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One Little Indian Boy



/ Wondrous Numbers of the Human Body
/ Water from Heaven
/ Only God Can Transform Lives
/ Whose Image?

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One Little Indian Boy



by Andrea Harris

On New Year's Day, 2018, our extended family had gathered to celebrate a late Christmas. My mother-in-law asked our son Ben, who was five at the time, if he had gotten everything he wanted for Christmas. He said that he did for the most part, but he really wanted a little brother or sister. This sparked a boisterous conversation among our three boys. Our oldest, Will, age 13,

tried to explain that, due to some medical issues, I was no longer able to have kids. Chris, 7, suggested that we could adopt, but if we did, it should be a boy, because "girls are too much drama." After this went on for several minutes, I interrupted them and said that if this was what they really wanted, they should talk to God, because I wanted no part in it.

The truth is that my husband and I had experienced a failed adoption a few years before Ben was born, and I knew I couldn't go through another heartache like that. To me, our boys were just having an amusing holiday conversation. Apparently, God was listening in.

Two weeks later, there was a phone call. The child safety officer in charge of foster care and adoption was calling.

Now for a little explanation. My husband Thomas is a full-blooded Native American. He is half Eastern Cherokee, a quarter Comanche, and some Sac and Fox, and Pawnee. He was raised around his father's tribes (Comanche, Sac and Fox, and Pawnee), so he was more connected to that side of his family. Thomas' mother left the Eastern Cherokee

Reservation in North Carolina at age 16 to attend a boarding school in Oklahoma. Though there is often a stigma associated with boarding schools for Native Americans, in this case, it provided a safe and stable environment for my mother-in-law. This set up a new family structure so that my husband was able to be raised in a home with both a father and a mother. Mama Harris' siblings back on the reservation were not as fortunate. Children growing up were often placed in foster care or group homes.

The person calling informed us that Thomas' tribe had a little boy who needed a home. They had researched this boy's family tree and discovered that my husband was his second cousin. During this initial phone conversation, we were told that if we wanted more information, we would



*Haidyn going home
with the big brothers*



Haidyn the toddler



*Haidyn with Thomas
and Andrea*

need to do a background check that typically took four to six weeks. Thomas happened to have the next day off, so we made a trip to our local courthouse for that background check. To our surprise, it took four to six minutes and not weeks! With the background checks submitted, we waited for more information. We soon learned that this little boy was 18 months old and had some medical issues which had contributed to the difficulty in finding him a home. In fact, during his young life, he had already been with nine foster families.

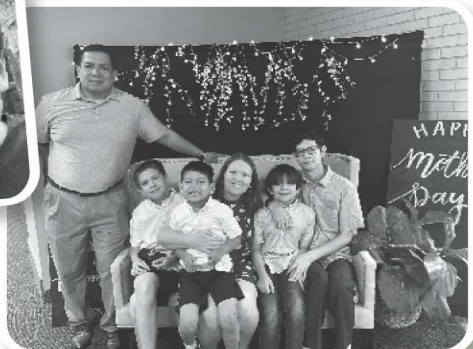
Fast forward a couple of weeks from the initial phone call, and we were meeting with a social worker in our living room. She looked over our house (what is called a “home visit”) and asked a lot of questions to determine if our family would be a good fit. In the interview, we were

shown pictures of this little boy and were given a quick medical history. A date for our family to travel 945 miles to go meet this little boy was scheduled.

Arriving at the reservation, we were taken into a small conference room where the social worker brought in the cutest, chubby little boy. We learned that his name was Haidyn. We spent a couple days with Haidyn that week, all the while thinking that the next steps in the process of bringing Haidyn into our home would take a few months. The reservation has its own courts and legal system, so we really didn’t know what to expect. The day before we were to leave, we went to Haidyn’s daycare to say goodbye and were asked what time we were leaving the following morning. That was when we learned that a judge had already signed the order and we could take Haidyn



Andrea and Haidyn



Family Picture

home with us. So, on Friday morning, March 16, we left the reservation—a family of six!

From the stack of medical records six inches thick, we knew Haidyn had seizures. Reading through the records was heartbreaking! Every time he had a seizure, he was flown by helicopter to the nearest hospital, an hour away. The reservation had a clinic, but not a hospital. Even so, the hospital only had neurologists who treated adult patients. These doctors were doing the best they could, but they were not trained for a case as complicated as Haidyn's, nor did they always have the right size equipment for him. On one flight, his femur was almost broken when the attendant, needing to get Haidyn medicine quickly, tried to do a procedure without a small enough IV. Haidyn was on four seizure medicines at doses far greater than the recommended dose for his age, and yet the seizures would not stop. Finally, the neurologist at the hospital said they could no longer treat him.

