A few years ago, I wrote a story in this newsletter about attending my high school reunion. We were handed a questionnaire to provide our fellow classmates an update as to what was going on with our lives. Obviously, this was before Facebook. One set of questions was equally intriguing and disturbing. The first question asked if I was married. The second question asked “how many times?”

Then there’s my psychology class, where my students write a paper about the experience with their family while growing up. I’m saddened, but no longer surprised when I read statements such as “after my parents’ divorce,” or “when Dad left the family.” Over the years, I’m seeing such comments with greater and greater frequency.

Being a person of faith is no guarantee that fulfilling the vow of “death do us part” is easy, let alone something realistic, for many couples. Anecdotally, I know far too many friends who are separated / divorced / “single again.” Statistics compiled by the Barna research group document and illustrate what is happening to couples within the faith community:

\[\text{In fact, when evangelicals and non-evangelical born again Christians are combined into an aggregate class of born again adults, their divorce figure is statistically identical to that of non-born again adults: 32\% versus 33\%, respectively (source: http://www.barna.org/barna-update/article/15-familykids/42-new-marriage-and-divorce-statistics-released).}\]

Think of ten married couples. Now consider three of these marriages ending in divorce. It’s not an encouraging picture.

Ideally, there would be a book of wisdom providing a guide to ensure the health of every marriage. In that book, there would be a helpful list about the love needed to uphold that relationship. If you attend enough weddings, you have likely heard many times the passage from 1 Corinthians 13. Worth noting is that the chapter does not describe love being about romance or happiness. This is not to cynically dismiss romance or happiness – of course, such elements are wonderful and important elements of love and marriage. Still, a marriage based exclusively upon romance and happiness is, at best unrealistic, and at worst, not viable. It takes patience, kindness, humbleness (i.e., not boastful or proud), the willingness to put your spouse before all others (i.e., not self-seeking), being slow to anger, not dwelling on wrongs, delighting in truth, not evil. In other words, a book of wisdom does exist, and the helpful “list” is there in 1 Corinthians 13.

The challenge of this “list” is that it does not specifically state how couples should implement the love described. Considering that just as no two people are alike, no two marriages are the same. Maybe that is intentional. To reiterate, how to apply this kind of love to a marriage will differ from one couple to the next, one circumstance to the next (raising children comes to mind), one disappointment to the next – you get the idea. It is a learning process, perhaps too often (but nonetheless accurately) described as a

(Continued on page 4)
On June 2nd, our dear friend, Pastor Ron Miyake of Evergreen Baptist Church SGV, finished his 7th marathon for the benefit of AACCS. As I think about Ron, I am reminded that my husband use to run marathons. Training was strenuous, but I remember how he loved the challenge of running long distances despite the pounding and toll on his legs, knees, and feet. He often talked about the runner’s “high” that came over him right about eight miles into a run. If he wasn’t sufficiently trained, he also knew all too well the experience of hitting the “brick wall” where he physically tanked and felt everything in his body crashing in.

Marathon runners know that to finish a race means optimizing all the variables that contribute to reaching the finish line. It is not only physical training, but mental training. It is about food and water intake, but also about when, what, and how much to take-in. It is about timing and distance—how much to train, when to train, how many miles per day/week, and setting time and distance goals. It is also about knowing when to rest and how long to rest. There is much more to training than meets the eye.

We have learned from the Apostle Paul that life is like a marathon. – “…let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.” (Hebrews 12: 1, 2 NLT).

This marathon though is not just about sin management. It is also about finding joy in the journey; and, there is joy, that runner’s high. To run well, we need to learn not only what “trips us up” but to identify and optimize those things that help us to persist and endure. Sometimes to get to the finish line, we need a good coach or trainer. That is what AACCS is about — coaching and training, standing in the gap for Jesus, being a watchman on the wall. (Our cover article by Board Member, Alan Oda, speaks to some of this regarding marriage.)

