

## Chapter One

# *Childhood*



I was born in Nanjing (Nanking), the former capital city of the Republic of China, on August 17th the year of the sheep (1931) according to the Chinese lunar calendar.

I was the only child born to a poor, dysfunctional family. My mother died in her early twenties, when I was three years old. No one told me the cause of her death. My father was serving in the army at the time, so my grandmother took care of me until I reached school age. She sent me to live with my father whom I was to meet for the first time. He was living with a woman whose background, it seemed to me, was questionable yet I was obliged to refer to her as my stepmother. She did treat me well and I especially enjoyed her cooking.

Recently discharged from the army, my father began working as a mailman in a local hotel for a meager salary. We lived in a shabby neighborhood behind the luxurious hotel, a stark contrast! Our family of three shared a small dilapidated, single-room dwelling in which we did everything together. We cooked, ate and slept in the same room. We didn't complain about our living conditions, content to have food on the table and shelter. We understood that China was a poor country.

Feeling more or less like an orphan, I do not remember any happy days during my childhood. Because my mother died young, I never got to know what she was like. The only thing I had to remember her by was a picture in her wedding dress. It had been cut in half with the bridegroom missing! I was never told why. My mom's death and her relationship with my dad have remained a mystery. I do not have any photo of my father. I only remember him as a benign, lanky, middle-aged man with a ruddy face, pedaling his bicycle daily back and forth between the hotel and the post office. We were separated by the Chinese Civil War in 1948 and I never saw him again.

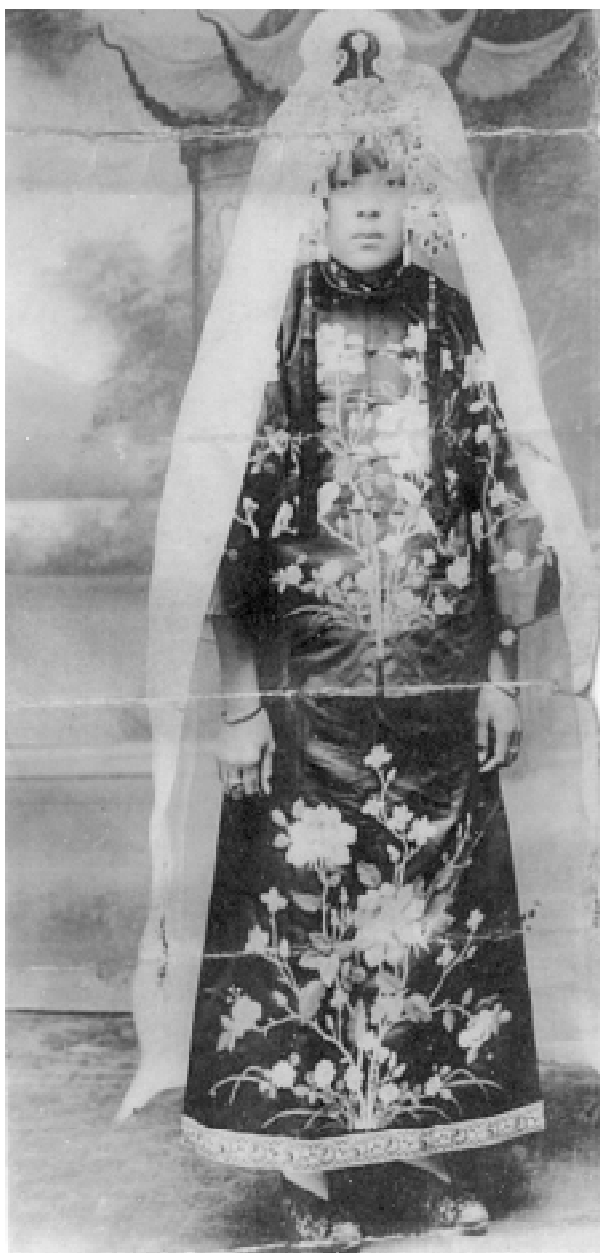
I had a weird experience in the late 1950s while living in Taiwan. I woke up in the middle of the night with a strange feeling about my father, who remained in Nanjing when I left for Taiwan to escape the Communist rule. For years we had no way of communicating. Not long after I had that strange feeling, I received word through a friend in Hong Kong that my father had died. No details were given.

As far as my grandparents were concerned, I knew little or nothing about them except that they did not get along and that they were not living together while I was under my grandmother's care. She was a devout Buddhist, faithfully chanting her sing-song prayers every morning. She never seemed happy. She never told me anything about my mother or about her relationship with my father. Probably because I would have been too young to understand. Later, as far as I could remember, the only thing she told me was that when my mother died, strangely enough, her eyes had remained open. Until she had been repeatedly assured that my grandmother would take care of me, did she slowly close her eyes.

As a boy I also lived through the terrible days of the Japanese occupation of China. I could never forget the atrocities committed by Japanese troops against the Chinese people following their invasion of China in 1937. Known as the "Nanking Massacre", Japanese soldiers killed tens of thousands of Chinese civilians, including women and children.

I vividly remember seeing armed Japanese soldiers carrying rifles fitted with bayonets, going from house to house in search of young Chinese women. I saw those women dashing off trying to find hiding places while being chased by the Japanese soldiers. When they were caught, they were dragged into nearby houses and raped. Many were killed, including some who were pregnant.

These horrible childhood memories cannot be erased. To this day, post-war Japanese authorities have refused to acknowledge the Nanking Massacre committed by their occupational forces in China and have deliberately excluded this portion of the Sino-Japanese war from their history textbooks.



Wedding picture of  
Jack Chow's mother whom he had never seen.

## Chapter Two

# *Education*



I am basically a self-educated man. My scanty schooling consisted of five years in grade school, a one-year correspondence course in journalism with the University Extension Department of UC-Berkeley, and one semester spent studying broadcast journalism at the University of Syracuse in New York. The latter was part of an eight month technical training program sponsored by the U.S. Information Agency under the State Department in 1955. The program also provided opportunities for me to travel in the United States to observe first-hand how American TV-radio networks ran their news operations. The technical knowledge and skills I gained from this trip were shared with the English-language news organizations in Taiwan in the form of short-term training classes that I was privileged to conduct.

One of the highlights of my U.S. study tour in 1955 was a meeting with Edward R. Murrow, an iconic American broadcast journalist at that time. His unique “As I See It” CBS-TV show was one of the most-watched interview programs in the U.S. It was my privilege to watch him produce the show and discuss with him some basic principles of American journalism. The conversation I had with this widely-respected American journalist in his New York office had a significant impact on my journalistic career.

In a nutshell, the bulk of my education/knowledge has come from two sources: the Bible and 80 years of real-life experiences. The Bible has been my companion and teacher ever since I became a Christian at the age of 17. It has taught me much about the meaning of life and the knowledge of God as well as our relationship with the Creator of the universe and humankind. The application of biblical principles in my Christian life has made me a better person—as a husband, father, journalist, preacher and grandfather.

### **Why I quit school early**

Because my father could not afford the school fees, I had to quit school early. I barely finished fifth grade when he pulled me out and put me to work to support myself. So at the age of eleven, I was left to fend for myself—sink or swim.

I felt sad that I couldn't go back to school. I often cried when I thought of other boys and girls being able to go to school while I was deprived of the opportunity of education. Nevertheless, I determined to study and learn by myself. I worked hard and studied hard.

With the money I earned from working as a bellhop at the same hotel where my father was employed, I bought books to read and additional workbooks in which to practice calligraphy. I wanted to be able to write fine Chinese characters with a brush pen like any Chinese scholar. I made use of all my spare time to study like a bookworm. I probably wouldn't have applied myself so hard if I had been kept in school.

As years went by, I kept up self-study. Then the eight-year war with Japan ended in victory. The two atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki by the United States, China's chief ally in the war, caused Japan to surrender in 1945. With the establishment of the first U.S. military advisory mission in China, there was a great influx of American military personnel who needed a lodging place in the capital city. The hotel where I was working was commandeered by the Chinese

government to house the American military. I was able to keep my job there as a bellboy, which provided a golden opportunity for me to learn to speak and write in English. Again, if I were still in school, I would not have had the opportunity nor the ideal environment to learn the language which would later become a vital asset in my career and future.

### **How I began to learn English**

Among the Americans staying at the hostel was a veteran journalist by the name of John Roderick. He was covering the Sino-Japanese war in China for the Associated Press. He later became the first American reporter allowed to enter China during the period of “ping-pong diplomacy” which led to the resumption of diplomatic relations between China and the U.S. in 1979. Though a total stranger, he took a personal interest in me as a teenage boy and offered to teach me English free of charge. John Roderick also gave me my first English name, Jack—which was his nickname. Normally, Chinese people do not have first names like Westerners do, unless they have adopted English names. Traditionally, Chinese first names are their last or family/surnames.

John Roderick was the first and last English teacher I ever had. He would spend hours each week teaching me to read and write in correct American English. As a veteran correspondent, he was a terrific reporter/writer. He worked with me on my pronunciation for three months until I was able to say English words and phrases the American way! That’s why I have an American accent when I speak English. I picked this up in China!

Nevertheless, learning English with an American teacher aroused my interest in American culture and history. As I worked and lived among the Americans, I noticed that they had a lot of respect for individual freedom and human dignity. The average American seemed to be better educated in social decorum. Their way of being courteous is different from the Chinese

who tend to be more respectful to the elderly.

I noticed, for example, that when Americans accidentally bump into someone, or when they must interrupt a conversation, they would usually say, “Excuse me” or “I’m sorry.” American motorists, by and large, yield to pedestrians; they almost always stop for or give right of way to them.

Another example is when they stand in a queue, usually no one tries to cut in to get to the front of the line. They will wait in line in an orderly fashion. I also noticed that when people had to sneeze or cough, they would cover their mouths with a handkerchief. I have never seen an American spitting in public places, or yelling while talking on the telephone.

### **How English changed my life**

I began to like Americans and Americana. I wanted to know more about American culture and history. For some reason, I had developed such an intense interest and love for the English language that I studied it day and night, literally eating it and sleeping with it! I worked on my English so fervently that I had to keep replacing my English-Chinese dictionary one after another. I tried to absorb every word and phrase I possibly could. Within a matter of two years, I learned to speak English fluently and was able to use an English typewriter and type as fast as a trained secretary.

In 1947, when I turned 16, I got my first salaried job with the U.S. Military Advisory Mission in China, first as a clerk-typist and later as a translator. From that point I started on an upward career ladder. I began to receive better job offers one after another. My knowledge of English seemed to pave a way for a brighter future. Especially in post-war China, there was a great demand for people with knowledge and skills in the English language both in government and the private sectors.



## **Advantages of knowing English**

My command of the English language, for all its worth, had thus become a principal means of financial earnings, not only to support myself but also eventually to provide for my family. It may be said that without the knowledge and skills of English, I would not have had a successful career in journalism. For that matter, I would not have been sent to the United States where I have had greater exposure to American politics, culture and history and eventually where I became a naturalized U.S. citizen.

Furthermore, I have had access to English-language literature which helped to broaden my knowledge of America and the world at large. With my knowledge of English, I acquired advanced technical knowledge and skills in the field of journalism, able then to pass this on to promising young Chinese journalists in Taiwan. It was my great joy to see some of the up-and-coming journalists whom I helped to train eventually employed by Chinese government information offices and private news organizations.

With adequate knowledge of English, I have enjoyed numerous advantages of living in the United States, especially in my role as a foreign press correspondent. I have been able to cover presidential press conferences and White House briefings as well as to interview Congressional leaders and other government officials. I've had access to American mainstream news media and various publications in English and have been able to obtain much of the news and information first-hand without waiting for the Chinese translation.

Another great advantage is that I have been able to read my Bible in Chinese and English side by side, comparing the Chinese and different versions of the English translations, thereby helping me to gain a greater and fuller understanding of the original meaning of the Scriptures. I also feel privileged to have been able to read spiritual and devotional classics available only in English, which has helped me to develop a closer relationship

with God.

Being bilingual has brought great benefits not only to myself but also to many others through my journalistic reporting and subsequent Christian ministry to both Chinese and English-speaking congregations. All in all, it has made my life and hopefully the lives of others more meaningful, enjoyable and worth living.

### **The Bible as a tool in self-education**

Since I was deprived of formal education, I have relied on the Bible as a major tool in self-education and self-improvement, especially in my pursuit of a higher knowledge of the Almighty God. It has truly shaped my character and molded me into someone who looks like a scholarly person.

I have read and studied the Bible time and again for over 50 years since I became a Christian. I have come to love and treasure the Bible as a source of inspiration and a gold mine of inexhaustible riches of wisdom and knowledge. I have discovered that this incredible book has all the answers to human problems and tragedies seen around the world today.

Because the Bible is believed to be the inspired Word of God, it has been miraculously preserved throughout the ages and has remained to date the best-selling and most widely-read book in the world—with translations, in part or whole, into 2,530 different languages or forms of speech.

To sum up, my self-education has been derived from two main sources: The Bible and work experience, the latter including over 30 years in journalism, 20 years in pastoral work and another 25 years of extensive travels related to the Christian ministry. I would attribute to my God and the Lord Jesus any success that I may have achieved in these human endeavors.

In recounting the benefits of self-education, I never imagined that learning English as a second language would have had such an impact on nearly all aspects of my life. It suddenly dawned on me that the passion I had for the English language in

the early days of my young life must have come from a higher Source, and that it was given for a reason. How could I not believe that the Omniscient God who is our loving Father had my whole life planned out, even before I was born, and brought it to fruition for His own glory?

This has led me to believe that God has a plan not only for my life but for the lives of everyone of His children who are born again of the Holy Spirit, as He emphatically declares in His Word: *“For I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future”* (Jeremiah 29:11).



Nancy's mother Lan-Lan, former movie actress in Shanghai.

## Chapter Three

# *Conversion*



I became a Christian and was baptized in 1948. It wasn't because I had an unusual religious experience, but because of the testimony of a Christian friend. One of my colleagues at work, Xu Yun Kui (徐云逵), invited me to church one Sunday morning to hear him preach. I didn't know he was a lay preacher. That was my first time ever to go to church and hear the name of Jesus Christ. Before then I had only heard about Buddha from my grandmother, or Muhammad from some of my relatives who were Muslims.

After that, Xu would show up at my apartment every Sunday morning, rain or shine, wait for me to get up, and then take me to church with him. Xu was the kind of person you could hardly say no to. He was always kind and friendly, and his patience and persistence definitely had an impact on me. So, I kept going to church with him for about six months, and I liked what I heard. One day, the church announced a baptismal service was to take place and those wishing to be baptized could sign up for an interview with the church elders.

During the interview, I was asked some simple questions: Do you believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God, that He died on the cross for your sins, that if you accept Him as your personal Savior, your sins would be forgiven, and that when you die, you will go to heaven? I answered yes to every one of these questions, and I was baptized as a new member of that church. Even though I didn't know much about Christianity, I thought I did the right thing. In fact, as time went on it turned out to be the best thing that has ever happened in my life!

Following my baptism, I went on to live like a zealous practicing Christian: I attended church services regularly, I prayed daily and read my Bible, I gave time and money to the church, I participated in Bible training classes and evangelistic activities. I served in various capacities such as leading worship, leading a cell group, and doing home and hospital visitation. I even cleaned lavatories. In those days they were quite primitive!

By doing all of these things, I thought I was a "good" Christian. I was just acting like a truly religious and spiritual person. But as I found out later, I wasn't even born again! Because there wasn't any sign of a new life in my behavior. I was still the same old self—self-centered, arrogant and ill-tempered. I couldn't get along with any of my colleagues. In church, I pretended to be nice and spiritual, but at home I was a totally different person. I often gave my wife and children a hard time! I envied other Christians who were so nice and happy, but I had neither peace nor joy in my heart. This situation went on for more than ten years. I was getting sick and tired of trying to be a good Christian.

Gradually I realized something was missing in my Christian life, but I didn't know what it was. I sought answers from our ministers in church, but none of them could help me. I became so desperate that one day I took off from work in order to seek an answer directly from God as to where I might have failed. I needed to know what was missing in my faith.

I spent the whole day in prayer, searching the Scriptures for an answer. But it seemed as though God was so far away from me. By the end of the day, I was ready to give up. I said to Him, “God, if you don’t give me an answer today, I will cease to be a Christian.” Then, all of sudden, this familiar Scripture verse popped up in my mind: *“I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me”* (Galatians 2:20). At the time I did not understand what it means for a believer to be “crucified with Christ” and to say that “I no longer live, but Christ lives in me.” I thought the Apostle Paul was only talking about his own Christian experience. Although I had been a church goer for many years, I had never had the experience of “Christ living in me.” I had no idea of what it is like when “Christ lives in me.” If that is what Christianity is all about, then I was not a Christian in the true sense of the word, but a mere religious person. It is often said that Christianity is not a religion; it’s a personal relationship with the living Christ.

So I continued seeking for the real thing. As Jesus promises, *“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened”* (Matthew 7:7-8). I just kept seeking and knocking. It took me seven years to find the truth—Christ living in me—and I was no longer the same person!

In 1962 I began a new job in Hong Kong, so we moved from Taiwan. We began to hear stories about a church where “signs and wonders” were said to be happening almost daily. We learned that the woman who started the church was a former popular movie actress who had a marvelous experience of conversion and that she was filled with the Holy Spirit and was being mightily used by God.

My wife Nancy and I (see Chapter 5 for our courtship and marriage) became increasingly intrigued and curious until one day we decided to visit the church to see for ourselves what it

was like. The actress-turned-evangelist was preaching that night on what was billed as “The Baptism of the Holy Spirit.” This was a topic that we had never heard in our own church, where women were not permitted to speak in public—and were taught to have their heads covered while in church as a sign of obedience. Women were only allowed to preach to women.

The former Cantonese-speaking actress (known as *Mui Yee* on the screen) preached a powerful sermon on the necessity of Spirit baptism. Until then, we had known only water baptism. Evangelical believers are usually baptized in water or sprinkled with water, but we had not been taught any “baptism in the Holy Spirit.” She made a case for the first 120 believers who were baptized in the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. She stressed that every Christian believer needs to be baptized in Spirit as well as in water, as Jesus commanded His disciples just before Pentecost: *“For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit”. “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...”* (Acts 1:5,8).

As she finished preaching, that petite woman preacher, dressed in a black traditional gown with a Bible in her hand, stepped off the platform and started walking directly toward us, smiling as if she already knew us. She greeted my wife and me warmly and invited us to stay for a late-night snack, as was the custom among the Cantonese people. We began wondering what God had in store for us.

As we sat down to eat, I was asked to pray a blessing on the food. As soon as I started praying, I heard my wife speaking in tongues for the first time ever, and even before I had finished praying, I found myself surrounded by Evangelist *Mui Yee* and her associates who started praying in unison and laying hands on me so that I, too, would be filled with the Holy Spirit. They all believed that speaking in tongues, as manifested by the early disciples on the Day of Pentecost, is a sign of being filled or baptized with the Holy Spirit as the Scripture says, *“All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other*



*tongues as the Spirit enabled them” (Acts 2:4).*

They prayed, prayed, and prayed, but I didn’t speak in tongues. I wasn’t rejecting speaking in tongues because I knew that it was clearly recorded and taught in the Scriptures. What I did not accept was the fact that these women laid their hands on me without first asking for my permission! As mentioned before, we came from a church background where women were taught to be submissive to men and to be quiet in meetings. (1 Timothy 2:11-12) As they kept praying for God to fill me with the Holy Spirit, I kept struggling in my mind as to whether women should be allowed to “lay hands” on men!

The women kept praying for me for at least half an hour, until I heard these words in my spirit: “.....*You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children*”. “*Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven*” (Matthew 11:25, 18:3).

I knew immediately that these words came from the Lord, and I began to understand that I needed to be childlike, humble and simple. I also knew in my spirit that God was doing something new for us that night. My wife received the gift of speaking in tongues so easily because she was simple and childlike. So I knew I needed to become like a child in order to receive the baptism in the Holy Spirit.

As soon as I surrendered my heart to God, in a split second, I burst out speaking in another tongue! I felt as though something had exploded from within me! I kept talking in tongues loudly and almost uncontrollably for about half an hour! In so doing, I heard the clapping of hands by people around me as they fervently prayed for me! They all seemed to be rejoicing over the fact that I had received the Spirit baptism.

For me, the best part of the baptism with the Holy Spirit was when I saw Jesus standing before me—not with my physical eyes but with my spiritual eyes, so vividly in my spirit—as I consecrated myself and my all to Him. It was made so real to me that I didn’t feel the need to open my eyes to see if He was there.

He *was* there standing before me! Because it was Jesus who baptized me with the Holy Spirit! John the Baptist had foretold this, “...*He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire*” (Matthew 3:11).

Until I had this wonderful baptism, I believed only mentally that Jesus Christ had risen from the dead; but now I believe empirically that Jesus Christ is indeed alive! He is not only alive in the world but also lives within me! Then I began to understand what it means when the Apostle Paul said, “...*Christ lives in me*” (Galatians 2:20)!

What happened on that night was a turning point in my life. Everything was changed! My worldview, my value system, my understanding of Christianity, my relationship with God, my view of the Church of Christ, my relations with fellow Christians and non-Christians, the meaning and purpose of life—all had changed!

## Chapter Four

# *Career*



Backtracking a bit to my earliest days as a Christian, the first time I ever prayed earnestly was when I was in dire need of a job. I was on an emergency evacuation ship that had just left Shanghai in advance of the Communist invasion. My friend, Li Shengyu, a senior military officer in the Nationalist army, was in charge of the ship headed for Canton (now Guangzhou). I was offered free passage with the understanding that I would have to be on my own once we reached our destination. I seized the opportunity to flee from Communism after my father instructed me to “go with the Nationalist government wherever it takes you.” That was the last time I talked to him on the phone not knowing I would never see him again.

Fighting had already broken out between the Nationalist garrison and the invading Communist forces. I could hear the exchange of gunfire between the two sides as our ship sailed out of the Shanghai harbor. Within a matter of days, the metropolitan city of Shanghai fell into Communist hands.

As our ship was cruising on high seas the next morning, I stood alone on the open deck. As I looked out upon the vast

ocean, the sky and waters seeming to merge together. I wondered who would help me once I reached my destination. Because I didn't have any money and I didn't know anybody in the strange city I was about to reach, I was worried about my future.

### **Praying for the first time**

I prayed to God in earnest: "Dear Lord, if you help me find a job in Canton, I will treat you as my God all the rest of my life. In Jesus' Name. Amen." As a young Christian, I really didn't know how to pray. But I learned later that my simple prayer was similar to the one prayed by Jacob in the Old Testament while he was in the wilderness fleeing from the wrath of his brother Esau (Genesis 28:20-21).

After the ship docked at the southern port city of Canton, I immediately went ashore job hunting. I was told there was a section of the city called *Shamian*, near the beach, where clusters of foreign companies were located. I called at some of these firms offering my service as an English-speaking typist and translator. No one would hire me during the first two days. On the third day, I landed a job at a semi-government organization called Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR). This was a U.S.-funded joint undertaking whose task was to help China carry out agricultural reforms. Its employees were better paid than most other organizations.

I was hired as a clerk-typist. Two weeks later, on my first pay day, to my amazement, I was paid seventy-five Chinese silver dollars! (The run-away inflation during the war had rendered the then Chinese currency worthless.) Silver dollars were almost as good as U.S. dollars. As I walked out of the pay office carrying two piles of the silver dollars in my hands, I was so thrilled that I just couldn't stop thanking God for answering my prayer while on the ship! So, God hears prayers, I thought! This experience had undoubtedly strengthened my faith in God. As I promised, I have trusted Jesus Christ as my Lord and God ever since.

Soon the Communist forces were advancing toward the city of Canton. JCRR and other Nationalist government agencies were ordered to evacuate to Taiwan. My service was thus terminated along with other local employees. However, I was surprised when my boss, a gracious American lady in charge of JCRR personnel, told me that she could re-hire me in Taiwan, if I could obtain an entry permit. With her consent, I listed her name as my guarantor, a requirement on the application for any Chinese citizen to enter Taiwan at that time. My entry permit was quickly granted and mailed to me in Hong Kong. When I arrived at the Taipei Sungshan Airport, a senior JCRR official sent by my former boss was on hand to greet me, and I started working right away! God was so good to me!

### **Miracles still happen**

If my employment/re-employment by JCRR was a miracle, it was only the beginning of more to come. Of the multiple jobs I have had so far, I would say the one with JCRR in Taiwan was the best thing that ever happened to me for two main reasons: first, it led to my surprise encounter with the former Miss Nancy Sun who was to become my wife and life-long companion; second, it provided an unlikely catalyst for a new successful career for me in journalism!

The publisher of the newspaper was Nancy Yu Huang (余梦燕), an enterprising Chinese newswoman who had a journalism degree from Columbia University in New York. Her lean, fledgling paper was in dire need of staff writers and editors well versed in both Chinese *and* English, since much of the news information was available only in Chinese. Yong and I had just finished our journalism course, and so we stepped up to fill in as part-time news writers and editors. It seemed like a perfect time for me to put into practice what I learned from the correspondence course.