When we arrived back home, I called our local children's hospital, Cook Children's in Fort Worth, and asked for the very first neurology appointment they had. People often wait six months for these appointments, so I emphasized that I was willing to drive to any of their locations. We were given an appointment a few months out with a nurse practitioner. Looking at

Haidyn's chart, the nurse practitioner knew immediately that she needed someone else to help. She left the room, found a neurologist in the hall who happened to be between seeing patients, and brought him into our room. This neurologist was not just a regular neurologist, but a genetic neurologist. Flipping through the stack of medical records, he stopped on the third page. Pulling it out, he stated with confidence, "I know exactly what he has."

There it was—a diagnosis! He continued, "He has a gene deletion on his SCN1A gene" and continued to rattle off exactly where that deletion was on the sequence of this very specific gene.

This disorder is called Dravet Syndrome. It is a rare form of intractable epilepsy that begins in infancy and tends to get worse as the child grows. It occurs in about 1:15,700 people worldwide. Dravet Syndrome also causes severe developmental delays, orthopedic issues, and disruptions of the autonomic nervous system which can lead to difficulty regulating body temperature, heart rate, and blood pressure. Ultimately, these children have a 15%-20% higher childhood mortality rate.

This news wasn't good, but we knew there had to be a reason for God to orchestrate this little boy from North Carolina coming halfway across

the country to become part of our family in Texas. But what this doctor said next was the best part of that visit—the part that helped us see the reason God had brought Haidyn to us. He told us that the head of neurology, Dr. Scott Perry, at this particular children’s hospital, was one of the world’s leading experts on this rare disorder. “In fact,” he said with obvious pride, “it is his favorite disorder, and he has devoted his life to studying and treating it.” We were told that it would be a really long wait to get in to see this specialist—but it was worth the wait! God was already working on it, and we were able to be seen within a few months.

Haidyn was just under two years old when we brought him home. He is now seven. He still has seizures, but they typically last only a minute as opposed to hours, and he has not had to be hospitalized in the five years we have had him. He does still have developmental delays, but he is learning things that we never imagined he would be able to learn. He is going to school and making friends. He goes to church and loves to sing about God. He points to our church logo and says, “It’s God!” Although it is not entirely correct, it makes me so happy to know that he can see God in those who love and care for him as the family of God. He has been able to participate in three clinical trials that have not only helped him have access to better treatment but will help other kids

with Dravet Syndrome have better treatment options as well. We have been able to share Haidyn’s story with doctors, the children’s hospital, and even a paramedical company. Though they are interested in his change medically, it opens the door for us to talk about the God who knew Haidyn on the reservation, has a plan for his life, and loves him enough to make all of this happen.

We do not know what life for Haidyn will look like in the future. Our goal is for him to live a happy life doing as much as he can. We know that no matter what happens, the Lord establishes our steps, and His plans are so much better than anything we can imagine on our own.

“The heart of man plans his way, but the Lord establishes his steps” (Proverbs 16:9, ESV). ■



Andrea Harris serves as the Director of Preschool Discipleship at First Baptist Church Hurst in Texas. She considers her most

important job is mothering her four boys, especially during times when her husband, Thomas, is on extended overseas duty with the United States Air Force. In all her work, Andrea finds strength and joy in the Lord as she tries to live out Proverbs 31:26 (ESV), “She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue.”



Wondrous Numbers of the Human Body

by Qizhi Yan

The Bible says, *“Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being”* (Genesis 2:7). Among all things that God made, only humans have a soul. This is a mystery. The human body is also full of mysteries. Our bodies are comprised of skin, flesh, bones, blood, and organs. And it is amazing how our brain, heart, and other organs function! Moreover, there are interesting biological numbers associated with our amazing bodies.

Interesting Biological Numbers

1. Brain

The brain of an adult weighs 1.4 to 1.5 kilograms (kg), which accounts for 85% of the brain’s total weight. There are over 10 million wire-like nerves connected to our brain. If every single nerve were connected, it would be 300,000 kilometers (km) long—like a very long electric wire in the human body. Among the trillion brain cells, perhaps 100 billion of them are active nerve cells. Every nerve cell can make up to 20,000

connections with other cells. Some experts point out that the number of connections made by nerve cells could be greater than the number of atoms in the universe.

