

Candidate Document – Jonathan Wang, Social Running Together

Spiritual Life

- a) What is the gospel to you? Briefly share your personal testimony.*
 - b) Describe your relationship and current walk with Christ.*
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I stumbled across a little stand with a cardboard tri-fold and banner that said UTCCF at the U of T clubs carnival back in a sweltering hot September day in 2018. I don't remember who was there that offered me the pamphlet of information and freezie to eat, but I do remember being reluctant to go to that first meeting in KP, even after my mom convinced me to go. Up until that point, I had slowly been growing more distant with God and the Church since high school. All my friends had left the Church and I was feeling a lack of true community of Christ-like people in my life.

I honestly don't know what I was hoping to get out of going that fateful Friday, but what I ended up receiving was a sense of openness and hospitality I had never felt before. I would come to understand that that sentiment of community was a key pillar of CCF's vision and I really felt it through the worship, Bible studies, IG activities, and the wonderful first-years. Towards the end of the year, I felt like I had grown a lot in my spiritual life. The social aspect of the fellowship re-motivated me to deepen my relationship with God and re-center Him in my life. After embarking on a leadership position (IG Leader), I have also come closer to understanding what it means to be a leader in the fellowship and in Christ. I've re-discovered the joys of actually going to church on Sundays again and hope to grow even further in my Christ-centered life by running for the role of Social Coordinator.

Vision

Just like how God worked through the Israelites to flee Egypt into the Promised Land in Exodus or to rebuild the City of Jerusalem in the Book of Nehemiah, so too does he work through our community to build each other up in our faiths. Our walk in God is not done alone. Although it is a personal journey, God calls on us to bring our fellow brothers and sisters up, encouraging each other in our faith, and pushing us to run together. Whether it be new believers or those already mature in their beliefs, we are all on this path and we need God and each other to complete it. CCF is a great place to find that sort of community and to build on it and it's up to the committee and the other leaders of CCF to foster that community and help other prepare for the Kingdom of God through strong visioning, Bible studies, and other events.

1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, 2 fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

It is sort of like running a race (I like to use the running analogy because I enjoy jogging as a hobby). Life is like a race path, with a beginning and end. It's not just you on that race path, there are thousands of other runners, all beginning at the starting line of birth and trying to get to the same end destination, which is eternal life. God is looking out for each and every one of you as you run that race. Sometimes you might slow down, even stop, even start running the wrong way or veering off course! You'll face pain, you'll struggle, you might even think about calling it quits and stop running entirely. That is the testing of our faith, the trials, temptations and tribulations we are bound to face in our journey with God. Just like how actual running strengthens your endurance and tests your perceived physical limitations, so too do challenges in your faith strengthen your connection with God (by submitting to him and asking for reliance). The other people running that race are also there for a reason, and they're there to help you and push you along the way. You're there to help them too. We are all here at CCF to grow and run together as a community.

6 In all this you greatly rejoice, though now for a little while you may have had to suffer grief in all kinds of trials. 7 These have come so that the proven genuineness of your faith—of greater worth than gold, which perishes even though refined by fire—may result in praise, glory and honor when Jesus Christ is revealed. (1 Peter 1:6-7)

*All my days I prayed and prayed and now I see the finish line
Oh I'm gonna finish mine
All my days I prayed and prayed and now I see the finish line
Gonna finish mine*

- Chance the Rapper, Finish Line/Drown, Coloring Book (2016)

Personal Evaluation

What God-given gifts do you see in your life and how do you see God using them for his Kingdom at CCF?

I love meeting new people, getting to know them and making friends! I'm a pretty extroverted person and love making people feel welcome and connected to the group. I also have a knack for planning events, so I look forward to collaborating with other Committee members to create those events and foster a welcoming environment in which people feel invested. I also already have leadership experience, both from IG and in my other student union. Even if I don't get the role of Social Coordinator, I hope to continue fostering this community in other ways, such as through IG. I know what it feels like to not have a strong spiritual community and I know there are tons of people out there that feel the same way. Just like how I felt a close community in my years, I hope to recreate that sort of community so others might be able to feel the same and grow in their faith. There are numerous ways in which you can foster a vibrant community, such as planning retreats, fun picnics and barbeques, investing in various ministries and IGs. Ministries like Freezer and Hospitality are great in fostering a welcoming community, especially for newcomers. The CCF welcoming table on Fridays is a great way to meet up with your friends, catch up on the week and introduce new people to the fellowship. The IG rotation is a great way of letting each segment of the fellowship do some welcoming!

What are some areas of weakness in your life? How are you taking grace-driven steps to overcome them and become more like Christ?

We are all sinful people, no matter how hard we try to avoid it and I definitely feel I have an issue with how I act. I come to realize that I sometimes may act or say things that are inappropriate for fellowship times, which might rub people the wrong way and lead to people feeling uncomfortable. Being a committee member, not only comes with the spiritual and logistical responsibility, but you are also viewed as a moral authority to those in the fellowship (a role model). I've been praying to God to help me curb my behaviour and also talking with some trustworthy friends to understand how my actions impact those around me and how I can ease people in a welcoming fellowship without having to mask or hide my personality.

I believe I am still somewhat spiritually immature. As in, my knowledge of the Gospel and theology is not as high as I want it to be. I'm making steps to improve that by supplementing Bible study, with extra analysis from the internet, input from others in the fellowship/church and again, quiet time with God through devotions and prayer. I hope that God will give me adequate preparedness for that role. If I am trusting and reliant on God, I know that he will guide me through my weaknesses and help me be a better leader for the fellowship.

10 And here is my judgment about what is best for you in this matter. Last year you were the first not only to give but also to have the desire to do so. 11 Now finish the work, so that your eager willingness to do it may be matched by your completion of it, according to your means. 12 For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have. (2 Corinthians 8:10-13)