

南灣華人基督教會

2007 年受洗見證集

**Michiana Chinese Christian Church
Collection of Testimonies in 2007**

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IN PURSUIT OF HAPPINESS - A TESTIMONY

GONG Ming

I grew up in Eastern China. There are three children in my family. My parents worked hard, and expected us to study hard. After graduating from high school, I got admitted to a good university in Beijing.

College was a different setting from high school. We did not have to work hard, like we did in high school. My friends were enjoying life and taking a four-year break. A lot of my classmates and friends at the time were searching for the true happiness, but could not find an answer, so they felt emptiness in their hearts. It led to irrational behaviors in some. One of my friends nearly got expelled from the school. Another tried to commit suicide.

After graduating from college, I found a job in Beijing and, most importantly, got to stay close to Wenping, who became my husband a few years later. I felt my husband and I were very blessed in our relationship from the beginning. Although we were considered "outsiders" in Beijing for coming from another city, we felt warmth and love in each other's hearts under the city's often gray and cold sky. We got married a few years later and came to the U.S. soon after.

The first six months at Purdue University were difficult emotionally. Wenping was busy with his study and research amid language barrier. I was in the process of applying for further study. It was a stressful time for both of us. During that time we came to know some very nice Christian people, among them Dana Gottfried invited us to the Christmas Carol in his church, Kossuth Street Baptist Church in Lafayette. I was very impressed by the peace and happiness from people in the church. And gradually we became good friends with a minister couple there, Paul and Geri Briggs and their family. I found even though they didn't have much materially, they were happy and at peace with their lives. They shared their faith in God with me at every chance they had, I was touched.

After graduating from Purdue, I started working in Oak Brook, a west suburb of Chicago. I started to go to Wheaton Chinese Alliance Church and attend their English worship and Sunday study. I also studied Bible with some friends in their homes on Saturdays and they were great witnesses to God's love, especially during the difficult time when I was pregnant with son Bryan, while Wenping was completing his study at Purdue. I remember reading Philippians 4:6-8 "*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*" These words gave me great comfort. By studying the Bible, I gradually realized that we as human beings are unhappy because of our sin against God, and happiness can only be found in God's words and His world. I decided to commit my faith to Jesus Christ.

After Wenping started working, I moved back to Indiana to be with him. Since then there have been some difficult times in life, and each time God carried us through. Now we have two great boys, Bryan and Evan, and a happy family.

I want to say that even though from time to time I worry and stress out, each time my faith and Wenping's faith in Jesus give us hope and joy. I also know the real joy comes in our eternal life, for Romans 6:23 says, "*for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.*" ♦

Through Thick and Even Thin

Rebecca Wei

I've been going to MCCC my entire life. I grew up in the church nursery, went through Sunday School and Children's Worship, and then continued to join the church youth group. At the age of 8 or 9, I accepted Jesus Christ as my savior. I didn't have to overcome any big obstacles to become a believer and even now, I've never gone through any major trials. Basically, I'd become so used to the ritual of going to church, participating in religious activities, and hearing the gospel preached and discussed that getting baptized should have been just another part of the routine. Two Decembers ago, the youth program coordinator, Shirley, asked me if I wanted to be baptized. My parents really prodded me to do so since my brother and one of my best friends were getting baptized. But for some reason, I didn't feel like I was ready. I couldn't pinpoint exactly what was holding me back, but I just knew I needed to wait.

Now that I look back on it, I believe that waiting to be baptized was the right decision. It gave me a chance to grow spiritually before stepping into the commitment of being an official Christian. During Christmas Break, I attended the Gospel for China Conference. In the youth program, I met many college small group leaders and I was able to learn a lot from their testimonies. We had fun playing games and hanging out with them, but they were great Christian examples as well. At the beginning of the school year, I became good friends with some Korean kids at my school. They invited me to their youth group and I began going there nearly every other Friday. During Spring Break, the Korean youth group invited me to a retreat called Geneva. The theme for Geneva was "Out of the Box" and the speaker talked about how Christians often store God away in a "box" and only take Him out when they need him. He said that oftentimes,

Christians forget who and what God really is. This really struck me because it was particularly true for me. As I said, God had become like a routine to me and I finally realized that I couldn't do that anymore. I had been taking God for granted and I needed to become a Christian who could stay committed to Him even when things were going my way.

Now that I'm getting baptized, I hope I can maintain a strong relationship with God. Even though my life will get busier since I'm moving on to high school, I'll do my best to keep up my daily devotions and to live out my life for Him. Though it may be difficult to include God in every aspect of my life, I'll try not to let myself put Him back into the "box". Because if God can stick by me through everything, I should stay faithful to Him through thick and *even* thin.

Like many Chinese families in my generation, mom and dad drew a clear life path for me: study hard, get admitted by a good college, afterwards, find a good job such as being a chief engineer or some kind of officer. Most of time, I was a good kid and often proud of my good grades. I also made my parents very happy by being admitted by one of the prestigious colleges in China. I myself was kind of happy but not well satisfied.