As a friend and partner with AACCS, we are grateful for Pastor Ron’s understanding of how AACCS stands in the gap between Jesus and our clients. Ron’s particular compassion for the special needs of missionaries and their families helped to raise over $4,700 for our Mission Outreach Fund which subsidizes counseling and training for missionaries as they prepare to go abroad, while they are in the field, and as they return home for debriefing. With over seven marathons now behind him, he has raised many thousands of dollars for this cause.
The 9th Annual AACCS Afternoon of Kindness Luncheon concluded successfully on Sunday, April 21, 2013 at Almansor Court in Alhambra. In attendance were 171 guests who enjoyed lively fellowship while having lunch and supporting our raffle and silent auction. Heartfelt inspiration was received from Kathy Narramore, our featured speaker. Kathy shared with equanimity and humor, her life as a missionary kid. Her stories revolved around the remarkable person of her mother, Mildred Rice, who served 38 years in the mission fields of China, Japan, and Taiwan under OMS International, formerly known as the Oriental Missionary Society.

While Kathy’s reflections blessed us, there was also unexpected blessings for her. During the luncheon, she learned that two couples sitting at her table had an association with either the evangelistic work of her parents or the colleagues who served in Japan with her parents shortly after World War II. Kathy’s father, Rolland Rice, in particular, lead the Every Creature Crusade teams which worked with missionary crusaders and Japanese nationals to plant more than 100 churches in Japan. One of these guests, David Kuroda, LCSW, believes that his father came to faith through one of these tent crusade meetings. (Many of you may remember his father, Reverend Akira Kuroda, former pastor of Los Angeles Holiness Church.) It was a wonderful time of connecting and affirming the work of missionaries, the seeds they plant, and their legacy of commitment and faith.

We want to thank everyone who joined us for the luncheon as well as our sponsors who helped to underwrite this annual event. Through everyone’s generosity, we were able to raise over $12,500.

The “Normal” Missionary Life
Arlene Michiko Yee, LCSW, Board Member

In March, I was blessed to be able to go to Japan thanks to the support of a family foundation grant, to counsel missionary women at the JEMA Women’s Retreat in Nikko, Japan. AACCS therapist, Rie Mizuki Ph.D, and myself along with two prayer ministers sent from Evergreen Baptist Church SGV spent four days with the most wonderful missionary women from all over Japan who were attending the retreat for renewal and refreshment.

These women were from all over the world: Australia, Switzerland, The Netherlands, Canada, and the United States. As they gathered together, they spoke in Japanese and English. Together they laughed and cried as they shared and supported each other. As unusual as this gathering seemed from someone on the outside looking in, this was their “normal” life as missionaries in Japan. In the car ride on the way back to Tokyo, I could have been in the back seat of a minivan with two American women in the U.S. talking about their children’s school, PTA, and family vacations. I was reminded that we were not in the U.S. when we got a little lost and had to turn on the GPS which gave directions in Japanese.

These women have given their lives in service to our God in a foreign land; however, by God’s grace, for many of these women and their families, this “land” has become their home. Many of them have lived in Japan for 20 or 30 years and are fluent in speaking, reading and writing Japanese. They understand the Japanese “heart” and are “all in” with their whole lives in order to share the gospel and the love of Christ.

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Jean & Ryo Komae Scholarship Awards
Aileen Hong, LMFT, Board Member

On April 21st at the AACCS Afternoon of Kindness Luncheon, I had the honor of announcing the three winners of the AACCS Ryo and Jean Komae Graduate School Scholarship. This scholarship is awarded each year to support the next generation of Christian counselors in their graduate studies as they train to serve the Asian American community.

The recipients for 2013 are Lyndsey Asami (a Social Work graduate student at Azusa Pacific University), Susanna Luu (Clinical Psychology Ph.D student at Loma Linda University), and Kim Than (Psy.D student at Alliant International University).

As a newly minted AACCS board member, I want to thank each person who played a role in making these scholarship awards a reality. While serving on the recipient selection committee this year, my heart stirred with excitement over the future of mental health resources for the Asian American Christian community. Judging by the remarkable achievements applicants, it is unmistakably clear that God has blessed us in this mission. What a thrill it is to anticipate the future that He has in store for us!

