思繼續旅遊。

11.台南沙崙：知道台灣有兩個鐵路系統(台鐵與高鐵)，但對他們的運作和車站地點不是很清楚。經人指點，我們在台北搭乘高鐵到台中，再坐台鐵經斗六至台南，又預先買了第二天早上9:00的高鐵票由台南回台北。一路南下非常順利方便。台南回台北時，早上8:15慢慢吞吞悠哉地由旅館走到台南火車站，剛好是8:30。不知為何，突然感到台南火車站可能沒有高鐵，衝到售票處，才知道要先坐到沙崙才有高鐵。8:35正好有一班去沙崙。匆匆忙忙買票到沙崙，趕上了9:00的高鐵。感謝主，如果再晚一點，我們就趕不上高鐵，又會有一堆麻煩事。

12.及時返美：六月台灣已經開始熱了，但還不能算太熱，台北還有一些微風。一路觀光，天氣都不錯。最後一晚在宜蘭，開始下大雨，但第二天一大早又放晴了，讓我們順利地經由台北搭上回美的飛機。不久就聽到台北台灣處處大雨，淹水塌方，停班停課。我心裡只能說感謝主，感謝主的保守，讓我們有機會遊覽花蓮橫貫公路，且能夠及時地回家。

出門一趟，再一次地體會到要常常數算主的恩典。感謝主，保守祂的子民出入平安。相信其他12位團員弟兄姊妹也都可以裝滿他們的12籃。



A Journey Home

Laureen Hori

On July 2, 2006, something happened that would change the lives of my children and I forever. There was a knock on the door early Sunday morning. Police were bombarding me with questions about my husband's personal life, of which I was reluctant to answer. I couldn't understand why there were three patrol cars on our street. As I was trying to figure out what was going on, they finally admitted that my husband committed suicide....

I was born and raised in San Francisco all my life. From grade school to professional school I lived at home—what one would call a sheltered life. I played with the kids at the corner mom and pop grocery store. Eventually their mother invited me to their church when I was seven years old. I met Christ somewhere along the way as I was growing up and became active in serving the Lord. I met my husband, Glenn, in dental school. We had dreams of having children, owning a private practice, purchasing a home in a decent school district, and then retiring together and traveling cross-country a second time (first time was with our little two-door Capri on our honeymoon, second time would be an RV during retirement).

As life unfolds, Glenn and I almost lost our first child at two years of age. It took hospital three days to diagnose the problem; which was either a sarcoma with a 100% fatality rate, or a psoas abscess with a 40% survival rate if the operation was immediate. Cheryl developed the rare infection that happens in only two cases per year world-wide. Why couldn't she catch chicken pox like every other kid instead of coming up with something exotic? To be in the hospital for three weeks, watching the little one suffer in a cage-like crib was rough for the parents. That year was a nightmare (she did survive and is now at UCSD.) My husband asked



those "Why?" questions that I didn't have any answers for.

The next storm hit, when Glenn lost his dad, older brother, and first cousin all in one year due to illness. The stock market crash struck—lost a substantial amount of money (the entire kids' education fund). Other storms of life continued to bombard us, and finally my husband repeatedly said, "That's it. Money is all important and don't you forget it. If God is real he would not let our two year old daughter suffer. No more church. Can't trust anyone, but myself." Oooh, that hurt. With time, I grew used to the idea living without God and it didn't bother me as much. I would ask God upon occasion to help out, but to no avail. My faith started to dwindle. Depression set in as my husband's goals in life weren't accomplished.

The last storm almost sent me on a collision course with life, when my husband decided to end it all. I sought to wake up from that nightmare. This was surreal. I lost many nights of sleep. How were we to survive? My husband had always reminded me that I was never going to make it in life if anything should ever happen to him. He was upset that I didn't leave my position working for the state of California and look for a better paying job, as I would never be able to retire. I never lived on my own, never took care of the paperwork or investments, nor did I know how to repair cars or household items. Yikes! The first weeks were

terrifying as it seemed that *each* day either something tragic happened or something major broke that I couldn't repair. I couldn't explain the strange occurrences. Then a friend mentioned his wife was channeling and had a message from Glenn Hori... this all seemed wrong, contrary to my upbringing...

