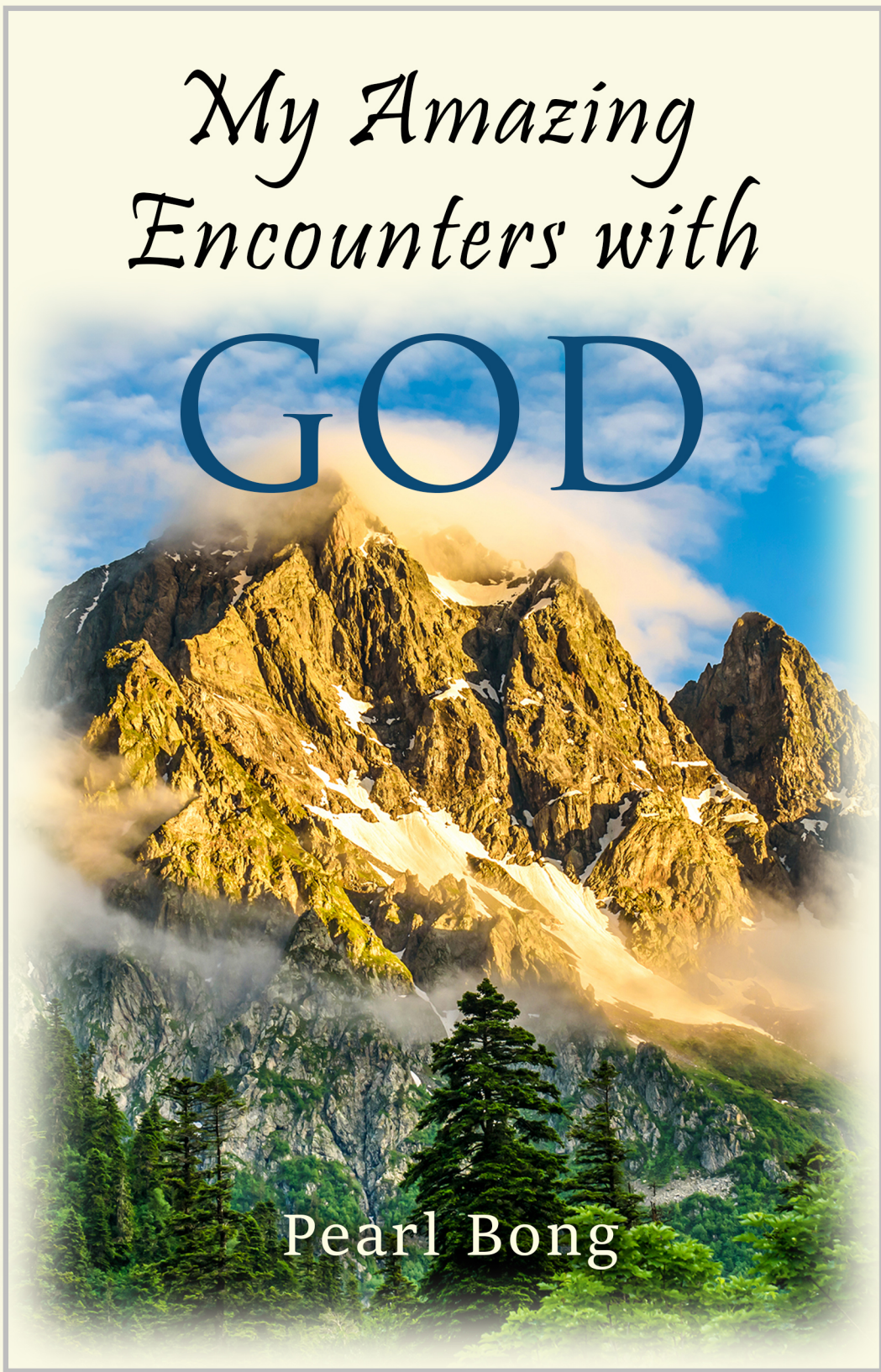


*My Amazing  
Encounters with*

**GOD**

Pearl Bong





My Amazing  
Encounters  
With  
GOD



Pearl Bong

With Drawings by Pearl Bong



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Encounters  
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GOD



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My Amazing Encounters with God

By Pearl Bong

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# Preface

**M**y purpose in writing this testimony is to unveil the truth behind my search for God.

To tell my story from the beginning, I came from a Buddhist background and was a devout Buddhist for many years. Through many twists and turns, I finally decided to quit Buddhism, and embarked on a new journey in search of the reality of the true God. Eventually my search for the truth led me to the Christian God whose name is Yahweh. In the whole process of my seeking after God, He had shown me many miracles in His time. Finally, I was totally convinced that Yahweh God is real. I decided to make my commitment to Him, and was baptized on 15<sup>th</sup> April, 1984.

