

NEUCHÂTEL CHURCH MAGAZINE – FEBRUARY 2009

Chapelle des Charmettes, Rue Varnoz 1

Services are held twice monthly :

10 am on the FIRST Sunday of the month.

Children meet for Junior Church at 10 am in the Villa Yo-Yo and join their parents in church for Communion.

5 pm on the THIRD Sunday of the month : Family Communion service

Minister in charge : The Rev. Roy Farrar
Chemin du Chasselas 11
2012 AUVERNIER

Tel : 032 730 51 83

www.neuchatel-church.ch

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

Bible Study at Roy and Mieke's home, at 8 pm :

Tuesday 9th February

Tuesday 23rd February

Debate at Eight at Roy and Mieke's home, at 8 pm :

Sunday 28th February

A Life Worth Living - follow-up to the 2009 Alpha course :

Tuesdays at 10 am at Roy and Mieke's home

A new evening Alpha course is coming up – see Roy for dates and details

ECHOS OF THE CAROL SERVICE

Seating almost became a problem at the carol service attended by well over 100 people. Added treats to the well-loved carols and readings, were the beautiful decorations to the church and the children's rendering of the « Christmas alphabet » sketch. The delicious refreshments afterwards gave us the opportunity to see old friends and make new ones.



Baptism of Sonya Huy - November 2009 at Neuchâtel Church



A daughter of Chinese immigrants, I was born and raised in the United States without any specific religious upbringing. Growing up as a first-generation Chinese-American, I had heard of Confucianism and Buddhism as these were traditional Chinese beliefs but actually practicing any kind of religion was not part of my childhood.

My real desire to learn about Christianity was sparked when I was 22 and backpacking around Europe for four months. On a whim, I traveled to the country of

Turkey where I happened to visit the ancient Greek city of Ephesus.

I was awestruck when I saw the fish symbol representing Jesus carved into the marble sidewalks among the ancient ruins and it was at that moment when I realized that Jesus Christ truly existed. I left Turkey and headed to Prague where I mentioned this experience to a fellow traveler who introduced me to C.S. Lewis' book "Mere Christianity".

When I returned home to the US, I read some Lewis books but at that time, they didn't show me how or why I should believe in Christ. For a few years, I didn't think about God as I concentrated on finding earthly happiness, in the form of a meaningful career and a potential husband.

Eventually I went to China, curious to visit my mother country and to seek job opportunities. It was in Beijing that I met my Chinese-French husband who was raised in a practicing Buddhist household and introduced me to Buddhist rituals. Our wedding even included a ceremony in which six Buddhist monks blessed us, but I never felt an affinity for Buddhism as much as I tried to please my husband.

We were living in Hong Kong both busy with jobs and eager to start a family, but after I gave birth to our two sons, my desire to learn about Christianity was rekindled.

Whenever I heard someone was Christian, I would casually ask about their church, as I was still unsure of my commitment. I knew that if I began to explore Christianity, it would likely be a solitary activity as my husband felt strongly about his Buddhist background and did not understand why I was interested to go to church.

Unbeknown to me, my father had been seeking Christ most of his life and became a devout Christian after he retired in Thailand six years ago. Especially during the past two years he encouraged my family and me to find a church and prayed that we too, would find comfort and guidance in Jesus Christ.

During the 11 years we lived in Hong Kong, only twice did I gather the courage to venture out to the Sunday service of two different churches. In both cases I never went back, the service with its masses of people left me feeling isolated, overwhelmed and unfulfilled.

Then over one year ago, my husband's new job relocated us to Neuchâtel, Switzerland. Shortly after our arrival, I started taking intensive French classes at a school that sponsored American missionaries to learn French before they went to Africa. I became friendly with one of my missionary classmates. I mentioned to her that my younger son, Oscar sometimes asked me questions about God and that I didn't know how to answer them. She bought Oscar a children's bible and together with her husband, sat down with him one day to answer his questions. Both my sons were interested in the Bible stories but Oscar was especially curious about the reasons and meaning behind the actions in the stories.

I wanted to foster my sons' interest in the Bible and in late May this year, we finally found our way to the Neuchâtel Church and met the Minister, Roy and his wife Mieke. The first time I went, I felt welcomed in this small church. Wonderfully, I saw a friend also there for the first time. I was glad there was someone of whom I could ask questions during the service as the 'rituals' always intimidated me in my previous visits to churches.

Roy and Mieke took an interest in my situation and never made me feel embarrassed about my awkward questions and skepticism about God's teachings.

Roy perceived my state of confusion and offered me a copy of “Alpha – Questions of Life” by Nicky Gumbel. This book clearly and frankly explained how and why I should believe in Christ.

With Roy and Mieke’s guidance, the accompanying Alpha course that I attended with a small group of other church members became a turning point in my life. Before we left Neuchâtel, there was no doubt in my mind that I wanted Roy to baptize me.

I am grateful for our time in Neuchâtel, as disappointingly short as it was, for the tranquil beauty of this small city and the ever-changing magnificent lake views nurtured the realization, awe and contemplation I needed to “see” God.

I am also grateful to Roy and Mieke, for through their ministry and friendship, I have gained the understanding and conviction that I needed to come to faith in Christ.

The day of my baptism touched me in many ways - hearing the singing of the hymns that I chose, feeling the love from the children in the baptism cards they made for me and from the friends who came up to sign me with the cross during the ceremony, and experiencing the cleansing act of baptism. I was especially touched and thank God for the presence of my husband that day, his unbridled enthusiasm during the ceremony and his support for my becoming a Christian.



In anticipation of our move to New York in January 2010, I feel both serenity and optimism with Jesus Christ in my life. Unlike my childhood, I want my sons to grow up with the love, support and guidance of Christ in their lives.

“Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you” Matthew 7:7

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Thank you, Sonya, for sharing your journey of faith with us. We loved having you at Neuchâtel and pray that God will truly bless you and all the family in your new life in America.