There are around 14 billion nerve cells in the brain. The diameter of each nerve cell is only one hundred thousandth of a centimeter (cm). The volume is only one ten millionth of a cubic cm (cm³).

There are around one billion sulci in the cerebral cortex. If we spread them out, the area is over 2,000 square cm. With blood vessels crisscrossing in the human brain, the total length of blood vessels is over 120,000 meters (m). The brain needs a huge volume of blood. Every minute, over 700 milliliters (ml) of blood flow through the brain, accounting for 1/6 of the blood being pumped out of the heart.

The brain can hold a huge amount of information, up to one quadrillion bits (unit of information), which is equivalent to a billion books. For each cm³ of the brain, one trillion bits of information can be stored. Within one second, over 100,000 different chemical reactions are happening in our brain. These chemical reactions produce thoughts, emotions, and actions in us.

2. Eyes

The eyes are called the windows of the soul. One blink takes around 1/24 second. Every day, it retains

over 50,000 different images. The eyes of a normal person can see and discern 7 million colors of different shades.

Humans have sharp eyes. On a moonless night, standing on a high point, we can see the light of a burning match from 80 km away.

3. Nose, Tongue, Throat, Trachea

The two nasal cavities are separated by the nasal septum. Nasal hair usually grows in the nostrils, functioning as a filter for the dust and impurities in the air. The nasal cavities are lined with a mucous membrane, which helps to humidify the air we breathe in and trap debris. In the back of the nasal cavities are the sinuses. Under the cranium on the sides of the nose are olfactory (sense of smell) nerves. The nasal cavities are connected to the throat, share the passageway with the digestive system, then branch into the respiratory system and the lungs.

On the surface of the tongue, there are 9,000 to 10,000 taste buds, capable of tasting four flavors: the front of the tongue tastes sweetness and saltiness, while the sides discern sourness, and the back part picks up bitterness.

The throat is of utmost importance in the human body. The main functions of the pharynx include swallowing, breathing, voice production, and regulation of middle ear pressure.

The tonsils in the pharynx have the functions of phagocytosis of bacteria, production of antibodies, and production of lymphocytes. They are the guards of the respiratory tract. When we breathe normally, the air must pass through the larynx. The larynx is an important organ in voice production and also warms and humidifies the air we breathe in. The larynx is also involved in breath-holding and responds to cardiovascular reflex.

The trachea is the tube between the larynx and the bronchi. Aside from being an airway, it also provides protection against—and removal of—foreign objects, as well as regulating air temperature and humidity. Every day, around 14 cubic meters (m³) of air enter our body through the trachea, which cleans, humidifies, and warms the incoming air. This warm body of air can fill up over 300 huge balloons.

4. Ears

Humans can listen to beautiful music, discern in great detail different sounds—such as that of streams, rivers, thunder, and rain—as well as the singing and laughter of men and women—the old and the young—and distinguish the sound

quality and timbre of various musical instruments. All of these are because God gave us a pair of intricately designed ears. The range of sound humans can hear lies between 20 to 20,000 Hertz (Hz, frequency unit). The sound beyond this range is called ultrasound. For example, bats can hear high-frequency sounds at 120,000 Hz, while cats can hear the high-frequency sounds of mice. It is a good thing that we cannot hear high-frequency sounds, so that we can enjoy quietness—deaf to the nuisance of a lot of noises. The cochlea analyzes pitch through the basilar membrane, which sits outside the screw plate and is only around 30 millimeters (mm) long, yet contains 2,000 to 3,000 horizontal fibers, which are used to respond to sounds. They are arranged in a way like that of string instruments, that is, from short to long. The widest part is around 0.5 mm on the top of the cochlea, which is sensitive to low frequencies, while the narrowest part is around 0.04 mm at the base of the cochlea and is sensitive to high frequencies. The intricate resonance design inside this tiny cochlea allows us to hear all sorts of beautiful music made by instruments and the sounds of nature. How can we not praise God for His wondrous creation?



