



A Publication of the San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church
"Growing together and reaching out in the love of Christ"

Firmly Rooted

"Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him." Col. 2:6a
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Sending a Message of Love

One of the nicest aspects of the month of February is St. Valentines Day. It is a day that we remember the person that we love by sending a message of love with a Valentines Day card, candy, flowers or presents. Whether it be your girlfriend, boyfriend, wife, husband or friend, on this day you have the opportunity to let this person know how special they are to you and how much you love and care for them. As you may know, St. Valentines Day has a legendary Christian connection.

While there are several different versions of the legend, one version says that St. Valentine was persecuted as a Christian and interrogated by Roman Emperor Claudius II in person. Emperor Claudius was impressed by Valentine and attempted to get him to convert to Roman paganism and in turn, his life would be saved. Valentine refused and instead shared the Gospel with Claudius and tried to convert him to Christianity instead. Because of this, he was executed. Before his execution, he is reported to have performed a miracle by healing the blind daughter of his jailer. The romantic legend added to this story was that on the night before Valentine was to be executed he wrote the first "Valentine card" to his beloved, many reference the jailer's daughter, and signed it "from her Valentine."

Whether this legend is true or not, it has become a tradition to "send a Valentine" to your beloved. What a wonderful thing it is to send a "message of love" to the person that is so special to you. If the Lord has blessed you with a special person to be your "Valentine," I hope that you are remembering your "Valentine" with a message or expression of your love on St.

Valentines Day. It is important to acknowledge such a blessing from the Lord and to let this person know how special they are to you. In return, you might find that you might receive a "Valentine" from someone who thinks you are a blessing for them from the Lord. Yet, if you think about it, every Christian has received a "Valentine" or a "Message of Love" from God, the Father.

God, the Father, loved us so much that He sent us a Message of Love, not just for St. Valentines Day, but for every day. "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and Only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." (John 3:16) Jesus Christ is our "Everyday Valentine" from God, a Message of Love for every person in the world if we choose to accept it. How blessed are we to have someone who loves us so much that He is willing to give His Son, so we can have eternal life. All we have to do is believe in this "Everyday Valentine" from God and we are saved. What is really great, is that we can offer this "Everyday Valentine" to anyone we meet and especially to those that we love.

As this St. Valentines Day comes around, I hope that you will remember your own special Valentine and send a Message of Love to him or her. In addition, I pray that you will remember the "Message of Love" that God, the Father, has given to us, not just for St. Valentines Day, but for every day. Jesus Christ is a "Message of Love" from God that we should cherish each day and that we should share with those that we love and care for.

Have a Happy Valentines Day!

In His Name, Jeff Kataoka

My Spiritual Journey

By: Josh Scott

I grew up at San Lo Church. I ate there, slept there, learned there, and had fun there for the first eighteen years of my life. I was easily afforded the opportunity to learn about whom Christ is and the basic foundation of Christianity, the Gospel, due to my family bringing me to church ever since I was born.

When I was still in Sunday school, I knew Jesus to be a great guy who did nice things for not so nice people. He came to the earth to die for my sins and I thought it was nice of Him to do that. During these early years, I asked to accept Christ into my heart several times because I wasn't sure if the last time I tried to accept Him counted. Everything was taken at a surface glance and it wasn't until later that I would even begin to understand the gravity of these fundamental teachings.

But before I get on to the rest of my life, God was working in it even before I was born. My father grew up on a farm in Oregon. My mother was raised in a small suburb of metropolitan Tokyo. What are the chances of two people like that meeting, getting married, and deciding to move to a state neither of them knew? Through a series of unforeseen and adventurous events, my parents moved to San Lorenzo where they met new friends and were invited to SLzJCC.

San Lo was where I learned the fundamentals of Christianity. In my teen years, I began to understand the meaning of these truths that I learned from many Sunday school classes. Youth group with Scott Shimada began to take on another form. A lot of the time, the exact verses and messages escaped me but the gist was always the same: The Gospel. This story of God's love for mankind gained a deeper meaning in my heart and mind.