## A full-fledged journalist

As I gained some experience in newspaper work, I wanted to find out how well I was doing as an English-language reporter/writer. One day, the official Central News Agency (CNA) in Taiwan posted openings for news writers/editors in its English Department. They invited young, aspiring journalists with college degrees to compete for these positions. Although I never went to college, I decided to take the test just to see how I would do compared to those who had college education. To my great surprise, among dozens of contestants, I came out on top! Another miracle for me! I was so happy to get an idea of where I was in my continuing self-study of the English language as well as a potential foreign-language journalist.

Mr. Tseng Xubai (曾虛白), a veteran journalist and noted political commentator in Taiwan, was head of the official news agency. He was also the interim CEO of the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC) where he was in need of someone to manage the foreign language broadcasts. He asked to interview me personally to determine if I would be qualified to fill that position at BCC. However, I had no intention of giving up my well-paying job at JCRR.

In our first meeting, Mr. Tseng displayed an intense interest in training a new generation of journalists. He had been the founder and Dean of the Graduate School of Journalism at the National Chengchih (Political) University in Taiwan. Eventually, it was this influential journalist and educator who would persuade me to leave JCRR in favor of a lower-paying job, which, he said, would offer better prospects for a career in journalism. It was a difficult decision because at the time I had to provide for a growing family. But, I am glad I took his advice.

## First visit to the U.S.

Amazingly, less than six months after I joined BCC as head of its English Department, I was chosen as one of Taiwan's two journalists to participate in an information technical training program funded by the U.S. State Department in Washington, D. C. It was one of those rare opportunities that a journalist in Taiwan would dream of.

The eight month program paid for my extensive travel in the United States to gain some firsthand knowledge of American broadcasting techniques as well as to get some hands-on training in the newsroom operations of major U.S. radio and television network stations. These included CBS, NBC and the then Mutual Broadcasting System network stations in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago and Los Angeles. I also spent one semester in the Department of Mass Communications at Syracuse University in New York, where I attended lectures and did lab work in TV broadcasting.

Armed with some new knowledge and the skills I gained from the various American broadcasting networks, I initiated two training programs upon my return to Taiwan—one for broadcast journalists and one for newspaper reporters and writers. I was also invited by the then Minister of Education, Mr. Chang Chi-yun (张其昀) to conduct the first experiment of educational TV broadcast in Taiwan in 1956. The plan was to use television as a new medium for mass education. Unfortunately, it never took off due to lack of funding.

When Taiwan launched its first-ever TV station in 1961, I was recommended as the first candidate to be its programming director. However, due to my commitment to *China Post* where I was in charge of the news desk and my publisher's refusal to release me "under any circumstances," the position was filled by a fellow journalist who had also been trained at Syracuse University in upstate New York.

## First Asian Journalists Conference

During my tenure at *China Post*, I was one of the two journalists selected to represent the Republic of China at the First Asian Journalists Conference held in the Philippines in 1962. The other representative from Taiwan was Ting Wei-tung (丁维栋), Managing Director of the English-language *China News*. During the Manila conference, we were received by the President of the Philippines along with delegates from other Asian countries (the People's Republic of China excluded).

While passing through Hong Kong on my return to Taiwan, something good happened unexpectedly. I was visiting with a veteran journalist friend in Hong Kong, Mr. Woo Kiatang (吴嘉棠), then Editor-in-Chief of the *Hong Kong Standard*, one of the two leading English-language newspapers in Hong Kong. At that time, he was looking for someone to fill the position of Chief Reporter on his newspaper and, to my surprise, he offered me the job which I gladly accepted and agreed to assume as soon as possible.

## Time to move on

I took the Hong Kong job offer as a sign from God that it was time for us to leave Taiwan after living there for 13 years. Shortly after I returned to Taipei, I resigned from the *China Post* effective immediately. Graham Jenkins, the then Australian General Manager of the *Hong Kong Standard*, was instrumental in facilitating the swift transition.

We lived in Hong Kong for six years from 1962-1968, during which I had four other jobs, apart from the *Hong Kong Standard*—namely, Radio Section Chief at the U. S. Information Center in Hong Kong, Correspondent for the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, Reporter/Writer of *World Today* magazine, and Trade Adviser/Writer with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council. These jobs were offered to me one after another even without my solicitation. Each one was better than



the other! By this time, I became fully convinced of such teachings as divine intervention and unconditional favor from God.

Spiritually speaking, the unexpected experience of the “Baptism with the Holy Spirit” I had in Hong Kong has had far-reaching consequential effect upon my personal relationship with God and subsequent service in the evangelical churches in the United States.

### **Major news events covered**

Among the most significant and historic news events I covered during my 33 year journalistic career were: the open ideological dispute and split between Communist China under Mao Tse-tung (Mao Zedong) and the former Soviet Union; the social unrest in the British colony of Hong Kong caused by the leftist-inspired riots in the early 1960s; China’s chaotic “cultural revolution” during the late 1960s; the U.S. landing of the first man on the moon in 1970; the re-election of President Richard Nixon in 1972 and his historic visit to China in the same year; the annual debate over the issue of China’s representation in the United Nations which ended with the Republic of China (Taiwan) being replaced by the People’s Republic of China in 1971; the much-publicized “Watergate” scandal that forced Nixon to become the first U.S. President to resign from office in 1974; and the normalization of relations between China and the United States. (This consummated with the re-establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1979, while the traditional ties between Taipei and Washington, notably the formal Mutual Defense Treaty, were replaced and hitherto maintained by the so-called Taiwan Relations Act passed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Jimmy Carter.)

I consider my assignment as the Washington/New York Correspondent for Taiwan’s *China Times* as one of the highlights in my journalistic career. It came at a critical time when U.S.-China relations were undergoing a historic change. The

Nixon administration was trying to formulate a new China policy whereby Washington would recognize Beijing as the only legitimate government of China, while still keeping its existing ties and moral obligations to the Nationalist Government in Taipei.

At that time Taiwan was also facing a grave diplomatic challenge in the United Nations over the issue of Chinese representation. Professionally speaking, for a journalist from Taiwan to be assigned to Washington and New York was both an exciting time and a great challenge.

There was so much news to report to Taiwan at the time, yet government censorship was still in force in those days. I had to walk on thin ice, so to speak, when covering those sensitive political issues involving the United States, China and Taiwan. In New York, meanwhile, the diplomatic tide in the United Nations was turning increasingly in favor of Beijing's admission into the world organization. There had been wide-spread predictions that Taiwan would have been dealt a fatal blow politically, diplomatically and probably economically as well if it were replaced by Communist China in the United Nations. In order to prepare the people in Taiwan for possible diplomatic shocks, I wrote my dispatches in a way people could read between the lines and perceive what might be coming.

One of the privileges of a journalist is that you get to see history while it is in the making. I was there on the spot when the Republic of China (Taiwan) was forced out of the United Nations and the People's Republic of China was overwhelmingly voted in. I could never forget the embarrassing scene when ROC Foreign Minister Chou Shu-kai 周书楷 led his entire delegation to walk out of the UN General Assembly Hall only moments before a vote was taken to admit the PRC as the legitimate representative of China and as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council. It was a sad day for the ROC, which had been one of UN's founding members since 1945.

On a personal level, as a Christian believer I had prayed much for God to keep Taiwan in the world organization. Like many others who supported Taiwan, I was saddened to see Taiwan lose its representation in the UN. I wondered why God didn't answer my prayer. As I sought the Lord for an explanation, He gave me this Bible verse: "*A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out. In faithfulness, He will bring forth justice*" (Isaiah 42:3).

To the degree I was able to understand the Biblical text, I took it to mean that despite ROC's losses in the UN and international relations, God Almighty "*who is sovereign over all kingdoms on earth*" (Daniel 4:17,25) was going to undertake for Taiwan's future.

Strangely enough, shortly after the ROC was ousted from the UN, Taiwan's economy, instead of taking a beating, began to take off in the early 1970s. Its manufacturing industry and export trade grew exponentially, and so it became one of the world's leading trading nations with the second largest foreign exchange reserve! Taiwan has been able to maintain economic and cultural relations with some 120 countries around the world, although only a small number of them (23 in 2012) still recognize the ROC as the legitimate government of China.

Despite Beijing's consistent claim that Taiwan is part of China—a stance that the United States still acknowledges but does not accept in reality—the fact is that Taiwan, or the Republic of China as it prefers to call itself, has remained a free, democratic and independent country since the Chinese Nationalist Government retreated to Taiwan in 1949 after losing the civil war.

For all practical intents and purposes, Taiwan and its offshore islands have never been under the control of the PRC. This has been a sticking point in the U.S.-China relations since the two nations established diplomatic relations in 1979. The United States, for its part, would prefer to allow the perennial issue of reunification to be resolved peacefully over time. Until

then the United States has moral and legal obligations to come to Taiwan's defense in the event of military conflict.

The political status quo is likely to continue as long as the U.S.-Taiwan Relations Act is in effect. As a Christian believer, I would attribute this unique international situation to none other than "divine intervention" or Providence.

### **Employment History**

I started working at the age of eleven. Since then I have had 13 different jobs over a period of 43 years (1942-1985). As part of our family record, here is my employment history in brief:

Bellhop, Nanking Central Hotel, now renamed Nanjing Centre Hotel (1942-1947);

Clerk-typist, U.S Military Advisory Group in Nanking (1947-1948);

Processing Clerk, United Nations Refugee Relief Organization Office in Shanghai (Jan.-May 1949);

Administrative Assistant, Sino-U.S. Joint Commission on Rural Reconstruction (JCRR) in Canton and Taipei (June 1949-1955);

News Editor & later General Manager, *China Post* in Taipei (1960-1962);

Copy Editor, English Department, Central News Agency in Taiwan (1955);

English Program Manager, Broadcasting Corporation of China in Taiwan (1955-1962);

Chief Reporter/Columnist, *Hong Kong Standard* (1962-1964);

Hong Kong Correspondent for the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe (1962);

Chief, Radio Section of U.S. Information Service in Hong Kong & Feature Writer & Editor of *World Today* magazine in Chinese (1964-1966);

Trade Adviser/Journalist, Hong Kong Trade Development Council (1966-1968);

Washington Bureau Chief & United Nations Correspondent for Taiwan's *China Times* (1969-1975);  
News Editor, *The Washington Post*, Washington, D.C. (Jan.-April 1970);  
President, *China Times* in Taiwan (1971-1972); and  
News Editor & Broadcaster, Voice of America in Washington, D.C. (1977-1985).



Jack and Nancy's wedding.

## Chapter Five

# *Marriage and Family*



I met Nancy Sun, a.k.a. Sun Nanxing (孙南星) in Taiwan in the summer of 1950. (Nanxing means South Star). This was approximately six months after I started working again for JCRR. The encounter took place at the home of Ms. Grace Chen, a Christian colleague from work. Grace had invited her friend Margaret Ma, Nancy and me to dinner at her house. Margaret was also Nancy's teacher/counselor at the Young Women's Christian Association where Nancy had enrolled in an English class. The dinner was purposely a set up for me to meet the 19-year-old girl who was to become my lifelong companion. I was given the reason for the dinner in advance, but Nancy wasn't.

My first impression of this modest young woman was hugely favorable. She was tall, plainly dressed, good looking, and a bit shy. Her hair was in a pair of pigtails. She probably would have dressed up had she been forewarned that this was a special occasion. I learned later that that was the way she usually looked, and I liked it. I said to myself, "She is my kind of girl!"

Without even trying to find out what she thought of me, I decided to date her. At first, she didn't seem to be at all interested in me. I wrote letters and made phone calls, but she wasn't responsive. I had invited her at least three times to dine out or to see a movie, but each time I got a flat-out refusal. At first I was disappointed and later angry. I felt my pride had been hurt. Since she had repeatedly spurned my love, I started dating a female colleague at work.

As a teenager, I adopted what might be called a "three-strikes-out" policy when it came to dating. If I was interested in a girl, I'd reach out to befriend her first by inviting her out to dinner or to see a movie; if she turned me down three times, I'd say, "You're out!" So, whenever I told Grace that I was ready to give up on Nancy, she'd always encourage me saying, "Just be patient, Jack."

### **Our courtship**

One day I learned that Nancy had broken her arm falling off a bicycle and that she was in a cast recuperating at home. I took the opportunity to visit her again and again at her home. I brought flowers and tried to comfort and encourage her. Gradually she changed her attitude toward me and began to show an interest. She had obviously decided by this time that I wasn't such a bad guy after all.

After she recovered completely, I invited her to a Christmas party given by our organization for its employees. I was so happy when she accepted my invitation. I don't remember the dress she wore that day, but she looked so attractive in her natural beauty. Even now, she never wears makeup—not even at our wedding. We mingled well with others at the party, and we danced for the first time. That was our first date.

We found out at the party that we both were attending the same church, and we both were Sunday Christians only at the time, not taking seriously the things of God. As we continued dating, I decided to stop seeing the other girl from the office.



One of the benefits of working at JCRR was that each staff member was entitled to use an office car for personal business on weekends. During those days, not many people could afford to own a car in Taiwan. As Nancy and I began dating and seeing each other every weekend, I would always book a car early for our weekly rendezvous. At that time, since she was working as an announcer on a radio station located on the outskirts of Taipei, I would not have been able to see her every weekend without an automobile.

As we continued to spend time together each weekend, our relationship grew steadily closer. In those days, however, young Chinese women, unlike their Western counterparts, were too reserved to say, “I love you” to their boyfriends. When Nancy and I were in love, she was so shy she had not even once verbalized her love for me until the day we became engaged.

The first time she showed her love for me was on my 20<sup>th</sup> birthday, when she gave me a journal as a birthday present. On the first page she attached a plastic wrapped dried flower, and underneath she wrote, “Forget me not.” That was also the name of the pressed flower. As a bashful young woman, that was about as far as she would go in expressing her love for her future husband! I don’t know why I wasn’t expecting more from her.

## **Our marriage**

After more than two years of courtship, we both thought it was time to talk about getting married. One day, we mustered enough courage and went to see her mother to secure her permission for us to marry. Not unexpectedly, our request was turned down probably for two reasons: first, her mom was concerned about my long-term health. Not long before I had an issue with tuberculosis; second, she had a desire to see her daughter marry someone better educated and wealthier—perhaps someone like her second husband, who was a Japanese-

trained medical doctor.

We decided not to rush into marriage or to marry anyone else for that matter—waiting it out as long as necessary—until her mother changed her mind. At the same time, we began to pray for her mother's change of heart, as well as for the salvation of her soul. We don't remember how it happened, but her mother gradually came around and gave her permission for us to be united in wedlock.

We chose the day after Christmas for our wedding. In deference to the wishes of our church leaders who shunned all forms of worldliness, we had a simple wedding ceremony in church presided over by several elders and attended by many other members of the church. Our certificate of marriage was especially handwritten in Chinese by an accomplished calligrapher on a piece of delicate red paper—signed by both the bride and the bridegroom, as well as by two leading elders as witnesses.

The church was so conservative and legalistic that the bride was not even allowed to wear a modern wedding gown for the ceremony! So, without any makeup whatsoever, she was dressed in *Qi Pao*, a Chinese traditional gown usually worn by women on formal occasions. Instead of a tuxedo, I wore a new suit. After the ceremony, we had our wedding pictures taken in a studio by a professional photographer.

Following our ceremony in church, we gave a dinner party at a large Chinese restaurant attended by more than 300 friends and relatives, including the bride's happy mother and step-father and our skillful match-makers, Grace Chen and Margaret Ma! The announcement of our wedding was published in the December 26, 1952 issue of *China Post* along with our wedding picture.

After 40 years of marriage and many moves, we thought we had misplaced our wedding photos and that we had lost them forever. During a ministry trip to Taiwan, I went to the same studio where we had them originally taken, wondering if the business was still in existence. Not only was the studio still at

the same place, but to my pleasant surprise they were able to locate all the negatives. I had eight sets made and brought them back to the States as keepsakes for our seven grownup children and one set for ourselves.

### **Our family**

We have been blessed with seven children, two sons and five daughters. In addition, we have 17 grandchildren, seven grandsons and ten granddaughters. David, our oldest son, was born on July 20, 1954, the day the Korean peace treaty was signed. Two years later, Ruth came along. We thought we had an ideal family—a family of four with a boy and a girl. We wanted no more children. Lo and behold! John, Mary, Esther, Susanna and Martha came in succession. On average they were two or three years apart. David, Ruth, John and Esther were born on Taiwan, and Mary and Susanna were born in the then British colony of Hong Kong. Martha, the only ABC (American-born Chinese) in the family, was born in Maryland.

Following are the profiles of our seven adult children and seventeen grandchildren at this writing:

1. David (周大卫), entrepreneur, born on July 20, 1954, married to Cindy Feng (冯国美) on March 15, 1978; they have two children, Alex (周世浩), born in Taiwan on February 22, 1981, and Jessica (周思妤), born in Los Angeles on June 11, 1986, married to Zachary Lopez (7/17/1984) on May 18, 2013. David has two younger sons by his second wife Liping Wang (王丽萍); their names: Alvin (周世逸), born in Shanghai on November 26, 1997, and Justin (周育霆), also born in Shanghai on May 10, 2001.
2. Ruth (周路得), CPA/entrepreneur, born on July 15, 1956, married to James S. K. Ku (顾绍箕) business executive/entrepreneur, on March 6, 1982; they have

- two daughters, Samantha(顾芷瑜), born in Taiwan on June 27, 1989, and Tessa(顾芷甄), born in Hong Kong on December 2, 1990, married to Jesse Samberg (3/8/1987) on October 14, 2017.
3. John(周约翰), architect, born on November 16, 1959, married to Nancy Molan Wong(王慕兰) on June 5, 1993; they have three children, Corrin(周恩霖), born in Boston on January 24, 1995, Timon(周恩泽), born in New York on July 1, 2000, and Bethany(周恩惠), also born in New York on January 23, 2004.
  4. Mary(周小丽), IT architect, born on November 27, 1962, married to Wayne Chih Kang Kao(高志纲), entrepreneur/golf instructor, on May 30, 1988; they have three children, all born in Maryland, Christa Danille Kao(高家仪), on March 5, 1990, Isabelle Tiffany Kao(高家玲) on March 11, 1992, and Christopher Samuel Kao(高家恩) on March 18, 1999.
  5. Esther(周以斯帖), biologist/school teacher, born on June 1, 1966, married to Trevor Shaffer, graphics designer, on April 15, 1995; they have two daughters born in Maryland, Caitlin on Christmas Day, 1996, and Lisette on July 26, 2003.
  6. Susanna(周珊珊), RN/NP, born on November 30, 1967, married to Peter Young, financial analyst, on November 1, 2008.
  7. Martha(周玛莎), school teacher, born on April 23, 1970, married to William Knaupp, MD, on January 6, 1996. They have three children all born in New York, Andreas(柯德华) on December 4, 1998, Mariana(柯德美) on October 29, 2001, and Nicolas(柯德荣) on January 6, 2004.

### **Our ancestors – on my side**

There is no record to trace our family tree on my father's side. I was an only child. My mother died when I was three years

old. On my mother's side, the only information I have is that my grandfather came from Qufu, Shandong Province, the hometown of Confucius (551-479 BC) or *Kong Fuzi* (孔夫子) in Chinese. Since my grandfather's surname or family name was the same as that of Confucius, and my mother's maiden name was *Kong Qinglian* (孔庆莲), we are supposedly descendants of Confucius; but I have not been able to verify the linkage.

When I learned that the fifth edition of the Genealogy of Confucius would be published in several volumes in 2009, and that new entries might be included for a small fee (the deceased could be added for free), I made several attempts to trace the root of my mother's family to see if her name could be added to the fifth edition—only to be told that only male names with surname *Kong* are listed in Confucius' genealogy. I had an uncle whose last name was *Kong*, but I never knew him personally or his full name. My mother also had two younger sisters, whom I met briefly in my early teens but never saw again.

With a history of over 2,500 years and more than eighty generations, the genealogy of Confucius is the longest family tree record in the world, according to the Guinness Book of Records. It was first printed in 1080 AD. Since then it has been revised three times, the last revision in 1937 with 600,000 new entries. The fifth edition contains almost two million *Kong* entries.

### On Nancy's side

Nancy's grandparents, Mr. & Mrs. Lan Yunsheng (蓝韵笙) were both born-again Christians. They came to Shanghai from Fuzhou, hometown of well-known Chinese evangelist Watchman Nee, in Fujian Province. He was a salt merchant in Shanghai. They had three daughters, Lan Fuqing (蓝馥清) who would become Nancy's mother, Lan Furong (蓝馥荣) and Lan Fuxin (蓝馥馨). It was Nancy's grandfather who introduced her to church when she was eleven years old. Her childhood experience in Sunday school has impacted the rest of her life.

Nancy's father Sun Yi (孙谊), alias Sun Shiyi (孙世毅), was a pro-Communist playwright and an acquaintance of Chou En-lai. After he joined a leftist theatrical troupe in the late 1930s, the family never heard from him again. Later he was found living in poverty with drug addiction in Hong Kong. Chou En-lai had him brought to Beijing for medical treatment and care, according to a relative who knew him in Hong Kong. Sun Yi is said to have contributed to the composition of the national anthem of the People's Republic of China.

Nancy's mother Lan Fuqing, better known as Lan Lan (蓝兰) in pre-Communist China's Hollywood, was crowned "Queen of Yenching University at Peking" (北平燕京大学校花) in Beijing in the early 1930s. She became a famous actress in Shanghai for the leading roles she played on stage as well as in silent motion pictures in the old days.

Nancy's parents were separated because of the civil war between the Chinese Communist and Nationalist forces in the late 1930s. After many years of separation, her mother filed for divorce and married Dr. Shen Tinghsin (沈鼎新医师) a Japanese-trained medical doctor who died in Taiwan in 2015 at the age of 100. Her mother became a Christian before she passed away in May 1966. We had prayed for the salvation of her soul for 13 years! *So do not stop praying for your unsaved loved ones!*

Nancy's brother Robert Lan (蓝国庚), 82, is a retired real estate broker. He is married to his second wife Peggy Lee (李文珠), 81; they live in San Gabriel, California with their 33-year-old son Ribin. (Note: Robert adopted the same surname of his mother in order to maintain the continuity of the Lan family tree.) Robert has two older children from his previous marriage and five grandchildren; Robert C. C., 50, CEO of UCA General Insurance, one of the largest insurance companies in California; he is married to Mary Lee, 47; they have two children, Haley 20, and son R. J., 18; Daphne, 45, she is married to Greg Cicci, 45, engineer; they live in Chicago with their three daughters, Gabby, 8, and twin girls Guiliana & Elisa, 7.

Nancy's sister Nell Ho (孙南强), a retired real estate

manager, passed away in 2012 at the age of 80. Her husband S. H. Ho(贺尚贤), who died several years earlier, was a professor of linguistics at the University of Hawaii where they lived for many years. They are survived by two children and four grandchildren; younger son Jimmy, 51 (9/3/1966), an electrical engineer, married to Japanese-born Ai Tomita, 39 (8/24/1978), an airline employee, they have two children, a boy named Kaito, born on June 15, 2011, and Mia, a girl, born on April 14, 2016; they live in Honolulu, Hawaii. Nell's only daughter Peggy, 60, married to Wally Lee, 67, a retired state government employee; they live in Oakland, California. Nell's oldest son John Ho (1960-2004) died of an accident in California. He is survived by two daughters, Jessica, 28, and Jennifer, 27, they live in Maui, Hawaii.



The author's seven grownup children at Susanna (6)'s wedding.  
L to R: Martha (7), Ruth (2), David (1), John (3), Mary (4) and Esther (5).





The Chow family reunion on the occasion of the matriarch's 80th birthday.  
3rd from right: The author and his wife of 65 years.



The author and his wife with their grandchildren.

## Chapter Six

# *God's First Call*



An encounter with God, in the Biblical sense of the word, means a life-changing experience for every Christian believer. When the disciples met Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, their lives were changed in one way or another. The same is true with many other believers whose lives have been touched by their Master.

My first encounter with God took place in the summer of 1965. It happened at a mission church in Hong Kong. Speaking in Biblical terminology, I was baptized with the Holy Spirit, or filled with the Spirit, and I saw in my spirit—to my amazement—the risen Savior Jesus Christ standing in front of me! The surreal suddenly became real to me! I didn't have to open my eyes to see if it was Jesus; I knew it was the Lord just as real as if my wife were standing before me. Since then, I have never been the same.

As the early disciples experienced on the day of Pentecost, I was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled me. (See Acts 2:4) For me, it was more than speaking in tongues. It was Christ Himself appearing

before me! My hardened heart was melted before Him as I consecrated my life and my all to Him. He came into my heart and made it His dwelling by His Spirit ever since!

### **Christ living within**

Before I received the baptism with the Holy Spirit, I only knew mentally what the Bible says about the resurrection of Jesus. I did not have the personal experience of Jesus Christ living within me, leading and guiding me by His Spirit. For the first 17 years of my Christian life in the church, I had not been taught about the ministry of the Holy Spirit and His role in the lives of individual believers. Now I began to understand its true meaning.

For the first few months following my Spirit baptism, my heart was filled with such joy that I felt like I was living in a new world! Indeed, it was like heaven on earth! I was so taken up with Jesus that the world had lost all its attractions! I used to love my profession as a journalist; I enjoyed reporting and writing, and I loved to see my byline in newspapers and magazines. I loved to go to movies and concerts and, of course, I loved my Chinese food! But for all its worth, everything in this world seemed to have lost its beauty and charm. The only thing I cared about was to live for Jesus and to tell the world about Him!