As always, I wish for more people to know that the God whom I believe is real. He is the true and living God who is the creator of this world in which we live. He created us and is constantly reaching out to us. If our hearts are open to God to reveal His reality to us, He will do so in His perfect timing. I earnestly pray that the world may know Yahweh God and also Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son whom He sent into this world to reconcile men to God.

*John 17:3*

*And this is eternal life, that they know you (Yahweh) the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom you have sent. (Jn. 17:3 ESV)*

# A Humble Beginning

## My family background

**M**y name is Pearl Ye. I was born in a small town in the state of Johor, West Malaysia, in 1961. I have five siblings: three elder brothers, one elder sister, and a younger brother.

When my father was a child, due to poverty he was given up for adoption by his biological family in Xiamen, a sub-provincial city in southeastern Fujian, People's Republic of China. He was five years old when he left China. He reluctantly parted from his biological family in China, and followed his adoptive father to start a new life in West Malaysia.

By the time my father had his own family, he had to work extremely hard to provide for his six children. Life was hard in the beginning because our family was very poor.

As for my mum, she came from a sad background too. I gathered from my mum that her own mother, my maternal grandmother, died of cancer when my mum was still

young. After the passing of her mother, mum's biological father could no longer cope with raising my mum and her two siblings, so he was forced to give my mum away to a family that would be willing to raise her up. My maternal grandfather found my paternal grandfather to be a kind-hearted man to whom he could safely entrust his daughter. That was how my mum ended up with the Ye family. The main reason my paternal grandparents accepted my mum into the Ye family was the intention that when she reaches marriageable age, she would be my father's wife.

Because both my parents came from very poor family backgrounds, they did not have the opportunity to attend school as did their peers. They only attended two years of primary school education. At the tender age of seven, my father had to engage in many labor intensive jobs, yet he strived to excel in life. He had endured much hardship in the course of learning to run a small provisions shop with my paternal grandfather. After many years of striving, he eventually become a wealthy businessman during the 50s.

Every parent's wish is that their children would be their joy and pride! My parents were no exception. However, they had much higher expectations of their children than do most parents of theirs, because they harbored the deep regret of not having had the opportunity for further education. Since my parents were deprived of education, they wished for their children to perform better than other

kids. I recall that my mum would say to me and my siblings, “Yes, we are poor but we must aspire to be somebody of higher social status! Your dad and I wish that all of you would perform better than others, both in conduct and in academic performance. We want to be proud parents of engineers, accountants, or at least school teachers.”

In the 50s, these were the most desirable and top-ranked professions. Every parent would be very proud to tell the whole world that their children are in these professions.

Can you imagine the pressure I faced in trying my very best to please my parents? Seriously, I was under tremendous pressure. I experienced no joy at all when I didn’t have the freedom to decide what I wish to be, for I was left with no choice of my own.

## **We were a big family living under one roof**

Back in the 20s in Malaysia, it was common to see the poor living in a house with an *attap* (coconut leaves) rooftop. Such houses had thatched roofs made of attap leaves while the walls were constructed of horizontal hardwood planks.

My family was living in one of these attap houses. We were a traditional Chinese family in which the men and their families, even after marriage, would live together with their parents under one roof. Besides my father, who

was the eldest sibling in the family, my paternal grandparents had one son and one daughter of their own. They also adopted another daughter. So I had one uncle and two aunts.

After many years of toil, the Ye family could finally afford to buy a piece of land on which to build a double story bungalow with a total of seven bedrooms. Our new house was completed in December 1966 when I was 5 years old. With a joyful heart we moved into our new home. My uncle, his wife and their 5 kids; my dad, my mum and their 6 kids; together with my unmarried youngest aunt and my paternal grandparents—altogether 18 people—were living together under one roof. Oh wow! What a huge group of people staying together! Can you imagine how hard it was to maintain a harmonious daily living?

In this big family, there were so many mouths to feed every single day. Thus my father became a workaholic. Every day he would wake up before sunrise, and work around the clock. And by the time he finished work, the sun would have set over the horizon. His mind was constantly filled with new business expansion ideas. He was devoting most of his time to expanding his business empire. My little mind could not comprehend why on earth he would resort to such a way of life. As I grew older, I had come to realize that his aim was to get out of poverty so that he could provide the best for his family.

Because I failed to understand my father, my perception of him was mostly negative. I regarded him as someone who was only concerned about earning lots and lots of money, and had little time for his family. I remember that when I was a little girl, I would hardly ever see my father smile. There was a thick barrier wall between us. As the days went by, I found it difficult to communicate with him. My siblings and I regarded him as a tyrant dad at home. All of us found it very challenging in relating to him.