Again, I would like to express special thanks to Ryo and Jean Komae. As mentors in their home, church, professions, and community, they have diligently invested themselves into the lives of others. We are deeply grateful for their vision, generosity, and kindness.

Married? How Many Times?

“Marathon,” not a “sprint.” And like a marathon, it can be tiring and sometimes painful. Still, consider that successful marathon runners are the ones who take the time – and often receive the coaching needed – to properly prepare for the race. Their journey – though perhaps exhausting and occasionally harrowing – ultimately is an experience that is fulfilling and worthwhile.

AACCS is committed to strengthening the family. We want to help couples prepare and practice healthy marriages, nuptials that will last until “death do us part.” We offer a pre-marital counseling package as well as a follow-up appointment within the first year of marriage at a reduced rate. When asked (or shall we say challenged?) about the cost of premarital counseling, Reverend Cory Ishida once said the flowers purchased for the ceremony will probably cost more than premarital counseling, yet the flowers do not last – but what is learned in counseling can last a lifetime. We also offer seminars on marriage and relationships by our clinical staff and our affiliates to churches and other interested groups.

The familiar end of a fairy tale is that the hero and heroine begin a journey together and “lived happily ever after.” Such tales do not provide details of the bumps in the road, and occasionally, the need for some maintenance and reconstruction encountered on that trek. We think some preparation and maintenance to help anticipate and learn how to deal with the detours of the journey will aid couples in realizing that their marriage may not always seem like a fairy tale, but can actually lead to happiness ever after.
Reflections on the Second Annual Asian American Christian Counseling Symposium
Timothy Yen, Psy.D. Candidate

I had the pleasure of helping and attending this year’s Asian American Christian Counseling Symposium. The theme was “Spiritually Oriented Psychotherapy & Inner Healing Prayer: A Biblical Perspective & Approach.” This was a follow-up to last year’s topic on implicit and explicit integration of faith and psychotherapy. Dr. Siang-Yang Tan was gracious with his time to equip fellow clinicians, leaders, and students. The vision was even more inclusive this year with an emphasis on training not only therapists but ministry leaders and non-clinicians as well. As God has established the church to be His hands and feet, AACCS aims to network the greater community to serve the world in a collaborative way through Him.

Dr. Tan did an amazing job in establishing the Christian foundation of psychotherapy along with demonstrating its power through spiritual integration. He grounded the psychological underpinnings through the Bible, talking about humanity’s desire for security, significance, and hope which can be found through love, purpose, and forgiveness. He emphasized the power of the Holy Spirit as our counselor, comforter, helper, and advocate and allowing God to do the healing through believers. He also addressed sin as the root of all pathology and symptoms, both personal sins and the impact of sins from others. Psychotherapy provides the space for confession and inner healing, allowing people to re-integrate themselves from the split self of believing or living a lie.

The highlight of the conference was definitely the live demonstration. A brave clinician volunteered to be vulnerable in front of the audience and allowed Dr. Tan to demonstrate inner healing. We were allowed to enter that sacred space and witness the hand of God move. The most humbling aspect of the demonstration was Dr. Tan’s ability to keep the dialogue open and allow the Holy Spirit to reveal Himself to the clinician. Even with all of Dr. Tan’s experience and expertise, he simply facilitated the context and humbly stepped aside for God to do His work. The experience was incredible! I was very encouraged with the practicality of inner healing prayer because the steps are intuitive and relatively easy to follow. I am reminded of the sacred work we do as clinicians and followers of Christ but most importantly allowing the Holy Spirit to do His work and not getting in the way. I am blessed to network with many people who share the same vision to empower the Asian American community, knowing I am not alone but part of a greater community of believers.

Timothy Yen was a 2012 Ryo & Jean Komae Graduate School Scholarship recipient.

