

Easter Message:

" Three Days that Changed the World "

By David Larson

There have been many events that have changed the world—the invention of the light bulb, the invention of the airplane, D-Day and the defeat of Hitler, the invention of the computer and the rise of the internet, the fall of the Berlin wall, etc. But I would suggest that no three days have changed the world like the 14th, 15th, and 16th days of the Jewish month Nisan in the Spring of A.D. 30 (or possibly 33)—the days in which Jesus Christ was crucified, buried, and raised to life. What difference would it make if these events had not happened?

First, there would be no Christian Church. Christianity is the largest religion in the world, with well over a billion followers (32% of the world's population claim to be Christian). Although Jesus was a popular prophet who attracted thousands, when he was crucified the masses were scattered and his closest followers went into hiding. His disciples were confused, discouraged, and afraid. They were not about to start the greatest religious movement in history. But because of Jesus' resurrection, of which they were eyewitnesses, their faith was revived and their hope renewed. They started preaching Jesus crucified and risen again, thousands believed, and the Christian Church was born. As Christianity spread around the world and through the centuries, its impact has not only been to inspire faith and personal life change in millions, but to start schools, hospitals, and to be the greatest influence in the world for world aid and development work. In many parts of the world, the first schools and the first hospitals were established by Christians, and in many cases the best schools and hospitals are still those run by Christians. Thousands of Christian workers and millions of dollars donated by Christian people every year continue to put Christian love into practice, im-

proving the lives of people through relief and development projects organized by Christian organizations like World Vision, Compassion International, Samaritan's Purse, and many others. None of this would have happened without the Church, and the Church would not have started without the resurrection.

Second, there would be no basis for forgiveness and peace with God. The only reason our sins can be forgiven by God and we can have peace with God is that Jesus paid the price through his death on the cross to pay for our sins. Jesus said, speaking of his blood poured out on the cross: "This is my blood of the covenant, which is poured out for many for the forgiveness of sins" (Matthew 26:27). Peter, whom Jesus appointed to lead his followers after his departure from the earth, said: "For Christ died for sins once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you to God" (1 Peter 3:18). Moreover, Christians who have themselves experienced God's forgiveness through Jesus are empowered to forgive others, as the Apostle Paul teaches in Ephesians 4:32: "Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you."

Third, there would be no hope of eternal life. The reason Christians have confidence that someday they will be resurrected and will live forever in heaven is that Jesus himself was first resurrected and ascended into heaven. Peter speaks of this hope, saying: "In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil, or fade—kept in heaven for you" (1 Peter 1:3-4).

Indeed, the crucifixion and resurrection of Jesus were events that changed



My heart was touched when I received so many volunteer responses from those who are willing to contribute their efforts to this edition of the newsletter. Every word is a great blessing. At Easter, let us rejoice in the power of God that raised Jesus from the dead. This same power is still with us today. It is with us not only in Easter, its Spirit fills us up anytime we invite Him to come. We welcome each of you continue to come to ISI Friday Night Fellowship to enjoy, share and get your mind renewed.

Helen Lin

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world. And they could change you as well—if you respond in faith, believing that he died for your sins and rose again. "If you confess with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved." (Romans 10:9).

By Zhili Nie

Sometimes something happens in your life that changes your life forever.

I have been thinking what wonderful things have changed my life.

When I came to America in 2007, I couldn't understand any word in English. My husband is a student at UB, so I came with him as a housewife. I always felt alone because I had no other relatives or friends here. My husband decided to send me to ISI English class so that I could have some opportunities to know other people and to learn how to talk with other people. I think it was my best choice to go to ISI English class. Since then, my life has turned into a new chapter.

The ISI English class played an important role in my life. The teachers taught me a lot of things about the culture of America. It enabled me to know Americas better; meanwhile, I enhanced my English to a new level. I also made some new friends in class. That made me more comfortable to live in the U.S.

The teachers also taught me many things about God which impacted me. I began to learn that God had created the whole world. We all are His children. He loves us so much. Can you imagine? Before that, I didn't know God at all. What a wonderful thing it is! I can be led by God. I can follow Him the rest of my life.

I not only made some friends in class, but also improved my English a lot. Certainly, the most important thing is that I had a chance to know God. It changed my life forever. This experience had influenced me deeply. I began to want to know Him more and more. So I decided to go to church every Sunday. I also had attended Bible study on Friday night in order to discuss questions with other Christians. They helped and taught me a lot. Now I have become a Christian.