Day in and day out my father would always be busy with his work commitment. I guess it could be that he felt that providing his children with all the daily necessities was all that mattered. As I paint a picture of my family's pathetic situation, I guess you could more or less gauge that I grew up in a family that was totally deprived of fatherly love.

As for my mother, she was the typical traditional mum who exercised very strict discipline. She would compare the achievements of me and my siblings with those of my cousins. No matter what, she would always demand that our performance exceed that of our cousins all the time. Maybe it had to do with her childhood trauma; she would feel inferior if her kids do worse than other kids. As a result, I was reprimanded whenever my school results were worse than my cousins'. Life was filled with misery as I was under tremendous pressure in those days.

I regarded my mum as the discipline master who strongly believed in the principle of “spare the rod, spoil the child”. She would cane us with a rod when we misbehaved or did not acquire good results in our studies.

She measured success in life by one’s educational level. I did not blame her for thinking that way because she herself had very little education. Whatever she could not attain, she wished it could be fulfilled by her six children. I admit that I had no good impression of my mum either. My perception of her was that she cared too much about academic achievements, imposing too many restrictive measures on my daily life to the point I felt I could hardly breathe.

Though we lived under one roof with our grandparents, we had little interaction with them. That was because of some marital conflict between my grandparents. Grandpa did stay with us in the beginning, but he later moved out to stay in the small room of his provisions shop to avoid the constant quarrels with grandma. The only time I had contact with him was during meals. He would come home for his daily meals.

I have a very good impression of grandpa because he was a kindhearted man with a heart of gold. He had done a lot of charitable work in his lifetime. I have always held him in the highest respect.



As for my grandma, she hardly cared or showered love upon me and my siblings because she had drawn a clear line between the children of her adoptive son (my father) and those of her biological son and daughter. Ever since the day my dad was adopted into Ye family, she had never treated him well. My mum had her fair share of bad treatment too. In grandma's eyes, my mum was accepted into Ye family as a lowly servant. I admit that I hated my grandma to the core for treating my parents badly.

If you were to ask me how my childhood was, it was sadly very lacking in love, understanding, and warmth. As the years went by, I had come to realize that there was a communication barrier between me and my parents. I grew up feeling neglected most of the time. Most of the time there was no one to lend me an ear. I would envy some of my friends who came from very simple yet fun-loving families. How I wish I could be like them, being loved and cared for by parents and grandparents.

## **My first religion, Buddhism**

My pathetic home situation was the setting for my first religion, Buddhism. I will take some time to share about how I started as a Buddhist. My belief originated from that of my parents, who were devout Buddhists. Ever since I was young, my mum would teach us to follow the Chinese

traditions and to exercise filial piety. An aspect of filial piety is to follow your family's religion. I obeyed my parents and followed their religion. In those days, although I didn't know much about the Buddhist gods, I regarded myself as a Buddhist. That was the typical tradition of a Chinese family. We followed our parents' religion which was passed down from generation to generation.

As the saying goes, "A house is not a home when love is almost non-existent." I felt insecure most of the time in my home environment. I had a very low self-esteem and eventually became extremely timid. Since young I believed in the existence of gods and goddesses. At the same time, I also believed in the existence of evil spirits, demons and ghosts. That was why I had decided, out of selfish motives, to become a devout Buddhist. At that time my little mind thought, "I don't care what god or gods I pray to. So long as I cling on to some god or gods for protection from the evil ones, I am perfectly fine with any religion."

As a fully devoted Buddhist, every morning and evening I would without fail light joss sticks and offer them to the Buddhist gods. My mum was well pleased with my voluntary actions. In her heart, I was an obedient child. During my prayer time, I would utter some words to the Buddhist gods, asking them to protect me from harm. My prayers to those gods were mostly self-centered. I remembered that my prayers were solely focused on me, myself, and I.

Although I prayed to the Buddhist gods faithfully, within my heart there was no peace or joy. My fear of bumping into ghosts or being possessed by some evil spirit did not diminish or disappear! That was my constant nightmare! Can you imagine that at such a young age I was afraid most of the time?

## **My exposure to Christianity**

In those days, I had no knowledge of any religion apart from Buddhism. I therefore continued to be a devout Buddhist for many years. One day, when I was in my first year of secondary school education (i.e., at the age of 13), I came across some Christian friends. They started preaching the gospel, and proclaimed Christianity as the only way to heaven. I was furious when I heard that claim. I refused to accept the view that I, a Buddhist, will never make it to heaven. In a fit of anger, I told them that all religions serve the same purpose which is to lead us to the god/gods in heaven. So they ought to stop proclaiming that Christianity is the one and only way to heaven. From then on, I began to blacklist Christianity. I also kept a distance from all Christians.