The “Normal” Missionary Life

(Continued from page 3)

These women also have “normal” crises and situations in their lives that cause stress and family concerns as they raise their children in two cultures. Unfortunately, they do not have the professional resources available to them to be able to process some of the crises that come up in their lives. AACCS has been sending two therapists for the past three years to this retreat in order to provide care for these servants of God. It has been a joy and a privilege to do this.
I joined AACCS in 2010. I am very glad to be part of this agency. I am inspired and convicted by one of the AACCS’ core purposes “…[to] search for the lost and bring back the stray...[to] bind up the injured and strengthen the weak…” (Ezekiel 34:16). When I first read this in their statement of faith, I said, “Yes!” This is the agency I want to be affiliated with because we share the same mission. I want to stay with this agency where staff has the heart of Christ and draws strength from Him to provide healing to our clients.

I personally experienced the benefit of counseling and God’s deliverance. I believe that counseling can help. In 1998, I left Hong Kong where I grew up to pursue a Masters in Social Work degree at Washington University in St. Louis. My concentration was in mental health and my specialization was in management. After graduation, I worked in a New York State psychiatric hospital. In 2003, I went through a very dark time in my life. I faced relationship problems and loneliness. My father had had a stroke, and I was still grieving over the loss of my sister to suicide in 1996. I felt depressed, anxious and could not sleep well. I was overwhelmed by fear that I might go through similar challenges as my deceased sister.

At that time my pastor’s wife was a Godly woman as well as a psychiatrist. I knew I needed help and thus went to see her. With her I was able to express my heavy-laden heart in my mother language, Chinese. I felt like a mess, that life was unfair, and I questioned why God let my sister get sick and die in such a tragic way. I asked God why I had to go through this emotional turmoil. I felt ashamed because as a social worker, I was not able to help my own sister recover and live on.

The pastor’s wife told me to humbly come to God’s mercy seat to seek His mercy and help. She comforted me and said, “I have seen many people like you. I know God will continue to use you. Do not be afraid. He will use your experience to counsel others in the future. You will be a blessing and comfort to others.” I burst into tears when I heard the hope and trust she bestowed onto me. I told myself, “I will and am willing.” I surrendered and did whatever I could do to get out of the pit. I met with the pastor’s wife on a regular basis. I shared my struggles with my fellowship. They surrounded me to pray for me every week. I spent more time in devotion to know God and His guidance. Isaiah 41:10 was the verse I held onto most of the time to give me hope and comfort. “So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.” I also attended many Christian spiritual healing meetings. Gradually I got better.

Because of this trial, my relationship with God grew deeper. I hungered for a closer walk with God and for knowledge of His word. I appreciated more the beauty and importance of belonging to a fellowship. I loved my fellowship which consisted of people from all walks of life. During my trial, they prayed for me, walked with me in the park, accompanied me to see the pastor’s wife, and even stayed overnight with me sometimes. I am forever grateful to my pastor’s wife who modeled the care for the body of Christ through her Godly wisdom and professional knowledge. My trial also transformed me to be more compassionate toward those who go through similar challenges. Jude 1:22 says “And of some have compassion, making a difference.” And here I am with AACCS to make a difference in people’s lives.

**Eva** is a bi-cultural, bilingual counselor/therapist at AACCS’ Torrance office. Her professional skills include work with adults, children, couples, and families who have experienced trauma, grief/loss, difficulties with life transitions, problems in parenting, mental illness (including schizophrenia, depression, anxiety, bipolar, PTST, postpartum depression and personality disorders), and issues related to suicide survivors, nonviolent communication, domestic violence, and child abuse.
### Presentations/Events

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<td>&quot;Elder Care &amp; Counseling Approaches for Caretakers,&quot; Wesley Center, Tokyo, Japan. Joseph Ozawa, Ph.D.</td>
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21st Annual Art & Sharon Yokoi Memorial Golf Tournament

October 11, 2013
Los Verdes Golf Course
7000 West Los Verdes Drive
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA
1:00 PM Shotgun Start

Golf Registration & Dinner: $150/Person
Dinner Only: $55/Person

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