### **God's first call**

In the midst of my excitement, I heard God's calling for the first time in my life. One day, in the middle of the night, half awake and half asleep, I found myself engaging in a dialogue with the Spirit of God. I don't remember the content of the conversation, but it went something like this:

God: "I want you to quit your secular job and start preaching the Gospel."

Me: "How can I? I have to work to support my family—my wife and four kids."

God: “I will take care of your family. I will supply all your needs.”

Me: “But how, Lord? I know that when you sent forth your disciples to preach the Gospel, you told them not to bring anything—“no staff, no bag, no bread, no money, no extra shirt” (Luke 9:3). But how can I and my family survive in this way?”

God: “I will supply all your needs.”

Me: “But how, Lord? You know that I do not have that kind of faith.”

God: “As long as you are faithful to Me, I will be faithful to you.”

That was the end of the conversation. It seemed like God had struck a deal with me: if I would be faithful in preaching the Word of God, He would be faithful in providing all our needs. When I woke up the next morning, I immediately told my wife what had happened during the night. I said, “God is calling me to step out into full-time ministry and to begin to live a faith life, depending upon Him for our livelihood.” She took it calmly without asking any questions, and said: “Well, let’s pray about it and ask God for confirmation.”

I want to insert a word here about my good wife. Ever since we were married, she’s been my best friend and co-laborer in the service of God. She has rarely questioned any of the decisions I have made over the years for the good of the church or for the sake of Jesus, whom we both love. I am forever thankful for her love, support and prayers.

Together we prayed every day for two months until we were certain of God’s call. For us, it would mean for me to quit my well-paying job and give over to the mission church everything we owned. With our understanding of Biblical teachings, it would be like what the disciples did when Jesus called them to follow Him—and much like those Spirit-filled believers in the early church who sold and shared their possessions with other believers as they lived together in a communal life. (See Mathew 4:18-22, Acts 2:44-45).

While praying together one day, I asked my wife this tough question: “After I quit my job, if it turns out that our life becomes so hard that we have no money and can’t afford even to have a decent meal, would you still be willing to stick with me?” Without any hesitation, she said, “Yes, I’ll be with you no matter what...”

### **Praying for confirmation**

In asking God for confirmation, we followed the example of Gideon, who put the fleece out twice to be sure that he heard God correctly. (See Judges 6:36-40.) We asked God specifically to do these three things to confirm His call: (1) to heal my skin disease; (2) to send domestic help to take care of our children free of charge; and (3) to reduce the rent to a certain affordable amount for an apartment near the mission church where we were to work full time.

Within a period of two months God granted our requests one by one: first, the chronic skin rash which had covered a large area of my chest suddenly disappeared; second, a Christian woman who loved the Lord volunteered to help take care of our children, freeing us to do the mission work; third, the landlord finally agreed to lower the monthly rent for the apartment to a level we could afford. God did exactly what we prayed for! We were thus convinced of God’s call for me to step out full time.

As soon as we received the confirmation, I resigned from my dual position as head of the USIS Radio Section and staff writer for World Today magazine in Hong Kong. When the announcement was made, all my colleagues in the two offices were caught by surprise. They had no inkling that I was contemplating giving up a job with such good pay and prospects for promotion.

### **Giving up all to follow Jesus**

The call of God was so powerful that I found it so easy to

quit my job and give up our earthly possessions to follow Jesus just like the early disciples did so readily in answer to His call. We owned a modest high-rise apartment and a Volkswagen Beetle, and so we signed the deed and title over to the mission church accordingly. Then we moved into our rental apartment just across the street from the church.

Many others who joined the mission church also gave up their property and valuable possessions, including savings, jewels and gold. One Bible woman gave up everything she owned except a couple of dresses, one she kept for cleaning and another for a change! A Christian lady from Singapore gave a large amount of money along with gold bracelets, earrings, etc. A young couple gave up their business and possessions in Singapore and came to live with us in Hong Kong. For all intents and purposes, the church was in a revival! The mission work expanded rapidly throughout Southeast Asia!

### **Learning to pray and fast**

After joining the mission, we had to work day and night in addition to attending a prayer meeting every morning and a church service almost every evening. There were also occasional weeks of prayer and fasting, eating only one meal a day. Sometimes we had a three-day prayer and fast without solid food; only water or soup was permitted. Once we went on a three-day prayer and fast without any food or liquid. I remember vividly on the second day I was so weak that I couldn't get out of bed. Spiritually speaking, however, I found out that fasting was good for my soul because it gave me time to get closer to God and made me stronger in the inner being.

Since I came from a church well-known for good preaching, they thought I was a good preacher and decided to let me have the Sunday pulpit indefinitely! But after a few Sunday services, I felt that was not what God wanted me to do there, at least not yet. Instead I needed to learn some practical lessons to prepare me as a servant of God and His children. These lessons

included prayer, fasting, hard labor and self-discipline. Good preaching alone was not enough. I needed to learn to be like Jesus who told His disciples, “Learn from me for I am gentle and humble in heart” (Matthew 11:29).

I had to learn to eat less and sleep less, pray more and study more—and toil more, if need be. I needed to learn how to get along with people, to accept and love them as they are. Pretty soon I realized that God did not bring me to this mission church just to preach and teach others, but to learn these basic lessons of humility and obedience so that I could be the kind of preacher that God wanted me to be.

More important, I discovered this previously unknown truth: It is relatively easy to give up the outward things for the sake of Jesus or His service—things like money, position, labor, and material possessions. It is not so easy to let go of the internal things—like egoism, pride, self-righteousness, or as the Bible calls “the flesh,” the greatest enemy of God and often a great hindrance to the fulfillment of His divine purpose. Self-denial seems to be the only condition laid down by our Lord Jesus for those who wish to follow Him.

### **“Public trial”**

During our association with the mission, God allowed my wife and me to be subject to misunderstandings, criticisms, and unfounded accusations by fellow Christians inside and outside of the mission. We had to learn not to defend ourselves. One day, the mission director called a meeting of all staff members in a manner that amounted to a “public trial” where we were openly scrutinized. Some of the co-workers expressed themselves freely about what they thought of us, for the most part in a negative way.

The young couple we had invited to live in our home and allowed the use of our master bedroom took the opportunity to find fault with us and publicly criticized and humiliated us. By the grace of God, Nancy and I just listened quietly, although



with tears streaming down our cheeks, and chose not to respond. On the inside we felt like a knife was piercing through our hearts. Moreover, the “public trial” continued and was intensified among the churches affiliated with the mission even after we left, as directed by the Lord.

While under these attacks, we were reminded of our Lord Jesus standing in trial before Pilate and facing false charges from the accusing crowd; and of how He remained calm and silent and chose not to answer His accusers: “When He was accused by the chief priests and the elders, He gave no answer...not even to a single charge” (Matthew 27: 12-14).

Sometimes, as we have experienced, simply by dwelling on Christ’s sufferings while He walked on the earth, we would feel encouraged and strengthened to endure our portion of trials. Suffering for the sake of Jesus is profitable, for it makes us stronger and better Christians.

God had allowed these things to happen in our life so that we would grow spiritually and become more like Jesus. Although those were difficult days for us, they were part and parcel of the spiritual training and discipline we needed to make us the kind of servants that God intended.

### **Excesses discovered**

After we had been with the mission for about six months, working and living among those supposedly Spirit-filled Christian workers, I began to see some serious problems regarding the way things were being done in their midst. For instance, one of the leaders had prophesied that a new church was going to be birthed at a specific place on a specific date in Thailand. When nothing seemed to be happening, some co-workers were quickly dispatched to the scene to make it happen.

The mission leadership appeared to be overly dependent upon the exercise of the gifts of the Holy Spirit such as prophesying, speaking and interpretation of tongues, dreams and visions rather than following Scriptural teachings and prin-

ciples. Another example of excess was that while divine healing was being preached and practiced, the emphasis was such that people in the congregation would feel guilty or come under condemnation if they were to seek medical help in case of sickness.

For example, the head of the mission who had experienced divine healing herself was suffering from the last stage of cancer. She was in such unbearable pain that she had actually attempted to commit suicide by jumping from her high-rise apartment building, rather than seeking medical treatment. She had preached strongly on divine healing and had written extensively about this subject. Finally, she had to be taken to the hospital—secretly and in the middle of the night—where she spent her last days.

Another example of misinterpretation and misuse of the Scriptures was a flawed suggestion made by the head of the mission before her death. After she died, her body was to be placed at the center of the church meeting hall waiting to be brought back to life on the third day, as Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day.

While she was fighting the cancer, I had a strong desire to talk to her about some of these issues from the Biblical perspective, but she was in constant pain and her condition was deteriorating rapidly to the point where she wasn't able to speak.

However, I did have a meeting with her associates and presented my views on the excesses from the Biblical standpoint, but they refused to accept what the Bible has to say and maintained that their leader had been correct all along.

That was when I decided it was time for us to leave this misguided, charismatic mission. Not long after we left, we began to hear about divisions taking place and people leaving the churches established by the mission.

The Bible says, "*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path*" (Psalm 119:105). We would certainly be in the dark without the Word of God, not knowing where to go and right from wrong. "*Since they have rejected the Word of the*

*Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have”? (Jeremiah 8:9).*

### **Lessons learned**

By this time, we had ended our relationship with two large Christian fellowships. Both had passion for evangelism, zeal for serving the Lord, and a willingness to give up all for the sake of Jesus. The first fellowship was much larger, well over 300 churches in pre-Communist China, later growing into the thousands overseas. Their emphasis had been on the so-called “local church ground,” as they saw it from the Bible, but without any sound teachings on the role of the Holy Spirit in the Body of Christ. For the most part they were functioning in the intellectual and rational realm instead of the spiritual realm. In other words, they had a lot of head knowledge and very little, if any, spiritual reality. When faced with tests and practical challenges, they had no power to overcome.

The second fellowship of churches mentioned above, known as *Charismatic/Pentecostal*, was sort of “Johnny-come-lately,” having come out of traditional, denominational churches. Fresh from being filled with the Holy Spirit, its emphasis was on signs and wonders and the operation of the gifts of the Spirit, but with little or no attention to the fruit of the Spirit or the proper understanding and application of the written Word of God.

These two extreme groups of churches had apparently failed to strike a balance, as they should have, between the Word of God and the Spirit of God. The two must go hand-in-hand, like the two tracks on a railroad on which the train—the Body of Christ, the Church—can grow and go safely forward. Christ as Head of the Church must be exalted above all “*so that in everything He might have the supremacy*” (Col 1:18). Failing this, the Church, or any local church for that matter, cannot be strong and remain united to manifest the presence, the power and the beauty of Jesus Christ.

These were the primary reasons, as far as I could see, for the recurring divisions that led to the disintegration of the two

large fellowships that we had been involved with over a period of nearly 20 years. Through it all, I have learned this invaluable lesson: We must always keep a balance; better yet, a linkage between the written Word of God and the Spirit of God as a safeguard against excesses and fanaticism. More importantly, with all eyes constantly fixed on Jesus Christ!

The Word of God and the Spirit of God are inseparable, for they are essentially one. The Bible says, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God...God is Spirit.*” We need to know the Holy Bible, the written Word of God. We also need to know the Holy Spirit, who is God Himself and without whose presence and revelation we cannot know Jesus Christ—who “*is all and is in all.*” (See John 1:1; 4:24; Col 3:11.)

## Chapter Seven

# *Doing God's Will*



*“The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever” (1 John 2:17).*

The most important thing in the life of a Christian believer is to do the will of God. Doing God's will does not necessarily mean being in the ministry, attending church services, making charitable contributions, or doing missionary work; it is doing what God wants you to do and being what He wants you to be.

Doing the will of God is the only thing that matters to Him. Jesus warns that not everyone who calls Him “Lord, Lord,” and/or not everyone who claims to have done mighty things in the name of Jesus *“will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father”* (Matt 7:22).

As related previously, we joined the mission church because we were convinced it was what God wanted us to do at that time. We did it only after it was confirmed in a number of concrete ways as we prayed it would be. Once we saw the excesses and deviations within the mission circles, it was clearly time for us to leave. Since God had brought us there, we thought

we had better let God take us out. As you will see, the way God worked it out was amazing.

Realizing the importance of being in the will of God, I endeavored to ensure that every step we took to part from the mission was in accordance with God's will. We had said to the Lord, "We would rather die in your will than to live outside of your will." I had learned through the vicissitude of life that being in the will of God is the safest place on earth one can be, especially in these last perilous days. Knowing that you are in the will of God brings a real sense of peace and security, if you believe with all your heart that God is over all and that He has every situation under His control.

However, doing the will of God could be a real challenge and test of one's faith and obedience and seemingly risky at times; but the result is invariably an increased knowledge of the goodness, faithfulness, and trustworthiness of the Almighty God.

We do well to remember that God loves us with an everlasting love. He knows all about us and cares for us in every minute detail of our life, agreeing with what Jesus said: "*And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered.*" Therefore, no harm can come to us, or as Jesus put it: "...*not a hair of your head will perish*" without the permission of our Heavenly Father (Matt. 10:30, Lk.21:18).

### **How to know God's will**

Regarding the will of God, a question often raised is "how can one *know* it?" The will of God—the eternal purpose and desire of God—is described in great detail in the Scriptures. Romans 12:2 tells us "*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is...His good, pleasing and perfect will.*" Reading the Bible will enable us to prove this true.

In practice, however, as a rule of thumb, I have found that

there are three ways in which one can determine the will of God: (1) a constant prompting of the Spirit of God within; (2) a definitive word from God in the Scriptures; and (3) circumstantial confirmation. In addition, consultation with a spiritually mature Christian leader would further help ascertain the will of God.

### **God works in all things for our good**

When it became clear to us that it was time to leave the mission church, Nancy was pregnant with our fifth child, and the baby was due in less than two weeks. While preparing for her childbirth, we received an urgent telephone call from her stepfather in Taiwan asking for Nancy to return home immediately to be with her mother, who was dying of cancer.

Because Nancy was so close to her due date, the airline did not allow us to book her flight without a doctor's written permission stating that she was fit to travel. I went to see Dr. Eric Fishbacher, a physician friend and brother in Christ, who gave her the go-ahead to fly to Taiwan.

The trip was expected to be a short one, but after Nancy arrived in Taiwan, her mother's condition improved, and she was asked to stay and provide continuing care for her. It appeared certain that my wife was going to have the baby in Taiwan. I was still in Hong Kong at the time with our four children, waiting for a clear sign from the Lord regarding whether or not I should book our passage to Taiwan. I prayed and waited.

One evening as I was praying on the rooftop of the six-story mission building, I heard these words clearly in my spirit: "You are to bring your children back to Taiwan on a ship scheduled to sail from Hong Kong on July 23<sup>rd</sup> [1966]." Three days later I received a letter from Nancy reporting that she and the new-born baby were doing well, and additionally: "You should come back to Taiwan with the kids on the ship scheduled to depart from Hong Kong on July 23<sup>rd</sup>." The same departure

date mentioned in her letter was a surprise to me because I didn't tell her anything about what I heard on the rooftop. I took this as confirmation that should be the day God wanted me to leave the mission for good.

Nancy also reported in the letter that after Esther was born, she and the baby had been under the care of our church friends in Taiwan who had known us for years. God had impressed upon them to bring food and cash gifts to her. Among other things, she said, "I believe this is the way God is going to provide for our needs in the near future." For the next eight months, until I returned to secular employment, God met our financial needs in a wonderful way.

### **Divine protection**

Indeed, our Heavenly Father took care of us every step of the way as we were led by His Spirit. While boarding the freight-passenger ship in Hong Kong with our four children, when our little Mary was three years old, I put her on the top of a bunk bed. I went to help the three older children with their bags when suddenly I heard a "bang!" I quickly turned around to see Mary on the floor crying. She had fallen off, but she wasn't hurt. Thankfully, and amusingly, I called it a "soft landing!"

When we arrived safely in Taiwan, we were now together as a family. Esther was already seven weeks old, and that was the first time we saw her. Mom had been alone, with no one to provide the kind of "special care" as was traditionally done by Chinese custom, for the first 30 days after childbirth. Although there were some church friends who came to visit her and who brought food and money, she was too weak to cook or do any house chores besides feeding the baby. The loft of the four-story house where she and the baby were staying had only a single bed and a shanty crib. The place had been vacant for quite some time, and the windows needed repair. Nancy was in dire need of help.

Then came a timely God-send! Pastor James Shao (邵遵瀚牧师), a former co-worker and close friend of our family, came to visit



Nancy and found mother and baby in urgent need of care. His wife and my wife were close friends who in the past spent time together seeking the Lord. He immediately offered to take them to his home where his wife and mother could provide the badly needed help. Without hesitation, Nancy accepted the offer, quickly wrapping the baby and gathering all their personal belongings. She got on the back seat of his scooter, one hand clenching the four-day-old baby and another holding onto the middle rail heading off to the pastor's residence.

When they arrived, his mother and wife were already at the door waiting to receive them with open arms. They quickly cooked some hot noodle soup for Nancy. Although they had no crib for the new-born "special guest," Mrs. Shao instantly came up with the amusing idea of using one of the chest drawers, wherein the tiny girl was put to rest comfortably. That's where Esther got her nickname "drawer baby." The Shaos took loving care of Nancy and baby Esther until the traditional 30-day post-natal home-care period was fulfilled.

There was something else special about the "drawer baby." She was unusually quiet, seldom crying except when hungry or needing to be changed. She quietly slept in that drawer for the whole time at the Shaos. She continued to be such a good baby even when seven months later and in her own crib, she scarcely required being picked up. This made her mom's life considerably easier, especially during those difficult early months.

### **Divine provision**

For the first eight months after we moved back to Taiwan, we had no money and no savings, literally penniless. We had to learn to trust God to provide for our basic needs. Although my previous employer, the publisher of *China Post*, had twice invited me to rejoin the English-language newspaper, I did not feel free to go back to work, at least not yet. I felt like God wanted me to trust Him, to honor His promise that He would supply all our needs in His own way.

With five children, ages 12, 10, 7, 4 and 8 weeks, we moved in with Nancy's step-father, living on the top floor of his four-story commercial building where he had his medical practice. Nancy's mother had died two months earlier. We had only some simple furniture in the loft and no bedrooms or a kitchen. Sister Wang Tan Meili (王谭美利姐妹), a former church friend, came to visit us and took note of what was lacking. She immediately went to work on our behalf.

Without saying a single word to us, Sister Wang quietly ordered building materials which were later delivered in batches. When there were enough materials, she hired a carpenter to build partitions and a small kitchen on the veranda. The children could have their bedrooms, and we had a place for cooking and washing. Other church friends who loved the Lord also contributed toward the cost of construction. But it was all done without our asking! Once again, God demonstrated His faithfulness in meeting our family's needs.

The way God provided our living expenses was also most amazing. Every Sunday morning after church service, the ushers who opened the offering box would find an envelope with my name written on it and containing a cash gift just enough to feed a family of seven for one week. This happened for eight months! From week to week we lived on this cash offering from an anonymous giver.

What was even more amazing was that when an additional need arose, we would receive an increased amount of cash to cover that need. Once, when Nancy's step-father's birthday was coming up and we needed extra money to buy him a birthday cake, we prayed for that specific need. Lo and behold! On the following Sunday morning we received additional cash which enabled us to buy a beautiful birthday cake for him.

Another time, we needed some extra money to pay for home tutoring. Before our 12-year-old David left for school that morning, he reminded his mom that the teacher was to be paid later that evening. His mom told him to pray for it. Early on that afternoon, a sister in Christ showed up for a time of fellowship

and prayer with us. After she left, as she got down to the second level of the four-story building, she suddenly turned around and came back up to the fourth floor, handing us a sealed envelope and saying: “Sorry, but I almost forgot this.” We opened the envelope and there was the exact amount of money we needed to pay for the tutor!

When David came home from school, he asked, “Do we have the money to pay my teacher?” Before Nancy answered him, she first asked, “Did you pray?” He replied, “I did.” Then she said, “Yes, we have the money.”

Since the time I gave up my secular employment 32 years ago to step out into full-time ministry without taking a salary, God has not failed to supply all our needs. It is just as He promised when He called me the first time: “As long as you are faithful to Me, I will be faithful to you. I will supply all your needs.”



Jack and Nancy on his 80th birthday.

# Chapter Eight

# *Ministry*

# *vs.*

# *Marketplace*

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*“I am a Hebrew [or Christian], and I fear the Lord”* (Jonah 1:9).

It was at this time, after God had been marvelously supplying all our needs from week to week without fail for eight months straight that I was asked to return to work for my former newspaper employer. However, I did not have the liberty to do so unless I received some kind of clear indication from God that it would be permissible to return to secular employment. At the same time, I knew I had to learn to trust the Lord for all my needs under *any* circumstances.

I received still another job offer from a good friend in Hong Kong, George Paterson, a former British journalist and author, also a brother in Christ. He had just been appointed Editor-in-Chief of *Hong Kong Enterprise*, a monthly business magazine published by the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, a semi-government organization in the then British Colony. The position, listed as Trade Adviser/Journalist, was to report and write about some of the best light industrial products made in Hong Kong.

When this job was first offered to me, I didn't give it much consideration, as I was too preoccupied with the ministry to think about returning to the business world. However, Brother George called me repeatedly to ask me to help him out, because none of the multiple applicants he had interviewed met his requirements, and he thought I would be a perfect fit for the job. He also stated his urgency to have this position filled.

### **Seeking God's guidance**

I debated with myself whether it is right before God and man for me to quit the ministry in favor of a secular job, since I knew I'd been called into full-time ministry. How do you explain your decision to the church people? How do you reconcile a job in the "marketplace" with my having given myself as a full-time minister to serve the Lord without salary, yet fulfill my responsibility to provide for a family?

These were some of my questions. I was in a dilemma and wrestled with the problem for quite a while. I didn't want to displease God, nor did I wish to face embarrassment before man. I sought the Lord directly. I earnestly prayed and searched the Scriptures for an answer.

Although I usually don't take dreams seriously, one night I had one. In this dream I saw myself standing on a seashore in front of a huge rock. Further out in the ocean, I saw a man with his right hand pointing to the south, as if he were directing me to go in that direction. I woke up the next morning wondering if Hong Kong was located south of Taiwan. Referring to a map, I found that Hong Kong was indeed southwest of Taiwan. That, however, was not enough for me to make such an important decision; I needed to hear from God for myself.

One morning, as I was reading the Bible, my attention was directed to the story of Jonah, a prophet in the Old Testament whom God had sent to Nineveh, the ancient capital of the Assyrian Empire (900-605 B.C.) with a message of salvation—*"for their wickedness has come up before Me."* But Jonah ran

away from God. He took a ship going in the opposite direction and fled to Tarshish, an ancient mining colony in southwestern Spain. On his way, God sent a severe storm so violent that the ship was about to break up. Those on board were all scared, blaming Jonah for the near disaster. The sailors asked him, “*What is your occupation? And where do you come from?*” He said to them, “*I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord*” (Jonah 1:2, 8, 9 ).

### **A word from the Lord**

While reading this particular passage, I felt God was answering my question. He seemed to be saying to me, “It does not matter what your occupation is or where you are coming from. What matters is that you fear the Lord.” I took it to mean that of most importance is being in the will of God, being where God wants me to be, doing what He wants me to do. Whether I am in the ministry or in secular employment, what matters to God is that I fear Him and keep His commandments.

Isn’t this what King Solomon concluded after all his studies and experiences? After all, he was the wisest man who ever lived on the face of the earth. He ended the Book of Ecclesiastes with these words: “*Now all has been heard; here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind*” [of all men and women] (Ecclesiastes 12:13).

As I searched the Scriptures I found examples such as the Apostle Paul and his co-workers. Luke, who wrote the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts, Aquila and his wife Priscilla and others who were apostles all had their own secular businesses. Dr. Luke undoubtedly continued his medical practice while serving the Lord; Aquila and Priscilla were tent makers by trade. So was Paul, who joined them to form a business partnership. Still, their primary call was to preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ and to live out the life of the resurrected Savior.

So, with perfect peace in my heart, I decided to accept the

job offer and relocate our family to Hong Kong. I thought, “Never mind what people might say about my decision; my perennial call is to deny myself and take up the cross and follow Jesus.” This is Jesus’ call for everyone who wishes to follow Him. The Lord’s entire mental attitude toward the Father throughout His earthly life of thirty-three and a half years was “*not my will, but yours be done*” (Luke 22:42).

I also realized that when God called me to “preach the Word” two years earlier, He did not mean for me to do all my preaching just within the confines of a church environment, but also out in the market place and in society as a whole. God did not call me to preach the Gospel only by mouth and/or by other means of communication. More importantly, I was called to preach *by the way I live*.

There is as great a spiritual need outside of the church as within the church. The so-called five-fold ministry—apostles, prophets, evangelists, teachers and pastors—is needed in the market place as much as in the body of Christ. I believe there are those who are called to be these apostles, evangelists, teachers and pastors in the market place! In a word, *the world* needs Jesus more than ever before!

To all Christians, including pastors and preachers, Jesus says, “*You are the salt of the earth*” [to influence all people]... “*You are the light of the world.*” “*Let your light shine before men that they may see your good deeds* [living out the life of Christ] *and praise your Father in heaven*” (Matthew 5:13,14,16).