5. Heart

The heart of an adult weighs around 300 grams (g). It is of paramount function. For example, when a person is in a resting state, the heart beats around 70 times per minute, pumping 70 ml of blood each time. So, for each minute, around 5 liters of blood would be pumped. The heartbeat is formed by the rhythmic contraction and relaxation of the cardiac muscles. When the cardiac muscles contract, blood is pumped into the arteries and flows through the whole body. When the cardiac muscles relax, blood flows back into the heart through the veins. So, the beating of the heart promotes the flow of blood. It is the engine in blood transport. The function of the heart is to promote blood flow, providing enough blood to organs and tissues to provide oxygen and various nutrients (such as water, inorganic salts, glucose, protein, and various water-soluble vitamins) and to remove the end products of metabolism (such as carbon dioxide, urea, and uric acid), so that cells maintain normal metabolism and function. Various endocrine hormones and other humoral factors must be transported to target cells through blood circulation to realize the regulation of body fluids and to maintain relatively constant internal body conditions. The defense mechanism and the relatively constant regulation of body temperature are realized through the non-stop circulation of blood in

the vessels, and this circulation is realized through the pumping action of the heart.

6. Lungs

The lungs are formed of numerous tiny alveoli. Slightly hemispherical, with surfaces in contact with air, an alveolus is the smallest respiratory unit in the lungs. The absorption area of the lungs is 120,000 cm³, as large as the floor area of a small house. When the chest cavity is expanded and at its highest capacity, the lungs of an adult can hold 4.5 kg of air. The internal surface area of the lungs is around 50 times the skin surface area.

7. Liver

The human liver only weighs 1 to 1.5 kg. Protected by the ribs, located on the top right of the abdomen, the liver is the huge “chemical plant” of the human body, responsible for over 500 kinds of the most arduous and complicated tasks to maintain life. A big part of human metabolism involves biochemical changes, inseparable from catalysts. There are over 1,000 proteins called “enzymes” in the liver, constituting various efficient catalysts, and controlling the progress of chemical reactions.

8. Red Blood Cells and White Blood Cells

The red blood cells (RBCs) mainly transport oxygen to cells in the body and bring carbon dioxide to the lungs. The RBCs have a bioconcave

shape, where the sides of the cell curve inwards. This shape helps the RBCs to flow past narrow blood vessels and bring oxygen to organs and tissues. RBCs live for around four months. During this period, they travel around 1,609 km in our bodies. The white blood cells (WBCs) form a huge blood cell family. Despite having an array of shapes, structures, and biological functions, they are not isolated and play a synergistic role in the protection, immunity, and wound healing of the body.

9. Bones

The bones support the human body and are a part of its movement system. An adult has 206 bones, and the bones are usually connected by joints and ligaments.

10. Muscles, Skin

Muscle cells have contractile fibers that move between cells and change the size of the cells. There are three types of muscles: skeletal muscle, cardiac muscle, and smooth muscle. All of them function to generate force and facilitate movement. The contraction of cardiac and smooth muscles is controlled subconsciously, as they are necessary for survival—such as the contraction of the heart or gastrointestinal peristalsis. The voluntary contraction of the skeletal muscles is for moving the body and can be precisely controlled, such as the tiny movement of the eye or the general movement of thigh quadriceps. When we smile, 17

facial muscles are engaged. When we frown, 43 facial muscles are engaged.

Human skin accounts for around 1/20 of our body weight. The skin of our palms and feet are around 4 mm thick, while that of our eyes and ears are only 0.5 mm thick. The thinnest part of the skin is 0.5 mm thick, while the thickest part is around 4 to 5 mm thick. When spread out, the skin of an adult is around 2 m³. For each m³ of skin, there are 14,000 pores. If we connect these pores one by one, we will get a small water pipe that is 60 m long. The total area of a person's skin is 1.8 m³. Assuming each cm³ of skin can endure 1 kg of air pressure, the skin of the entire body could at most bear 18,000 kg of pressure, which is equivalent to a person shouldering the weight of 9 to 10 big cars without breaking a sweat. In a person's lifetime, the average total weight of the shed skin is over 227 kg.

The Spiritual Meaning Within

1. The mysteries of the human body are a part of the mysteries of God.

All of God's works are a mystery to humans who are finite and limited. *"As you do not know the path of the wind, or how the body is formed in a mother's womb, so you cannot understand the work of God, the Maker of all things"* (Ecclesiastes 11:5). We cannot be blind to the mysteries in our bodies and in this

world. Only our wondrous God could do such wondrous deeds. Scripture states that, *“For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse”* (Romans 1:20). The world and everything in it, including humans, are the work of God and not the product of evolution.

