

# Thankful For A Second Chance

David Kriesel-Koll

"You are the light of the world... let your light shine before men." (Matthew 5:14 - 16) I am the recipient of a great gift from God - a second chance at life. I've been selective, however, with whom I share my experience and therefore have "hidden my light". On May 14, 2003, I received a heart transplant at the University of Minnesota. My heart disease odyssey began in 1992 after having a heart attack at age 35. During the next 11 years, my heart kept enlarging until it finally went into congestive heart failure. Heart transplantation is a last option, having exhausted all other medical interventions and procedures to keep a diseased heart functioning.

The thought of facing imminent death was not frightening to me. God intervened many times on my behalf during my life. I was at peace that He was still with me to handle this situation, and in my mind, I was comforted knowing that if my earthly time was up, I would be with Jesus in Heaven. After the transplant, I had a deep spiritual awakening and knew that I felt the touch of God immediately following the procedure. God is real and He is with each one of us. We have to trust in Him.

My family was with me at every phase of my disease and was vital in helping me deal with the decreasing heart function. The sacrifices and stress of caring for a chronically ill family member was a burden I wished they didn't have to endure. I will never fully comprehend the anxiety that the members of my immediate and extended family had to deal with, but their love and prayers were always with me. There were many periods when my wife, Pam, felt isolated and lonely by a lack of support and resources.



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Do I feel an obligation to take full advantage of my gift? You bet. The Achilles Heel in this attitude is that I have the same personality to some extent post-transplant in dealing with issues and expressing gratitude toward receiving the new heart. The new heart, in and of itself, does not transform outward expression and communication about my experience. The best way for me to show the love and the power of Jesus Christ is through my visible presence, the fact that I am still alive. There is definitely a purpose for my life, and I believe my survival is a desire by God to witness to others and let Jesus Christ into their hearts.

I'm very open to discussing my second chance at life and would be glad to share with anyone who's interested. Pray for my family as they continue their care-giving role and ask them how they are doing on occasion. Keep in your prayers my donor family who lost a husband and father but are comforted in their grief by knowing that through unselfish organ donation others were given the renewed hope of life.

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# Sharing From A Grateful Heart

## I am Thankful For . . .

### Adrian:

I thank God for giving me an opportunity to study mathematics in Minnesota. Not only has God let me study here, He has also given me many good friends in the department and in church. Though at first I felt a little bit unaccustomed to the culture here, by His grace I can always be confident that I am loved and can rest assured. I love all the blessings and challenges that He has prepared for me here.

*(Adrian, native of Hong Kong, has been attending the Seekers Class since August of 2006. He leads one of the small groups in Seekers Class on Sundays.)*



Linda Nick Adrian  
(New Seekers' students)



Seekers' Students who recently come to the United States have not celebrated Thanksgiving, nor have they heard the true reason of how the tradition began. When they do hear, they are given a more accurate perspective on the holiday.

Students are invited each year into American homes for Thanksgiving. They get a chance to build new friendships with these American families. This is all done on a volunteer basis.

Interested in having a student over for Thanksgiving?  
Contact  
Audrey Sollie at  
651-686-6508

## I am Thankful For . . .

### Hui:

I am very thankful for lessons I learn from the *Daily Bread* each morning before I go to work. I do want to be baptized around the Christmas holiday.

I am also very thankful for my wife's safety during the earthquake in Hawaii. None of her personal belongings were destroyed. She was able to make it down to the first floor of the apartment she is living in during the quake.



*(Hui has been attending the Seekers' Class for about a year now. Hui came to accept Jesus as his personal savior this past March.)*

## I am Thankful For . . .

### Seekers Class as a whole:

We thank God for the wonderful Sundays together. We have had many good discussions in our class, and we got to know more about our Lord's words. We also have a very good fellowship time during the potluck which reminds us of family time.