At that time, I gained a negative impression of Christians. I could not understand why Christians were the only ones who would always try to convert or brainwash others.

Why can't they be like the Buddhists, Hindus or Muslims! Apart from Christians, I had never come across people who tried to convert me. I totally disliked the Christians' approach!

I vowed to keep away from Christians for two reasons. Firstly, I was afraid that I might incur the wrath of my Buddhist gods if I allowed the Christians to preach to me. Secondly, I feared that I might lose the protection provided by my Buddhist gods if I were to listen to the Christians' words. As the days went by, my hatred of Christians magnified, and I eventually became a staunch anti-Christian.

# How I Began Seeking After the Christian God

## **My passion in singing and music led me to church**

**I** remember that when I first attended primary school, “Singing” was one of my school subjects. It was my favorite subject because I was quite gifted in singing. It was a wonderful experience to score an “A+” in singing throughout my six years of primary school education.

From 1969 to 1973, I was the representative of my class in the annual singing competition on Children’s Day. It is strange that my music teacher would have me sing the same song for the competition every year. In any case, I had never requested to sing a new song. It was enjoyable to participate in the contest when I emerged as the champion for 5 years in a row. To this day, I still remember the lyrics of that song.

It is interesting that what I sang in those days had become a reality in my life ten years later. The following is a translation of the lyrics of that Mandarin song titled, "I am a little artist".

*Lyrics:*

*I am a little artist, a little artist*

*I held the paintbrush in my hand*

*And I painted a picture with some multicolored paint*

*With my pencil, I sketched an apple tree*

*The tree was full of green leaves*

*And lots of flowers were blooming*

*It bore many red and juicy apples as big as  
watermelons*

*I plucked a big red apple and offered it  
to my dearest mum.*

It was a simple song that was deeply engraved in my heart. That is why I can still remember the lyrics clearly even though almost 50 years have since passed.

Besides singing, since young I have always loved music. Among all the musical instruments, the piano is my first love, and the western concert flute ranks number two. At the age of seven, I had a strong passion to learn piano

because the sound of piano would always captivate my heart. I would often dream of myself playing all the beautiful songs on the piano. Unfortunately, my parents were against the idea of learning the piano and other musical instruments. In their view, it was a waste of time and money to learn anything related to music.

But pursuing music studies was one of my ambitions. Sadly, that dream did not come true because my parents were old fashioned in sense of believing that one could not earn a decent living through pursuing music as a career. So my dream of becoming a musician was thrown out the window!

## **How I was first drawn to the church**

In 1977, a miracle happened, the first miracle in my search for the Christian God: I finally stepped into a church building one fine day. I was sixteen. It was absolutely unthinkable! How on earth did that happen? Indeed, Yahweh God had been working wonders. It was beyond my imagination that someone like me whose heart was hardened could finally cast aside my prejudice against Christianity. That certainly had to do with the work of the Holy Spirit, I thought.

Just to give you a clearer picture, my house was situated pretty close to a church building, about a stone's throw

away. Every Sunday during the church service, I could hear the sound of musical instruments and the voices of Christians singing hymns or Christian songs.

Our way of life in the 60s was very different from now. Computers were non-existent, so we couldn't listen to music and songs at YouTube as we freely do in the twenty-first century. As for me, so long as there is the opportunity to listen to music, I did not mind listening to music and songs from any source, including church songs and music. Since I am passionate about music, it was absolutely marvelous to listen to the beautiful sound of singing and music carried by the wind to where I was every Sunday.

So I continued to enjoy the sound of Christian songs coming from the church Sunday after Sunday. One day, I met a friend who was a churchgoer. I did not ostracize her for being a Christian because she wasn't a Christian yet. After knowing her for some time, I decided to accompany her to attend the Sunday service so that I could for once listen to the singing, not from afar but directly from the church people.

It was a wonderful day which marked the turning point of my life. I guess it must have been the work of the Holy Spirit. That Sunday, I heard for the very first time in my life a message on "God is love" preached by the church pastor. He quoted the famous verse from the Gospel of John, chapter 3 verse 16.



*For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. (John 3:16 ESV)*

In his sermon, the pastor preached that God loves the world, which He created, so much that He sent His only begotten son Jesus Christ into this world so that through Jesus the world may know who the true and living God Yahweh is.

There was a section of the pastor's message that left a deep impression in my heart. I recall that he said, "For the true believer in Christ, God is our heavenly Father and He loves us dearly."