2. God’s Wondrous Creations are for His Glory.

The Bible tells us, *“All the nations you have made will come and worship before you, Lord; they will bring glory to your name”* (Psalm 86:9). The Psalmist exults, *“I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well”* (Psalm 139:14). ■



**Qizhi Yan is a retired senior lecturer who has edited a variety of books such as The Concise Bible Dictionary. This story*

was first published in Chinese Today, Issue No. 725 (Sept 2022) and was translated into English by Kiara Ngai.

Wat

God is Reaching the Maasai!

In June of 2022, our family and my brother’s family climbed Mt. Kilimanjaro, the highest mountain in Africa. The eight-day trek was difficult and very tiring, with nights spent under the Milky Way trying to stay warm in our thick sleeping bags. Three days of safari were tacked onto the end of the hike in which we were to tour three of Tanzania’s magnificent safari parks. They are amazing places, but after two days, I told my husband, “I don’t care if a cheetah tap dances on the hood of our jeep, I do not want to go on another safari!” I was done.

So, parting ways with my brother and his family, we opted instead to go to an upscale tourism shop and spend our final day shopping and relaxing at the hotel. While in the shop, we were given a personal “assistant” to help us shop. The assistant would hold the basket and point out worthwhile purchases. That is how we met Lamnyak Siria, a Maasai warrior from the Simanjiro province of Tanzania. Lamnyak was 31 years old, spoke a little English,



er from Heaven

by Anne-Marie Touliatos

and seemed amused by the crazy Americans trying to chat with him. We told him about our hike and asked him if he had ever climbed Kilimanjaro. He said he had and that he did it in three days. We gasped and oohed and aahed. He said that was because he and his tribe were used to walking. They had to walk 30 kilometers (16 or so miles) to get water EVERY DAY.

Stunned by this, we asked for more clarification. He told us that the Maasai are migrant. The men herd cattle and have to search long hours for grazing fields and water for the cattle to drink. The women walk all day to bring water to their villages, and the water they find is not clean. Because of this difficult situation, the children are not able to receive an education. The young boys are often herding goats by the age of three, and the young girls accompany their mothers to get water. It is a cycle that has continued for many years.

We were sobered by this thought and told him that we were Christians, that we follow Jesus. We asked him about his faith and that of his tribe. "Oh, we don't have any faith," he said. "We do not know where we are going when we die."

Our hearts were so sad as we made our way back to the car. Sitting in stunned silence, my husband, John, said, "I feel like we need to get his contact information. I don't know what we can do, but at least we will have that." I agreed completely and made my way back into the shop to find Lamnyak.

During the ensuing three months, we emailed Lamnyak back and forth. We asked for details about his tribe—did he have videos and pictures, did he have other needs, etc. We shared more of the truth of God's Word with him. He told us the biggest need that

this remote Simanjiro province had was for water. We asked if there were any other wells in the province, and he told us no, but there had been someone from the US who put in a well in a neighboring province. Asking for the contact info to reach out to this person, we were amused to hear that they only had a name—Jon Bon Jovi, a rock singer. So, we guessed we would not be contacting him!

We immediately began to pray that if God wanted the Maasai to have water, He would provide a way and the resources needed. We began to gather funds for what was the unknown. Another Maasai man named Charles, who was well-known in the NGO (non-governmental organization) world, was located to help us dig the wells. We decided to funnel these resources through a 501c3 organization called The International Ministry of Jesus.

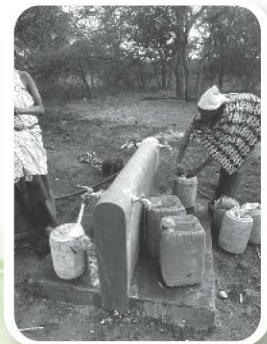
Lamnyak turned out to be an excellent manager of resources and extremely proactive. Within those first three months, he was able to secure a land survey for water, done by a local geologist from the city of Arusha. Water was found to be deep under the ground near one of the only churches in the area. We were thrilled and located a drilling team. Drilling began in October 2022.