(Revised by Phyllis Lawecki)

Note from Editor:

ISI English School is enjoyed by English learners with different nationalities. It is a great place to enjoy English and make friends. It is also the place where we experience the love shared by Christian teachers and friends. The following articles are written by ISI English School teacher and student. After reading, you may want to join them.

Helen Lin



ISI English Conversational School

By Phyllis Lawecki

I started working in the nursery at the ISI English Conversation School when we first came to Buffalo as ISI staff in 1995. I was impressed with how the school met needs of the total person - linguistically, culturally, socially, materially and spiritually. After that first semester I knew this was something I would like to be involved in, so I was given a small class the next semester. I saw how my linguistic background helped me teach pronunciation especially.

I have been directing the school for the last 10 years and find it very satisfying and fulfilling. Our philosophy at



English School Teacher & Students

the school is to help meet the felt needs of the students to improve their English for whatever their reason - learn some functional English, prepare for college classes, etc.

We are a Christian service organization but are also evangelistic. We include in our advertising for the school that we use the Bible for part of the class time for instruction in English and set aside 45 minutes in each class for this purpose. I've never met with a problem from any of the students regarding using the Bible. In fact, most seem to be very interested in learning more about the Bible. The program was begun in the 80's by retired Mennonite missionaries Joe and Catherine Baehre and Henry and Pearl Gamber and has continued since then under different directors.

We've always been blessed with wonderful volunteer teachers. We have 8 currently teaching 4 classes at different levels. We are able to keep our classes small for optimum conversational learning - 2 beginner classes, intermediate and advanced classes. I am currently teaching an intermediate class on Wednesdays and tutor a Taiwanese woman in reading on Saturdays. We are always open to volunteers who would like to come and visit a class with the idea of possibly becoming an assistant or a teacher. Please contact me at plawecki@buffalo.edu



I Put My TRUST in Him

— Testimony from *Alex Sung*

My Background

My name is Alex Sung and I was born in Malaysia. I am the fourth child in my family, with three older brothers and a younger sister. My parents are both Catholics and that has become a great influence in my life. Just like most of the kids in those Catholic families, I was baptized when I was a baby and was confirmed when I turned 12. So to me, my understanding of religion was going to church every Sunday morning, confessing my sins to the priest through the little window in the confession booth every year before Good Friday, fasting for certain food on Friday during the Lent season just to name a few. I had rarely missed any Sunday Masses all these years even though it was at 7a.m.!

My College Life

After graduated from Sunway College in Malaysia, I went abroad with some friends to further my studies in Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Michigan. The urge (obligation) in my heart reminded me days after arriving in Kalamazoo that I should go to church. I found one near the university and started going there for the next 3 years. I continued my Spiritual quest on the very first Sunday I stepped foot in US. I felt very good about it because I was able to continue the “obligation” of going to church since my childhood. My friends were very impressed that I was such a good person / Christian – attending church every Sunday! After meeting

my then girlfriend (now wife) in Western Michigan University, things started to change. I knew there was this pride in me preventing me to embrace God. After going back and forth with my wife between different churches, finally I decided to settle down in a Lutheran church.

Job Searching & Working Life

My job searching after graduation in December 2000 turned out to be nightmare. Recession started a few months after my graduation. Job market was extremely slow and I was unemployed for many months. I lived through those periods of sleepless night and depressed moments before finally starting my career late in 2001. It seems like I am completely powerless when faced with these challenges. There is nothing that I can do to make things better. I have been relying on my own strength my entire life but why can't I now?

Turning Point

For many nights I had many questions recurring in my mind. What had happened? Am I not in control of my own destiny? Is it not true that through working hard, I will be able to do or get whatever I wanted?

My wife started to tell me more and more about a person that I have known for most of my life that I had no relationship with – Jesus Christ.

She told me that “Trust in the Lord with all your heart: do not depend on your own understanding. Seek his will in all you do, and He will show you which path to take – Proverbs 3:5-6.

Slowly, I started learning to lean on God. I was hesitating at first because my father had always given me the impression that I should always relied on my own. I always believed that I can handle everything. I continued working in the same company and resumed our lives here in Buffalo. It was one of the most difficult transitions in our lives to continue to live in Buffalo after the offer was turned down. I started to dial-in my focus on my career and my MBA. This time, I knew I cannot rely on myself. I knew there are many things that are not in my control. Career is one of them. I started to spend more time reading the bible and doing devotions. I struggled to find time for bible studies and devotions due to my busy schedules that I have to keep up with work, school, school work and spending time with my wife.

Thank God that my wife met Phyllis. She invited us to the ISI English School and then through her we come to know more about ISI Friday. My wife also found us some good bible teaching churches that had played a significant role in growing my faith. A lot of my questions about Christianity have been answered while attending ISI and these churches. The results after putting my life in God hands are simply amazing.