### **Not my will, but Thy will**

When God calls you—and you will know it—it does not necessarily mean that you are to leave your secular occupation to become a full-time pastor, evangelist or missionary. When God calls you, or when you think that God is calling you, the first thing that probably will come to your mind is that you need to attend a seminary for training to qualify you as a minister. But this is not the way the disciples of Jesus were trained. None of



them went to a seminary. The Apostle Paul was an accomplished Jewish scholar before his conversion, but he never went to a so-called theological seminary.

God has His own ways of training His servants. Also, God does not call everyone to be a pastor, evangelist or missionary. His vineyard is worldwide, and there are various needs. God has a place for everyone who is called. He alone knows where to send and place His servants. It is our duty to obey His bidding.

The question now is: How do you know what God wants you to do? As I have outlined in the previous chapter, I have learned to ascertain the will of God for me in three basic ways: a constant prompting of the indwelling Spirit; a definite word from the Lord; and circumstantial confirmation. It pays to wait for God's direction and confirmation to ensure that we are in the will of God and doing what He wants us to do.

The rule of thumb I generally use is whether I have peace in my heart when I try to do what I believe God desires. When I don't have peace, or if I am uncertain regarding what to do, I would not do anything but pray and wait and see. When there is uneasiness while doing something or going somewhere, it may well be a sign that we should stop or back off. God certainly will make us know what to do in His time, since He desires everyone to do His will. The indwelling Holy Spirit, or the "holy anointing," as referred to by the Apostle John, "*teaches you about all things as that anointing is real, not counterfeit...*" (1 John 2:27)

As we are taught and led by the anointing that abides within us, we stay attached to the Lord of life, as the branch is attached to the Vine, thereby bearing much fruit. Bearing spiritual fruit such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control which are commonly called the "fruit of the Spirit," is a natural consequence of constantly abiding in the Lord.

Finally, we should also give God time and space to manifest the gift or gifts which He desires to impart to members of the Body of Christ, His children. The Apostle Paul teaches

that not all members have the same gift or ministry. (see 1 Corinthians 14:26-30) But if we would wait patiently and humbly, God will show us the part or parts we are to play in the church or in the market place. To do the will of God is the primary thing, the hallmark of the life of Jesus. And so it should be ours.

## Chapter Nine

# *Divine Plans*



*“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the Lord, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future” (Jeremiah 29:11).*

Life is full of challenges; it is forever a learning and growing process. As the good old Chinese saying goes, “You don’t stop learning as long as you live.” At age 87, I am still learning because the more you learn, the more you feel you need to learn, especially in this hi-tech, fast-changing world.

Particularly for serious Christian believers, life is a growing and ever-enriching experience as you continue to learn about the secrets of the kingdom of God. The challenges in life are opportunities for us to grow in faith as well as in the grace and knowledge of God. Life also allows us to gain wisdom and understanding, both more precious than silver and gold.

During the six-year period from 1962 to 1968, we moved between Hong Kong and Taiwan four times. We made these moves not only because of job situations, but also because we believed God was leading the way and that He had a plan and

divine purpose for our lives as His children.

What were His purposes for these transitions? I once asked God, “What do you want from me, Lord?” He answered, “I want just you. If you would give me yourself more completely, you can have more of Me.” At the time I did not understand what it meant to have God Himself. As I continued to grow in Christ, I began to see that having God Himself means possessing all the riches of God, all that He is and all that He has. As the Apostle Paul put it, “...*the boundless [unsearchable] riches of Christ...*” (Ephesians 3:8).

### **Lessons learned**

Just what were some of the lessons God had for us to learn? First and foremost, He taught us to live what I would call a “tent life” on earth since life is short, living the kind of life that Abraham of old lived as he followed God all the way into the Promised Land.

When Abram (his former name) left his hometown of Haran with his family, he did not know where he was going. He moved his tents as God led and directed him, because he believed there is a better homeland. “*For he was looking forward to the city with foundations whose architect and builder is God*” (Hebrews 11:10).

God also taught me how to get along with people, people who are different from me and of diverse cultures and ethnic origins—to accept and love them as they are.

As City News Editor and Chief Reporter on the English-language newspaper *Hong Kong Standard*, there were people on my staff from Australia, England, India, Portugal, North America and North and South China. I had to learn how to establish a rapport with them in a working relationship despite our differences.

Even Chinese people from the same country are different from each other. The northerners are more straightforward and physically rugged than the southerners, who are more suave and

sophisticated. These observations from my personal experience proved to be helpful subsequently in my role as pastor of a church where I had to deal with various kinds of people and problems.

Hong Kong is a fascinating city with international flavor. It is also where I went through a series of spiritual crises. While my baptism of the Holy Spirit brought about a revolutionary change in my life, it also caused a stir in my church, resulting in my suspension from a leadership role and eventually to our total withdrawal from the church we loved.

For reasons stated in the preceding chapters, we had to leave two rather large churches. The first was opposed to my experience of the baptism with the Holy Spirit; we dissociated ourselves from the second church because of its excesses and deviations from the Scriptures.

### **Challenges in life**

Our departure from these two churches had been widely criticized, ridiculed, and ruthlessly attacked especially by leaders of the second church. We had given up all of our possessions when we joined them, and these criticisms and attacks especially caused us deep hurt and pain. I became so discouraged that I didn't want to have anything to do with any church. I thought the church should be a place where people are supposed to love each other, but what I experienced in these churches was no different from what I saw in the world.

For a good while I kept asking the Lord, "Why do such things happen in Your churches?" I was confused and perplexed with many questions concerning the church. For nearly two years I didn't go to any church at all. I spent a lot of my time reflecting on my bitter experiences. I'd gone into partial seclusion since I was still working in order to be with God alone. I would come home from work and spend hours in my room resting, praying, and reading my Bible, waiting on the Lord for answers to the many questions troubling me. Only on Sunday

afternoons, we would meet with a few Christian friends in a private home.

### **Miracles begin to happen**

During this quiet season, nearly all my baffling questions simply disappeared. My hurts and pains inexplicably vanished, bitterness was gone, hatred was taken away and peace and tranquility were miraculously set into my heart and soul. I didn't know what happened!

All I could remember was that during those restful, quiet times, I did a lot of praying—silent prayer for the most part—and Bible reading and meditating. All the questions I had were gradually answered one by one. I was completely healed and restored—as though all past criticisms and malicious attacks had never taken place.

I could not explain what transpired. The only way I could describe it is to say, “the Almighty God did it!” How? I don't know. But I took by faith what the Bible says: “*By His [Jesus'] wounds you have been healed*” (1 Peter 2:24). I had no doubt that God healed me and fully restored me! Now I could say, “I am at peace!”

### **All things work together for our good**

Gradually I came to understand the truth of one of the often quoted Bible verses: “*And we know that in all things [good or bad] God works for the good of those who love Him*” (Romans 8:28). Whatever happens to a Christian believer is for a divine purpose. It is the result that matters; the outcome is always for the good of those who love God.

I learned that nothing can happen to us as children of God without His permission and divine purpose. Bad things happen to Christian believers just as they do to non-believers, but for the ultimate good of those who love God. As the apostle Paul put it, “*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those*

*who love Him*” (Romans 8:28).

For children of God, there are no such things as good luck or bad luck because we have a loving Father in heaven who has loved us with His infinite and everlasting love. As the Creator and Sovereign Lord of the universe, all things are under His control. Everything that God allows to happen to us is meant for good. This is one of the most precious truths I learned through my unpleasant experiences in Hong Kong.

What may be one of the most profound lessons I learned through my spiritual crises is the “mystery” of spending time alone with God—not necessarily praying or reading the Bible all the time, but simply being quiet and still in His presence. I did this for one to two hours daily for nearly two years. As a result, I was completely healed of my inner hurts and wounds, and all my questions dissolved. This practice, which in reality I had started aimlessly, is referred to in the Scriptures as “waiting on God,” which is also the title of my first book in the English language.

During the healing process, I asked God time and again why He allowed me to go through the unpleasant experiences in the two churches in Hong Kong. His answer always was loud and clear: “All things work together for the good of those who love God.” It took me years to see the results and to be convinced of the validity and depth of this wonderful truth. I realized what I had considered as “bad things” that happened to me were meant for good in the end.

### **A good God gives only good things**

Apart from material blessings, God, in His goodness and mercy, has blessed me with so many good things: the wonder of His presence; inner peace and joy in my heart; power to forgive and forget; ability to be tolerant; ability to love those who have hurt me and spiritual insights into some of the deep things of God, only to mention a few.

For those who truly love God, our heavenly Father has

only good things in store. Even when bad things happen to us, He can cause them to work for our eternal benefit. Once we realize this wonderful truth and begin to apply it to our personal lives, there will be less grumbling or finger pointing.

There will always be things happening in this world that we may not understand. Nevertheless, our Father, the Lord of heaven and earth, knows all about us. He loves us and knows what is best for us. We need simply to trust and love God wholeheartedly, because He not only has our best interest at heart, but always works on our behalf for our benefit.

### **Adorned with spiritual jewels**

Whenever you find yourself in a difficult situation, remember this: God has all things under His control, and He will cause all things to work “for the good of those who love Him.” If you love God, no matter what happens to you, everything will turn out to be beneficial for you.

God is going to work on your behalf if you are willing to learn the lesson that He has for you, whether it be patience, faith, love, forgiveness, hope, or humility. These are among the spiritual jewels with which God desires to adorn us in order that we may be prepared as part of the collective Bride of Christ, the ultimate church described in the Bible “...as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless” (Ephesians 5:27).

Instead of running away from difficult circumstances, let us embrace hardship and gladly accept it as from the skillful hand of our loving Father who “works in all things” only for our benefit. God has also promised that He will not allow us to be tried beyond our ability to bear. As Scripture says, “*God is faithful; He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, He will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it*” (1 Corinthians 10:13).

To those of you whose faith is being tried, let me say this: After our faith is tested and proven to be genuine, it will be more



precious than gold. Let us, therefore, take every lesson that God has for us to learn, and learn it well by the grace of God. Only in that way may we grow spiritually and become mature Christians to reflect the beauty of Jesus Christ in the world.

### **There is no fear in God's love**

Let me repeat this: Nothing can happen to us or harm us without the permission of God. God loves and cares for us to the minutest details of our life: *“Even the very hairs of your head are all numbered”* (Matthew 10:30). Therefore, we have nothing to fear since we know that our life and times are in His hand. *“There is no fear in love. But [God’s] perfect love drives out fear”* (1 John 4:18).

It is reassuring to know that nothing can happen to us without God’s permission. His divine purpose is to bless us, to strengthen us, to help us grow spiritually, to prosper and enrich us in Christ, so that we may know Him better and eventually be changed and become like Him. This is the ultimate purpose of God’s salvation—not only to save us from eternal damnation, but more importantly, to gradually change and mold us into the glorious image of Jesus Christ!

### **The secret of waiting on God**

*“For thus says the Lord God, the Holy One of Israel, ‘In returning [to God] and rest [before Him], you shall be saved; in quietness and confidence shall be your strength...But those who wait on the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint’* (Isaiah 30:15; 40:31 NKJV).

The practice of waiting on God—getting alone with God in quietness and stillness—is the most valuable lesson I learned through my spiritual wilderness experience. “The secret of waiting on God” is how we are ushered into God’s treasure

house.

Waiting on God, a deeper form of prayer life and intimacy with God, is a devotional lesson no one had ever taught me. It was through my spiritual crisis that the Spirit of God led me into this blessed state. Through this practice, however, I discovered the easiest way to get connected to God, a way of entering into His presence in order to develop an intimate relationship with Him.

I found that as we come to wait on the Lord, we are actually coming into the presence of God, to have fellowship with Him, and to be spiritually attached to the One who is the Source of life, light, power, wisdom—all and all that we need in order to live a full Christian life. God refers to Himself as “...*the spring of living water...*” (Jeremiah 2:13) which means He is the endless Source of all our supply.

Jesus Christ is the ultimate answer to all our problems in this life. As I have recounted above, the Lord performed miraculous inner healings for me and answered all my troubling questions as I continued to spend time waiting upon the Lord. As Scripture says, “*But, those who wait on the Lord shall renew their [divine] strength...*” (Isaiah 40:31).

Every Bible-believing Christian may come to God in time of trouble or peace. The Bible clearly says, “*Come near to God and He will come near to you*” (James 4:8). But you must believe that God is there for you. The Bible also admonishes: “*Without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him*” (Hebrews 11:6). When we approach God, we must do so by faith, simply believing in our heart that He is there, and that He is within us by His Spirit.

As we draw near to God by faith, praying in our heart not necessarily with words, silently and patiently waiting before Him, we should expect Him to work on our behalf and to meet our needs, whatever they may be and in whatever way He may choose. I have found this way of approaching God to be very powerful and rewarding!

I also found waiting on God to be an effective way of overcoming our own weaknesses, those hidden things such as pride, self-righteousness, jealousy, bitterness, hatred, and our own complex personality. God knows all our needs, and He is always there to help us as we approach Him in earnest. By waiting on God, I can have serenity and inner peace in the midst of any storm, stress or pressure.

In short, the practice of waiting on God, if done consistently on a continuing regular basis, would eventually ensure the success of a happy, triumphant Christian life. For pastors, ministers and missionaries, continual waiting on the Lord will be your secret of an anointed and fruitful ministry!

(For further discussion on the subject, please read my book “Waiting on God” available in most online bookstores.)



Jack and Nancy with their six children on his 80th brthday.

## Chapter Ten

# *Led to the U.S.A.*



*“For this God is our God forever and ever; He will be our Guide even to the end” (Psalm 48:14).*

This God is the only true God, and I have come to know Him experientially as a loving Father and Savior Lord Jesus Christ. He not only answers our prayers, but He also leads and guides us unerringly in the choices and decisions to be made in our life. As we deliberately seek to live in accordance with His will, He ensures our well-being, peace and prosperity. As long as I keep endeavoring to do His will to the best of my knowledge, He will continue to lead and bless me, even to the end of my life.

When I was offered the position of General Manager of *China Post*, an English-language newspaper in Taiwan, I saw it as a significant step up the professional ladder. I also felt it was a signal from God that He would have us move on again after living in Hong Kong for another two years (from 1967-1968). Our previous sojourn in the then British colony had been from 1962-1966.

During the late 1960s, while working in Hong Kong, I witnessed the fallout from the “Cultural Revolution” in China, where countless people were subject to ill-treatment and cruelty by the “Red Guards” of the Communist leadership. Dead bodies, some dismembered and some with hands tied to their backs, were seen floating on the waters of Hong Kong Harbor, presumably originating from across the Chinese border. We also weathered a period of social unrest in Hong Kong where home-made bombs, both fake and real, were placed on the streets by British colony pro-Communist leftist unions. This caused a mass exodus of wealthy Hong Kong residents to Western countries like Canada and the United States.

During our six years of residence in Hong Kong, I had several journalism jobs: namely, News Editor/Chief Reporter for the English-language newspaper *Hong Kong Standard*; Staff Writer/Reporter for *World Today*, a widely circulated Chinese-language magazine published by the U.S. Information Service in Hong Kong; Special Correspondent for the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe; and Trade Adviser/Journalist with the Hong Kong Trade Development Council, a semi-government organization. I accepted the job offer from *China Post* on condition that the first six months would be a trial period. If the results proved to be satisfactory to both sides, I would sign a longer-term contract. With this understanding, I resigned from the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and started preparations for the transition.

### **First missionary venture**

During the interim, however, I felt a call from God to go to Singapore on a short-term missionary trip—my first such trip ever. Since it would last one month and I would be without income, I would have to trust God to meet my financial needs. I didn’t know anyone in Singapore at that time except a Christian businessman whom I had only met briefly in Hong Kong. But the call was so strong and clear, I could not but obey.

I remember after paying for my airfare, I had only about \$30 (U.S. currency) when I boarded the plane. I had no idea where I was going to stay while in Singapore, so I was prepared to sleep on the street of the tropical city-state, if need be. Whatever decision I made for the sake of the Lord Jesus, however foolish it might seem, my dear wife would always support me with her prayer and faith.

To my pleasant surprise, when I arrived in Singapore, Zhou Ming, the Christian brother whom I had met in Hong Kong, took me into his home. His house was like a mansion, and I stayed there for exactly one month. Through this brother in Christ, God opened a door for me to preach at two evangelical churches in Singapore, one of which was established by Watchman Nee during his early missionary journey to the South Seas.

With about 200 people in attendance, I preached in that church three nights in a row. On the first night I preached on the Baptism in the Holy Spirit, and there was hardly any response. On the second night, the audience seemed to be paying more attention to my message. On the third night, toward the end of the meeting, to the surprise of everyone present, there was suddenly a mighty outpouring of the Holy Spirit! People rose up from their seats as they were filled with the Holy Spirit. Many of them came forward to confess their sins or repent of their lack of love for Christ. An 80-year-old lady who had been with that church all her life later told me, "I've never seen anything like it in our church!"

### **That still small Voice**

On the last day of my stay in Singapore, I received a phone call from a church elder in Penang, Malaysia, inviting me to speak in his church. As I spoke to him on the phone, the Holy Spirit clearly whispered to me: "Your one-month mission in Singapore is fulfilled. You are to return to Hong Kong and pack up for your move to Taiwan!" I knew it was the Lord speaking to me as clearly as He told me to go to Singapore. I had no choice

but to decline the invitation.

Surprisingly, on the night before I left Singapore, Brother Zhou Ming handed me a large envelope which contained a bundle of cash. He said the money was his tithes and offering, which he was giving me for my ministry in Singapore. When I counted the bills, the total amount came to be more than enough to compensate for the one-month pay I gave up for the mission trip! Time and time again God has proved Himself to be faithful in supplying my needs, whether in secular employment or doing church work.

### **New job, new challenges**

I started my new job as CEO of *China Post* in the fall of 1968. In addition to my salary, we were provided an apartment behind the newspaper office building, and we settled in fairly comfortably. I enjoyed my job, since we had good public relations with both the Government and the private sector, especially with the foreign communities in Taiwan, including the then U.S. Embassy and the Taipei American School. We were fortunate enough to get full scholarships for David and Ruth, our two oldest children, to attend TAS. In those days, only elite Chinese families could afford to send their children to the American school.

Soon after we settled in, our faith was tested again. One day, we found all six children sick with the flu, all running a fever and several badly coughing. I had to be at work while Mother was home taking care of the ailing children. In those days, we couldn't afford to have any health insurance in Taiwan, and it was not our habit to bring our children to a doctor when they took ill. We would just pray for their healing, and they would always get well.

When I got home from work, seeing all six children sick in bed, Mother and I decided to go into each bedroom to lay hands on them. One by one we prayed earnestly for divine healing. After we had finished praying, we returned to our own



bedroom, got down on our knees and praised the Lord loudly for about half an hour. We did it because we had been taught that praising God is a powerful weapon against the devil. Several days later, all six children were up and running again!

### **Child lost & found**

One of the most unforgettable scary experiences we had in Taiwan involved our two-and-a-half-year-old daughter Esther. Because she was missing for several hours, it caused quite a stir. Concerned that she might have been abducted, many of us, including some office staff members, were all out trying to find her.

That afternoon Mother needed to go out on an errand. As she left our apartment, Esther followed her without Mother knowing it. As little Esther tried to catch up with Mom from a distance, Mother came to an intersection where she made a turn, thus disappearing from Esther's sight. Not knowing what to do, the frightened child started crying for help.

A lady in the neighborhood saw her crying and came to her rescue. She picked up Esther and carried her to her own house. Then she reported a "missing girl" to the nearby police station. The officer on duty immediately made a phone call to the newspaper office and gave the information for publication, including the name and address of the lady who had called. My staff realized it must have been their CEO's daughter *Yee Si Tie*, (Esther in Chinese). Upon receiving the report, Mother rushed to the lady's house and there found her little girl crying. The moment Esther saw her mom appear at the door, she jumped off the lady's lap and ran into her arms. We all breathed a sigh of relief and thanked God for her safe return.

### **From Taiwan to the USA**

At first, I thought our move from Hong Kong back to Taiwan was permanent. To my surprise, just before my six-month trial

run at *China Post* was due to expire, I was approached by another newspaper tycoon, Mr. Yu Chi-Chung, owner and publisher of the mass circulation newspaper *China Times*, with an offer to be its editor-in-chief. It was an attractive position because *China Times* is one of the two largest, most influential newspapers in Taiwan.

The offer, if agreed upon, would have meant we could settle in Taiwan permanently as we had intended. It would have been an ideal situation, since most of our children had been born there and since I had good connections with the Nationalist Government and foreign communities. Nevertheless, the negotiations hit a snag. The proposal was strongly opposed by the senior editorial staff within the newspaper. Mr. Yu then made another offer—to send me to the United States as the *China Times* Bureau Chief and assigned to Washington, D. C. I turned down the second offer because I wanted to remain in Taiwan indefinitely.

Strangely, after I rejected the offer, I had no peace in my heart. For several days, I couldn't sleep well at night. I wondered why. Was God trying to tell me something? I reasoned in my own heart, "During the last six years, we moved back and forth between Taiwan and Hong Kong four times. Are we to move again—even to the other side of the Pacific Ocean?" I shared my heart with my praying wife, and she said, "Maybe God wants us to move to America. Why don't we pray about it?"

As we started praying together, strange things began to happen, one after another. First, one of our prayer partners, Brother Jonah Huang, suddenly showed up at our apartment one morning. He quickly pulled up a chair to sit down. He was very serious as he said to me, "Brother Chow, while I was praying last night, the Lord told me to come to tell you that He wanted to send you to the United States." It sounded like the second offer made to me by the publisher of *China Times*!

Brother Jonah, who later became "Pastor" Huang, went on to explain why he believed he got the word from God. That morning, before he had come to our apartment, he was praying

by himself in the house where we held our prayer meetings. The road outside was blocked because of construction work. He said to the Lord: "If you want me to take the message to Brother Chow, please send some workers to remove the roadblock." As soon as he finished praying, he lifted his eyes and saw the blockade being cleared!

Shortly after he brought me the message, his wife An Jing (Peace) came to our apartment for a visit. Acting somewhat oddly, she looked around the apartment, going through every room. She looked at every piece of furniture even the old refrigerator. Then she said to my wife, "I heard you are planning to move to America. Are you going to sell your furniture lock, stock, and barrel?" Nancy replied, "Yes," realizing this was an answer to her prayer. Without telling anyone about it, she had been praying secretly, "Lord, if it is your will for us to relocate to the United States, please send somebody to buy our furniture lock, stock and barrel!" An Jing was the answer. She offered to purchase all our furniture, knowing we needed money to pay for our passage to the U.S. She actually paid more than the furniture was worth!

### **Encouraging words from God**

During my devotions one morning, the Lord confirmed His leading when He gave me these encouraging words: "*You are my servant; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. 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*" (Isaiah 41:9-10).

Even having sold our furniture, we still needed additional money to cover the airfare to the U.S. for all six of our children. At first, my employer had offered to pay only for my airfare; then, to my surprise, he also offered to pay for my wife's ticket. Even so, we didn't have enough money to cover the whole family. We kept praying, believing that if it is God's plan to send us to America, He will provide sufficient funds.

To raise more money, we also had to sell the piano we had owned since our Hong Kong days. In answer to our prayer, God sent a brother in Christ. He previously had been used by God to meet our needs during my eight months of unemployment. He bought the piano, deliberately paying more than the price we asked because of his desire to help us with the airfare.

At about the same time, I received a letter from Jackson Chou, an old friend working for the Voice of America in Washington, D. C., offering a place for the family to stay temporarily until permanent housing became available. The letter was another encouraging sign that God would be meeting all our needs in the U.S. if we determined to follow His leading. I also took it as further confirmation that *God* was indeed sending me to the U.S. and using the *China Times* assignment as a vehicle.

Since the travel expenses we had raised were only enough for the family to fly from Taipei to Los Angeles (when our final destination was Washington, D.C.), I arranged for Nancy and the children to continue by train. On the way she could visit her sister Nell and family in Madison, Wisconsin, until I found housing in the D.C. area.

Amazingly, the day after we arrived in Los Angeles, visiting with Nancy's brother Robert and his family, I received a telephone call from my friend Jackson. He sounded quite excited when he said, "Your God is really looking after you guys. I've just found a house for you and your family. It belongs to a colleague of mine who is also a Christian. The house is furnished, and some students from the University of Maryland are living there right now; but it will be available when school is out. The owner said since you are a servant of God, you are welcome to move in and just pay whatever rent you can afford...."

This was yet another answer to our prayers. Even before we left Taiwan, we were asking God to provide two essential things once we set foot on U.S. soil: a suitable house for a family of eight and an automobile. We had also heard that housing in

the Washington, D.C. area was very expensive, and that it would not be easy for a family with multiple children to find an apartment.

The four-bedroom house was located in College Park, not far from the University of Maryland and only half an hour from the nation's capital. Because the house had been leased to college students, it was fully furnished and complete with kitchen utensils. It also had enough beds for every one of our six children!

The way God gave us a V-8 Oldsmobile convertible was most incredible. I was on assignment in New York covering the ongoing debate in the United Nations General Assembly over the issue of China's representation in the U. N. On my way back to Maryland, I stopped in Elizabeth, New Jersey, to visit a friend for whom I had done a favor while living in Hong Kong. He and his wife both were medical doctors, and each had a car. They had just purchased a new one and were trying to get rid of an old one—the 10-year-old-convertible—with very low mileage.