Amazingly, that Sunday sermon spoke volumes to me. I was wondering, "Hmm, the Christian God is a God and at the same time the Christians' Father in heaven. What an interesting God He is!" After listening to the sermon, I felt the warmth of love enveloping me. That strong sensation caused me to go further in my search for the truth. After the service, I returned home, but those three words, "God is love," kept lingering in my mind for as long as I could remember.

As I have shared, I come from a family that was deprived of fatherly love. As a result, I searched high and low for a fatherly figure who would allow me to experience what it is like to be loved by a father. That message "God is love"

struck me real hard. As always, curiosity kills the cat! From that day onwards, I was determined to find out who this Christian God is, the one whom the Christians address as their Father in heaven. With that in mind, I started my adventure in seeking after the Christian God.

## **From Buddhism to Christianity**

I began to attend church service diligently. Soon enough my mum found out about my pursuit. She was fuming mad and scolded me for seeking a western religion. She said, “Have you forgotten your roots? We are Chinese, and Buddhism is our religion. It’s a disgrace for us Chinese to adopt a religion meant for westerners. Could you please stop being a disgrace to the Ye family! I forbid you from going to church from now on!” I was deeply hurt when I heard those words coming from my mum’s mouth.

According to my mum, Christianity is a western religion, not a religion meant for Asians. She tried her best to stop me from attending church but the attempt was futile. Every Sunday I would quietly sneak out of the house to attend Sunday service. When I got home after the service, I had to face mum’s wrath. Life was depressing because I felt as if I were undergoing persecution every Sunday. I admit to feeling terribly sorry for hurting my mum deeply but the strong passion for listening to church sermons

plus the joy of singing together with the church people were simply irresistible!

This went on for about two years. I continued to go to church every Sunday and was incurring mum's wrath continuously. As the days went by, I had gotten immune to her scolding. It was music to my ears as I was no longer affected by mum's angry words.

However, I still felt a heavy burden weighing down on me because I was inflicting pain on my mum as a disobedient child. After struggling for some time, I decided not to shoulder the pain alone, but to share my bad experiences with the church pastor. He encouraged me to commit my sadness to God and to ask Him to show me that He is the God of love who will carry me through my ordeals.

Although I had not yet become a Christian, I heeded the pastor's good advice. I started praying fervently to the Christian God. I was determined to know more about Him, and so I decided not to be a two-timer. With that in mind, I stopped praying to the Buddhist gods completely. Mum was heartbroken when I no longer burned joss sticks to pray to the Buddhist gods. She said, "You are not baptized yet, which means that you are not a Christian. In that case, it's alright for you to continue praying to the Buddhist gods with joss sticks, isn't it?" I replied, "Sorry mum, but no. I wish to know the Christian God. Therefore, I must break

from the Buddhist gods.” Mum was displeased but she had to accept my choice.

## **My paternal grandfather passes away**

In 1977, my paternal grandfather passed away after suffering from tuberculosis for a few years. Because he had done a lot of charity work in his lifetime, many people held him in high respect. A large number came to pay him their last respects over the five days of the funeral wake. Although I wasn't yet a Christian, interestingly the Holy Spirit was at work, prompting me not to hold the joss sticks or to pray to the deceased.

I recall that on one of the evenings, before the commencement of the Buddhist funeral rites, I had a talk with my mum as I did not wish to put her on the spot in the presence of my relatives. I said to her, “Mum, please do not ask me to hold a joss stick and pray to the dead. I am attending church regularly, and have promised to break from the Buddhist gods and from all the rituals related to Buddhism.”

After hearing these words, mum's face turned pale. I could see that she was struggling hard to hold back her anger. She said, “You are not baptized yet! You can hold the joss sticks! Please stop being a disgrace before our relatives! Your actions might cause others to think I am a lousy

mother who raised such a disobedient kid like you! Could you please stop giving me trouble?”

After hearing mum’s words, all of a sudden I had a severe headache. My head was splitting and I was in great pain.

My immediate response was, “Mum, no way I will pray with the joss stick. I have promised to make a clean break from Buddhism. You knew my stand, didn’t you?” At that point, mum was holding back her tears. She was caught between letting me go and facing the dread of answering all my relatives regarding my rebellious attitude. Oh, poor mum!

Despite her frustration and great disappointment, she decided to do something out of love for me. She said, “Since you have a headache, you don’t need to attend the funeral rite. Please do whatever you wish. From now on, I will wash my hands of you!” Oh wow! That was a close call! What an amazing encounter! I thank God for saving me from a sticky situation. Indeed, He is an awesome God!

