

N.Y. Knicks' Jeremy Lin seen as 'Taiwanese Tebow'

by [Daniel Burke](#) in the [March 21, 2012](#) issue

New York Knicks guard Jeremy Lin's underdog story and outspoken evangelical faith have some sportswriters dubbing him the "Taiwanese Tebow."

But while Lin and Denver Broncos quarterback Tim Tebow share similar Christian convictions, Lin's sudden stardom is even more miraculous.

Several weeks ago, the Harvard University graduate was buried on the bench and crashing on friends' couches. Stadium security guards mistook Lin for a team trainer.

After injuries to teammates, though, Lin was inserted into the starting lineup. The Knicks promptly went on a winning streak and rose in the NBA standings, with their new point guard leading the way. New Yorkers and Asian-Americans across the country succumbed to a frenzy of "Linsanity."

Fans splurged for replicas of Lin's jersey, the TV ratings of Knicks games skyrocketed and shares of the Madison Square Garden Company, which owns the basketball team, soared by mid-February.

Like any good point guard, Lin knows the art of the pass—distributing the praise to his teammates and to God. "I'm just thankful to God for everything," Lin said in a postgame interview. "Like the Bible says, 'God works in all things for the good of those who love him.'"

Lin's passing reference to Romans 8:28 was caught by his longtime pastor, Stephen Chen of Redeemer Bible Fellowship, a ministry within the Chinese Church in Christ in Mountain View, California.

Chen describes the church as full of first- and second-generation immigrants, like Lin and his parents, who are "conservative in nature" and evangelical in faith.

"Very early in his life he decided to pay heed to the call of Christ to take up the cross daily and follow after him," Chen said.

Even during the basketball season, when games went deep into Saturday night, Lin's

family made sure he was in the pews on Sunday morning, Chen said.

Lin also credits his parents with teaching him to play "godly basketball," which measures success by sportsmanship, not stats. That means putting teammates first and showing respect for opponents and referees.

As his star rose, first at Harvard and then with the San Francisco-based Golden State Warriors, Lin shared his faith testimony with youth groups and churches near his California home.

In a 2011 appearance at River of Life Christian Church in Santa Clara, he quoted from the works of John Piper, a prominent neo-Calvinist pastor in Minneapolis, and spoke of trusting in "God's sovereign plan."

Chen, who said he recently spoke to Lin, expects his sharp-shooting congregant to continue his evangelism in the bright lights of the Big Apple. "He is really looking forward to using the platform that he has to share the gospel with others," Chen said.

Lin already uses his social media platforms to spread the Word. His Twitter account's description is, "To know Him is to want to know Him more." His account's avatar depicts Jesus telling a young man, "No, I'm not just talking about Twitter. I literally want you to follow me." His Facebook page quotes Colossians 3:23: "Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men."

Tom Krattenmaker, author of the book *Onward Christian Athletes*, is among the many who see some similarities between Lin and Tebow. Like Tebow, Lin has spoken of relying on faith to help carry him through highs and lows of his sports career, and both men often praise God during postgame interviews.

Lin himself has called Tebow "a polarizing figure." But he has also said he draws inspiration from the young quarterback's example. "I think the things he says in interviews, his approach to the game, is just unbelievable, and I respect him so much," Lin told a California radio station. —RNS