My friend took me to dinner at a Chinese restaurant. Upon returning to his apartment, he showed me the brand-new car they had just bought. Then, a short distance away, we stopped to see the old car they were trying to get rid of. He said, "We've been trying to decide whether or not to give it away. If you're interested, I'd sell it to you for \$1.00."

Back in his apartment, he signed the title over to me for the nominal sale price, thus completing the legal transaction. Almost immediately I took the car to a nearby gas station and filled it up. Gratefully and joyfully, I drove it back to Maryland! The next day, when my wife and our six children arrived in Washington, D.C. on the train, I had our first American car with which to pick them up at Union Station. The V-8 was just big enough for a family of eight including all their personal belongings!

## **Orientation to the American way of life**

It was good for Nancy and the children to have spent some time with her sister Nell and her family in Wisconsin. It was a period of orientation to the American way of life, especially for a Chinese housewife and mother of six children. At the time, our brother-in-law, S. H. Ho, was working on his PhD at the University of Wisconsin. The Ho family later moved to Hawaii, where he became a tenured professor of linguistics at the University of Hawaii.

Even though the owner of the four-bedroom house in Prince George's County, Maryland, was willing to accept "whatever rent" we could afford to pay, I insisted that a lease be signed for a mutually agreed upon rental amount. We decided to each pray about a fair figure and then come back to compare notes. Lo and behold!—the amount each of us independently came up with was exactly the same! A lease was signed.

We lived in that house for less than a year. Then, in early 1970, I took an interest-free loan from my company and purchased a slightly better house on the next street in the Hollywood section of College Park. This house, our first one ever owned in America, had three bedrooms, with two smaller rooms in the basement, some play space for the children, plus an extra bathroom. The dining room, with barely enough space for a family of eight to eat in, was an extension from the kitchen—with a small window through which food items and dishes were passed. After our seventh child, Martha, came along, we could still squeeze in a high chair for her!

## **Family worship**

Although the shanty dining room was crowded, we were happy together, and there was always plenty of joy and laughter at the dinner table. I decided to incorporate a "family altar" (or family worship) into our lives. It was the spiritual bond that held us together, even though we may have been lacking financially.

I came to believe in the expression, “The family that prays together stays together.” Not only were we close together as a family, we were always happy as we read the Bible and prayed together.

I included daily worship at the dinner table as part of our family life because I learned from a New York pastor that it was the best way to protect our children from the evil effects of this world. It was important to establish a family altar and start teaching our children from the Bible the things of God as early as possible. “*Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old, they will not turn from it*” (Proverbs 22:6 ).

I followed this admonition because I became aware of my responsibility as a parent to pass along my faith to our children, so they and their children might be blessed as much as I have been, if not more. I realized the intrinsic and lasting value of family worship, which is even more important than church attendance. I am a firm believer in this tremendous promise of God for every family “...*showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep my commandments*” (Exodus 20:6).



Jack and Nancy with their grandchildren on his 80th birthday.



## Chapter 11

# *First Severe Trial in The U.S.A.*



Shortly after we moved into our own house, Nancy became pregnant with baby No. 8. One week prior to her first prenatal checkup in the fifth month of her pregnancy, she suddenly developed severe abdominal pain. I rushed into her room and prayed for her, something I would normally do when anyone in the family was sick, and God would always answer our prayers. This time as I prayed for Mother her pain grew worse to the point that she started screaming. It seemed as if her whole body was under attack. Recognizing the seriousness of the situation, I rushed her to the Emergency Room of Prince George's County Hospital. As soon as she was admitted, she suffered an attack of convulsions and ended up in a coma.

A team of doctors later found that the five-month female fetus had been dead in the mother's womb, which, according to a medical report, was due to premature separation of the umbilical cord, causing blood poisoning. Her case was diagnosed as "eclampsia," a serious disorder late in her pregnancy. The reason she didn't have her prenatal checkup sooner was because we had taken for granted that everything was going to be normal,

since all our other seven children were born without any problem. It was also because we didn't have health insurance coverage at the time.

A dead fetus in a mother's body puts her life in grave danger. Although the doctors had considered immediate surgery to remove it, Nancy was in a deep coma with exceedingly high blood pressure. The chance of her survival was only 50-50. The doctors decided to hold off and "wait and see." I wasn't given any information about my wife's condition until she had been in a coma for three days.

The news came as a shock. I was stunned and speechless. I immediately placed long-distance calls to our church friends in Taiwan, and in New York and Houston, urgently asking for prayer. Our friends at the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church in New York prayed earnestly and persistently for her and for the family as well.

As I drove to the hospital to see her the next day, my faith suddenly came alive as I kept singing the words of the familiar chorus, "This mountain shall be removed; this mountain shall be removed...by my Spirit, saith the Lord." I sang it daily on my way to the hospital for the following several days. I was conscious of the fact that those prayers had lifted me up spiritually. My faith was stirred and strengthened, and I began to believe in earnest for her healing and recovery.

One morning about 8 o'clock, I received a phone call from Dr. Suki, one of the gynecologists on the medical team. "I'm glad to inform you that we don't have to operate on your wife because the baby came out by herself. We think your wife is lucky, but she remains in critical condition." I took the news as the first sign that God was answering those prayers on behalf of my dear wife.

However, as I continued my daily visits with her in the hospital, she remained unconscious. The doctors and nurses tried repeatedly to test her reflexes but to no avail. They all seemed to have given up on her case. Humanly speaking, it was indeed hopeless. During one of my evening visits, I asked a

female doctor on the treatment team whether she thought my wife was going to make it. With her eyes glued to the breathing machine, she simply said, “We’re just waiting....”

When I saw her lying in the hospital bed unconscious and motionless, seemingly in a hopeless condition, I couldn’t help but feel downcast. She was at such a low point and unable to breathe on her own, that a tracheotomy was performed in order to hook her up to a breathing machine. She had tubes all over her body, her hair was disheveled, and her face was pale. She lay there in ICU, literally looking like a dying person. I was afraid to bring any of our children to see her in that condition.

Pastor Waldvogel of the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church called me from New York almost daily to inquire as to my wife’s condition. He sent Pastor Charles Andrews of the Fredericksburg Pentecostal Church in Virginia, one of the Ridgewood Fellowship churches, to the hospital to pray for her. Several times he drove some 90 miles each way. On one occasion, he brought along a missionary friend to our house to pray for my wife, who was still in ICU. This man had great faith and was said to have brought a dead man back to life through his powerful prayers.

On his last visit to the hospital, Rev. Andrews and I together laid hands on Nancy uniting our faith, claiming the resurrection life of Jesus Christ. As we finished praying, I called out to my wife, saying, “Mama, I’m here to see you!” For the first time in many days, she began to respond, turning her head very slowly toward my side of her bed. She opened her eyes for just a few seconds and then closed them. Both eyes were bloodshot. At that moment I felt as though the same power of resurrection that raised Jesus Christ from the dead was working within her body to quicken her and to cause her to make that initial move.

However, it took another week for her to become fully awake and conscious. She had been in a coma for two weeks. Her first question was: “What’s wrong with me?” She realized now she was in a hospital. At first I couldn’t understand what she was saying because she had lost her voice as a result of the trache-

otomy. I had to ask her to repeat her words so I could read her lips and figure out what she was trying to say.

Meanwhile, after the hospital staff moved her from ICU to a regular ward on the fourth floor, the place suddenly seemed lit up—as if someone had been raised from the dead! At the time she was moved, two or three patients on the same floor had just died, and there was a general sense of gloom there. Suddenly the spirits of the nursing staff seemed lifted up now that they had a new patient who had just come out of a week long coma. It felt like they had received someone who had been “resurrected!”

The day she was discharged from the hospital, I took her in a wheelchair back to ICU where she had been bedridden in a coma, to thank the doctors and nurses who had cared for her. They were all surprised and happy to see her alive and well, ready to go home! Many of them said to me, “Mr. Chow, you are lucky to take your wife home alive.” One of the doctors who had treated her asked her, “Are you Mrs. Chow? I thought you were dead!”

At home, however, she didn’t even recognize our car parked in front of the house. As we entered the house, she also didn’t recognize Martha, who was about 12 months old at the time. When she asked, “Who is this girl?” I suspected that she had either lost her memory or suffered some other brain damage during her prolonged deep coma. Interestingly, she could still recall things that happened far back when we had our first child. It took her about six months to gradually regain her lost memory. Apart from our many friends’ prayers on behalf of my wife, I had been greatly inspired and encouraged by the same Scripture two Christian families had received separately and independently, which they passed on to me while Nancy was in the coma. The verse was John 11:4: “*Jesus said, ‘this sickness will not end in death. No, it is for God’s glory so that God’s Son may be glorified through it.’*”

I tried repeatedly to share this powerful word with her while she was unconscious. Although I couldn’t communicate with her, I would read this verse out loud into her ears, praying

and hoping she could hear and be encouraged by the Word of God. I did so because I was told that people in a coma could hear. I had noticed a sign posted on the wall beside her hospital bed with these words: “Speak carefully. Patient hears.” I read the verse out loud to her also in the belief that there is healing power in the Word of God. *“For every word comes from God with power”* (Luke 1:37, Chinese Union Version). Later at home, I asked her if she had, in fact, heard my reading. She said she had not.

What about our huge medical bill? As I mentioned before, we had no insurance coverage at the time. But God provided again! He always seems to have a way of helping those who put their trust in Him in time of dire need. One day, just a few days before I took my wife home, a social worker at the hospital asked to see me to determine if I would be eligible for the State Medicaid program. After reviewing my financial status, she concluded that I should apply for Medicaid from the State of Maryland. The total medical bill came out to be more than \$10,000, of which I was required to pay only \$2,000. Since there was no interest charged on medical bills, I was able to pay a minimum of \$100 each month until my portion was paid off.

### **Unfeigned faith**

The near-death experience of my wife has had an enormous impact upon my life, faith and family values. It taught me how to grow in faith, to trust in God for all my needs, and to love my wife and family more. During that testing season, I learned what it means to have “unfeigned faith,” a quality that Timothy had inherited from his grandmother Lois and mother Eunice (2 Timothy 1:5). This unfeigned faith is an unalloyed, pure, genuine and wholehearted trust in God.

I recall the days when the doctors had exhausted their brain power, skill and the medical technology available in an effort to awaken Nancy out of her deep coma. They all seemed to have come to the end of their rope. Practically nothing they

could do revived her. On the surface, it was an utterly hopeless situation. Somehow I did not give up hope, even though my faith was small. I knew I had to learn to trust in God no matter what because my only hope was in Him. I also knew I needed to grow in the grace and knowledge of my Lord. I used to tell others what Jesus has said, *“If you can believe, all things are possible to him who believes”* (Mark 9:23).

During those trying days, I had many sleepless nights as I wondered why my wife couldn’t be awakened. The only thing our children and I were hoping and praying for was that their mommy would wake up. While she was in ICU, the more I stared at her, the more depressed I felt. Through my despair the Spirit of God inside would say, *“Fight the good fight of faith”* or *“For we live by faith, not by sight”* (1 Tim.6:12; 2 Cor. 5:7).

Three of our children—a one-year old, a two-year-old and a four-year-old—were too young to be without their mother. A group of Christian women who knew Nancy in Taiwan were pleading for God to spare her life. They would pray, “These kids need their mommy!” I also cried out to God, “Please save her life for the kids’ sake.” I prayed that God would extend her life for at least 15 years, until our youngest child turned 16 when she would be old enough to drive a car and take care of herself. My plea for a 15-year extension to her life was borrowed from the Biblical example of Hezekiah, king of Judah (726-697 B.C.). He had been told by the prophet Isaiah that he was going to die. Hezekiah, weeping bitterly, prayed to God to spare his life, and God heard him. God told Isaiah to go back to tell Hezekiah, *“I have heard your prayer and seen your tears; I will add fifteen years to your life”* (Isaiah 38:1-5).

Nancy was 42 years old at that time. God not only heard my prayer by graciously and generously granting her many more years than I had asked for. Today, by Chinese count, she is approaching her ninetieth year, and in all respects she is still going strong. Praise and glory be unto God throughout all generations!

## Chapter Twelve

# *An Encounter That Changed My Life*



I was preparing to move from Taiwan to Hong Kong to start my new job in early 1967. Dr. Donald Dale, a British missionary doctor friend of mine, who was attending our Chinese Christian Assembly in Taipei, told me that an American pastor from New York was planning to hold special meetings in Taiwan and asked if I would be willing to be his interpreter. At the time, I was in the midst of packing and didn't give much thought to the idea. I simply said, "Yes, if it is God's will."

Through Dr. Dale and his wife, Penelope, I had come to know Pearl G. Young, a missionary from Nova Scotia, Canada, who founded the Zion Church in Taiwan. She was associated with the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church in Brooklyn, New York, of which Rev. Hans R. Waldvogel was the founder and pastor. Back in New York, the folks at Ridgewood were praying for the "right interpreter" for Pastor Waldvogel's first Taiwan crusade. I had never expected that my meeting with this American pastor would turn out to be an important milestone in my life and ministry.

## **A new milestone**

It wasn't until we came to the U.S. that I learned Hans Waldvogel was a well-known Pentecostal evangelist in the United States and Europe, mightily used of God in tent meetings with signs and wonders following his ministry. His frequent trips to post-war Europe had resulted in the establishment of many churches in Germany, Austria, Yugoslavia, Switzerland and other European countries. His Brooklyn-based home church had also branched out into many other New York-New Jersey areas as well as in Northern Virginia. These churches came to be known collectively as the Ridgewood Fellowship. The Chinese Christian Church of Maryland, which I founded in 1979, also became a part of that fellowship as a result of my connection with Pastor Waldvogel.

Several things happened that led me to believe my encounter with Hans Waldvogel was a divine appointment. In addition to his church in New York praying for the proposed conference in Taiwan and the right interpreter, in Hong Kong my wife and I were also praying for confirmation that I would be the one God had in mind. Through a chain of events, then, I was led to believe it was God's will for me to go to Taiwan to serve as his escort-interpreter.

At that time my wife was pregnant with baby number six to be named Susanna. Her estimated due date conflicted with the scheduled conference in Taiwan. We prayed specifically that the baby would arrive before, so that I could leave home without any worry. Our domestic helper, who was not a believer at the time, would laugh as she heard this "strange" prayer daily. The baby was delivered safely three days prior to the start of the conference in Taiwan! It gave me just enough time to bring mother and baby home from the hospital, grab a taxi heading to the airport, and catch my flight to Taiwan. Our maidservant, by the way, later became a Christian believer.

Earlier that year, one of the airlines in Hong Kong was having a sale, and fare to Taiwan was slashed by as much as



50%. I took advantage of the discount at the time and purchased a round-trip ticket, not knowing when I would use it. Six months later I would use it to fly to Taiwan for the express purpose of translating for Hans Waldvogel at his crusade.

### **A modern-day Brother Lawrence**

When I arrived in Taipei, the first thing Pastor Waldvogel said to me was: “Your coming here is a confirmation for me, too.” Apparently, he was seeking to confirm that his trip to Taiwan was in the will of God. For the first time in my life, I met a man of God who was entirely devoted to doing God’s will. He seemed to be so filled with the Holy Spirit that he was constantly in communion with God, whether in public or in private. I had the privilege and pleasure of being with him in and outside the meetings and witnessed how he lived and functioned in the Holy Spirit. He was truly a Holy Ghost, Spirit-filled minister. I would call him “a modern-day Brother Lawrence”—a sixteenth-century saint known for his book, “The Practice of the Presence of God.”

I remember interpreting for Pastor Waldvogel at his first meeting in Taiwan. The Spirit of God was so copiously poured out upon the attendees, causing nearly everyone to laugh heartily and loudly for an extended period of time. Miss Pearl Young, the Canadian missionary of Scottish descent, a very strict and reserved person, laughed joyfully while I, too, was laughing so uncontrollably that my stomach hurt! I said to the Lord, “That’s enough, Lord, that’s enough!” This was my first time ever to have been in a meeting full of joy in the Holy Ghost. Looking back, I would have described Hans Waldvogel’s ministry as “truly inspired and Holy Ghost directed.”

To my surprise, as I interpreted for him, there was such unity and harmony in our hearts that I felt we were in the same Spirit. Every word he said struck a chord within my spirit, as if they were my own. Thoughts were so powerfully expressed by Pastor Waldvogel! I had never felt so free and liberated in a

Christian conference or while interpreting for a speaker. As the Bible says, “*Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty*” (2 Corinthians 3:17). The Spirit of God truly had His way in those meetings. As we emerged from one of the first meetings, he said to me, “We both were preaching.”

### **A most unforgettable experience**

One of the most unforgettable experiences I had with Hans Waldvogel occurred during a morning session at Zion Church in *Gou Zi Kuo* outside of Taipei. Only about two dozen people were in attendance, many of them pastors and ministers from the local churches. He was speaking on the subject of “Christ’s Humility.” While interpreting for him, I was translated into a spiritual state where I found myself kneeling alone before the Lord Jesus as though there was no one else around. He said to me more than once, “Learn to be humble as I am humble.” I was made completely oblivious to the fact that I was still interpreting for Pastor Waldvogel as he preached! It was such an unusual experience—one that I will never forget.

Although I was with Hans Waldvogel for only two weeks during his 1967 Taiwan crusade, his exemplary life and ministry, the way he walked with God left an indelible impression so deep that it has had a lasting impact on my own life, ministry and personal relationship with God.

Two years later, in early 1969, I was getting ready to leave for the United States to assume my duty as the Washington Correspondent for the Taiwan newspaper *China Times*. I had been looking forward to seeing Pastor Waldvogel again in New York. To my keen disappointment, I received the sad news from Pearl Young that Pastor Waldvogel had gone to be with the Lord. He would be missed, not only by me but by the many who had benefited from his ministry. He was 76 years old and had never married, devoting his entire life to serving the Lord Jesus whom he loved with all his heart, all his mind, and all his strength.

## A new relationship

In September 1969, I went to New York on my first assignment to cover the United Nations General Assembly debate over the question of China's representation in that world body. I decided to visit the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church in Brooklyn, despite Pastor Waldvogel having gone to heaven. Armed with pictures of his Taiwan crusade showing I was his interpreter, I met his nephew, the Rev. Edwin H. Waldvogel, who had succeeded him as the church's senior pastor. He kindly received me with open arms and invited me to dinner at his home, where I also met his wife Edith and their three children.

Through "Brother Edwin," as he was affectionately referred to within the Ridgewood Fellowship, I met the Rev. and Mrs. Gordon P. Gardiner, then co-directors of Pilgrim Camp, a summer camp and retreat center founded by the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church, and many other pastors and ministers from churches affiliated with the fellowship. Edwin Waldvogel and Gordon Gardiner were the two most senior pastors of the Ridgewood church. Mr. Gardiner was also the editor of *Bread of Life*, a monthly church publication, and the author of *Radiant Glory*, a biography of Mrs. Martha Wing Robinson. He was instrumental in my ordination into full-time ministry in 1985, when our church from Maryland joined the Ridgewood Church in observing their 60<sup>th</sup> founding anniversary and the 6<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our Chinese church in Maryland.

Prior to the establishment of the Chinese Christian Church of Maryland, we had lived in New York for about two years after I quit my secular employment. I thought the Lord would have me start a church there in Queens or Chinatown, where there was a heavy concentration of Chinese people. During this time, our family attended the Church of the Good Shepherd at Ozone Park, one of the Ridgewood Fellowship churches, where Frank and Emma Posta served as pastors. I would also make an effort to attend the church at Ridgewood as often as possible, especially the ministers' prayer meeting every Monday morning at

the Faith Home. Gradually I was made to feel like I was one of them. I also had opportunities to visit the other churches of the Ridgewood Fellowship. As my relationship with the fellowship ministers grew, I would be called to fill in when a minister had to be away on any given Sunday. Because of this, I came to know almost all the Ridgewood fellowship churches in the New York-New Jersey area.

While I was still employed by the *China Times*, whenever on assignment to New York, I would choose to stay at the Faith Home, part of the Ridgewood church, so that I could attend their meetings as much as possible. I could have stayed in any New York hotel at company expense, but I wanted to be in their meetings, where the presence of God was so evident. The people at the Faith Home always graciously received me and treated me with exceeding kindness and hospitality. I felt privileged and specially blessed when they put me in the same bedroom used by the late Hans Waldvogel. The Lord even blessed the news stories and articles I wrote in that room and sent to my newspaper in Taiwan. Some of the reports had been brought to the attention of the then President Chiang Kai-shek, according to my employer Mr. Yu Chi-chung. Chiang Kai-shek's eldest son, Chiang Ching-kuo who had also followed my reporting from U.S., received me twice in Taiwan before he became the President of the Republic of China. I believe these were some of the reasons for my promotion to CEO of *China Times* in Taiwan.

While we lived in Queens, New York, I waited on the Lord desiring to know what He would have me do in that city while attending the Ridgewood church. Both Brother Edwin and Brother Gardiner had prayed for me on several occasions, particularly with the thought that I was going to start a church in Manhattan Chinatown. Brother Edwin had said to me on at least two occasions, "You are welcome to use our lower auditorium (of the Ridgewood church) if you were to start a Chinese work in New York." But I told him that I had not received an indication or clear light from the Lord as to whether I should do so. Nevertheless, I continued attending the various Ridgewood

fellowship meetings, especially the Monday morning ministers' prayer meeting, where I received considerable spiritual help.

### **Jehovah Jireh (The Lord Provides)**

Without a regular income, life in New York was not easy. Our faith was tested again money-wise. At that time we had five children. Although I was being paid by the newspaper for my writing on a piece-by-piece basis, we often found ourselves in a tight spot. For instance, one Monday morning, as I was near the refrigerator and, without saying a word, my wife opened its door and showed me the inside, which was almost empty. I understood what she meant. I said, "Let's pray." We prayed together before I left to go to the Faith Home for the ministers' prayer meeting.. My wife called after me that she was encouraged by the "Lord's prayer: *"Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread"* (Matthew 6:9-11).

At the end of the prayer meeting that morning, Brother Edwin walked over to me and shook my hand as I was about to leave. He stuck a bill in my hand, and whispered to me saying, "This is my tithe." I knew it was money. When I got into my car, I saw it was a \$20 bill. That was a lot back in the 1970s. I stopped at a grocery store on my way home and bought four or five bags of foods, sufficient to feed our family for about two weeks!

Housing in New York was by far more expensive than in Maryland. Fortunately, we were living in a rent-free apartment owned by a Christian friend we had known in Hong Kong. As power-of-attorney for her, I was asked to handle the transaction on her behalf when she purchased the property in Elmhurst, Queens. She invited us to live there, hoping that I would start a church in the basement. She loved the Lord and wished to be a part of the work. But things did not turn out the way she expected. Two years later we moved back into our own house in Maryland.

I often wondered why the Lord led us to New York and allowed us to live there for two years without anything concrete seemingly being accomplished. As I waited on the Lord, it gradually became apparent to me that it was a time of preparation—necessary for the Lord to train and further equip me for the Spirit-led ministry ahead. In looking back, I cannot help but thank God for the spiritual benefits I have received from the Ridgewood fellowship, without which I would not have been able to undertake the kind of ministry that He has given me.

## Chapter Thirteen

# *Last Secular Employment*



When I was offered the job of Washington Correspondent for the *China Times* in Taiwan, I took it as a “Macedonian Call” (Acts 16:9) to come to the United States—ultimately to serve God as He desired. The newspaper job was to be of secondary importance, as a livelihood. Even before the opportunity presented itself, I was ready to answer God’s call to serve Him in any way and wherever He might send me. So, when God opened a door in New York by providing a rent-free apartment in the city, I quit my secular job to start a work for the Lord and “live by faith,” totally depending upon Him to provide for our needs. It was also a welcome opportunity for more and closer fellowship with our friends at the Ridgewood Church.

Although we lived in New York for two years without seeming to accomplish anything, our sojourn there was not in

vain: we learned some precious lessons we might not have learned elsewhere, and which afterward not only proved beneficial to our family and church life in Maryland, but conducive to my later ministry as well.

## **Back to Maryland**

We moved back to Maryland mainly because we were unable to find a tenant for our house which had been standing vacant for two years. One day in early 1977 while I was on a ministry trip to Atlanta, Georgia, my wife had to rush back to Maryland to single-handedly deal with a major flooding problem in the basement. We had to deal with that repeatedly and some other issues associated with a house unoccupied for an extended time. During our respective morning devotions, we both received a word from the Lord indicating that we were to return to our own house in Maryland.

The unusual thing about it was the exact same Scriptural verse had been given to us separately and independently. Leviticus, Chapter 25:13: *“In this Year of Jubilee everyone is to return to their own property.”* We were convinced it was the Lord speaking to us both, and that it was time for us to *“return to our own property”* in Maryland. Back in Maryland, the question was what to do next? I needed to know whether I should start a church in Maryland or return to secular employment. I prayed much seeking God’s will regarding the direction I should go.

One day I asked my wife and six children if they would be willing to join me for a special day of fasting and prayer, specifically for the purpose of seeking God’s leading and guidance. They all readily agreed to skip three meals that day so that we could pray together as a family. I made a list of several job possibilities, including my former employer in Taiwan.

