



Sun Land Times



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Picture for the Graduation day bulletin.

THE JOYS OF SEMINARY COME TO A CLOSE

Finally, after three tremendous years, my career as a seminary student has closed and another chapter of life has begun. Three years ago, Corinne, myself, and nine-month old Alethia loaded up our U-Haul truck and migrated across the states staying with beloved friends along the way. We arrived and immediately settled into the school crunch only to discover a few months later that little William would join our home—right in the middle of summer classes.

That first year was challenging as we watched our nest-egg savings evaporate in the California housing heat. But by Fall '01 the Lord provided a rent-free apartment managing job that included a two bedroom house with office and backyard—both proved vital to finishing school in three full-time years. The Lord also provided several web development contracts and a network administration consulting position which put food on the table and books on our shelves.

Each class semester increased in difficulty as my gracious professors ever-increasingly taught me to carefully study and teach God's word. Their diligence began to pay off this past year when I joined a friend in starting a church in the heart of downtown Los Angeles.

Finally, this past year I had the honor of serving as the student class vice-president. The privilege of being involved with the students and faculty was a highlight of my seminary experience. *Our future?* We'll see what the Lord has next in store for us. Until otherwise we'll keep on church planting downtown. If you're interested in more pictures, my resume, and ministry philosophy, check out our website (www.nightflare.com). *God Bless!*



Russ and Corinne on the big day.

WHO ARE THESE LITTLE GREMLINS?

I suppose that everyone thinks that they have the sweetest kids, but I've got to say that our kids are pretty precious.

Alethia Grace is now 3 1/2 years old. She's a constant talker. A friend took her on a 20 minute drive and dropped her off exclaiming that she talked the *entire* time.

This little bundle of energy loves dressing up her dolls, or dressing up herself (she'll often change clothes multiple times in a day). She also is a consummate reader, tea partyer, and budding Crayola Rembrandt. She has mastered some computer games, but *that* she calls "working"—only a minute ago, because it's bedtime, she asked if she could stay up and work



for *thirty more days!*—We've apparently raised a chronic work-aholic.

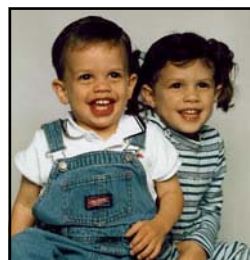


William Grant has just passed his two year birthday and he's truly *all boy*. He still doesn't talk yet but he makes up for it with his busy boy playing and gesturing.

He takes life very seriously and goes about accomplishing all kinds of tasks. He's happiest being outside in the mud watering plants (which I just turned around and see he's again doing right now) or drilling/hammering with his child tools. Perhaps his favorite task of all is to stand on a chair at the sink and "do dishes."

Both kids still sleep in the

same room. Recently, Will has been able to wage a couple successful jail-breaks from his crib, so he'll probably be paroled soon from his life behind bars. They have a blast together and it's my delightful pleasure to frequently have to go into their room after bedtime and quell the hullabaloo that always seems to mysteriously stop the moment I open their door...



"Behold, children are a gift of the Lord." (Ps 127:3)

Acts of God throughout Seminary:

- Apartment managing position.
- The support of friends, family and churches.
- Opportunity to start a church in downtown Los Angeles.
- Network Administration job with super-flexible hours.
- Great trip to Croatia.
- Survived Hebrew.
- Multiple web contracts all from word-of-mouth referrals.



All of us outside Sequoia National Park.



Upper and Lower Falls from our trip to Yosemite National Park.

Two Seconds of Inspiration

Romans 1:20

“For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.”

Russ Recommends:



Want a great biography on godly Christians but can't afford the time to read a whole book? J.C.

Ryle's *The Christian Leaders of the Last Century* provides an outstanding analysis of eleven leaders in the 1800s. The accounts can be read in one sitting, but they are profound enough to make you sit back and marvel at the work of God in these men's lives.

Want to teach your kids God's thoughts on wisdom? *Proverbs for Parenting*, arranged by Barbara Decker categorizes proverbs under various headings such as relationships, prosperity, wisdom, and reverence for God.

Theology Alley



Recently I've had extended conversations with a Jehovah's Witness and a Muslim about Jesus Christ as God. One man was convinced that the Bible didn't teach that Jesus was God and the other recognized that the New Testament taught Christ was God, but thought that the Old Testament didn't.

I had the privilege of showing both men how indeed the entire Bible presents Jesus as truly God and truly man. To be faithful to the teachings of scripture we have to recognize these two aspects of Jesus. If either attribute is denied, then we violate God's Word. Yet when we realize that Jesus is God, then we have to deal with the ramifications of listening to what He says about life, faith, and obedience to Him. To ignore God isn't a wise decision.

I've posted a nine page list of verses on our website www.nightflare.com, but will include a couple more here:

New Testament Verses:

John 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Col 2:9 For in him all the fullness of deity dwells in bodily form.

Titus 2:13 Looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus.

Old Testament verses:

Job 19:25 I know that my redeemer lives, and at the last he will take his stand on the earth, even after my skin is destroyed, yet from my flesh I shall see God.

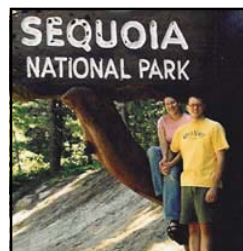
Isaiah 43:10 "You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "And my servant whom I have chosen, so that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me there was no God formed, and there will be none after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and there is no savior besides me."

WHO NEEDS A GALLBLADDER ANYWAY?

Apparently Corinne doesn't need a gallbladder because the day we returned home from Spring Break (where we were up in northern California mountains and in Yosemite National Park), Corinne suddenly had excruciating abdominal pain. She'd actually had pain like this a couple of times, but after a night of debilitating pain we decided to go to the emergency room.

They examined her and gave her morphine and diagnosed the problem as being a bum Gallbladder. The doctor said that it had to be removed eventually, which seemed to mean sometime in the distant future.

But after nine days, Corinne was still not eating (nothing would stay down) so we went back to the hospital and she was admitted and scheduled for surgery to remove the gallbladder. Everything was a success and the pain is gone. However, Corinne took almost two months to fully recover. Thankfully, our wonderful friends pitched in with food, babysitting, and sympathy.



This was only a few weeks ago with a fully recovered little lady.

Croatia Was Wonderful

For those of you who know or remember, last summer at this time I was in Croatia teaching adults English while also ministering in a small church in the heart of Zagreb.

The entire trip—from the three plane flights and five train rides to get there—to getting to know the wonderful people of former communist Yugoslavia—to seeing the gorgeous countrysides of Italy, Slovenia, and Croatia—to talking about the Lord with a band of roving rock-throwing teens—the entire trip was a joyful service to the Lord. We're still hoping to be able to go back.

Former communist governments long ago moved most Croatians into housing like this.

Aside from neighboring Slovenia, amazingly,

Croatia was considered the apex of communist society until the collapse of Yugoslavia in the '90s. Many of these middle class homes were even more run down than this.



This is a small town street way in the countryside. In many ways the countryside of Croatia is still as beautiful and undisturbed as it was decades ago.