At beginning of my college life, I still studied hard and I again obtained good grades. However, soon I realized college life is more than just good grades. It has its own way and I started to learn and tried to get involved in college life such as attending various group activities with other friends and classmates. Later in college, I started asking myself about the meaning of life. But I did not have a good answer at that time.

In my first year of post-graduate study, I met my wife Ming. We enjoyed our relationship and we married a few years later. Shortly after our marriage, I was accepted to Purdue University for my Ph.D. study. Ming and I both came to the United States in 1995. Life was stressful in the first couple years in US. Study and research took a lot of my time. Ming sometimes was not happy about the fact that I could not spend much time with her in this foreign land. I would lose patience with her from time to time. It was also that time I met my long-time Christian friends, Christopher Blake's family, Dana Gottfried, and Paul Briggs' family. God used their kindness and peaceful life attitude to draw my attention to Him. Dana invited me to his church, Kossuth Street Baptist Church (KSBC) in Lafayette, Indiana. It was in our Bible study, God gave me first life message: "Love is patient", found in 1 Corinthians 13:4. This message helped me with my marriage relationship.

I started going to KSBC regularly with Dana since 1996. The first Bible book I studied was the Gospel of John. Some of the messages, preached by Pastor Whipple from the Bible, was completely foreign to me. For example, love your enemy. This is completely contradictory to what I thought. I watched movies and read books about fighting and even killing your enemy, not love them. The concept of loving your enemy is definitely from somewhere else. You can imagine how surprised I was when I was studying about Jesus. He died for sinners, His enemy, because of love. I thought about this subject for a long time. My conclusion was that there is no greater love than this. I was mentally convinced that following Jesus' love can be an ultimate life goal.

Shortly after I was confronted by Pastor Whipple with a question "Are you your self a sinner?" I did not think I am a bad person by the world or moral standard. Later after a few-month study with Dana and another Chinese Christian KC Chen, Bible showed me that God is perfect and holy. I am sure I am not perfect, as a matter of fact, I know in my heart that I am far from it. 1 Corinthians 13:4 "Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It is not rude, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoice with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres." This Bible verses can easily convict me. I also realized I do not even know what perfection is

in some cases. I did not know “loving your enemy” was part of being perfect, which means putting away our hatred. In the Spring of 1997, I was convinced that I need the precious blood of Jesus to cover my sin and cleanse me in order for me to be acceptable to God.

The last few years, I would say it was experiencing God’s love. My wife and I met some other Christian friends, Honbiu Yu, Eric Norregaard, Dorothy Moy, and their families at Wheaton Chinese Alliance Church in Chicago in 1998-1999. Their love for us helped me grow in faith. Our son Bryan came in 2000 and Evan in 2002. We move to South Bend, Indiana in 2006 and got to know Michiana Chinese Christian Church and felt your love for Christ. God has been guiding my life and various decisions.

So I would like to say, through the years of not knowing God, searching for meaning of life, amazed by God’s love, experiencing God’s love, God has prepared and equipped me with caring heart and engineering knowledge and skills to serve my family and others. I believe I am still a sinner, weak in faith, often thinking life is about myself. I need His grace and mercy everyday to carry out me duties. Just like Jesus’ teaching about praying, Matthew 6:9 “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. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.”

Lastly I would like to quote a verse from the book of Joshua 24:15 “...as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.”

我的父親及父親那方的親戚皆為基督徒，從還是懵懵懂懂的孩提時期，我便有許多機會接近教會，但卻因為受到他們一些偏激言行的影響，讓我對於基督產生一些誤解及排斥，因此好長一段時期，約十年的時間，我跟著母親成為一貫道徒，但是越接近一貫道的核心，心中的疑惑漸深，尤其是看到心目中所謂悟道的高僧面對外界的物質也表現出凡人的貪嗔慾望時，心中產生更多的疑惑，當時我不能明白若是修道能淨化心性，帶來自在歡喜，為何修道多年的人仍會輕易的敗給外界物質的慾念，這點打擊了我對宗教的信心，讓我與一貫道漸行漸遠，也讓我在接下來十多年的歲月裡面不斷的在找尋這個答案。

由於主的憐憫，我在來美國的飛機上結識了高雄聖經禮拜堂的主任牧師林立民夫婦，從他們的言行中我感受到他們的平安喜樂，讓我多年來對於基督徒的疑惑得到解答，當時我聽明白的是：基督徒的言行並不代表是基督及神，因為基督徒是世人，人是會犯錯的，這樣的觀點激起我想要研讀神的話語的欲望，神應許了我強烈的渴求，安排了"佳佳"，I Call her my angel,當我的室友，更安排了 Heather 來協助我研讀聖經，每每在研讀聖經後，心中總會有一種平安喜樂的感覺，當時並不很清楚這樣的改變，直到遠在家鄉的朋友紛紛來信問我是否有什麼好事情發生？我才驚覺到，從前每當我內心不平靜或是疑惑的時候，總是同好友傾訴，自從研讀聖經後，由於太平安喜樂了，居然就沒有了需要向好友傾訴的話題，我很享受這樣的平安喜樂。