I also called Brother Gordon Gardiner at Pilgrim Camp and asked him to pray with us for direction and guidance. As one of the two most senior pastors in the Ridgewood fellowship, I held him in high esteem. Two months later he wrote back



suggesting that I return to secular employment temporarily, in order to provide for my family while waiting for God's clear leading.

### **Divine Providence**

I started my job hunting, and by divine Providence, Senator John Sparkman, once a Democrat vice presidential candidate and the then Chairman of the US Senate Foreign Relations Committee, took a personal interest in my job search. As the former *China Times* correspondent in Washington, I had on occasions interviewed him regarding the then-evolving United States policy toward China. He became aware of my need through his press secretary, whom I got to know very well. Even without my asking, the Senator from Alabama wrote a letter of recommendation and sent it to the Director of the Voice of America, who happened to be his longtime friend from the same State.

After submitting a lengthy federal job application to the U.S. Office of Personnel Management, I was called in to be interviewed and tested for the job of news translator-announcer in the Chinese-language section of the Voice of America, the international broadcasting arm of the U.S. Information Agency under the State Department. I was immediately hired as a U.S. Civil Service employee, one grade higher than the average entry level. I never imagined that a United States Senator would be involved in securing my last secular employment!

As far as I was concerned, the job at VOA was supposed to be a temporary one, but it lasted eight years. I didn't expect it would turn out to be a prolonged, deep-valley "furnace experience." It was like the one Daniel's three friends had (Daniel 3:24-27)! I had listed six different job opportunities, and providentially I ended up with the one I wanted least!

In my 32-year journalistic career, I have had 12 different jobs with various news organizations in Taiwan, Hong Kong and Washington, including executive positions on three leading

newspapers; but the VOA job turned out to be the most unpleasant one. The pay was fairly good, but the working environment was not. There was a lot of inter-office politics and bickering. A former employee once said ruefully, “That place could drive you crazy!” An insider had warned me even before I started working there, saying, “This place is like purgatory!”

### **God’s higher purpose**

Nevertheless, God had a higher purpose for my life when He saw fit to use the good offices of a senior U.S. Senator to put me in that “furnace” and allowed me to be tried and refined for eight years. Given my seniority and extensive background in journalism, my big ego allowed me to think that I knew better how to run the Chinese section of VOA. After the first few years of working and observing how things were being done there, I concluded that these people were either not doing their jobs or did not know what they were doing.

I had a strong desire to help improve the news operations in the Chinese service, but I was not in a position to do so. I felt frustrated and useless. The situation got even worse for me when I was assigned to the all-night shift, where I had to report to every news editor on duty, many of whom were younger and less experienced. I balked at the idea of working the night shift. I began to hate my job and the fact that everybody was made to be my boss at one time or another. As a former CEO of three major newspapers, I formerly had hundreds of people working under me. For a long time I wondered why my professional experience was not recognized and utilized. One day I heard the Lord saying gently to me, “I didn’t bring you here to change others—but to change *you* and make *you* what I want *you* to be!”

Then I began to understand why God put me in that awful place and kept me there for so long. It was that I should be humbled and emptied, broken and stripped of my hidden pride and self-righteousness. I didn’t know that I still needed to learn to be obedient, patient and tolerant. I had to learn to accept and

love people as they are. These are the characteristics of Jesus Christ, which God desired to instill into my soul in order that I might be a true servant of God and follower and lover of Jesus.

God saw what I was lacking. He always knows when, how and where to fill my needs. But I had never expected that it would take such a long time for me to learn the lessons that I needed to learn. I found out what a poor student I was in the School of the Holy Spirit. So, my last secular job was literally an advanced training course to further prepare me for my full-time ministry. But until it was God's time to bring me out of that hot place, how desperately I wanted to escape from there! I tried very hard to get a new job or to be transferred to another department. All I wanted was to get out of that fiery furnace!

I recall when I became a naturalized U.S. citizen in 1980, I thought I would have a much better chance of getting a job in some other agencies within the Federal Government where citizenship was required. I had applied for as many as forty-two different positions that were posted on the federal job listing. To no avail! To my keen disappointment, I was told by several interviewers that I was "over-qualified" for some of the positions I had applied. But I said in my own heart, "Never mind, just give me a job!" They had no inkling that I was trying so desperately to quit my existing job.

Toward the end of the eighth year, the trial and suffering became inwardly almost unbearable so that one afternoon I got up from my office desk and went to find a place where I could cry out to God for help. I said to myself, "I can't take it anymore." As I was walking to an upstairs conference room, I seemed to hear a loud voice saying, "*Because I live, you also will live*" (John 14:19). It hit me like a hammer, and I was instantly lifted out of my darkness and gloom and filled afresh with hope, strength and confidence to go forward!

I responded to the Lord in real time, saying, "Yes, Lord, I am willing to stay put as long as you want me to." The voice was a wake-up call for me, reminding me that the Lord Jesus is alive, and that He lives within me to give me power to triumph

over the difficulties and trials in this earthly life!

During this long period of trial, I became convinced of the truth of this Scripture: *“What He [God] opens, no one can shut, and what He shuts no one can open”* (Rev. 3:7). More important, though, is that I learned something about the meaning of Christian suffering. It is good for our souls *“because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, hope”* (Romans 5:3,4). King David said, *“It was good for me to be afflicted so that I might learn your decrees”* (Psalm 119:71). Job, a man who had an “intimate friendship” with God, was allowed to suffer perhaps more than anyone except the Lord Jesus. Yet of his trials, Job said, *“...when He has tested me, I will come forth as gold”* (Job 23:10).

By the grace of God, I can also say that suffering was good for me because it made me a better Christian believer/minister, father and husband. I realize that without the trials I had on my last secular job, I would not have been able to be a good pastor and love the people of God, accepting them as they are, regardless of their ethnicity, culture and religion or lack of religion.

### **Call for full-time ministry**

After I told the Lord that I would be willing to stay on my job as long as necessary, He began to unfold His plans for my future. He indicated that it was time for me to step out into full-time ministry. I understood this would mean we were going to trust God to provide for our needs. At that time, our church was still small and did not have the resources to support a family of nine.

My concern was that since three of our children were still in college, how were they going to complete their education if I quit my job. I was worried also about our monthly mortgage payments and a host of other bills. So, my wife and I prayed together over this vital decision. We asked God for confirmation and assurance that He was going to supply our needs and see to

it that our three children complete their college education in time.

In November 1984, after praying for over a month about leaving my employment, Yang Xian Ming, a brother in the Lord and well-known artist from our church, stopped by our house one day. He brought along a newly-finished painting, which he wanted to give our family as an early Christmas present. It was a picture of mountains and trees with birds flying over them. Within the painting was calligraphy with the words: *“Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they”* (Matthew 6:26)? The message was clear. Continuing our prayers, we asked God as further confirmation to take away our worries about financial needs and to give us perfect peace, and to fill us with faith for living a “faith life.” As weeks went by, the Lord took away all my worries and doubts and granted me perfect peace, joy and confidence.

Amazingly enough, those who had been hostile to me in the office suddenly became my friends. They joined the rest of my colleagues to honor me with a large farewell dinner party at a Chinese restaurant. Thankfully my departure from VOA was with a happy ending to what used to be an unhappy working environment. Only God could have done it.

When I stepped out into full-time ministry, our church was only five years old. I believed from the Scriptures and from being led by the Holy Spirit that I was not to take a salary from the church. I was to accept my pastoral role not as a job, but as a calling from God and that I was to look to Him for provision. The question of pay was not even mentioned. With this understanding, however, the church began voluntarily to support us in the form of their tithes and free-will offerings to God.

Finally, our three children, John, Susanna and Martha, not only completed their college education, but went on to finish their graduate schools with Master’s degrees from such prestigious universities as Harvard, Columbia and Georgetown. One

of them also received a bachelor's degree from Johns Hopkins.

## Chapter Fourteen

# *From Journalist to Pastor*



As a teenager, my dream was to become an air force pilot. I had never thought of becoming a journalist or church pastor. I recall, however, that even as a young man in my early twenties some of my friends at work started calling me “Pastor Chow.” At the time I thought of it merely as a nickname and it didn’t sound bad at all! But Almighty God had a plan for my life which was yet to unfold. As a Christian, I became a firm believer in the Biblical truth that God has a plan for every one of His children even before they were born, an eternal plan to be revealed to those who love God and believe in the truth and infallibility of the Bible as His Word.

One of the outstanding extra-curricular activities of the Chinese students studying in America is their active participation in Bible study groups existing on most university campuses. Many of those students and exchange scholars who come from China and Taiwan have been converted to Christianity through these Bible studies. The prime force behind these Bible study

groups has been such organized ministries as Campus Crusade for Christ, Campus Christian Fellowship, the Navigators and so on.

Many of the Chinese churches in America have grown out of small Bible study groups, as did the Chinese Christian Church of Maryland.

Actually, this church began in the private home of a Christian couple who had recently earned their PhD from the State University of Florida in Tallahassee. Only a few of us met once every weekend, and as the attendance grew steadily, I began to hear calls for starting a church so that others could attend. It must be remembered that we had come to the United States with an eventual goal of doing the Lord's work. The news media job was only secondary as a means of livelihood for me. Amid these calls, I decided to seek God's clear guidance to ascertain if starting a church was what the Lord desired.

By this time I had been working for the Voice of America for two years while leading the Bible study group. For my first annual vacation, I took the opportunity of driving across the continental U.S. to deliver one of our cars to our daughter Ruth, who was attending the California State University in Los Angeles. My wife, my four young daughters, my son John, and one of his friends also came along, the two young men serving as alternate drivers. We made a point to do some sightseeing along the way, since we had heard much about the National Parks and the Grand Canyon. We had a good time. But on our way back, I was the lone driver. All I remember was that I had to drive eight hours every day for five straight days before we arrived back in Maryland! When we got home, I said to myself, "Never again!" Nevertheless, I thought this one experience is something every man and woman ought to have in their life time, if at all possible.

The following year when I was to take my summer vacation, I decided to set aside a week to pray and fast, and just be alone with God. I wanted to be able to hear from the Lord myself as to whether I should start a church, in response to the desire of my Bible study group. I got in touch with Pastor Walter



Fette of the Bowling Green Pentecostal Church in Virginia and asked if I could come down to spend several days in his church just seeking the Lord. We came to know Rev. Fette and his wife Anne through the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church in New York and at their suggestion began attending the Bowling Green church for a while.

Without hesitation, Brother Fette gladly received me and put me up in a house-trailer which used to be occupied by his late mother. The mobile home, complete with two bedrooms, shower, kitchen and a sitting room, sits on the church property. To my surprise, he stocked up a lot of food in the refrigerator, including “fortune cookies,” and said to me, “Please make yourself at home.” Actually, I didn’t feel like eating anything. I was just there to pray and read my Bible.

On the fourth day, at approximately 10 o’clock in the morning as I was having my devotions, I suddenly felt a strong and definite Presence in the room. It was as though someone had walked in and sat in a chair next to me. In my spirit I knew instantly, beyond any doubt, that it was the Lord Jesus! Speaking by His Holy Spirit, He directed me to open my Bible to the Book of Isaiah, Chapter 55. As I began to read it slowly and attentively, the Lord gave me specific instructions concerning the establishment of a new church in Maryland. In addition to these instructions, He made certain promises which He would fulfill if I would follow His directions faithfully.

As I read the chapter carefully, I felt the Holy Spirit speaking to me verse by verse in a new way. The following are some of the instructions given to me, which I recorded in the back of my King James Bible on June 14, 1979:

1. You are to exalt Jesus Christ and let Him be the Lord and Commander-in-Chief.

2. Your one desire must be for more of Christ who is All in all.

3. You are to seek the Lord with all your heart, and you shall find Him.

4. You are to enjoy the presence of the Lord and have

constant fellowship with Him.

5. You are to preach the Word faithfully for His Word shall not return void.

6. You are to lead people to Jesus Christ Himself Who is the answer to all their problems.

7. You are to help people to be filled with the Holy Spirit and live by the Spirit.

8. You are not to have your own agenda but to learn the thoughts and ways of God which are higher than the thoughts and ways of man.

In return, this is what the Lord promised to do for us, providing I would discharge my pastoral duties faithfully and consistently:

1. The presence of God shall be manifested among us.

2. He shall bring people to our church—people we had never known before.

3. He shall baptize them with the Holy Spirit and bless them with peace and joy.

4. He shall cause people to know Him and to have intimate fellowship with Him.

5. He shall add to the church such as should be saved.

6. He shall cause His Word to go forth and bear much fruit.

7. Thus He shall make our Christ-centered church a lasting testimony.

Armed with these instructions and promises from the Lord, I approached Rev. Granville Slye, Pastor of the Glad Tidings Assembly of God Church at Beltsville, Maryland, and asked him if I could rent his facilities for a Chinese church to meet every Sunday afternoon, since they had their own Sunday morning service. My wife and children had been attending this church for some time already while I had to be out of town speaking in some Chinese churches in the New York-New Jersey area. I asked Pastor Slye how much we should pay for the

use of his church, and he replied, “Never mind about the rent. God will supply.” I took it as another confirmation from God.

On Thanksgiving Day, 1979, the Chinese Christian Church of Maryland came into being. As founder and pastor, I sent out notices to all our friends in the Washington, D.C. area where I had preached, inviting them to attend the inaugural service of our new church. That first Sunday, the church was packed to capacity with more than 100 people. The service was marked with the glory of God’s presence, and the people were filled with joy, praise and thanksgiving. It was indeed a grand opening and a historic day for our new church.

### **A new lesson**

No sooner had the church opened when something puzzling happened. To my absolute bewilderment, the attendance on the following Sunday abruptly dropped by almost 50%. On the ensuing Sundays, the drastic decline in number continued unabated until it was down to a handful of people. The only people attending were my family and Brother Yu Tao-chieh with his wife, Sister Ying, a couple from my Bible study group. Where is the crowd that attended the first Sunday service? Why did they suddenly stop coming? Did I say or do anything wrong that might have turned them off?

I searched for answers to these questions. The only explanation I could give was perhaps the way I conducted the service was different from their traditional form of worship. Instead of the sermon being the main part of Sunday worship, we would spend considerable time waiting on the Lord in silence, undoubtedly new to those who came merely to hear the preaching of the Word. They stopped coming apparently because we had failed to meet their expectations. But I could do nothing on my own without being directed by the Holy Spirit.

This awkward situation continued for approximately two years. There were times when I found myself preaching to an audience made up mostly of my own family. I thought, “If this

is the case, I could have preached to them at home!” Nevertheless, I couldn’t shut down the church that I had just opened. I was in a dilemma. I couldn’t help asking, “Lord, why don’t you bring in people as you promised?” Time and again, I asked the same question.

One Sunday afternoon after another service attended by only a few people, I repeated the question. To my surprise, the Lord asked me this question in plain English, “Do you want Me or just crowds?” I answered, “Of course I want You, Lord—more than I want people.” On another occasion when I grumbled about the scant attendance, the Lord again surprised me by asking: “Do you want large attendance or My holy presence?”

It dawned on me that I wasn’t following the instructions the Lord had given me: namely, to exalt Him and desire more of Himself, not a greater number of people; and to seek Him first with all my heart so that I may find Him Who is all in all. I seemed to have lost sight of this one thing: To have Christ Himself and His presence is to have everything I need!

### **Misplaced focus**

I began to realize I had my focus misplaced. It should have been on Jesus Christ instead of people, and on His presence rather than attendance. In hindsight, I realized I wasn’t doing what God wanted me to do. He was teaching me certain spiritual lessons which would have eternal value, but my eyes were on external things such as “more people,” which would have only temporary value. There was a paradigm shift in that not only my focus had been reset, but my value system was properly adjusted as well.

The Lord was using this particular season to instill in me this vital but simple truth: I must have Him and His presence with me before I can satisfy the needs of others. As Jesus says, “...Without Me you can do nothing” (John 15:5). In ministering, which is essentially the work of the Holy Spirit, I found out it is “not by might nor by power [natural talent or human resources],

but by My Spirit, says the Lord” (Zechariah 4:6). Therefore, we must have the anointing of the Holy Spirit upon us in order to be effective instruments in God’s hand.

Keep your eyes on Jesus. This is the secret of successful ministry as well as Christian living. But it took me a long time to learn this most precious lesson. “Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith” (Hebrews 12:2). For the first few years of our fledgling church, we had this key verse on the wall above the pulpit. Whenever I felt low or downhearted, I would turn my eyes to these words, and I would be quickly lifted in my spirit! What an invaluable lesson the Lord has taught me! It would become the secret of my life and ministry for years to come.

### **The Church began to grow**

As I learned the secret of keeping my eyes on Jesus and always having Him at the center of church services, the Lord began to bring new people in, just as He promised—people we had never met before. Though still small in number, these newcomers were precious brothers and sisters in Christ who truly loved the Lord and desired to have more of Him. They were so special that in comparison each one was equal to 10 average churchgoers.

As Jesus says, “When I am lifted up from the earth, I will draw all men [and women] to myself” (John 12:32). I remembered the first thing Jesus had commanded me: to keep Him preeminent in all things. As I endeavored to follow His instructions, the Lord began to draw hungry hearts to Himself, and, as He promised, He manifested His presence among us in a wonderful way.

In addition to our Sunday afternoon service, we started a second meeting for those who would want to spend more time seeking and waiting upon the Lord. There were approximately 12 of us who met regularly every Saturday morning at six o’clock, just to sit in silence before God and pray. Rain or snow

in the winter, these “early birds” would come together to seek the Lord. This unique weekly meeting went on for 10 years. There were days when the church was snowed in, and the ones who got there first would shovel snow and clear the driveway.

One of the instructions and promises given for the new church was to “Seek the Lord while He may be found, call on Him while He is near” (Isaiah 55:6). Those who came were sincere seekers and lovers of Jesus and found Him to be near, true, and precious in a personal way. God honored His words by manifesting His presence and revealing Himself to those who sought Him earnestly.

As the church grew in number, we began to have a Christian retreat twice a year; the first one, known as the Thanksgiving Weekend Retreat, is held to mark the founding anniversary of the church on Thanksgiving Day, 1979. The second event, called the Memorial Day Weekend Retreat, is intended primarily for the congregation to relax and recoup as they spend time resting and waiting upon the Lord. Many attend and leave refreshed, renewed and strengthened. As the Scripture says, “...*they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength*” (Isaiah 40:31).

For the first several years we held our Thanksgiving Weekend Retreat at the Bowling Green Pentecostal Church, a small American church in rustic southern Virginia. Our Chinese church had developed a bond of affinity despite cultural and linguistic differences. As more people and those from other churches began to attend the retreat, we had to move it to the larger sanctuary of the Fredericksburg Pentecostal Church in another town about 25 miles away. Twelve years later, we secured the lease of the Hispanic Seventh-Day Adventist Church in Silver Spring, Maryland, which has a seating capacity of 250-300 people. We relocated our church to accommodate our own growing congregation as well as the expanding Thanksgiving Weekend Retreat. The Seventh-Day Adventists, like the Jewish believers, are a Christian denomination that keeps Sabbath by having their regular worship service on Saturday instead of

Sunday.

Another annual event that has contributed to the spiritual growth and development of our church has been the Labor Day Weekend Retreat held at Pilgrim Camp, a Christian summer camp and retreat center operated by the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church in Brooklyn, New York. Many from our small church would travel to Pilgrim Camp in upstate New York for the Labor Day Weekend Retreat to be taught and built up by the Word of God preached by anointed ministers from the Ridgewood Fellowship.

Pilgrim Camp, founded in 1946, derived its name from John Bunyan's book "Pilgrims Progress" as well as in honor of the pilgrims who immigrated to America from England and Europe. The motto of the camp is "Holiness Unto the Lord." The endeavor of the ministry since its beginning over 70 years ago has been to keep holiness clearly the focus of all that pertains to the camp. Its major attraction has been the manifest presence of God as evidenced by the transformed lives of those who attend—both children and adults alike. Many of our people have been richly blessed and strengthened at the Labor Day Weekend Retreat at Pilgrim Camp.

The greatest benefit I personally have received from the retreats was observing how Christian meetings or New Testament church services were conducted by spiritual men and women under the control and direction of the Holy Spirit. I was impressed particularly by the way Rev. Gordon Gardiner presided over those meetings as he was led by the Spirit of God. While declaring that one never knows "the twists and turns" of a Holy Ghost-led meeting, he still seemed to know the flow of the meetings, every step of the way, conducting them so appropriately and beautifully. He was also an excellent Bible teacher.

Mrs. Gardiner, Sister Caroline as they called her, was seen usually at the organ, yet in real time she would provide a prophetic word that perfectly fit his teachings "like apples of gold in settings of silver." It was said that she used to be a better preacher but deferred to her husband after they were married.

Nevertheless, she proved herself to be a perfect match and supporter of her husband whenever she was moved by the Holy Spirit. I have never seen a husband-wife team working in such harmony and unity while under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.

### **Full-time ministry**

For the first five years of our church, I gave as much time as possible to the ministry while still working at the Voice of America in Washington. As the congregation grew in number, there were increasing demands on my time and attention. By the end of 1984, God called me again to step out by faith to serve Him full-time. This would mean that I was not to be on salary again and that I was to live by faith, to trust God alone to supply all my needs. That was what I had been taught if I were to step out full-time.

The first time God called me to step out full-time was in Hong Kong shortly after I had received my baptism in the Holy Spirit. Once, in the middle of the night, I found myself engaging in a sort of dialogue with God. I do not recall how the conversion began or its full content, but the following short exchange has remained in my mind:

God: "I want you to step out to serve Me full-time."

Me: "Yes, Lord, but I can't step out right now because I need to provide for my wife and four children. I know I am not supposed to ask anyone for money—and am to totally depend on You for our livelihood."

God: "Follow Me. I am the Lord your God. I shall supply your needs."

Me: "But, Lord, I am not ready yet for this kind of faith-based life."

God: "If you will serve Me faithfully, I will be faithful to you."

That was the end of the conversation.

The following year, after we moved back to Taiwan



where our fifth child Esther had recently been born, I remained unemployed for a total of eight months while serving in a newly-formed independent church. During this time, however, the Lord supplied our needs marvelously on a week-to-week basis. A cash gift, wrapped in a piece of paper with my name on it, regularly came from an anonymous donor. It was found among other tithes in the church offering box every Sunday morning. The amount of money was always just enough to meet our physical needs until the following Saturday. And then the following Sunday, there would be another offering envelope marked “For Brother Jack Chow.” This happened consistently week after week for eight months! Amazingly, whenever there was a special need during a particular week, there was always some extra money in the offering packet.

### **God’s call renewed**

One night in December 1984, I was driving to work on my late-night shift. I had just finished listening to a recorded sermon by Rev. Hans Waldvogel. I don’t recall its content, but no sooner had the sermon ended, when God renewed His call in these three words: “Now or never!” The voice was so powerful that it hit me like a hammer on the head, and instantly I burst into tears. I knew without any doubt that it was the voice of God issuing an ultimatum to me. Two months later, I turned in my resignation.

On November 29, 1985, I was ordained to full-time ministry in New York during the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary services of the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church. The ordination was recommended by Rev. Gordon P. Gardiner and performed by Rev. Edwin H. Waldvogel in the presence of eight other ministers from the Ridgewood Fellowship.

About 15 years after I left my secular employment, our church, even without my request, took upon itself the responsibility of supporting us in the form of tithing and free-will offerings that enabled us to maintain the same standards of

living. This allowed me to devote my full attention and energy to the needs of the young church.

Now I was able to take advantage full time each morning to further engage myself in in-depth study of the Bible and contemplative prayer. I devoted four hours a day, five days a week to digging deep into the Word of God and waiting upon the Lord in silence. I did this for five years from 1985-1990. This period of solitude not only deepened my personal relationship with God, but also gave me a better and broader understanding of the eternal will of God concerning His Church, the Body of Jesus Christ.

### **Transition**

Little did I know that this period of seclusion was divinely appointed to prepare me for an upcoming transition from pastoral ministry to a traveling and apostolic ministry in the future. The transition began in early 1991 with a strange chain of events which unexpectedly took place far away in Asia. Our oldest daughter Ruth had just given birth to her second child named Tessa. She was living and working for American Express in Hong Kong. According to Chinese tradition, able-bodied parents are supposed to do all they can to provide special care for the mother and baby during the first 30 days. So, we decided to travel to Hong Kong to be of some help to them. On our way there we stopped over in Taiwan to visit some of our relatives and church friends. While there I was invited to speak at a church in Taichung, a major city in central Taiwan. To my surprise, the meeting drew a crowd of over 200 people who were singularly blessed of the Lord.

After we arrived in Hong Kong, again to my surprise, I received an invitation to preach at a special conference to be held in Ling Liang Tang (Bread of Life Church), one of the largest churches in the capital city of Taipei. I was completely overwhelmed, because I had never been a conference speaker before. After much prayer and waiting upon the Lord, I regained

my calmness and sent a reply of acceptance.