At the end of the five-day period—on burial day and before the cortege (procession) headed towards the burial site—there was another final rite. Because grandpa was a philanthropist when he was alive, all those who had benefited from his good work flocked from far and near to bid him their final farewell. It was a grand funeral procession graced with the band from my primary school. My fear

intensified when I saw the large crowd that had gathered. I was thinking to myself, “Will I be persecuted by some of my relatives? Will they let me off for not holding the joss sticks to pay my last respects to grandpa?” Although I wasn’t a Christian at that time, I cried out to God. I prayed very hard; my heart was weeping. I prayed, “God, you know my fear. You know how weak I am. Help me God to remain strong and firm. Dear God, I don’t wish to inflict more pain on my mum. Please spare me from persecution. Please ...”

After that prayer of desperation, I noticed that the situation was cool and calm. Although many eyes were staring at me from all directions for not kneeling and holding the joss sticks to pay my last respects to grandpa, there wasn’t any sign of persecution. Oh how I thank God for hearing my prayer even though I wasn’t His child. I began to understand the principle of, “If you honor God, He will honor you.”

## **I was the oddball in the Ye family**

During our primary school years, my siblings and I were attending the same Mandarin-medium primary school. It took us 6 years to complete our primary school education. After that we moved on to our secondary school education in which we could choose to attend a Mandarin-medium school or an English-medium school. Interestingly, my

parents wanted to enroll some of their children in a Mandarin-medium school and the others in an English-medium school. In the former, all the school subjects were taught in Mandarin whereas in the latter, all the subjects were taught in English.

My eldest brother was the first in our family to pursue secondary education in Chinese Independent High School, which was a Mandarin-medium school. The rest of my siblings were all educated in an English-medium school. Since my parents had two daughters, they wished for one of them to go to a Mandarin-medium school. In reality my sister had a better command of the Mandarin language than I, so it was strange that my parents wished for me to be educated in a Mandarin-medium school. I raised my strong objection right away as I preferred the English language more than Mandarin. Surprisingly, my parents did not insist that I follow their wish. In the end I was allowed to continue my secondary school education in an English-medium school. Again, it must have been God who helped me, and I truly thank God for that!

In fact, all my siblings were well versed in Mandarin, and had always scored excellent results in their Mandarin course. As for me, I did manage to pass my Mandarin course but my results weren't as good as theirs. Moreover, I was the oddball in my family who loved reading English books more than Mandarin books. Throughout my school

years, I had a greater love for the English language. In 1977, I sat for the Lower Certificate of Education (LCE) Examination which was a national examination taken by all students at the age of 16. After taking that national examination, we had the option of choosing Mandarin or some other course such as Tamil Language, Malay Studies, or Art, as our elective course. I chose Art as my elective, and it was then that I began to develop a great interest in art. I will share more on that later.

## **My desire to dig deep down into the Holy Bible**

As I have already shared, besides singing in church every Sunday, I listened attentively to the sermons, and the messages would often touch my heart. One day in 1978, when I was 17 years old, out of the blue I realized that the best way to know more about the Christian God was to dig deep down into the Christian holy book known as the Holy Bible. I yearned to own a Bible but had no money to buy one. So I prayed and asked God what I should do next.

After praying for some time, I thought of a good way to get hold of a Bible. Among my three elder brothers, my third brother was the closest to me. He was pursuing studies in a different city at that time, so mum would give



him more pocket money for his monthly expenses. He certainly had more money than I.

When he came home on one of the weekends, I casually shared my thoughts with him about acquiring a Bible. Lo and behold, the following week he bought me a Revised Standard Version Bible. It was a beautiful hardcover Bible. Wow! That was totally unbelievable!

When I received the Bible, I was dumbfounded! What puzzled me was that my third brother did not ask me why I suddenly had the urge to get a Bible. Without harboring any doubts, he just went ahead to buy me the Bible as a love gift. That must have been divine intervention. My heart was beaming with joy when I held my first Holy Bible in my hands. I started reading my Bible diligently from then on.

As I reflected what had happened, I wondered, “Firstly, my third brother isn’t a Christian, so why would he buy me a Bible? Secondly, it must have cost him a bomb to purchase it. Why was he willing to fork out that money? Thirdly, did it ever occur to him that mum might scold him for leading his sister astray?” Those were some of my daunting thoughts, and the truth is that I had no answers to those questions.

My mum did not know I had a Bible because she was illiterate. So she didn’t know that my third brother had bought me a Holy Bible. In reality, she always wished that I could improve my English standard, so she thought that

my third brother was being so kind as to buy me a nice hardcover English book as an encouragement to read more English literature. Wow, that was a relief! I could safely keep my Bible and read it freely in my own sweet time! As I reminisced about the past, it brought back lots of fond memories. I could only say that God's way is beyond my understanding. He is a God of miracles!