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My company was going through some restructuring starting in late 2005 / early 2006. I was worried that it might affect me. Quickly, I was asked to be take apposition in the team that was going to re-structure a department in the company. At least that had given some sense of job security to me. I continue to work on my MBA. It was a long journey but I finally graduated with my MBA in June 2008. Due to the slowing down of economy; my company canceled the tuition reimbursement program – two months after my graduation! What a coincidence! The years after resettling in Buffalo had been absolutely smooth sailing and wonderful!

It was on July 7th 2008, I remembered very clearly a transformation took place in my life. I got saved.....I got saved while driving home from a doctor's appointment while listening to WDCX. God spoke to me through two callers that gave their testimony in Neil Boron Live. What they said pierced through the darkest side of my heart like a double edge sword that left me no where to hide but to confess my sin and accept Jesus Christ into my life as my God and Savior! I had to pull over from a traffic jam because I had tears coming down from my eyes like never before!

In December of 2007, that was when the recession was officially started and the world economy started to head in the wrong direction. Unemployment rate in the US started to creep up from a steady national average of 4.5~4.9% to 5.0% in February of 2008 and then to a 25-year high of 8.5% in March of 2009. It is during this difficult time that God opened another door for me to work in another company that much better opportunities.

There are many more blessings that I cannot describe with words. I will leave you with these three verses.

Luke 1:37:

"For nothing is impossible with God."

Proverbs 3:5-6 :

"Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; In all your ways, acknowledge him, and He will make your path straight. "

Romans 8: 28:

"And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose."

Cooking Around the World

By Beth Larson



Ladies' Talk & Tea meets every Thursday morning for tea (and coffee for some of us), snacks, English idioms and conversation, and frequently for a craft or cooking experience. On March 12, we had the opportunity to learn some Middle Eastern fare. One of our regular attendees is from Yemen, and agreed to teach us to make hummus, a delicious spread for pita bread or dip for vegetables. Everyone enjoyed working with ingredients which were unfamiliar to us and sampling the tasty results

Cooking or craft experiences give us cultural awareness as well as valuable English practice. Our friend from Yemen had to explain clearly in English how to make the hummus and others listened and wrote the directions on recipe cards. We can learn so much from one another! I eagerly welcome any woman (sorry men, this is a ladies' only group!) who would like to share something from her culture to give it a whirl (this is an idiom. It means "try it.")

I am including the recipe for hummus. I think you will enjoy this tasty treat.

Hummus

- 2-4 small very hot peppers
- 3 cloves garlic
- 15 1/2 oz. can garbanzo beans
- Juice of 3/4 lemon
- 1/4 cup tahini
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 tsp. salt

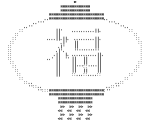
Instruction: Put all ingredients into a blender and puree. Top with 2 sprigs parsley, chopped, and more olive oil. Serve on pita bread or use as a vegetable dip. Enjoy!!!



Professional Day

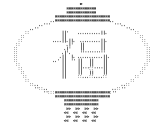
By Helen Lin

In ISI, we can meet people from diverse backgrounds and professions. Learning from others' experience helps to widen our eyes. ISI Professional Night took place on 03/27/09. This year, we have three speakers: Dr. Cho, Distinguished Professor of Philosophy at UB, Dr. Alfred Fast, heart surgeon, and Mr. Ralph Bolton, author and lecturer. They shared their experiences that how they came to Jesus Christ and how they work and live in the Lord's presence. Every personal story is different and God reveal to each of them in different ways. But in those words, we can read the message of God's power of inspiring, comforting, love and care. Buffalo ISI has various programs each year in different themes inviting people from different fields to share with internationals and help them to understand more about God.



ISI Chinese Night

By Susi Pasaribu



On February 20, 2009, ISI celebrated Chinese New Year. The celebration was held at Randall Baptist Church. About 130 people came and enjoyed the night, including students, friendship families and people from some other churches. The program started with tasting traditional Chinese tea samplings: Black Tea (Pu'er), Green Tea (Dragon Well), Oolong Tea (Tie Guan Yin), and Flower Tea (Jasminethen). Other Chinese activity stations included Chinese lanterns making (loved by the children), and Chinese calligraphy. After that we had a potluck dinner with yummy food and tables decorated in red .

Hongwei Cai and Ziyan Wu acted as Masters of Ceremony (MC) welcoming people and giving explanations about Chinese culture. We saw a video presented by the 17 Buffalo State students from the earthquake region in Sichuan, China, showing their experiences in America.