On one Friday in October, the first hole was dug down to 180 meters, but it ended up being dry. Our faith was a bit shaken. All the work and planning that had gone into this effort, and now no water! That was a low, low point for us. John and I were heartbroken when we saw the pictures of women and children standing around the dry hole. We pleaded to the Lord for His mercy and felt He was leading us to dig another hole. We asked Lamnyak and Charles to go back to Arusha and get



First well being dug

Clean water from the first well



Women receiving water from the well

the geologist to see where another point might be for possible water.

They did so, and another hole was dug on a Saturday night, on the other side of the church 200 yards away from the first. At 6:00 a.m. on Sunday morning, our phones rang with a text and video. "Our God has won!" it said, and the video showed water gushing from the ground with the entire village dancing and singing around it. We wept and thanked our Lord and Savior!

That seems like a distant memory now as things have moved quickly, and God has shown His hand of deliverance to the Maasai. At the well dedication a month later, 180 Maasai accepted Christ as the Gospel was shared and the Jesus film shown. Many of the village leaders accepted Christ and were baptized as a group. They declared that they as a village would now follow God and worship Him alone. Since that time, three churches have formed in that village

and the Gospel has gone out to the region through the Jesus film.

Lamnyak has experienced the most radical transformation of all. He is an evangelist to his own people, taking the Jesus film out to remote villages and tribes that are very difficult to reach except on foot. In September, he will be starting seminary, learning the method of "storying" the Bible. He has shared about Christ with his co-workers and led many of them to Christ. Every Friday, a group of pastors from Texas, where my brother lives, meet with Lamnyak by phone to study the Bible together. They are providing discipleship and follow-up for Lamnyak and the group he has led to the Lord.

We have been able to dig another well in a neighboring village called Kati-Kati. The Jesus film was shown there, and now there are churches where there were none before. Another neighboring community called Esilaei was touched by Lamnyak and our team visiting from the States. The village leaders accepted Christ and a church



The people of Kati-Kati receiving Christ



Lamnyak with John and Anne-Marie

is meeting every week with over 150 members. Two teams from the States have come to lead in discipleship and training.

The Maasai people are so open to the Gospel and thankful to know where they will go when they die. They are most touched by the fact that God saw them in their distress and loved them enough to help them. We desire to put more wells in this area, and we are waiting on the Lord to provide the funds and resources for that.

I have never seen God move like this on a people group. It is exciting and powerful to be a part of this. God has truly won!

“Jesus answered, ‘Everyone who drinks this water will be thirsty again, but whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life’” (John 4:13–14).

“And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely” (Revelation 22:17, KJV). ■



Anne-Marie grew up as a missionary kid and accepted God's call to faith and missions at a young age. She is the

Director of International Ministry of Jesus, a disciple-making ministry that serves those in need and proclaims the Word of God in Ecuador and Tanzania. She and her husband, John, live in Birmingham, Alabama, where John works as a general surgeon. They have three adult children. Anne-Marie is a registered nurse, a graduate of Samford University. She is passionate about God, her family and friends, and disciple-making. Anne-Marie also loves animals and the outdoors and wants to learn how to manage a farm.



Children being taught each week and prepared for eventual baptism



The baptism of new believers



Only God Can Transform Lives

by Chen Junru

There's nothing unique about my story. Succumbing to a life of drug addiction is the way of life for hundreds of my countrymen. It begins slowly, but in the end, addiction overtakes you.

I was born on February 20, 1968, in Tainan County, Taiwan, the youngest in a family of five siblings, with two older brothers and two older sisters. Though my parents were not wealthy, I was spoiled, and no doubt given more than I needed and allowed to get by with more than I should have. By the time I was in high school, I had become a problematic student. After only one semester, I dropped out and started hanging out on the streets, joining gangs, and running illegal gambling operations.

After serving my time in the military, I became a successful car salesman. I had plenty of money to live a lavish

lifestyle, and using heroin was part of it. It turned out to be a very expensive habit! Soon my work performance was affected, which led me to return to the criminal underworld I had known as a teenager.

In 1993, at only 25 years of age, my addiction caught up with me. I was arrested by the police for drug use and sentenced to three years and six months in prison. This was my first time in prison, but not my last! I ended up going in and out of prison four times over the next decade. Every time I was released, I would resolve to quit drugs, but I was never able to succeed in doing so. I actually believed that I could not live without drugs. I was in bondage!

By this time, many of my family members had given up on me—but not all! My second sister was a Christian, and she was willing to

help me. She helped me get into the Gospel Rehabilitation Center of Dawn Group, where I met Jesus.