## **The joy of attending the Billy Graham Crusade in Singapore**

In the beginning of 1978, a group of Christians from Singapore Ngee Ann Polytechnic came over to the church I was attending to conduct a six-day workshop. I joined the workshop without mum's knowledge. After interacting with the group, I came into contact with a group member who was attending the Zion Full Gospel Church of Singapore. She was a fine young lady who had been trying to share the gospel with me. I appreciated her zeal in leading people to know the Christian God.

At that time, this sister shared with me the steps to becoming a Christian, and said to me: First, you must acknowledge that you are a sinner. You must confess your sins by saying the "sinner's prayer" which goes like this,

*“Dear Lord Jesus, I know that I am a sinner, and I ask for your forgiveness. I believe you died for my sins and rose from the dead. I turn from my sins and invite you to come into my heart and life. I want to trust and follow you as my lord and savior.”*

The understanding is that as soon I accept Jesus into my life, with immediate effect I am a Christian. There is no requirement of going through water baptism in total commitment to be considered a Christian. My understanding was that saying the “sinner’s prayer” was alone enough to make me a Christian. At that time, I was told that water baptism is just a ceremony. With or without going through water baptism, I will become a Christian by following the steps just mentioned. Hence I was unaware that I have to go through water baptism to receive the gift of the Holy Spirit (Acts 2:38). That was how ignorant I was! It was not until I was baptized many years later that I discovered that my understanding about making the commitment to be a Christian was totally wrong.

At the completion of their mission work, the Ngee Ann Polytechnic team returned to Singapore but this sister and I continued to keep in touch. At the end of November 1978, the sister who had shared the gospel with me invited me and my friend to Singapore for a short holiday. Her intention was to invite us to the Singapore Billy Graham

Crusade (SBGC) which was held at the Singapore National Stadium from December 6th to 10th that year.

In all my previous seventeen years, I had never stepped out of Malaysia by myself. It wasn't because I did not wish to, but because my mum had never agreed to let me travel anywhere alone or together with friends. I knew it was a rare opportunity for Reverend Billy Graham to come to Singapore to preach at the National Stadium. The desire of my heart was to attend the crusade. I turned to God in prayer and asked Him to open the way for me. Finally, to my amazement, mum allowed me to travel together with my friend to Singapore for the very first time in my life. I strongly believed that it was God who had opened the way for me so that I could hear a direct message from Reverend Billy Graham.

Reverend Billy Graham was an American evangelist and minister who became well known internationally starting from the late 1940s. He was a prominent evangelical Christian, and was, according to a biographer, "among the most influential Christian leaders" of the 20th century.

I was dumbfounded to hear the 4,500-strong choir that had come together to worship God in our Singapore National Stadium during the SBGC. It was an occasion to hear the generation who had front-row seats to the phenomenal leadup and miracle of the milestone SBGC

event that drew a record 337,000 over five days at the National Stadium.

Guests could hear the messages in six different languages because volunteers had distributed more than 8,000 sets of headphones for this purpose. At the conclusion of the Crusade, more than 19,600 people surrendered their lives to become Christians, among whom many have become pastors and church leaders of Singapore churches after the SBGC. There were no mega churches back then in Singapore. The big churches we have in Singapore today came forth through and after SBGC.

## **Reverend Billy Graham's words on his 99<sup>th</sup> birthday**

While I was writing this section of my testimony, I took some time to view some YouTube videos on the SBGC. Amazingly, I chanced upon a short sharing by Reverend Billy Graham dated 7<sup>th</sup> November 2017 when he was celebrating his 99<sup>th</sup> birthday. I found the three points which he shared to be very practical.

He said, "I have been praying that we might have a spiritual awakening. But I think that would be possible only when individuals surrender their lives to Christ and live the Christian life wherever you are.

“Firstly, we must do everything we can to follow in the steps of Jesus. We are to live a life in which we love one another and help one another. We must live as Jesus lived. The Holy Spirit is the one that helps us live that new life in Christ which is one of love, gentleness and patience. All of these things are the fruit of the Spirit.

*Galatians 5:22 & 23*

*22 But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, 23 gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*

*(Gal. 5:22-23, ESV)*

“Secondly, you must read God’s word every day and make the Bible your source and authority. Study it, meditate on it, memorize it, trust its promises.

“Thirdly, go on your knees and pray until you and God have become intimate friends. I cannot describe to you the joy and peace that He will give you as a result of that daily routine that you have in prayer.”

Reverend Billy Graham was a great servant of God who finally passed away on 21<sup>st</sup> February 2018. I consider myself so honored to have the chance to attend his crusade in Singapore. How marvelous to hear a powerful message of salvation in such a large-scale event. It was indeed an eye

opener to witness the huge crowds that responded to his powerful messages over the course of five days.

