

from the desk of

**SEAN**

Congregation of  
Austral Asian Chinese Church

I'm Sean, a Year 12 student at Glenunga International High School. I was born in China and raised there until I was 11. Prior to my arrival to Australia, I had no knowledge of who God is or what Christianity is about.

In September 2009, my parents and I migrated here to Adelaide. At first it was all very exciting for me: a new place, milk that is safe to drink, clean air to breathe, and etc. The real problem started for me was when I went to school. At first I was placed into the new arrivals class for kids who had just migrated to Australia. I was able to adapt to that fairly quickly, but when I was moved into the normal classes half a year later, I had a “cultural shock”: I was simply too different from the rest and couldn't fit in with the crowd. I tried to make friends but I didn't really know anything about Australian culture: I don't play football, I can't understand cricket, I don't know about the social norms and I definitely wasn't a good talker. The only things I could do were studying and playing guitar. At the time, there was another guy at my primary school who also played guitar and was really popular and I thought: “Wow, I want to be just like him!”, so I started hanging out with him and his “cool crew”, hoping that I can be a bit more popular.

At the time, I was also going to church with my parents after we were introduced to Christianity by one of our first friends here in Australia. I didn't really understand Christianity, but I was able to gradually make friends among those who were of similar age. I didn't realize this until a few years later, but what I was looking for was acceptance. Romans 15:7 says: “Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” While I wasn't able to find acceptance at school, I was accepted by the friends I made here at church, and through their acceptance, I felt God's love for me.

Little by little, I started learning more about God, but at the same time I was still hanging out with the same “cool” people at school. Looking back, I've wasted a lot of time trying to be like them and impress the others. I thought that I would be happy, but inside of me, I felt empty and purposeless. On one Sunday at church, I heard a message from the service based on Romans 12:2, which says: “Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.” This message made me realize that what I've been doing is exactly trying to conform to the standards of the world. With this, I decided to stop and be who God wants me to be. In the wake of this realization, I also opened myself up and was able to make other friends at school who genuinely cared for each other.

In spite of this, I still felt that I wasn't able to give my all to God when I didn't have the opportunity to use my abilities properly. But one day in Teens Alive, I was approached by a leader, who invited me to join the worship team. Although I had stage fright and hesitated a bit, I knew that this was an opportunity for me to serve God. I took up the offer and have since been part of the worship team. A few months earlier, my friends and I started our own worship team to help our fellowship and we have even been given the chance to serve God by playing for Sunday worship. Looking back, it is amazing to me how God gave me so much more when I trusted in him and gave him my best.

My life is not perfect and I am still having problems with many struggles in life. My journey to God is a long one and I know that it won't always be smooth sailing. But I will always trust in God's mercy, grace and love and know that he will always be with me.

I have taken an interest in medicine and while many people told me that it will be hard, I know that God will always be there to guide me and even if my decision was wrong, He will forgive me and lead me to His will, for Psalm 23 says:

<sup>1</sup> The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing.

<sup>2</sup> He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters,

<sup>3</sup> he refreshes my soul. He guides me along the right paths for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; my cup overflows.

<sup>6</sup> Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.