This group is a faith-based organization which provides a recovery program for addicts. They rely on the power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ to achieve their objective. Passing on the love of Jesus, they care for and counsel residents and families to achieve renewal of the whole person. While at the rehab center, I had five hours of Bible reading and prayer every day. Gradually, I realized that I was a sinner, and I could not change my life on my own. So, I called upon the name of Jesus and asked for His help. The new environment, where I was cut off from previous social networks, helped too. Activities such as Bible study, physical exercise, teamwork building, and interpersonal communication training helped to replace old habits with new.

Thank God, during my three years in the rehabilitation center, I grew as a born-again Christian. Feeling God calling me to full-time ministry, I entered the Discipleship Training Center of Dawn Group for three and a half years of training. After graduation, I was moved by God to see that my friends who were addicted to drugs needed the Gospel just as I did, and even more so did their families. God placed in my heart a burden to preach the Gospel to these people and to study in

the seminary.

Coming from a traditional lower middle class background in Taiwan, I realized that if it weren't for my drug addiction that left me with nowhere to turn, I would never have come to believe in Jesus. People from lower socioeconomic backgrounds face difficulties with entering the church, as they can feel uncomfortable or out of place. Churches need to find a way to make it easier for this group to enter the church.

It was through the ministry to drug addicts that I met my wife. We celebrated our 10th wedding anniversary not long ago. God touched her heart, and she decided to retire early from her job as a junior high schoolteacher to join me in the ministries of reaching disadvantaged people in Taiwan for Christ. She is very willing to serve, and we share a common vision of bringing lower and middle class people into the church.

The church where I pastored for 10 years (Changchun Presbyterian Church) placed great emphasis on meeting the needs of disadvantaged groups. I was involved in ministry to high-risk students and prison fellowship groups, as well as the education work at the Xindian Rehabilitation Center. Additionally, I participated in service activities at drug rehabilitation organizations such as Morning Light Society

and Yeadon. I am truly grateful for God's grace—for saving me and then equipping me with the ability to minister and help people from disadvantaged backgrounds come to know Jesus and be transformed by Him.

People ask me why I have continued to study hard even though I'm very busy. I actually failed the written exam for entrance to China Evangelical Seminary three times before finally getting a chance to take the oral exam. So, the answer is that God has called me to shepherd the church well, especially to reach the vulnerable groups who face many challenges in entering the church and living out their faith. My prayer is that through the inspiration of God's Word, more Christian brothers and sisters will invest and be willing to sacrifice to reach this vulnerable group. Therefore, I wanted to equip myself through theological education to establish a foundation for education and training in the church.

Along with my studies, I have accepted an invitation from Chenxi Foundation to serve with their pastoral staff in developing a Gospel-based drug rehabilitation program. This ministry calling is increasingly moving to me, as my burden for sharing the Gospel with drug addicts has not diminished. Whenever I encounter a drug addict or a family member seeking help, I encourage the



*Chen Junru sharing his story
at a church*

addict to enter a drug rehabilitation program and for their family to join a church. I firmly believe that only the Gospel can truly change people's lives. As a pastor, I have seen the relationship between the Gospel and drug rehabilitation.

Chenxi is a private foundation whose main purpose is to assist drug participants in recovery—in all aspects of their physical, psychological, spiritual, and social lives. Through faith and the love of Jesus Christ, they are enabled to completely break free from drug addiction.

The Gospel-based drug rehabilitation work relies on God's Word to help participants break free from the bondage of sin. It falls within the domain of spiritual and cognitive therapy, emphasizing no reliance on drug substitution (not replacing drugs with other drugs) and not relying on one's own strength. It relies on God's

love, the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, the teachings of ministers from the Bible, guidance from those who have successfully overcome drug addiction, and group dynamics to assist drug users in being reborn.

Those who receive counseling are required to reside in the counseling village/house for a year and a half. Accommodation, education, and counseling in all villages/houses are provided free of charge. The final stage in this program is Life Renewal, which assists participants in implementing their faith and formulating plans for life after leaving the village, preparing for reintegration into society. After the completion of the program, there is a maintenance period. Participants are referred to churches to connect with faith communities for further learning, thereby enhancing their chances of successful reintegration into families and society.

Chenxi Foundation has a total of nine drug rehabilitation villages and three training centers in Taiwan, as well as other locations overseas—including the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Thailand, Myanmar, and China.