在研讀神的話語之前，我一直不明白，為何人生下來就是有罪的，為何人吃了分辨善惡及使人有智慧的果子就會死，信靠神跟迷信有何差別？中國傳統的儒家思想中就曾辯論過人之初性本善或是本惡，孔孟思想以性本善為出發點，認為一切的惡都是後天環境所造成的，所以才有孟母

三遷的故事，而荀子主張人之初性本惡，應透過律法來規範人的行為，雖然我支持人性本善，但是卻常常不能解釋為什麼兩三歲的小孩會因為忌妒比他們年紀還小的弟妹搶去父母的注意力而去偷捏或是偷打弟妹，曾經有位同事的五歲小女兒就曾經將還是嬰兒的弟弟推下床，只因為媽媽從弟弟出生後就不再抱她，我們當時不能理解這樣邪惡的因子是誰灌輸他們的，在研讀聖經後，我發現這就是受到原罪的影響所產生的行為，人與生俱來以自己的好惡分辨善惡，以悅己利己的事情為善事，以逆己或損己的事情為惡事，這種情形很常出現在工作職場上，常常可以聽到同事間的不和往往不是因為對方真的做出什麼十惡不赦的事情，而是因為對方正在做的事情與自己的利害相衝突，舉例來說，當協助同事解決工作上的問題的時候，大家對於這樣的行為是讚譽有佳的，卻在他們聽到妳因為工作表現好而獲得前所未有的升遷時，同事們開始憤恨不平，更甚者，會出現一些負面的挑釁行為，完全忘記了你當初對他們的好，而這樣“自以為是”分辨善惡的能力阻斷了我們與神的聯繫，這也解釋了未何修道多年的僧侶仍不能擺脫貪嗔慾望的糾纏，解釋了靠人努力的自修的確仍無法擺脫這與生俱來的原罪，我更在讀聖經出埃及記看到了人們如何以悅己利己的事情為善事，以逆己或損己的事情為惡事，當人們在荒野中遇到各種不順的事情，比如鬧飢荒的時候或是沒有水喝的時候，人們就忘記了神領著人們逃出埃及的恩典，反而反過來責備摩西及神，看到人是如何的軟弱，也漸漸的讓我相信只有靠神的憐憫救贖才能夠幫助我們擺脫這原罪的捆綁，得到真正心靈上的平安喜樂。

在決定受洗前，我心中一直有一個疑惑那就是“信靠神跟迷信有何差別？”我認為的迷信就如生了病卻不去尋求醫治，反而是到廟宇中去求神問卦這樣的行為，而以前我在馬來西亞工作的期間，記得在一個聖誕節

假期中，公司倉庫的存貨被盜走了，因為倉庫的門鎖並沒有被破壞的痕跡，保險公司認為這是內賊所為，公司的行政高階主管並沒有馬上透過原料市場供應線索去追蹤貨品，反而是在第一時間跑去花錢向地方神祇口中去探求答案，我相當不認同這樣的行為，也常常疑惑信靠神的方式如果是求神來做我們的主宰，那與迷信的差異在哪裡？後來我從 Heather 姐妹的口中得到了答案，聖經上並沒有說生病就不需要醫治，信靠神是使人擺脫知識果子的殘毒，尤其是人的“自以為是”，所以以上面的例子來說，信靠神是誠心的呼求上帝給我們智慧去處理而不是求神問卜的問神貨到哪去了。感謝神的憐憫，在我對於“信靠主”仍存疑惑的時候，不斷透過信主的姐妹給我解惑，我自己買車的經過就是一個好見證，因為我是一個完全不懂車子的人，由於不懂，所以有很多的擔心，也不知道從何下手去蒐集資料，後來在一次的禱告中，我心中默禱著“主阿，我相信您會幫助我買到性能好又符合我預算的車子，請您讓我專心的將語言學校的課程完成，之後再來處理買車的事情。”主應許了我的呼求，在我完成課程後一個星期內，順利從網路上發現一輛符合我預算的車子，當時腦海裡出現了一個聲音告訴我“去瞧瞧這輛車子吧”，於是請 Heather 陪我去車商那裡試車，而 Heather 姐妹更找了自己教會中懂車子的人去幫我檢查引擎的性能及內部的配線，經過對方的檢查，發現車子的性能果然相當好，對方更是熱心的幫我比價，並認為車子的價錢雖然不是最低但是仍在合理的範圍，感謝主的安排，我當下就買了這輛車，這讓我第一次體會到信靠主所帶來的好，也從這次經驗後，我體會到人是有所不足的，事情是不能等人 well prepared 後才來處理，所以在主帶給我這麼多感動後，我腦海裡面出現了一句話“我想與主更親近”，接受洗禮就是肯定主的開始，也是我學習信靠主的開始，我願成為主的門徒，並與教堂的弟兄姐妹一同學習主的話語並行主所教的正經事業。