

God Stories

Here it is! The last newsletter of the semester! I want to thank all the people that make this whole thing possible! Big thanks to Jeff, Ron and Chris for putting everything together since I am PageMaker illiterate. Thanks to Michi for doing the spotlights and to all the people who have written! I hope you will enjoy this issue as much as I've enjoyed watching it come together. It has been a real encouragement to me as articles came in to read about how God has been touching the lives of ACF'ers. Not just making his presence known in people's lives, but changing each one from inside out. Interested in finding out how? Read on and enjoy!

God bless!

Betty



Hi everyone! I'm Patty Chang, a senior at Carnegie Mellon. If you don't already know, I'm graduating early and starting to work in New York in a couple months. I actually started to get really nostalgic a couple *months* ago after realizing this would all end too soon. This semester has been a turning point in my life since I joined ACF. When I was a freshman, I experimented here and there; I visited ACF once, went to church sporadically, went to Agape meetings once in awhile, etc. But nothing lasted because I was apprehensive and downright scared. God left the door open for me and I kept shutting it closed.

God was patient with me though. He spoke to me and changed my heart completely. For the first time ever, I let God handle everything. Thus, the theme of my semester would have to be: **Let go and let God!**

As I reflect on these past couple months, it's simply incredible how much God touched my heart. I got to know people who influenced me, inspired me, and even *changed* my way of looking at things, and they may not even realize it. Before I was blessed to meet these beautiful people, I totally relied on myself and was resistant to anything related to prayer, church, fellowship, Jesus Christ, God... I looked at my other Christian friends and refused to give up what I thought they didn't have – freedom.

I thought that by being Christian, one was expected to lead a restricted, conservative life without having any "real" fun. I wasn't ready to make any sacrifices or change my way of life. I was satisfied with what I had already. I realize now, though, that I was the one who was deprived because God's love was missing in my life all along. By resisting God's love, I kept myself focused on academic success, material things, family, and friends. I never turned to God for support, encouragement, intimacy, or His love. Now, His love is a precious and sacred part of me that will never die. Although I still have much room to grow, I have never felt so alive. Trusting in Him is a source of comfort that has freed me from inner conflict, doubt, and confusion.

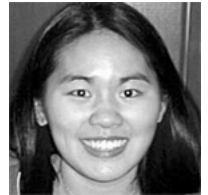
As I begin a new chapter of my life in New York, I pray that God will continue to work in my heart and teach me His beautiful ways. I also look forward to meeting new people in the city and even touching someone else's heart the way I've been touched. So many of you out there have really helped me grow so I want to thank you! And ACF has also served as an outlet for me to finally let go of everything and let God handle the rest.

And finally... just a little shout-out to God's Babes! I love you all so much, my dear sisters. Don't forget me! (This is beginning to feel a lot like a yearbook signing session. Heehee...) Farewell, everybody! I'll continue to pray for ACF when I'm gone. Praise God!

Patty

'Till we Meet Again...

In less than two weeks, the chapter on my life called 'college' will be coming to an end. It's so funny because at times I never thought I'd be able to reach the end, yet now it's so close that in some ways I'd like to just add on a few more pages. Yeah, I'm weird. =P I'm gonna miss you people! ACF has been a special part of my life here in Pittsburgh. Lots of great AND fun memories with you guys — from ACF choir to running the marathon relay, squeezing in crazy amounts of people into my car after ACF, potluck dinners, all the way to sleepovers. =) So what next? Well, I'm in the process of applying to law schools, and I will be spending most of next semester in Taiwan visiting family (and enjoying the yummy food too, of course!), then visiting some good friends in Japan. So, some of you I may not see anymore. =(I'm not sure where I'm going to be ending up next fall yet, but wherever I go, you'll definitely be welcomed to stay at my place if you're in town. Or, if you need some legal advice, feel free to look me up in 3 1/2 years. =P I'm not really good at saying goodbyes, so I just won't. =) After all, I'm sure that our paths will cross again — so, until then...



Becky

"A friend loves at all times..." Proverbs 17:17 Thank you all for your dear friendships!

God's not done with me yet!