To add insult upon injury, I had a new boss who changed my work start time from 8 AM to 6:30 AM in the morning. He had no sympathy for kids being dropped off at 5:30 AM and left alone till school started—his attitude: choose between your job and your kids; a lot of single woman do it on their own. We were living from paycheck to paycheck, life insurance was nonexistent as there was a clause if death was by suicide, the insurance is null and void. I hadn't had time to "process" his death as I had to hit the ground running with work and household operations.

Sept 19, 2006 was supposed to be our 25th wedding anniversary, but instead I found myself attending the first night of a suicide support group. This seemed just all wrong. The support group was beneficial, but after awhile I was just too tired to attend.

The following four years were the worst in my life. Life is difficult enough having two parents run the show, but having one take the role of two people... Learning and doing Glenn's household chores in addition to my own was overwhelming.

It was fast food and TV dinners. Came home from work totally exhausted. No energy to help my kids out with their homework. My boss assigned me the most problematic patients to work with in the State of CA—condemned row. I had to work extra hours to take care of all the paperwork without compensation. I was totally fatigued each day. Weekends were for catching up on household work. Social life was almost nonexistent.

Life was tough. I dripped many tears from time to time. One night as I was late getting home and didn't call home while I was "falling apart," my 11 year old son, Michael, left a message on my cell phone, "Mommy, I hope you didn't do what daddy did."

It was difficult to continue this thing

called life. I was beginning to wonder if God really existed and if everything I was brought up with in my childhood and young adult age were just figments of my imagination. As miserable as it was, I could not ever bring myself to end it all. In case the Bible was true, I didn't want God coming after me later and saying, "The pack rat you are, how could you



have thrown away all the gifts I've given you to use for others?" As small as the hope was getting day by day, there still was a glimmer of hope in me—someone or something was keeping watch over me, though I didn't realize it at the time.

One of my former pastors heard about the suicide, and called me from Oklahoma. He explained to me he knew exactly how I felt. His dad passed away and shortly afterwards, his mom committed suicide, and then he too became suicidal. He was 19 and had six younger siblings he had to support. If his mom who was so strong couldn't do it, how could he survive? He shared Jeremiah 29:11 with me, which I just could not relate with at the time. I felt totally lost and abandoned....But, God did not let me go... He also mentioned that God will bring people into your life and help you out—"Don't reject the help," as he made a mistake in doing. He cared enough to call from time to time to remind and encourage me that I need to find a home church that can help support and care for us.

I did try. I came up with a list of churches, but never got around to making a criteria list. My children and I explored three churches early on, but the kids were turned off. I was discouraged. I prayed about it, asking God "1) To give me an exact address—I'm too drained to search for a church. I need you to point me in the right direction. 2) My kids don't know you—can't you at least give them a desire to know you? 3) I

don't know how much more of this stress at work I can handle before I break down." My prayers didn't seem like they went past the ceiling.

Then it happened, God finally intervened. It started on September 15, 2010: I tore a tendon in my ankle and was told I am not allowed at work with crutches—that meant staying at home and being off my feet. I now was a captive audience of one. God had my attention.

Around May of 2010, Michael's high school swim coach called one evening to convince me to allow Michael to switch teams for the summer of 2010. I met the mom of one of the kids we carpooled with. She invited Michael to visit OASIS on Sept 18, with her son. Shortly before the meeting, Michael was protesting that he did not want to go and didn't want to have anything to do with it. Why did he have to go and I wasn't going? I reminded Michael that one of these days when I have enough energy I was planning on searching for a church that we would feel comfortable with. Also, I needed him to make use of this opportunity and check it out. And above all, I urged him not to embarrass us in case this might be a church we want to be a part of! Reluctantly with much fussing and complaining, he went.

I dreaded the repercussion from Michael, when I picked him up from OASIS that evening. He quietly commented, "Mom, aren't you going to ask me?"

"Ask you what?"

"How was it?"

"OK, how was it?"

"Mom, it was great. Eddie, the pastor, was just like my chemistry teacher! He's great! Maybe we should check out their Sunday school, and other stuff!"