The time eventually came when Scott would encourage me to attend Winter Vision and Mt. Hermon. I heard these camps were supposed to be a lot of fun and my friends were going to go so



Pastor Brian, Brent Kihara, Josh Scott and Pastor Scott before Brent and Josh are baptized on Dec. 12. Praise God for these young men and their steps of faith and commitment!

I thought, why not? Again, I began to understand more of the Gospel. From these camps I gained new friends, many of whom I am still in contact with and keep accountable with today. I would question, live two faced (be one person at home and another at church), stumble, and struggle with my faith but God always brought me back through the messages at church, Winter Vision, Mt. Hermon and these close friends.

Towards the latter half of high school, I began what I consider my serious pursuit of Christ. Camp highs would bring me up and the times in between would bring me down into spiritual depressions. I would be on fire for Christ one minute and lukewarm and cold during the next. I was not pursuing God on a daily basis. Life changed when I made serious decisions at Mt. Hermon and Winter Vision to break this unsatisfying habit.

Cabin leaders like, Richard Shinoda and Tim Lee, kept me accountable. They were always so encouraging to me, especially going into college where my faith was tested. Going into UCD, I was offered temptations that I had encountered before in life but never felt standing alone was so difficult as I had felt then. But God used these brothers of mine to keep me in check. Very shortly into my freshman year, I found my main fellowship in Epic, (an Asian American ministry with Campus Crusade for Christ), where I am leading on Servant Team and worship today. This is all a process and I'm still going through it.

My New Life in His Continuing Grace

By: Ben Lee

The 2010 Christmas season was a miracle in my family's life. We praise God for His goodness and love. We are forever grateful and humbled by the Lord's constant presence and grace.

At the end of October we had traveled to Taiwan and Shanghai where I experienced shortness of breath. Upon returning home, I was treated for pneumonia at which time I also asked for a tread mill test based on my angioplasty done about 15 years ago. After my pneumonia was under control, I went for the treadmill stress test on Thurs., Dec. 16, which I failed. The cardiologist was immediately notified for an appointment the following Mon., Dec. 20. He had already scheduled an angiogram and said, "Oh by the way, here are the options which may include bypass surgery."

Going into the hospital, we were expecting a short stay, where the angiogram would take place then a stent placed, repeating the angioplasty and then sent home. While on the gurney for the angiogram, the doctor said, "You have three clogged arteries and we will need to do a triple bypass graft. You won't be leaving this hospital until we take care of it."

On Thurs., Dec. 23, I went in at 8 a.m. for a 4-1/2 hour surgery and came out of anesthesia successfully at about 4 p.m. During the following recovery days at the hospital, the doctors and nurses were surprised and heartened by my progress. We spent Christmas Day with the family at the hospital in room 3372. It was memorable to say the least. I was discharged on Tues., Dec. 28, and now am recovering at home with my angel, 24/7 nurse, Janie!

I realize that in these past weeks God lavishly bestowed His sovereign grace not only on me but on all the doctors, nurses and medical staff. But most of all, His grace through the Holy Spirit as Comforter and Intercessor, through the incessant prayers from my brothers and sisters of my immediate family here and in Texas, my San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church family, my Cornerstone Bible Church Family in Garden Grove and many other faithful brothers and sisters in the Lord.

How will I respond? I will continue to give Him praise, glory and thanks. I will continue to express joy because of what He has done for me

spiritually and physically. I will continue to tell others that Christ desires for all to have a relationship with Him, that there is no need to fear no matter what they face.

2011 NorCal Missions Conference at San Lorenzo J.C.C.

**Saturday, February 19, 2011
8:30 a.m to 2:30 p.m.**

Conference Theme: "Unity"

"Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity."

Col. 3:12-14

Registration fee includes lunch: \$5

Leon Harper, the main speaker, is on staff with International Students, Inc. (ISI), a non-profit Christian organization helping churches develop ministries to international students on the local college and/or university campus.

Leon will speak on:

"The Christian's Wardrobe"

We would never think to leave our homes every morning with no clothes on. We regularly put off our night clothes and then dress for the occasion. We spend much time on our physical appearance, but how much time do we spend on dressing up our spiritual lives in order to face this world? There is definitely a wardrobe that we are to wear as Christians. We must never leave the house without it. Come and find out more about this wardrobe!