Transitions are difficult. May 12, 2000 was probably one of the biggest transitions I've experienced since I moved from New Jersey to Hong Kong six years before - it was my college graduation. It was exciting, anticipatory, and heart wrenching. The feelings were rolled into a ball and sat in the area right below my heart and right above my stomach. Naturally, I felt like I was going to vomit.

In my hand I held a degree from a prestigious university, yet I had no “real” job. In my heart I held onto the heartstrings of my best friend, yet we were in an undefined, undirected relationship. And in my mind I still held onto the hope of repairing broken friendships, yet there was no return of the same hope from my friends. There I was in my cap and gown - unemployed, heart broken, and lonely. So, what did I do? I faced my problems head on.

The first thing I did was “to give up my Isaac”. I really loved my best friend, but we were distracting each other from the one person who is most important to us, Jesus. So, I initiated a six-month break - no communication, no visitations, nothing but a clean break as we reconciled with Jesus. The pain was incredible. It felt like someone took a butter knife, drove it into my chest, and then proceeded to tear my heart out with their fingers. And yes, there after I felt like I was walking around with a gaping hole in my chest where my heart used to be. How was I ever going to heal from this?

The second thing I did over the course of the summer was to deal with my emotions. I was hurt and angry at my friends’ hypocrisy, judgments, and righteous attitudes. I kept feeling like there was all this injustice for the hurtful things they had said or done to me, but that wasn’t entirely true. What about all the times I judged them harshly or broken a promise I had made to them? I tried to resolve some of the issues, and even though some things will never be resolved, I took responsibility for my actions. The most difficult lesson I learned was to continually forgive someone after they’ve hurt you and to ask for forgiveness when I’ve hurt someone else. It’s a very humbling process, but it’s what God has asked me to do.

The easiest to take care of was my employment status, and I got a position as a Therapeutic Support Staff at the end of the summer. I knew I wanted to get a feel for social work, to see if that’s what I wanted to do for the rest of my life, but many people discouraged me from this field. Here’s a handful of things various people have told me:

“It’s emotionally draining. You’re going to come out with emotional problems of your own.”

“You’re going to work with crazy people?! Are you crazy?! [I guess so.] You’re going to get yourself killed!”

“You’re going to burn out from this [working with children], and then you’ll never want to have any of your own.”

“You’re going to be overworked and paid peanuts for it. How are you going to survive on peanuts for the rest of your life?”

In spite of all the negative responses I received, I still wanted to see if social work is for me. Why? Because God called me to it. I know it’s not a glamorous job, but I’m not doing it for the money. I just want to help children. And after three months, this is what I know: I love the work, but I don’t want to do it for the rest of my life, I still love children, and I still want to have my own, and I’m still alive.

Oh, and as for my heart? The void has been filled with much love from friends and of course a deeper, more everlasting love from Jesus. I no longer desire a relationship with anyone; I am very content with singleness. God continues to cleanse my heart of selfish desires and replace them with His desires. So, even though I was going through some really rough times, God was and is always at my side to convict me, to rebuke me, to forgive me, and to love me. I hope you can see that too, if you’re going through difficult times. ‘Cuz God isn’t finished with us yet!

Wynne

A Fond Farewell

Yuan and Maria (and baby Charissa) will be leaving Pittsburgh at the end of January. Yuan has been a graduate student in the ECE department at CMU for the last six and a half years. Maria came to Pittsburgh from Singapore three and a half years ago when she and Yuan were married.

As we prepare to leave Pittsburgh, two thoughts come foremost to our minds. The first is that we will be leaving many brothers and sisters in ACF and PCC whom we love dearly. We have been blessed and encouraged by many of you. Through you, we have learned that no matter where we go, God surrounds us with Christians who impact our lives forever. The memories of our times spent together – the cell group meetings where joys were doubled and sorrows halved because they were shared, the quiet lunches, the warm retreats and cold winters, the talks by many different speakers, the musicals we put up, the fellowship over snacks – they will always be for us to treasure. And we hope we have somehow been a blessing to many of you too.