That was unexpected! Did I hear what I heard? I thought I better find out what kind of church this was, i.e. make sure it wasn't a cult or anything contrary to the Bible. Since I was not allowed at work, I had time to start investigating CCGC. It started with the first phone call and Eddie happened to be at the other end--grilled him for a bit and questions were answered to my satisfaction. To my surprise, there were several similarities to my former church. Then we discussed developing a game

plan to meet others through the fellowship groups.

My initial thoughts were, "I'll wait till I'm off the crutches; this is embarrassing. I don't want to hobble into the church, stick out like a sore thumb, and look like I'm handicapped! I want to keep a low profile." With the rain, the next excuse was I didn't want to slip. Time passed, and I realized the ankle didn't seem like it was healing any time soon. I was going to be on crutches for a while, and I felt the Lord was saying to me, "Look, you are off of work, you have the time, I provided the address of a church I'd like you to attend. No excuses for a long commute—six minutes away, and there's easy parking! Michael is being receptive. Get moving and check it out!"

Okay, okay. Whoa, did God just answer what I thought were three impossible prayers? Statistically speaking, what are the chances three requests would be answered in a span of a week? Unbelievable - His timing! If the answered prayers occurred separately, I doubt it would have had the impact on me that it did. It was no accident. I needed that miracle. (Some of us have to be hit with a 2x4 to get the message) How did God do that?—especially when I was losing hope and faith in Him?

And it doesn't end there. The Lord continued to prove to me CCGC is where he wanted us now. Little did I know then, the healing plan had begun. I didn't expect to have such a drastic change in me. When the major work obligation gets taken away, and one gets knocked off of one's feet literally, all one has left is time to focus on God and try to understand what has happened in the last couple of decades. He had my full attention.

My initial thought was that I was never going to be able to retire on a state salary; thus, I didn't think about retirement. Nine months later after the loss of my husband the State of CA gave us an incredible raise that would make it possible to retire comfortably. However, along with the raise, came the arrogant, condescending, uncaring boss, who put fear in all of us that we would be probably fired before our retirement dates. There were false reports written against many of us. Excessive work was created to make us fail. Life in the

last four years was incredibly painful. Life was just working 40+ hrs without lunch or breaks, commuting 2-3 hours, coming home exhausted and starting all over again the next day. The weekends were used to catch up on housework. I felt my prayers weren't going past the ceiling. I was losing hope in God. It was appalling that the only thing keeping me alive was the financial considerations if I endured to retirement age. Each month I survived meant more added to the pension fund.

The revised thought was to make



it to retirement in one piece. Perhaps in 2012 I would start the chore of looking for a church and then process/grieve the loss of my husband. There were so many unanswered questions. God beat me to the task. Little did I know I would be given the required time in 2011 to explore CCGC, deal with the death of my spouse, meet people, have God back in my life, and see him amazingly at work. Although I've seen what has happened, I sometimes have a hard time believing it actually occurred. Yet there's indisputable physical proof it happened.

First it was Eddie's Sunday school class that happened to be studying the Psalms. As a child I thought this book was all boring. As he discussed the lament Psalms, I found myself identifying with David. That sounds like my complaints about life. Then Eddie challenged the group to write a praise or lament Psalm. Nope, I wasn't going to do that.

I'm too new and I don't write poetry. One day I said to myself, what would I write if I tried? I tried and somehow the words flowed out really easily as it was from the heart. Eddie mentioned that the Lament Psalms should have a "confession of trust" and a "conclusion of praise" in

them...I think I forgot how to trust and praise God for years... hmmm...one of my first steps in coming back to God.

There was discussion on how people keep asking God for things on a daily basis, but how often do we remember to thank him? For me, with the constant reminder of the injured ankle and each day off of work, is a precious gift and I can't help but thank Him daily. It truly has been a refreshing time as he's turned my life around 180°. It's awesome that I have had the opportunity to spend with the Lord, chatting and reflecting on the recent years.

Another significant thought was God likes to hear singing/music from us. We can imagine that God filters out the off-notes and loves to hear the wonderful praise from us. I never quite viewed it that way, so out came the guitar from the back of the closet and many of the songs that reminded me of the joy I once had years ago. I guess this was all God's plan about that healing I desperately needed.