I flew back to Taipei alone for the conference, leaving my wife to take care of our daughter and new granddaughter. The Taipei Bread of Life Church, with a 1,000-plus seating capacity, was packed the first night. As soon as I got up to preach, my fear was gone; I spoke freely under the anointing of the Holy Spirit such as I had never experienced before. When I gave an altar call at the end of my sermon, the response was simply overwhelming. The crowd that surged quickly filled the huge stage. Many of them lying on the platform were apparently touched by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. It was an awesome scene, entirely shocking and new to me as a speaker.

As it would later unfold, the 1991 conference in Taipei was the precursor and pattern to the new traveling ministry that God had prepared for me without any advance inkling. It also marked the beginning of our frequent travels to Asia, culminating in our first visit to China in 2008. This was my first trip back home since I left Shanghai in 1949 just before the Communist take-over.

I recall when I stood up to speak at a church in Hangzhou, back in China for the first time in almost 60 years, I was speechless. I was so overcome emotionally that I remained silent for several minutes. I felt like crying. This was also the same year a major earthquake occurred in Wenchuan, Sichuan Province, in northwest China, killing tens of thousands of people. In fact, I felt the shocks while I was meeting with a group of Christians gathered in a private apartment in Hangzhou.

My wife and I continued to travel to China every year to preach in different churches throughout the country—until the Communist authorities canceled my visa. Since I had an American passport, and since they considered a naturalized United States citizen a foreigner, all such persons, including citizens from Taiwan and residents from Hong Kong and Macao, are prohibited from carrying out religious activities in China. They have banned me from reentering the country ever since.

Since the first conference in Taipei, I have been traveling more than ever before, initially to Taiwan, California, Canada, and Europe, and subsequently, to Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, and Australia. I found myself increasingly away from my own church for as many as two or three months out of the year. I realized the time had come to add a second pastor or a full-time replacement pastor. So, I asked the congregation to start praying for a new pastor.

From the beginning of the church, the Lord marvelously supplied three men to comprise the pastoral team. Brother Yu Tao Chieh, one of these faithful men, emerged as the most likely successor. Nevertheless, we had to wait for the Lord to work out His will and perfect timing, fully convincing Brother Yu himself of God's call to step out into full-time ministry. For him to quit his lucrative employment in exchange for an unsalaried pastoral position was to be one of the most important decisions in his life.

At the beginning of 1999 when he received confirmation from God that it was time for him to leave the corporate world, he tendered his resignation without hesitation. But the news came as a shock to all his colleagues, many of them senior engineers who had worked under him for years. Some wondered why he chose to give up his executive position with tremendous potential for the future, especially at a time when he had just won an international achievement award. It was difficult, of course, for them to understand this sacrificial decision was made out of his devotion to the Lord Jesus Who loved him and died on the cross for him.

With my recommendation and acceptance by the congregation, Brother Yu was ordained on July 18, 1999 in Silver Spring, Maryland by a team of pastors headed by Rev. Edwin H. Waldvogel, senior pastor of the Ridgewood Pentecostal Church in Brooklyn, New York. He became my successor as full-time pastor of the Chinese Christian Church of Maryland on September 1, 1999. By the time I stepped down, the church had grown to some 150 people representing well over 40 families.

## Reflections

As I reflected upon my 20 years of tenure as a church pastor, I see it as the most worthwhile investment of my mid-age life, learning valuable life lessons I could not have learned in school. Some of those lessons are:

(1) Serving God and others instead of living merely for myself has made life much more meaningful; (2) Being able to get along with everybody is one of the greatest human achievements; and (3) Being able to love people who are different and seemingly unlovable is the greatest accomplishment in the pursuit of personal successes.

Love is the greatest thing in the world. Without love, as the apostle Paul puts it, “I am nothing.” One may acquire everything there is in the world, but without love, he/she is nothing and has nothing but a sense of emptiness. Therefore, Paul admonishes all men and women, “*Pursue love*” because “*Love never fails ... And now abide faith, hope and love, but the greatest of these is love*” (1 Corinthians 14:1; 13:8,13 NKJV).

Apart from love, I also learned the value of faith. When it comes to dealing with God, faith is a must; it is *the* key to receiving anything and everything from God. “*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists and that He rewards those who earnestly seek Him*”(Hebrews 11:6).

One of the definitions of faith in the Webster’s New World Dictionary is: “unquestioning belief in God” or “complete trust, confidence and reliance” on God. For 20 years, while serving as a church pastor without salary, God has not failed to supply all my needs as I put my complete trust in Him. As a pastor, I have had to deal with all sorts of people, and every one of them—male or female—is different, even within the same culture. There were many well-educated people in our church, including those with PhDs, while I had to preach and teach with little or no formal education. I had no other capacity to satisfy these people but to rely entirely upon God and the anointing of

His Holy Spirit. When confronted with relational issues in the church, I could only take them to God in prayer and trust Him for solutions. Time and again God has proved Himself to be faithful.

Patience is another important lesson I learned during my pastorate. How I needed patience! Yet when I first became a pastor, the Lord forewarned me that there were going to be differences of opinion and personality conflicts in the church; but that I was going to learn to be tolerant and patient. On one occasion, He clearly said to me, “Others may be angry and lose their tempers, but not you—because you are the pastor.”

During the two decades of my pastoral ministry, I did have serious differences of views with my co-workers and faced opposition from two of them. One of the two brothers even challenged me publicly while I was preaching from the pulpit. However, I do not recall if I have ever lost my temper in church. I asked my wife several times if she had ever heard or seen me “blow my top” when I had a disagreement with the co-workers, and she said she could not remember if I ever did. I can only attribute this to my God and give Him the glory if that were the case.

I would be less than candid if I didn’t admit to my own weaknesses. During my pastoral years, I have had my moments of discouragement, displeasure and internal struggle to the point I was ready to give up. Each time I thought of leaving, the Lord said to me, “If you love me, feed my sheep.” I knew I needed to have more love—more of God’s love—in order to stay on.

Fortunately, I learned earlier in my Christian experience that it is always better to bring my needs to God than to seek human help. I found out, as the Bible says, “*It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in (or rely on) man*” (Psalm 118:8 NKJV). So, whenever I had a problem with my co-workers or others in the church, I would always take it to the Lord in my private prayer time and trust Him for the solution. Time and again, He has proved Himself to be the answer to all my problems.

In closing this chapter, let me state in all honesty that of all the jobs (totaling 13 or 14) I have had throughout my life, the pastoral role has been the most challenging of all. As far as I am concerned, however, it wasn't just a job but a sacred calling from on high. Through it all, I have learned to overcome difficulties simply by waiting upon the Lord and trusting Him for the victorious outcome. By the grace of God, I passed the tests and trials and came out with flying colors!





## Chapter Fifteen

# *My Faith and Vision*



My faith is quite simple. It's strictly based upon the Bible. I believe in everything that is written in the Bible. My vision is that every Christian who practices what is taught in the Bible will eventually become like Jesus Christ, the Son of God. He or she is destined to be part of what the Bible calls "the Bride of Christ" or "the Holy City, the new Jerusalem"—the consummation of that perfect and glorious Church which is the ultimate goal of God's eternal plan.

I believe the Bible is the inspired Word of God. Every book in the Scriptures has been written by godly men under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. I believe in the authority and infallibility of the entire Bible, time honored and proven to be true. An intellectual understanding of the Bible is inadequate; it must be accompanied by spiritual enlightenment and understanding. This comes only from a revelation by the Spirit of God. A. W. Tozer, known as a twentieth-century prophet, once asked this question: "Are you Bible-taught or Spirit-taught?" In our pursuit of God, we must be taught by both the Bible and the Spirit.

The intrinsic and lasting value of Scripture lies not in the letter of the text but in the Spirit, *“for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life”* (II Cor.3:6). Jesus says, *“The words I have spoken to you are spirit (or Spirit) and they are life”* (John 6:63). Therefore, the Bible is not merely to be understood in the literal sense, but, more importantly, in the spiritual meaning as revealed by the Holy Spirit, the original Author. The Bible is to be accepted not in part but in its totality. Everything written in the Bible is for our instruction and edification and, therefore, acceptable. Any doctrine or teaching not in the Scriptures or which is contrary to the Word of God is unacceptable and should be rejected.

The Jesus I had believed in for the first 17 years of my Christian life was merely an objective historical figure as recorded in the New Testament. The Jesus I now believe in is truly the risen Christ Who has become personal and precious to me through what the Bible terms “the Baptism with the Holy Spirit.”

Through the teachings of both the Bible and the Spirit, I have come to know Jesus Christ as God the Father, God the Son, and God the Spirit—the Holy Trinity, as referred to in traditional theology. Since *“God is Spirit”* (John 4:24), He can come and live within us by His Spirit. It is therefore absolutely necessary for us to relate to Him in our spirit and soul, not by intellect alone.

God as the Spirit is not far from us; He is accessible at anytime and anywhere. As a Bible-believing Christian, I believe the Lord Jesus Christ lives within me to teach, correct and guide me daily by His Word and Spirit. My Christian life may be best described by the following chorus:

*“He lives, He lives, Christ Jesus lives today! He walks with me and talks with me along life’s narrow way. He lives, He lives, salvation to impart! You ask me how I know He lives? He lives within my heart.”*

## A growing process

I have been an evangelical Christian for almost 70 years. When I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior at the age of 17, I knew practically nothing about Christianity. I just thought it was the right thing to do, since all religions (except radical Islamic extremism) teach people to be good and do good things. So, for the first 17 years I was a zealous, religious person, giving all my spare time and money to the church. I participated in all sorts of church activities, namely, attending regular services, Bible studies, outdoor evangelistic meetings and various training programs, and volunteering for work in the church. As a result, our church grew exponentially.

However, my own spiritual life did not grow simultaneously. I found myself increasingly weary and unhappy. I had no inner peace and joy. My big ego continued projecting itself as a problem at home and in the workplace. I was self-righteous, self-centered, and hot-tempered. My loving, patient wife had to put up with me for many years. The biggest problem I had was my inability to get along with people. I didn't know how to be tolerant, respectful, and to accept people as they are, regardless of race, culture or educational background. I felt powerless and helpless. It was as the apostle Paul said, "*I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out*" (Romans 7: 18).

I was also not doing well in the church, where I would spend all of my spare time seeking to be spiritual. I began questioning my faith. "Why am I not doing better? What's wrong with my religion? Is there something missing in my faith?" "I started searching for answers. I went to my pastor and other leaders in the church asking these questions, but none of them could help me. One day I took off from work in order to pray and study the Bible, hoping to hear from God. At the end of the day, I had received nothing but this familiar Scripture: "*I have been crucified with Christ; and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me*" (Galatians 2:20).

Although I had known this text and even had preached on it, I didn't know how to apply it in my own life when confronting practical issues. I never understood what it means to be crucified with Christ, or to die to the "self-life" as described by some spiritual men and women. Not until 17 years later did I begin to discover the truth of the great apostle's declaration. One night, my wife and I skipped our own church to attend a so-called Spirit-filled meeting at another church. To my surprise, at the end of the meeting, we both were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues, just as the disciples of Jesus experienced on the day of Pentecost, according to Acts 2.

What was remarkable was not my speaking in tongues for the first time, but my sudden realization that Christ is indeed alive and that He lives in me as well. This was the original Gospel—the Good News—preached by Paul and other apostles/disciples who received the same Spirit baptism at Pentecost. I began to consider the significance of Pentecost—the outpouring or in-filling of the Holy Spirit. Ever since I was baptized with the Holy Spirit, the fact that Christ lives in me has become increasingly real and personal. My life has never been the same since that day. For the first few months, I was in a state of ecstasy. It was like heaven on earth! I lost all my interest in earthly things; namely, western movies, good music, my job, my journalistic career, etc.

Jesus became so real and precious to me that I began to understand what it means when Paul writes, "*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit*" (Romans 14:17). I found the inner peace that had been missing in my early Christian life. I was filled with joy almost daily; I felt as though I was walking on a cloud! I was living in another world! Jesus was no longer a historical figure to me, but a living reality—One Who dwells within me by His Holy Spirit! I could truly say, "I had found Him!"

The best part of being filled with the Holy Spirit was not speaking in tongues or the impartation of certain spiritual gifts; it was an entrance into a personal, living relationship with Jesus Christ. I found that there is a notable difference between a church-going Christian and a Spirit-filled Christian; the former merely being religious, the latter, having the Spirit of Christ living within. I also began to see the point in the oft-quoted statement that Christianity is not a religion, it's a relationship with the living Christ.

*"I want to know Christ,"* declares the apostle Paul, and *"the power of His resurrection."* That is the essence of Christianity. Humanly speaking, this erudite apostle has an impressive record of accomplishments. By Jewish standards, he had arrived at the point of being *"faultless based on the law."* Yet he said, *"Whatever was gain to me I now consider loss for the sake of Christ. What is more, I consider everything a loss because of the surpassing worth of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord"* (Philippians 3:5-10).

### **In-depth Bible study**

After I had the Pentecostal experience, I began a thorough study of the Bible on the subject of the Holy Spirit. I began to see the importance and necessity of receiving the Holy Spirit, or the "Baptism with the Holy Spirit," as it is often referred to in Pentecostal/Charismatic circles. In fact, both John the Baptist and the Lord Jesus taught about two baptisms, the water baptism and the Spirit baptism, and the inherent connection between the two. (See Matthew 3:11 & Acts 1:5.)

The water baptism performed by John the Baptist is for repentance, and the Spirit baptism given by Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God, is for empowerment—the indwelling of the One who conquered sin, the world, the flesh, the devil and death! Before the Lord Jesus returned to heaven to pour out the promised Spirit, He told the disciples, *"For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy*

*Spirit...But, you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth” (Acts 1:5,8).*

Jesus Himself is our perfect example. When He was baptized in water by John, He was also baptized with the Holy Spirit, as recorded in the three Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. We also have the example of Jesus’ disciples. They were apparently baptized in water by John and later in the Holy Spirit by the Lord Jesus on the day of Pentecost. Accordingly, we can see the striking difference in the lives of the disciples before and after they received the baptism of the Holy Spirit!

Peter is a good example. Before he was baptized with the Holy Spirit, he had denied Jesus three times. After his Spirit baptism, when the Sanhedrin, the highest Jewish civil and religious authorities, forbade the disciples from preaching, he boldly stood up and said, *“...Which is right in God’s eyes, to listen to you, or to Him? As for us, we cannot help but speak about what we have seen and heard” (Acts 4:19,20).* Empowered by the Holy Spirit dwelling within them, they not only had courage to face persecution, but also had power to heal the sick and cast out demons. They were living out the life of Christ!

After studying the Old and New Testaments, I’ve concluded that every born-again Christian should have received two baptisms, water and Spirit. Without the second baptism of the Holy Spirit, evangelical Christians will remain weak and poor spiritually, however strong and rich they might be intellectually.

What is Christianity after all? Though often described as the world’s largest religion with an estimated total of three billion adherents, Christianity should neither be classified as a religion nor treated as an equation with any other religion because it is the antithesis of religion. Otherwise, Christ would not have been put to death by the religious leaders of his day.

Christianity is a personal, very practical relationship between God and man. In a much broader sense, it is about God the Creator and His dealings with His created. Or, as the apostle Paul preached and practiced, it is about knowing Christ and the

power of His resurrection as well as living out the life of Christ from within. In another portion of Scripture he puts it this way: “...may know the mystery of God, namely, Christ, in whom are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge” (Colossians 2: 2,3). This is, as I see it, what Christianity is all about.

### **From newsman to Churchman**

Journalism was not just a job for me; it was my love, my life, my cup of tea. I ate, lived and slept with the news. I seemed to have a knack for it. I knew what would make an eye-catching headline. I was a died-in-the-wool newsman. Even after I became a devoted Christian, I still considered myself half-newsman and half-churchman, dividing my time between journalism and evangelism.

With little or no formal training in the trade, I fell in love with the news business in my early twenties. With what I considered adequate knowledge and a good command of the English language acquired through self-study, I took a one-year correspondence course in “News Reporting and Writing” with the Journalism Department of the University of California.

During my studies, I had to do actual assignments as a cub reporter covering sports, court, trade, politics and community events. Almost immediately after I had completed the course, a friend of mine, along with his business partners, launched the first English-language newspaper in Taiwan known as *China Post*. I was invited to join them as a part-time writer on the staff where I was able to put into practice what I had learned from the course. As the paper expanded from the size of a tabloid to a full-fledged newspaper, I became its full-time news desk editor.

After I joined the Broadcasting Corporation of China (BCC-Taiwan) in 1955 as head of its English Service, I was selected to participate in an eight-month practical training program sponsored by the U.S. Department of State to study broadcast journalism at Syracuse University, in upstate New York.

As part of the program, I had opportunities to travel and observe firsthand news operations at some of the major network stations such as NBC, CBS, ABC and Mutual Broadcasting System in New York, Boston, Chicago and Los Angeles. I had the pleasure of meeting some of the then well-known national news anchors, including Edward R. Murrow.

Upon my return to Taiwan with the newly acquired knowledge and techniques in broadcast and print journalism, I conducted a series of training programs in both fields for those English-speaking Chinese young men and women aspiring to be professional journalists like myself. A good number of them turned out to be successful news persons working for various news organizations, including the Voice of America in Washington, D. C.

My journalistic career spanned over a period of 33 years, reporting and writing for the most part in English as a second language. During my two-year stint as a newscaster and commentator at BCC in Taiwan, I had to write my own script and deliver it in my native Chinese Mandarin language. I also had to write and speak in my mother tongue on my last job for eight years in Washington. It wasn't until I came to the United States that I started reporting and writing in Chinese! Being bilingual has had numerous advantages in my profession as well as in my private reading and study.

The Washington assignment was the highlight of my journalistic career. During this eventful period from 1969-1974, I had to cover, among other things, three major historic events: the three American astronauts landing on the moon; President Richard Nixon's surprise trip to Beijing which led to the resumption of diplomatic relations between China and the United States; and, the "Watergate Scandal," which forced Nixon to become the first U. S. President to resign from office.

Historically, President Nixon's China initiative had helped not only to open the Communist country to the outside world but has literally changed the world. As one of the few Chinese journalists reporting from Washington at the time, I had written



extensively on the evolving U. S. China policy with veiled warnings to the Chinese Government and people in Taiwan to be prepared for the twin shock and blow against the fallout from Washington's shift of diplomatic ties from Taipei to Beijing and Taiwan's eventual humiliating departure from the United Nations. Those were difficult days for Taiwan and its diplomats. It was then officially referred to as the Republic of China. The ROC Ambassador to Washington, James Shen, once remarked to me, "The days I'm spending here are like years."

In the United Nations General Assembly in New York, I was watching the procedural voting on the resolution calling for the admission of People's Republic of China. As the trend was turning overwhelmingly in favor of PRC, Mr. Chou Shu-kai, Foreign Minister and Chief of the ROC delegation to the United Nations, quickly stepped up to the podium and announced ROC's prompt withdrawal from the world organization, ending twenty-five years of representing the whole of China as one of its founding members.

### **A higher calling**

As a journalist who lived in Washington for over 30 years seeing many historic events unfold, I think I could have written a memoir. But, this book is not intended to be a record of history; it is about a genuine Bible-believing Christian who has found true meaning in life and put into practice what he has learned and preached. It is not about Christianity as a religion, but about what it means to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

For over three decades I have enjoyed my work and life as a journalist, loving it so much as to give all my time and energy to its pursuit. I thought I had achieved some measurable success as I made myself a reputation in the Chinese news media. My success might be measured by the fact that I rose from a cub reporter to the top position of CEO of one of the largest newspapers in Taiwan. Nevertheless, to me it was just

one of the many jobs I have had in order to make a living and provide for my family.

It still seems strange to me that even in my youth I did not attach importance to success, fame or wealth. As a successful journalist, I had opportunities where I could have made a great deal of money or arrived at a position of power and influence had I pursued it. For instance, some of my colleagues in journalism rose to become the country's top diplomats, including one foreign minister.

Regarding wealth, I can't remember ever looking at millionaires with envy. Money can be useful, but there are also many things that money cannot buy. And often, money can be detrimental. But through faith in Jesus Christ my Savior and Lord, I have found things that money cannot buy: unchanging love, inner peace, everlasting joy, and a real sense of security. I can truly say I have found the secret of happiness and contentment whatever my circumstances might be.

What is it that caused this paradigm shift in my life? In the Christian world, it is often referred to as "an encounter" with God much like the experience of the apostle Paul, whose life took a 180-degree turn when Jesus Christ appeared to him on the road as he trekked to Damascus to round up Christians and bring them back to Jerusalem to be jailed. (See Acts 9:1-6.)

There were two turning points in my Christian experience that totally changed my perspective and value system. The first one happened long ago when I was in a house prayer meeting attended by several other young people. Everyone was earnestly praying, and some were weeping. When it was my turn to pray, I started crying uncontrollably. I don't remember what happened, but I saw in my spirit Jesus hanging on a cross bleeding profusely from His thorn-crowned head, His hands, and feet. The scene was so real and vivid it was as if a motion picture were being played before my eyes.

The scene brought conviction in my soul in a way I never had felt before. I realized I was a sinner even though I wasn't conscious of any specific wrongdoing at the time. I became

keenly aware of how much Jesus loved and cared for me to die for my sins on the cross. I repented of my love for the things of the world and dedicated myself to loving and serving Jesus my Savior and Lord.

The second turning point in my life was when I was filled with the Holy Spirit, an event that settled my future once and for all. It took away all desire and ambition for any other pursuit in the world, and it set me on fire for Jesus and for service in His kingdom. It reset my goal in life: to seek the things of eternal value rather than the things of temporary value in this world. It gave me a proper perspective of things seen and unseen. Above all, it gave me an entirely new Biblically-based worldview.

Then *came* the midnight dialogue with the Lord, described in previous chapters. As if I had forgotten about the first call, God had to serve what sounded like an ultimatum to me again, although I had already been pastoring a church in Maryland. The second call had effectively put an end to my journalistic career for good.

As a journalist, I used to report and write about earthly news events for a certain targeted audience. I brought both good and bad news to people. Now, as an evangelist, I bring only “Good News”—the Gospel of Jesus Christ—to all needy people around the world. My wife and I have traveled extensively in Asia, Europe and North America for the past quarter of a century, bringing the good message of Christ and the Inner Life—living out the resurrected life of Christ by His Spirit dwelling within us.

I do not have adequate words to express our deep sense of gratitude for all the blessings God has bestowed upon us as a family of seven adult children and seventeen grandchildren plus two grandsons-in-law at this writing. By the time this autobiography is published, we will have celebrated our sixty-fifth wedding anniversary. There is a popular saying often heard around Christmas time: “Jesus is the reason for the season.” I can truly say Jesus Christ is the reason for the longevity of our marriage.

Operating under the name of *Jesus Ministries International* (indicating it is *His* ministry), inner-life conferences have been held in China, Taiwan, Hong Kong, Singapore, Malaysia, Australia, Japan, also Africa, the Middle East, Belgium, France, Germany, Canada and the United States. (For complete information, please visit our website: [www.jmiinnerlife.org](http://www.jmiinnerlife.org)). God seems to have a mysterious way of making connections with the local churches in these countries through the Internet and by word of mouth.

Our ministry team, a loosely organized but tightly knit spiritual fellowship, is made up of ministers and Christian workers from various churches in different countries, some of them are lay preachers and others are stay-at-home moms, but all are genuine followers and lovers of Jesus donating their time and energy to the work of the Lord.

Because of access to the Internet we launched an e-school in early 2015 with only a dozen students. It suddenly grew to hundreds of students the following year. In less than two years, the student enrollment jumped to 1600! This year in 2018 the total enrollment has exceeded 2300! There were countless hungry Christians out there, mostly in China, seeking to know God better and have a closer walk with Him. What caused the phenomenal growth of our e-school? I can only attribute it to the Spirit of God drawing these hungry souls unto Himself.

As a non-profit religious entity, JMI is a strictly faith-based ministry with a small all-volunteer staff of dedicated and faithful workers. We do not have any operating budget as such. We depend entirely upon private contributions from individuals who love the Lord and give sacrificially as they are moved by His Holy Spirit.

For instance, it was a sizable donation from one Christian businessman who had been healed of cancer through our budding ministry that enabled JMI to kick off its first inner-life conference at our home base of Dallas in 2006. After the first three annual conferences in Dallas, we were invited to conduct similar conferences and seminars overseas every year since

2008. From our first conference God has not failed to provide our financial needs.

## **No Retirement in God's Vineyard**

God's calling is for a lifetime. There is no "retirement" in today's sense of the word. If our Master has seen fit to bless us with long life, it is to continue to serve Him in ways that He adjusts to our season of life. Jesus was known for saving the best wine until the last, as He did at the wedding in Cana. The ripest fruit sometimes lingers on to the tree after the first touch of frost. Because of the wonders of today's technology, the Good News can reach thousands or even million of people worldwide not only instantly but at one time. It is like the "latter day rain" God sends just before the Great Harvest in preparation for Christ's second coming.

The Lord is doing just that in an amazing way! His timing is perfect. Instead of downsizing due to our age, He opened the door even wider when we ourselves could no longer go forth physically to preach, especially in our elderly years when travel has become more arduous. He gave us the vision of an online e-school only a little more than three years ago. We stepped into a marvelous opportunity, through a door that when God opens, no man can shut.

