

SPIRITUAL HISTORY OF ANTON LIU

PERSONAL TESTIMONY

I started to follow my parents to church in Kaohsiung, Taiwan when I was in my 6th grade. My father became a believer when he was a college student in Mainland China. He led my mother to Christ a few years after their marriage. He was a good role model as a Christian and had had great personal testimony at home. I became a believer one day when I was in the 9th grade in response to an altar call after a three-day evangelistic event. I was baptized a few weeks later (by total immersion).

I remember vividly that the speaker contrasted a life in sin that was without God and without hope and a life as a new creation in Christ. I knew then that my life would never be the same in Christ. And the years following that special day have proved that God's promise in 2 Cor 5:17 is exactly true. I have been living a life full of God's grace and hope, even through all the trials and difficulties when I was growing up, including my mother's serious illness for many years until her death when she was only 53. God has blessed me with many wonderful, godly teachers both in church and in school. I was encouraged by them and learned from them on how to serve the Lord throughout my years in high school and in college.

EARLY CALL TO SERVE HIM

One day during my junior year in high school, while I was studying in the garden of my high school in Kaohsiung, preparing for my final exam, I felt the need to pray for strength and wisdom. While I was praying God allowed me to see a vision: One part of the garden became extraordinarily bright and beautiful, and there was a voice (or a voice coming from within me) telling me that I should follow and serve Him with all I had all the days of my life, and He would bless me greatly. I responded by saying "yes" to Him and began to serve Him in greater capacities in my church's youth group. I became the leader of the youth ministry and later, when I went to college in Taipei, I participated enthusiastically in the ministry of "Campus Evangelical Fellowship," and eventually became the chairman (leader) of the 600+ member ministry group at the National Taiwan University. I was very active in ministry on campus, trying very hard to spread the gospel among all the student-unbelievers and lead the Bible study groups. God blessed us with many new believers on campus through my college years. He also raised many of my friends on campus to become full-time pastors or strong lay ministers in later years. This type of ministry continued when I came to the U.S. for graduate studies. I served as one of the founding members and ministry leaders of the Chinese Student Bible Study Fellowships on both the University of Missouri (for my Master's) and the University of Illinois (for my Ph.D.) campuses. In addition, I served in a similar capacity during the 10 years when I was working at Caterpillar Inc. in Peoria, Illinois, following my graduation from University of Illinois. My wife and I worshipped at local Caucasian churches while leading the Chinese Christian Fellowship groups as part of their church ministry during

those years. After working almost 10 years in Peoria, Illinois, God opened a door for us to relocate our family to Phoenix. We moved to Phoenix at Christmas time in 1985.

LAY MINISTRY IN PHOENIX

We attended the First Baptist Church in Tempe during the first year after moving to the Valley. At the end of 1986 the senior pastor of the Greater Phoenix Chinese Christian Church (GPCCC) had called me numerous times to invite me to join his team to serve the Chinese Christian community. After serious prayers and consideration we knew the Lord had opened a door for us to again serve Him in a Chinese church, after attending and serving in American churches since 1968. It was a big change, but a good one.

I served at GPCCC in all kinds of capacities possible for 16 years (1986-2002), including that of a gardener, the choir director, adult and children Sunday school teacher, deacon, janitor, helper of the Evergreen Fellowship group (for the elderly), and chairman of the Board of Elders and Deacons. I exercised and further honed many of the spiritual gifts that God had given me.

CALL TO PASTORAL MINISTRY

After almost three years of planning and preparation I started a small engineering consulting company (Phoenix Analysis & Design Technologies, Inc.) in the summer of 1993, and resigned from Honeywell to work full time there as its president and CEO in 1994. We quickly became profitable. My initial plan was to operate this small business for 10 years and make some money so I could become financially independent; and then start serving the Lord as a missionary full-time without receiving monetary compensation. I was serving as the Chairman of the Board of Elders and Deacons at GPCCC at the time. Soon the Lord began to speak to me through Matt 6:24, Psa 90:12 and John 21:15-17. Every week when I was signing paychecks for my employees He would ask me the question, "How long are you going to continue to serve two masters? How much time would you still have to serve me?" This process was repeated for almost three months. Finally on first pay day (Friday) in March of 1995 I suddenly realized that God wanted me to fulfill my dream for many years: to attend seminary and serve His church as a pastor. I replied, "Lord, I am willing to serve you alone, now." The Lord used John 21:15-17 to tell me, "Shepherd My sheep." I knew then that I was going to serve Him in a pastoral capacity. So I sold my company to three of my employees, who were also my good friends. I started attending Phoenix Seminary full-time for two semesters. After that I became a part-time student at the seminary and worked part-time at Honeywell because of our financial need. I graduated from Phoenix Seminary with a M. Div. degree in 2002 and began to serve as the inaugural pastor of Blessed Hope Christian Church in Scottsdale a few months later. This was a new church that I had began to help since 1999 when they were just a small family Bible study group.

A NEW CHAPTER FOR MY FUTURE

After serving Blessed Hope and many other churches both in Phoenix and in Tucson, for many years while holding a full-time paying job for many years, I became physically exhausted and developed a symptom of irregular heartbeat. On October 28, 2004 I received a pacemaker transplant to regulate my heart rate. I was in need of some physical rest to nurture my health of my body. Both my doctor and my wife wanted me to take a break from my two jobs. So, at the end of 2005 I announced my resignation from my pastor's position at Blessed Hope and served there until June of 2006. Due to my acute need for rest, my wife and I decided to attend Bethany Community Church in Tempe so I don't have to involve in the ministry decision-making at Blessed Hope. I did not know how long my medical leave was going to last, so I felt it would be best for the church and for me that my wife and I would attend another church that we have had years of relationship. We began to attend Bethany Community Church in Tempe while nurturing my physical body and getting my rest.

My physical condition has improved steadily over the last 6 months and I feel I am up to it again...I wanted to get back to full-time ministry at the beginning of 2008 and make a gradual transition from the capacity of a bi-vocational pastor to a full-time pastor during the year of 2007. I have begun to explore ministry opportunities since November 2006.

I trust the Lord will open a ministry door for me that would be suitable for me and my family. I am currently considering several ministry possibilities. I am sure when the time comes the Lord will make his will clear to me and my family.

God is good!