We also saw a skit from Florence Wong and Zaohui Zhang about Jesus Christ,

and enjoyed some musical performances: two violin solos presented by Hongbin Yang (Buffalo State Collage) and Rui Mao (UB graduated student) and a piano solo presented by Kangkang Li (member of ISI Worship Team). In addition, a piano special was played taken from ISI Worship CD by Crillen Zhao. The night was closed by Xuan Zhao, graduate student at UB and President of the Chinese Student and Scholar Association with a wonderful testimony about how he became a believer in Jesus Christ. It was a wonderful night of food, music, testimony, and Chinese culture. I hope we will have it every year. Thanks to everybody who helped organizing that night; we really enjoyed it.

(Revised by Beth Larson)



Lantern Making at Chinese Night

Sports are important for keeping us healthy. On Saturday, April 4, we had ISI Sports Day at White Heaven Road Baptist Church, Grand Island, with more than 100 in attendance. There were volley ball and table tennis competitions. We had 8 groups for volley ball competition: EE (Electrical Engineering), English School, Larson Family, Manta Family, Physic, Extra, Friday Fellowship 1 and Friday Fellowship 2. For table tennis, we had 16 contestants.

During the break, we got insight from David Larson that in order to win, we must have a "Winning Combination", which includes: **fitness** (you need to be in a good shape), **skill level** (including natural talent, following rules, practice, knowledge and techniques), **determination** (will to win and never give-up attitude) and **team work**.

Sports Day

By Susi Pasaribu

(Revised by Beth Larson)



He afterward linked that winning combination to the spiritual life; number one is **Faith in Jesus Christ** (if we accept Christ then we can get salvation) and then we have to do **Good Works** (knowledge of God's words, self control, godliness, brotherly kindness), **Perseverance** (faith to the end, good attitude toward trial and temptation) and **Love** (which equal to teamwork or unity). This was excerpted from 2 Peter 1: 5-11.

Also during the break, we heard a beautiful traditional Chinese music solo presentation, Er Whu by Ying Zhao. He played two wonderful songs with Er Whu, one of which was 'Amazing Grace'. We also had opportunity to play 'yoyo', carpet ball, basket ball and some other sports.

In the volley ball competition, Manta Group and EE group shared the medal for 1st Place, Physics Group took 2nd Place, and Friday Fellowship 2 took 3rd Place. For the table tennis competition, the winners were Han Seung Jin in 1st Place, Kim Jung Pril in 2nd Place, and Liu Xin in 3rd Place.

Finally, there was dinner with people from the church and awards presentation for the winners.



ISI MINISTRY TEAM

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Prayer of this Month

By Florence Wong

A Celebration of the Relationship — Coming into the Presence of God should Cause a Celebration

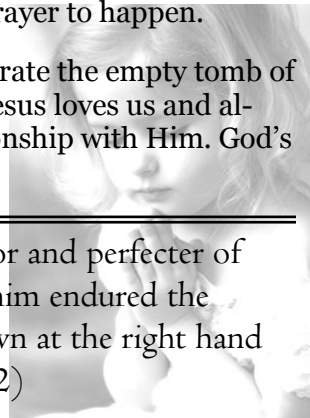
But may all who seek you rejoice and be glad in you; may those who love your salvation always say, "The LORD be exalted!" (Psalm 40:16)

When God invites people to prayer, He invites them to the dances—a celebration of the relationship and who created it. A celebration of who He is (a living God who cares his people). A celebration of life meaning forgiveness and heaven! When God the Father invites us to prayer, it's an invitation to the dance.

Prayer when it is taken too seriously ceases to be prayer. It becomes a formal exercise, obeying rule, being proper, trying to get better, trying harder in doing the religious things that are necessary in order for prayer to happen. The truth is prayer is something different from that. As Christian (follower of Jesus Christ), we already have the privilege to prayer and having the right to claim that we are acceptable in God's eyes. We do not need to try being religious in order for prayer to happen.

This Sunday April 12 let us celebrate the empty tomb of Jesus and knowing that it does matter Jesus loves us and already made a way for us to have a relationship with Him. God's word says:

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:2)



We are on the web!

ISF @ UB Website:

<http://wings.buffalo.edu/isibuffalo>

ISI @ Buffalo Website:

<http://www.buffaloisi.com>

Thank You Note

When I finished editing and looked back the whole working process, it is a kind of witness that how ISF is supported by all its participants. Here, I sincerely thank everyone who contributed to this edition of newsletter in every aspect. Thank you for all your support to make it better!

Your Editor