The second thought is that because of the many opportunities we had to serve in the different ministries within ACF and PCC, we have in the process learned what we are better at and what we are not so good at. Through the failures, we have learned



what our spiritual gifts are and how we can serve our Lord more effectively. We hope to carry these lessons to the next place we go. Like some of you who will be graduating in the upcoming year, we are praying for God to show us where

to go after Yuan graduates in January. We know that if we remain obedient to Him, our experience in the next place will be just as rich as the one we have shared together with you here in Pittsburgh.

Finally, our fondest hope is that we will all complete the race God has set before each of us and meet again someday in His presence!

Yuan and Maria Chou :)

An Anonymous Prayer

Dear God,

First off, I want to pray that the tone of this does not offend anyone. I am writing this to offer thanks and encouragement to my fellow ACFers for their help and guidance in bringing me to you, the path and the truth. My style might be unusual for praising you, but I think you know that there is nothing but the greatest sincerity, gratitude, and happiness in this.

I came to ACF first not as a friend, but as a hidden foe. For years, I listened to pontificators spewing contradictory sermons, judging others for sins that they themselves committed, and eschewing love for anyone who did not hold similar beliefs. I was vaguely familiar with the lessons of the Bible, and I saw nothing but hypocrisy from your believers. Thus, when I first came to ACF, my goal was to disprove to myself once and for all your existence.

“You love me. You actually love me.” (Sally Fields said that after winning the Academy Award) You must have, because you didn’t strike me down to hell despite all my doubts and disrespect towards you. Instead, you strengthened the hearts of ACFers and gave them wisdom to answer my questions. Through their behavior and actions, I saw, for the first time, consistently faithful followers of your’s who could not be labeled as mere “Sunday” Christians.

I once thought I knew it all, and everything was within my control. Little did I know just how powerless I was. Having gained a relationship with you, and a new family in ACF, I now feel I can enter into a new stage of my life, one of devotion to you and love towards my fellow peeps. That’s the slang these days, although I’m getting to the age where I will soon be oblivious to word on the street. Please let me age gracefully. I apologize that this does not follow the ACTS prescription for talking to you, but the “Pauls” in my family of God told me that as long as I speak my heart, it will be okay.

I pray that you continue to be in the hearts of ACF members as they set examples to other non-believers. Let them know that if they could change my skepticism, they can overcome just about anything through you. Their fellowship is incredible, and I will truly miss it. I just thank you so much for loving me so that I experienced at least a little bit of it before I left. Quickly, three more things: Please watch out for those virgins of true winter, such as Leon from San Jose, CA, as they face the harsh weather here in Pittsburgh. Also, please show more people the wonders of happy hardcore. Finally, I hope this doesn’t go too much over length so that Betty gets mad at me.

In Jesus’ name,
Amen.

“As Now, So Then”

I remember when I was studying at CMU (back in those old, old days), I was found by God and became his follower of Jesus

near the time of my graduation. I had a good friend who was in the EE program who was also a new Christian. We were encouraged by our “older” brothers and sisters in Christ and our pastors to begin a life-time habit of spending devoted, focused time with God by praying and reading His Word.

To be honest, initially, because reading the Bible can be hard to understand, and because many of the late-nighters (not all due to study, some due to goofing around too), having devoted time to read the Bible was like taking Cod Liver Oil (do any of you know what this nasty stuff is?), you know its very good for you, but it sure don’t taste so good. Or perhaps at times it tasted like Oatmeal, not so bad tasting, but not so good either, almost like cardboard. But at the same time there was a hunger within my soul that drove me to want to know and experience this God who loved me enough to die for me. So I pressed on, and on, and on. Guess what? The more I read, the more I prayed, the more I began to understand, the more I began to know that God is with me and enjoys time with me, and what’s more, I can enjoy spending time with Him. No longer like Cod liver Oil or Oatmeal, but a tasty treat, a life-giving meal.

I could not say the same for my friend, I saw him not changing much after he became a Christian, and he tells me he did not touch the Bible much or spend any time with God. He told me “I am too busy right now with school, God understands, when I finish school and have a stable job, I will start this habit of spending time with God.” So I watched with concern as he busily and stressfully finished CMU, moving on to a good job. I visited him at times and found out that he no longer goes to church at all and still does not have a habit of spending devoted time with God. He told me “I am too busy right now, with settling into a new job, planning on getting married, etc. God will understand. When I get more settled, I will start.” Again, a few years passed, and I watched him getting married and settle in on his job, all the while showing the signs of a stressed-out, anxious, conflict-prone life apart from God. When I visited him again, he no longer had the desire of anything of God, he now has no relationship with God. I have no right to judge him, but it saddens me and concerns me to see him drifting from the source of life, peace, and joy.