I thank God for giving me the opportunity to be called again, so that I can serve addicts and their families. In serving at Chenxi, I see people's needs and witness the glory of God! The Lord Jesus said, *"I have*

come that they may have life, and have it to the full" (John 10:10). The Gospel is the power of God, and by relying on Jesus, addicts can break free from the bondage of addiction and obtain abundant life.

The grace of Jesus Christ can transform people with drug addictions. I know because I was saved in this way. I know of no other education policy or welfare system that can change people's lives. Many addicts, like me, come to Bible-based rehab programs after all other efforts have failed—and then they give God a chance.

God is able to do things that are impossible for man to do—to transform the life of a hardened heroin addict into someone who can be used by God to bring transformation and wonderful changes in other people's lives. Glory, praise, and honor belong to God alone!

"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13, NKJV). ■



Chen Junru serves as Vice-Executive Director of Chenxi Foundation in one of the training centers in Taiwan. He is

responsible for pastoral care within the organization. As a pastor, he advocates for support of the organization within local churches.

Relieved when I saw no evidence of blood, swollen limbs, missing teeth, or broken skin, I finally got the twins inside. I pulled them apart and tried to be heard above the crying and yelling. Exhausted at this point, the three of us sprawled on the stairs right inside the front door, book bags, sweaters, and papers strewn all around. "What in the world is going on here?" I asked sternly, looking from one little tear-stained face to the other.

Sniffing and hiccuping, Jon began to explain that Jordan had his picture. Jordan then sat up and protested loudly and tearfully that it was not a picture of Jon, but of him. They both claimed to be the one in the picture. I looked at the picture. I looked at each of them. They were looking at me. We all looked back at the picture. *Oh dear*, I thought.

Although identical in person, those of us in the family could usually tell them apart. But pictures seem to average out small, minute details. They both really did look like the one in the picture!

"Let me see the other picture," I said, stalling and praying, *Lord, help me!* Jordan pulled the rejected one out of his bag. It was slightly crumpled. "That is not me!" he said, his voice full of tears. "Well, it's not me either!" Jon cried. It looked exactly like both of them.

Whose Image?

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Jordan and Jon



Jon and Jordan

"Give the pictures to me for now," I said. "I think we really need a snack, and we'll work this out later." *And I need help*, I thought.

Hours later, after milk and cookies and popcorn, the pain and frustration had lessened. Meanwhile, the three older siblings had gotten home from school. I took them aside to help me decide who was who. With their help, I made a hopeful decision. I called Jordan and Jon into the living room. Trying to be calm and confident, I told them which picture was which child. After pointing out several differences in the clothing in each picture, Jordan reluctantly accepted the fact that it was really Jon in the picture and not him.

Finally, we were able to take both pictures out of the crumpled envelopes and put them over last year's school pictures in frames on their wall.

Once again, I was reminded of the amazing mysteries, wonder, and humor of God. The Bible says we are made in His image. I wonder if He sees Himself when He looks into our faces.





*Jon and Jordan,
9th grade, school play*

Afterword

Fast forward 25 years after this “whose image” incident: Jon and Jordan, our look-alike twins, are out of the university and into their busy lives. One is a teacher and the other a store manager. Though they live in different cities, they retain a special connection. Today, when we see them together as adults, their likeness still reminds us that we are made in God’s image and reflect Him in all we do. ■



*Belinda Senter
Kingsley grew up
in Tanzania, East
Africa, a daughter of
missionary parents.
In her book Together*

Again, Belinda recounts what life was like as a child living in two cultures. Today in retirement, she lives with her husband on a ranch in central Texas where she enjoys her children, grandchildren, horses, and dogs. Belinda considers it a great calling to reflect Christ’s image to her family, friends, and community.

Whose Image?

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Whose Image?

by Belinda Senter Kingsley

"In my family is my Dad, my Mom, my two brothers, one sister and Jordan like me."

Jon, age 6

I could hear my eight-year-old twins screaming and crying long before I saw them. They had gotten off the school bus at the top of our street and were struggling with each other as they made their way to our house. Seeing this from the window, I ran from my bedroom, down the stairs, and yanked open the front door. Jordan and Jon were pulling at each other's book bags, crying, and trying to take hold of the same large envelope. The envelope contained a new school picture they had received that day.



(Continued on page 21)

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