The courses we offer are free of charge, as Jesus has commanded, "Freely you have received, freely give." However, students are required to submit a report at the end of each course giving an account of what they have learned. The subjects we teach basically deal with the development of a Christian's inner life and intimacy with God. In a word, it's all about Jesus our wonderful Savior and Lord. Yes, God's eternal message to us is as fresh and powerful as the day God first revealed His secret to us personally. It is the emphasis of what the "mystics" call Waiting on God and Walking in the Spirit. The courses are all taught in Chinese Mandarin by Chinese pastors and ministers from China, Taiwan, Malaysia and North America.

To include English listeners, Martha Weldon, our associate minister, has stepped up to answer God's call by teaching in English with a Chinese interpreter. As Jesus taught the multitudes from the hillsides or from a fishing boat pushed off away from the shore, so we can do what He promised would be "greater works than these" through His Spirit now in this high-tech age. We must continue to work the works of God's Kingdom while it is day. "The night is coming when no man can work." To tell the ever-expanding story of JMI I have yet to write another book!

We are humbled and blessed and full of joy to be able to continue being about our Father's business leaning hard on God for strength and wisdom. "He addeth more grace when the burden grows greater," as the classic hymn proclaims. But "His grace has no measure, His power has no boundary" as we wait on Him in quietness and stillness. These are the works of the Holy Spirit, as we always say: "It's all God's doing!" Blessed be the name of Jesus!

We are not rich by the world's standards, but we have Jesus Christ who is "all in all." In Kenneth N. Taylor's paraphrased translation of the Bible, "So you have everything when you have Christ, and you are filled with God through your union with Christ" (Colossians 2:9). So we have peace, joy, love and a sense of security and contentment in spite of our need to deal with age-related problems like any other elderly couple. We are thankful for being still together in our octogenarian years. We wake up every morning thanking God for each new day as a gift from Him, living one day at a time and believing "our times are in His hands."

I would like to leave you with this expression often heard among our Chinese students,

64.7 有耶穌真好<sup>15</sup> (You Yesu Zhen Hao) "It's just wonderful having Jesus!"

## Chapter Sixteen

# *America As I See It*



*“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord,  
the people He chose for His inheritance” (Psalm  
33:12).*

America is a nation of exceptionalism in many aspects. It began with the first group of 102 immigrants from England who set sail for America on a ship named the *Mayflower* on September 6, 1620. After two months of experiencing a brutal stormy sea journey, they landed in New England at Plymouth Rock, where they established the first overseas Colony.

They started building shelters for themselves as soon as they set foot on the new soil. However, as they were unprepared for the severe cold weather, half of them died during the winter. With the help of friendly Indians, notably two of them named Samoset and Squanto who had learned to speak English from early traders, the new immigrants learned to farm and raise livestock in order to survive in the New World.

When they reaped a bumper harvest in the spring, they invited their Indian friends to join them in a three-day thanksgiving festival with various activities and sports competitions. The annual Thanksgiving season in America has its origins in the first immigrants. The idea of work ethics also developed from the early settlers.

### **Separation of church and state**

They were not only good, hard-working and law-abiding immigrants, but also devoted Christians who chose to leave behind their homeland and the state-sponsored and ritualistic religion (Church of England) to secure a place where they could freely worship God and practice their pure religion without any governmental restriction. They called themselves Puritans, also known as Pilgrims, and their sole purpose of settling in America was to live a simple and peaceful Christian life and share their faith with others.

The much-talked-about concept of separation of state and church, which to the Pilgrims obviously meant non-interference from the government in the free exercise of religion, was inspired by these Christians. This thinking made its way into the Constitution of the United States. The first Amendment of the Constitution begins with these words: “Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof...”

Unlike any other country on earth, the Constitution of the United States was framed and written by the founding fathers, almost all of whom professed to be Christian believers. Virtually all fifty-five writers and signers of the United States Constitution, including those who signed the Declaration of Independence at the risk of their own lives, were dedicated Christians who belonged to various mainstream denominations.



## The Mayflower Compact

The first immigrants did not come to America to pursue the so-called American dream, but simply to practice their Christian faith in a new free world. Upon disembarking from the *Mayflower* on November 11, 1620, the Pilgrims held a prayer service and signed a covenant known as the “Mayflower Compact” which stated clearly that the voyage was undertaken “for the glory of God and the advancement of the Christian faith” as well as to “plant the first Colony” in America. They also pledged their “all due submission and obedience...to the just and equal laws, ordinances, acts and constitutions to be enacted from time to time for the general good of the Colony...” The Mayflower Compact was so politically significant and revolutionary that it was actually America’s first governmental document that has influenced all other constitutional instruments since then.

Following the Pilgrims, there had been a continual influx of immigrants from the United Kingdom and other European countries in 1630, 1640 and the ensuing decades. But the overwhelming majority of the early immigrants were well-educated, law-abiding and highly moral religious people. It is true that America began as an immigrant nation, but more significantly it was born out of a Christian community founded upon centuries-old Christian-Judeo heritage, a new nation where the immigrants were reverently subject to God as the Sovereign Lord and to the Biblical principles as the only standards of their conduct. This was the American way of life, which continued for the first couple hundred years of American history.

I am not a history buff, nor was I ever a fan of America, but I began to really love and appreciate America as a Christian nation after I dug into the beginning of the American history. I even began to think that it is almost impossible to love God without loving America when one is informed of the American history.

As an ex-journalist, I remember covering my first Fourth of July celebrations in Washington for a newspaper in Taiwan. I was deeply impressed with the enthusiasm and patriotism manifested by the crowd gathered in the nation's capital; I wanted to know what they thought of America, and virtually every one of those I interviewed on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial said, "I love America, but I am Christian first, American second."

### **The influence of the Bible**

The Bible, which has been the main source of my self-education, played a prominent role in American national life since the arrival of the Pilgrims. Even to date, by tradition, every government official from the President of the United States on down would place their hands on the Bible at their swearing in ceremonies. The Bible was the source of inspiration for the formulation of the American Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. Those who are not unfamiliar with the Holy Scriptures can readily perceive or detect Biblical principles and precepts welded into these and other historical/governmental documents.

The system of checks and balances in the form of three branches of the Federal government—the executive, legislative and judicial—was said to have developed from the Old Testament Scriptures, specifically from the Book of Isaiah, chapter thirty-three and verse twenty-two which says, "*The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King; it is He who will save us*" NKJV. The framers of the Constitution apparently foresaw the need to share these powers among three branches of government so as to prevent the rise of a king or dictator in the United States, a possibility thus forestalled once and for all. Under the American form of government, it is impossible to have one-man rule or even one-party rule. The system of checks and balances is another evidence of the far-reaching influence of the Bible in American democracy.

Nevertheless, as John Adams, the second President of the United States, cautioned in an address in 1798: “Our Constitution was made *only* [emphasis mine] for a moral and religious [Christian] People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other.” In other words, there is always a possibility/danger for immoral and non-religious people (those who do not believe in the Bible as the Word of God) to misinterpret and misapply the Constitution which is described as a “living document.”

George Washington, the first President of the United States, a godly man hailed as being “first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen,” once said, “It is impossible to rightly govern the world without God and the Bible.”

John Adams had such high regard for and faith in the Bible that in his diary entry dated February 22, 1756, he wrote: “Suppose a nation in some distant region should take the Bible as their only law book, and every member should regulate his conduct by the precepts there exhibited. Every member would be obliged in conscience to temperance, frugality and industry, to justice, kindness and charity (love) toward his fellow men; and to piety, love and reverence toward Almighty God....What a Utopia! What a Paradise this region [nation] would be.”

John Quincy Adams, the sixth President of the United States and son of John Adams, had this to say about the Bible: “The first and almost the only book deserving of universal attention is the Bible....The Bible is the book of all others, to be read at all ages, and in all conditions of human life....So great is my veneration for the Bible that the earlier my children begin to read it the more confident will be my hope that they will prove useful citizens of their country and respectful members of society.”

## **The Year of the Bible**

While President Ronald Reagan was in the White House, the Congress, by a joint resolution passed by both the Senate and

the House of Representatives and signed by the President on October 4, 1982, declared 1983 as the “Year of the Bible,” recognizing the fact that “the Bible, the Word of God, has made a unique contribution in shaping the United States as a distinctive and blessed nation and people....many of our great national leaders—among them Presidents Washington, Jackson, Lincoln and Wilson—paid tribute to the surpassing influence of the Bible in our country’s development, as in the words of President Jackson that the Bible is ‘the rock on which our Republic rests’.”

Abraham Lincoln, the 16<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, a man of highest moral character and nicknamed “Honest Abe,” once remarked: “I believe the Bible is the best gift God has ever given to man. All the good from The Savior of the world is communicated to us through this Book.” Lincoln was an avid Bible reader and a man of prayer; he testified that oftentimes in the midst of great difficulties he was driven to his knees and God answered his prayers. His prayers and faith in God saw the nation through its Civil War safe and undivided. After the death of his son Willie at the age of 12 in 1862, Lincoln “was seen more frequently with a Bible in his hand and that he spent more time in prayer,” according to Dr. Phineas Gurley, his pastor at New York Avenue Presbyterian Church in Washington, D. C.

Woodrow Wilson, the 28<sup>th</sup> President of the United States, another godly national leader and firm believer in the Holy Scriptures, said of the Bible: “When you have read the Bible, you will know it is the Word of God because you will have found it the key to your own heart, your own happiness and your own duty...The Bible is the one supreme source of revelation of the meaning of life...It is the only guide of life which really leads the spirit in the way of peace and salvation...I am sorry for men [and women] who do not read the Bible every day. I wonder why they deprive themselves of the strength and pleasure.”

The Congressional resolution designating 1983 as the “Year of the Bible” points out that “Biblical teachings inspired

concepts of civil government that are contained in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States.” Research has indicated that 94% of the historical documents stored at the National Archive in Washington, D. C. contained quotes from the Holy Scriptures.

### **The Bible in education**

Not only was the Bible regarded as a source of divine inspiration and guidance in governmental affairs in the early days of American history, it also played a cardinal role in education as well—and even in journalism. For example, Charles A. Dana, a highly respected journalist, was editor-in-chief of the *New York Sun* before he served as Assistant Secretary of War during the Civil War. Referring to the origin and value of the Bible, he said: “I believe the Bible to be a divine revelation. Christianity is not comparable with any other religion. It is the religion which came from God’s own lips; and therefore the only true religion. Of all the books, the most indispensable and the most useful, the one whose knowledge is the most effective, is the Bible.”

For all intents and purposes, America’s first public schools grew out of the Christian Church’s Sunday schools where the Bible was used as a basic tool of education. In the fall of 1946, the Dallas High Schools published a Bible study course on *New Testament*. The course was authorized by the Board of Education on April 23, 1946 with its foreword stating: “The Dallas high schools allowed one-half credit toward high school graduation for the successful completion of a general survey course in the Bible...In 1939, it was decided to provide separate courses in the Old and New Testaments, each course carrying one-half unit of credit toward high school graduation.”

America’s most prestigious universities, notably Harvard, Yale and Princeton, began as Bible-based colleges established initially to train clergymen and ministers of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Harvard University, originally known as the College at

Cambridge, Massachusetts, was founded in 1636 with the donation of property and the library of Rev. John Harvard for the purpose of training “a literate clergy” and of teaching students “to know God and Jesus Christ...and therefore to lay Christ as the only sound foundation of all knowledge and learning....” The founders of Harvard all believed that “all knowledge without Christ was in vain.” Harvard’s motto was: “For Christ and the Church.”

However, slowly but steadily as years went by, Harvard became liberalized. Samuel Langdon, the president of Harvard University, in his address at the Provincial Congress of Massachusetts in May of 1775, solemnly said: “We have rebelled against God. We have lost the true spirit of Christianity, though we retain the outward profession and form of it...My brethren, let us repent and implore the divine mercy. Let us amend our ways and reform everything that has been provoking the Most High...May the Lord hear us in this day of trouble...”

After almost two and a half centuries, Langdon’s appeal is still applicable, perhaps more so today than ever before. I had an opportunity to visit Harvard and its School of Divinity in June 1995 when my son John graduated from the School of Design with a Master’s degree in architecture. Today Harvard University, the first college established in America, is one of the most liberal institutions of higher learning.

Yale is the second oldest university in America. Originally known as the Collegiate School at Saybrook, Connecticut, it was jointly founded in 1701 by ten ministers of the Congregational Church. Later it was moved to New Haven and renamed for Elihu Yale, an American-born British Christian businessman who donated his possessions to the college valued at the time in the amount of \$2,800. Its purpose was “to plant and, under the Divine blessing, to propagate the blessed Reformed and Protestant religion in the purity of its order and worship.”

Princeton University, originally called The College of New Jersey, was established in 1746 by the Presbyterian Church. For the first one hundred fifty years until 1902, every president

of Princeton University was a Christian minister. Jonathan Edwards, whose fiery preaching touched off the revival known as the first “Great Awakening,” was the third president of Princeton University. Its official motto was, “Under God’s Power She Flourishes.”

### **Christian heritage in Washington**

In Washington, the nation’s capital, where I lived and worked for many years and all our seven children grew up, much of the American history and its Christian heritage is in evidence. Washington is also a world power center where decisions made often affect the rest of the world. It is also a place where lobbies for special interest groups are most active, hence a hotbed for corruptible politicians. Washington has a saying, “Power corrupts.”

Washington is also a historic town where bits and pieces of American history and its Christian tradition are on display, with dozens of museums and multiple monuments, such as the city’s landmark Washington Monument whereupon the words “Praise to God” were etched, Lincoln Memorial, Jefferson Memorial and Ford Theater where Lincoln was assassinated. Washington is also one of America’s tourist attractions, especially during the annual Cherry Blossom Festival in the spring when millions of visitors would come from around the country and the world.

During my tenure as Washington Correspondent for the *China Times*, I discovered in the White House this beautiful prayer by President John Adams, the first President to move into in the White House, engraved upon the mantel in the state dining room: “I pray Heaven to bestow the best of blessings on this House and all that shall hereafter inhabit it. May none but honest and wise men ever rule under this roof.”

On Capitol Hill, in the House chamber, where joint sessions of Congress are usually held when the President of the United States delivers his annual State of the Union address or

in the event of a visiting head of state invited to address the United States Congress, I noticed America's national motto, "In God We Trust" inscribed on the wall over and above the House Speaker's seat. This motto is also found on all American coins and bank notes. The United States is probably the only country in the world which declares its faith in God on its monetary currency, though usually ignored by the average spender.

The origin of the national motto dates back to the mid-nineteenth century when a pastor by the name of M. R. Wilkinson of Ridleyville, Pennsylvania, wrote a letter dated November 13, 1861, to the then Secretary of Treasury Salmon P. Chase, suggesting that the nation's religious sentiment be expressed in these four words and that they be inscribed on U.S. coins. Mr. Chase also received similar appeals from other religious leaders of his day. One week later, Secretary Chase, in a letter dated November 20, 1861, directed James Pollock, Director of the Mint at Philadelphia, to prepare the motto. The letter was noteworthy in which Secretary Chase stated: "No nation can be strong except in the strength of God or safe except in His defense. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins."

### **America today**

America remains unique as a nation, but it is vastly different and diverse. American culture has changed and is still changing, but unfortunately, not for better but for worse from the traditional/Biblical point of view. America has been consistently on moral decline for the past fifty years that I have observed both as a journalist and pastor in the United States. America, probably the most singularly blessed nation on earth, is no longer "one nation under God, indivisible..." as declared in the Pledge of Allegiance. It used to be a godly nation, but it seems to be increasingly Godless. The country is now largely divided, with Republicans and Democrats constantly pitted against each other; rarely have they shown to have put the



national interest above their personal or partisan interests. The rule of law seems to have been relegated or replaced by the rule of majority without regard for the well-being of the country.

People with different views or beliefs are labeled conservatives, alt-right conservatives, liberals, ultra-liberals, independents, racists, etc. Labeling in itself is potentially divisive; some so-called “sanctuary” states are at odds even with the Federal government in Washington. The news media, supposedly neutral and objective, are divided such as left and the right-wing media, with the mainstream news media seemingly playing the role of an opposition party. The country is no longer united as “one nation, indivisible” because it seems to have ceased being “under God” as it was before. God seems to have been taken out of the context.

As an ex-journalist, I have been disappointed with the mainstream news media which offers very little objective and unbiased factual information. Much of the news reporting today is slanted or opinionated. There is hardly any distinction between the editorial pages and straight news reports in the nation’s leading newspapers. It is no longer easy to sort out truth from falsehood or to know whom to trust because of the many voices. The one Voice, the Word of God, is no longer referred to as the final authority and standard of measurement. Consequently, the United States of America today is largely a “Divided” States of America. As the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah rightly notes: “*Since they have rejected the word of the Lord, what kind of wisdom do they have?*” (Jeremiah 8:9). God is the Source of wisdom and power and His Word is full of wisdom. Take for example the Constitution of the United States which is filled with wisdom and far-sightedness because its framers and writers were inspired and guided by Biblical principles and precepts.

David, the most beloved king of Israel and a man after God’s own heart, writes in his prayer to the Lord: “*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path*” (Psalm 119:105). Without the Word of God, there is no light but darkness. The

people in the world are walking in darkness not knowing where to go unless they know Jesus who is “the light and Savior of the world.” Therefore lawlessness, violence and terrorism are taking place all over the world because the world is in darkness, just as the prophet Isaiah says, “*Darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples*” (Isaiah 60:2).

America used to be a safe and peaceful country. When I first came to America 50 years ago, people by and large were friendly, honest and trustworthy. Sometimes we would leave our door open or unlocked when we went to bed and still felt safe. We would go to the store and bank without being worried and afraid of being mugged or attacked. Now we are told to look out for ourselves whenever we go to a bank or an ATM machine or department/grocery stores.

It is almost commonplace to hear or read news reports about a certain young woman missing from home and then her body found in an unexpected place later on. Young children too are sometimes reported missing or being abducted and molested or even murdered. Domestic disputes are often reported to have resulted in killings among family members. It seems that the consciences of many people “*have been seared as with a hot iron.*” “*But mark this,*” the Apostle Paul warns, “*There will be terrible times in the last days*” (1Timothy 4:1; 2 Timothy 3:1). I have never seen so many shootings and killings as in recent years, not only in the streets of Chicago and other crime-infested cities, but in places like schools and churches where such things are not expected to happen.

Because people are in darkness, they cannot see black and white or any other color, nor can they tell what is wrong or right, or what is normal and abnormal, what is natural or unnatural. The debate over homosexuality and same-sex marriage is not a civil rights or equality issue at all, but it is clearly a question of naturalness and unnaturalness. If homosexuality is not a violation of the law of God, it is indisputably against the law of nature. If same-sex marriage is a normal way of life, then one would ask: Where did all the men and women in the world

come from in the first place?

Nevertheless, even the United States Supreme Court—or the majority of the justices sitting on the nation’s highest court—failed to see the distinction between what is natural and unnatural when they ruled in 2015 that same-sex marriage is legal in all fifty states of the United States of America. Why is it that even the nation’s top jurists and constitutional experts could have misinterpreted and misapplied the Constitution of the United States which derived from Biblical principles and precepts? The answer is simple: People are walking in darkness.

The Bible is sacred book, time-honored and proven to be true; it is more than any encyclopedia. The Bible has all the answers to all of the problems of humanity, and tells it like it is. On the question of marriage, for instance, the Bible states clearly that it is one between a man and a woman. Concerning homosexuality, its cause and the consequence of its practice, the Bible explains it in plain English:

*“Although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened...Therefore God gave them over in the sinful desires of their hearts to sexual impurity for the degrading of their bodies with one another...God gave them over to shameful lusts. Even their women exchanged natural relations for unnatural ones. In the same way the men also abandoned natural relations with women and were inflamed with lust with one another. Men committed indecent acts with other men, and received in themselves the due penalty for their perversion”* (Romans 1:21-27).

When the United States Supreme Court handed down the ruling legalizing same-sex marriage, there were warnings from religious circles that it would cause confusion and chaos in human relationships, giving rise to further abnormalities. Sure enough, shortly after that ruling, press reports had it that a daughter was considering marrying her own father. While I am writing this final chapter, Fox News-TV reported that a 42-year-old man of North Carolina and his 20-year-old daughter with a

“love child” have been arrested on charges of incest. The report went on to say: “Steven Pladl, 42, of Knightdale, and Katie Pladl, 20, were arrested on January 27, WNCN-TV reported, citing ‘warrants.’ They have also been charged with adultery and contributing to delinquency. The maximum sentence for the incest charge is 10 years in prison.” The child, a boy, was four months old, and the father-daughter couple were reportedly married in Maryland before moving to North Carolina.

Recently there have been numerous cases of sexual abuses and harassments brought to light virtually in all walks of life in American society. Many high-profile people were forced to step down from their positions of power and prestige after some of these reports were published and broadcast over the news media. In addition, the country has been beset with a host of other social problems such as racial tensions, drug addictions, teenage pregnancies, abortions, illegal immigration, drug trafficking, many people with depression, people dying of opioid overdose, etc.

### **What is wrong with America?**

In my opinion, simply put, America has slowly but steadily walked away from God—the Almighty God who literally created this nation two and half centuries ago and made it the greatest and richest country in the world! God has blessed America more than any other nation in history, and made it a blessing to many other countries since the end of World War II. The United States is probably the only country in the world which has helped to rebuild the nations it had defeated in war. God has purposely raised up America to show forth His glory, righteousness, justice, love, generosity, mercy and compassion which are the characteristics of America as a Christian nation. The fundamental reason for America’s greatness is that the founding fathers and the national leaders after them undertook to honor God and the Bible as the Word of God. “Those who honor me I will honor, but those who despise me will be

disdained” (1 Samuel 2:30).

While the national motto “In God We Trust” is still on display in the great hall of the United States Congress and on all American currency, it is hardly noticed by the public and politicians, much less practiced by the American people. The chaplains of both the Senate and the House of Representatives, by tradition, are still present to open the Congressional sessions with sincere prayers. But just how many of the people’s representatives take these prayers to heart?

There is a Chinese saying which goes: “When you drink water, think of its source.” The Bible is the source of inspiration and guidance used by the founding fathers to formulate the Constitution of the United States, but it is not taken as seriously as it was before, even though it is still used on occasions upon assumption of office by government and court officials. The Bible, though it remains the best-selling book in America, has been generally ignored or treated just like any other book. In designating 1983 as the “Year of the Bible,” both President Reagan and Congress apparently saw the need to restore the influential role of the Bible in American national life, realizing that the country was headed in the wrong direction. The special declaration was made “in recognition of both the formative influence the Bible has been for our Nation and our national need to study and apply the teachings of the Holy Scriptures.”

President Reagan, whose mother was a Bible teacher, was a regular Bible reader and practitioner himself. Reagan once said, “My mother was a very devout member of the Christian Church denomination. She instilled in me the necessity of reading my Bible, saying my prayers, and living as though the Second Coming of Christ was just around the corner.” Ronald Reagan has been the most favorite President of the United States—even his political enemies liked him—since President Dwight D. Eisenhower in recent American history.

In the midst of all the voices, pros and cons, heard loudly in America today, only one Voice matters: the Voice of God as concealed in the Bible. People, politicians and media pundits

may say what they like under the First Amendment, but only what God says shall stand. As the Lord Jesus says, “*Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away*” (Matthew 24:35).

When I came to the United States 50 years ago, I had a real burden in my heart to pray for America, crying out to God daily, “America, America, God shed His grace on thee...” I didn’t understand why, because I was never an American dreamer until I became an eyewitness to the moral decay and depravity taking place in the United States. For all the sins that have been committed—hidden and revealed—in this nation, God has been mercifully patient in delaying His full judgment. God seems to be hearing the cries and prayers of the remnants of His people, the true followers of Jesus and practitioners of Biblical teachings. The fact that America has remained the strongest nation outwardly indicates that God has not yet taken His hand off this blessed nation.

The Almighty God seems to be using an increasing number of natural disasters, accidents and terrorist threats as His means of waking up the nation and calling it to come home so that He could continue to pour His blessings upon us. God seems to be giving us additional time to repent of our sins and to put our house in order. But the time for setting things right may not be long.

### **Hope for America**

The only hope for America today is to turn back to God, honor Him as before, and reapply the Biblical teachings not only in our personal lives but in our national life as well. For God has promised, “*If my people, who are called by my name [Christians who form 78.3% of the population], will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then will I hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and will heal their land*” (2 Chron. 7:14).

Again, we will do well to remember what our first

President George Washington said: “It is impossible to rightly govern the world [or the nation] without God and the Bible.” Those who are most vocal in advocating American-style democracy should also bear in mind what our second President John Adams stated: “Our Constitution was made *only* [emphasis mine] for a moral and religious [Christian] People. It is wholly inadequate to the government of any other [people/country].” In other words, the American system of government cannot work effectively unless people fear God, are submissive to authorities, have high moral values, and love their neighbors as themselves as taught in the Bible.

What is wrong with America today is not the system itself; it’s the people and their hearts. It is an internal, spiritual issue. No politics can ever resolve it. The Bible says, “*The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure*” (Jeremiah 17:9). Only God, who created the human heart, can fix or change it. The rule of law inherited from the law of God in the Bible seems to have been replaced by the rule of the majority irrespective of the presence of God as claimed by the founding fathers. We are like the people of ancient Israel. As the Scripture says, “*In those days Israel had no king [or God]; everyone did as he saw fit*” (Judges 21:25).