Eddie's next Sunday School topic was—what to look for in a church if you leave CCGC. How coincidentally backwards was that?—I should have had this course first before we found CCGC as I never got around to making up a criteria list. I guess God had his own ideas about what comes first! Another reason, we got dropped off here.

A few months later, I planned to visit Richard's Friday night Bible Study group. Only one major problem: it conflicted with my favorite TV show, *Smallville*. During reruns, I saw an opportunity to see what the bible study group was all about. After a few weeks, I realized I had to choose between the two—I guess that's what VCR's are for. A couple of the topics were really significant to me. We studied a section on trials, testing, and temptation, and how they build perseverance in life. So that was what was those previous years were all about, and it is true I'm much stronger for having gone through it all—both mentally and spiritually. While life is peaceful, I plan on preparing for the next storm that is going to strike by growing in my faith and depending on Him to pull me through.

Another topic studied on Friday night was prosperity and God's plans. The verse, Jeremiah 29:11, came up to haunt me again. I understand if it weren't for three major events happening in my life (loss of husband, ankle injury, Michael responding positively to Oasis), I would not be at CCGC writing this article, nor would I have rediscovered the joy of walking with the Lord again. As I look back in the last few months, I'm at awe of how God laid out His plan and dropped us off at CCGC's doorstep. I can't get over how amazing it has been that out of all the people in this world he has to listen to and love, he took the time to plan for our family. Many times in retrospect, it's easier to see how His plans work.

I really started enjoying my quiet times with God in the morning. Wasn't ready to go back to the work world. I prayed a few times, "Lord, if you can get me off the week of VBS, I'll do whatever you want as I'd rather prep for that than return to work." God honored the prayer-- VBS worked out fine as I had wonderful high schoolers helping me out that week. It was an opportunity to meet many others at CCGC. I invited "Sunshine," the clown to help at the Carnival with her balloons... the story didn't stop there... Unexpectedly, I was asked to help out in the Jr high group the Saturday night after VBS was over. I couldn't say no, as I couldn't break a promise to God about helping out the

same week of VBS! I learned be careful what you ask for... as God did answer my prayer and then some.

One of the latest concerns was how am I going to survive the five year mark of the loss of my husband (July 2, 2011). I was anxious that I wasn't going to make it through that day without breaking down. I didn't think to pray about it, but God must have been watching after me. Reading my email of July 1, Emily asked me to help out with the children's praise time with the guitar on Sunday, July 3rd. I hadn't done that for years and confidence wasn't quite there. Remembering what Eddie said about asking God for power (Ephesians) when we need it, I did as I definitely needed it. All worked out well (Romans 8:28) as the kids did a good job of distracting me from any nervousness I might have had that morning as they were trying to pin the identity of Sunshine on me. Wow, didn't expect God to step in with his timing with a deterrent to keep my mind off the loss... managed to get through that weekend in one piece!

Grace Fellowship's study in Ecclesiastics had its effect on me in various ways— talking about God's timing, and taking time to enjoy life. Meeting great people and having wonderful food was an added feature! There were many others who helped me adjust to CCGC and life... too many stories to write about here. You'll have to ask me in person one of these

days.

These entire last few months of life have changed me forever. I can truly say that 1) God answers prayers, 2) If it's necessary, he'll pull a miracle for those of us in deep need, and 3) He has his own timing for things to bring back those who have wandered off the path of life.

Through it all, I have a clearer understanding of why these series of events happened the last five years. It's truly been a learning experience with God directing the program. The verse Jeremiah 29:11, "For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future," now has special meaning for me.

God had his own timing when he moved things up on His calendar and I guess mine too! What I was planning on doing in 2012 has been mostly accomplished in 2011. The Hori family does not need to waste time searching for a church in 2012; nor do I need to take substantial time out to deal with those difficult events. (I was going to do it on my own, but literally thank God that he provided people and situations that I could process it with.)

"Now, Lord, what do you have in store for me when I retire in 2012? Could you point me in the right direction and provide me with the exact address?"

THE END OF THE BEGINNING... 



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