“We are developing good or bad habit right now that will shape who we are in the future.”

There is a phrase I heard once “As now, So then.” It means that as you are now, so you will be then. It is often very true. We are developing good or bad habit right now that will shape who we are in the future. As the busy finals time arrive, as the relaxing winter break comes, will we keep up or start the crucial habit of spending time with God? Yes, you and I are very busy, God will understand. He will understand that our lives depend on our vital link with Him. He is our source of strength and guidance. Let’s open the door of our heart wide and let Him in to transform us, to enjoy us, to lead us. Jesus said to us “Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me.” -Rev. 3:20

For Him,
Pastor Hugo

Reminiscing Once More

The end of a semester always seems to come unexpectedly. We students in particular often find ourselves juggling projects, finals, travel arrangements, and an endless list of tasks and errands that demand attention before we can officially end another academic season. All of a sudden, as our days rapidly crescendo to a climax of stress and sleep deprivation, we find ourselves on the other side. No more classes. No more finals. No work more. No more stress.

This will be the last time some of us will have the opportunity of experiencing the end of a semester. Last day of classes. Last day of finals. Last day in Pittsburgh. For good. Our good friends Markus Adhiwiyogo, Becky Chang, Patty Chang along with advisors Yuan and Maria Chou and their bundle of joy Charissa will be moving on after January. In this issue of the ACF newsletter, you'll read about their fond memories of the past, their plans for the future, and their heartfelt goodbyes to the fellowship. Please be sure to take some time out during these busy last days of the semester to reminisce with our friends before they move on in their lives. And don't say "goodbye," but rather, "see you later."

ACF WINTER RETREAT 2001

The Fear of the LORD

who: ACF Members and Friends = You!
what: pausing life to go be with God
challenging talks, dynamic worship,
delicious food,
and speaker Pastor Barry A. Gin
when: Friday, evening of January 26th —>
Sunday, afternoon of January 28th
where: Whitehall Conference and Retreat Center
~2hrs NEast of Pittsburgh
why: To come to know our Lord and one another
better in agape love
To take a break from the Pitts? ;)
To let our lives be changed!
To have snowball fights
Because it is FUN! and challenging
how: we drive
Cost: newcomers (first time January
or financially constrained = \$20
the rest of us = ~\$50, may be less

Retreat registration begins immediately! You can register the old fashioned way or on-line at:
<http://acf.cx/wr01reg.html>
For more information contact:
Dave Harrison <poktan1125@yahoo.com>

Last year's faces and talks:

<http://members.nbci.com/etsung/ACF/WinterRetreat2000/>

Birthdays 2000/2001

DECEMBER

12/12 Bonnie Hu
12/15 Philip Chang
12/16 Jon Nedel
12/18 Angeline Wong
12/25 Neil Christopher
12/29 Wynne Lee
12/30 Jonn'e Cheah



JANUARY

1/3 Ren-Yi Lo
1/9 Julia Chiu
1/28 Vishal Radhakrishnan
1/30 Janet Tao



FEBRUARY

2/2 Mousumi Sircar
2/12 Michi Chan



Spotlight

Name: James Tseng **Hometown:** Houston, Texas **Year:** Junior
Major: Biomedical/Chemical Eng. **Email:** ctseng@andrew.cmu.edu
Function in ACF(if any): e-mail distribution
Hobbies: Playing musical instruments, tennis, roller blading, poetry writing, eating, sleeping
Fav Bible verse: "Consider it pure joy, my brothers, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith develops perseverance." James 1:2-3
Best advice you can give someone else:
"Try everything once."
What do you do on your spare time: It's an effort to find spare time at CM. I like to go roller blading whenever it's not snowing outside. Poetry writing is one of the few brainy things I still keep. Having fun with friends is my favorite!
If you could change one thing in ACF, what would it be? Make the worship team bigger!