It was a fruitful trip to Singapore. Besides the experience I had at SBGC, I enjoyed the company of great Christian friends. Not to mention the delicious Singapore food. Singapore certainly lived up to its name as a food paradise. After that trip, I returned to my home feeling refreshed. With the new inspiration I received during the SBGC, I was all ready to move on to the next chapter of my life!





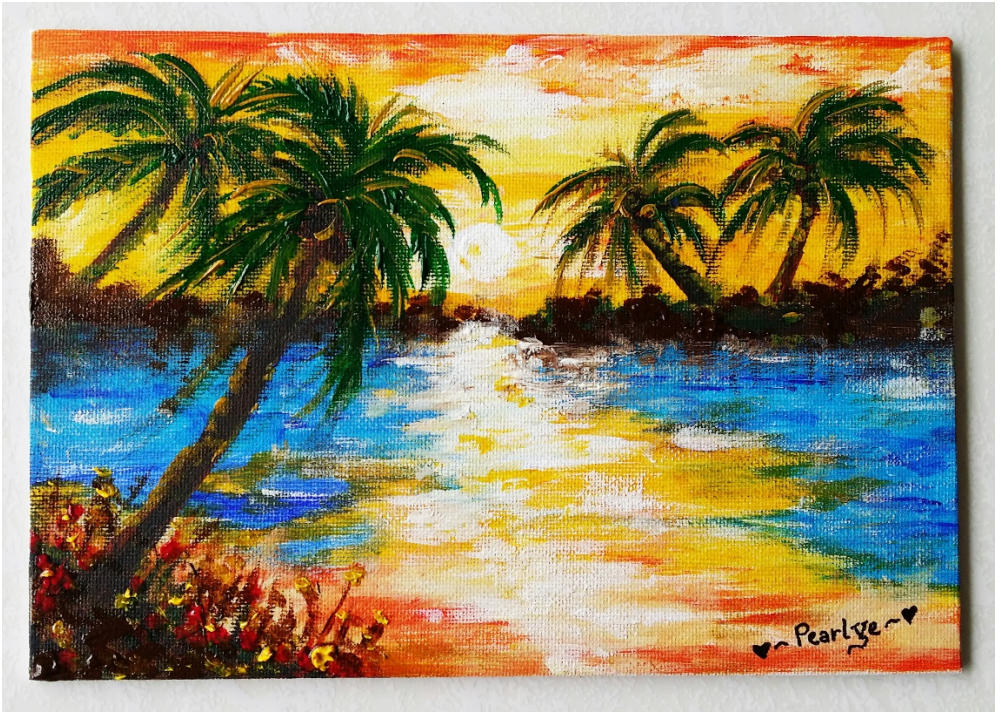
## Another Chapter of My Life

### **My pursuit of art and my desire to go overseas for further education**

**W**hen I chose art as my elective course in 1977, I began to explore art with great enthusiasm. Two years later, I discovered I have some specific artistic talent. It was a pleasant surprise because as a matter of fact, I was not good in art during my primary school days. I recall an incident which happened in 1972, when I was 11 years old. My teacher asked his students to draw “A scene at the market place” during one of the art lessons. Throughout my primary school years, I was really bad in drawing human beings. For that assignment, I had to draw many traders, both men and women, who were selling vegetables, fruits, poultry etc at a busy open market. I managed to complete my drawing but it was a lousy piece of artwork.

I recall the bad remarks I received from my teacher. He said, "Your drawing is so bad! All the actions and expressions of the human beings in your painting look weird!" He graded my piece of artwork a "D" which means that I barely passed. My art teacher was totally displeased with my drawing and thought I was absolutely not gifted in drawing.

However, after I had chosen art studies as my elective course in 1977, I discovered that my artistic talent was in a specific area of drawing and painting. I was not gifted in drawing human beings but I was talented in painting any topic related to nature. In 1979, I started my new hobby by doing lots of landscape watercolor paintings. At that time, I was a big fan of sunset paintings. I excelled in my art class and my wish was to pursue the "Academy of Fine Arts" in the near future. That same year, I took the Malaysian Certificate of Education (MCE) examination which was a national examination taken by all fifth-form secondary school students in Malaysia. I scored an "A" for my art course. With that excellent result I thought there would be no problem in convincing my parents to let me pursue art studies at a college in Kuala Lumpur, West Malaysia.



*Sunset oil painting on canvas (2015)*

An idea came to my mind: “Since my parents aren’t supportive of my pursuit of music studies, why don’t I pursue art studies?” Sadly, life isn’t always a bed of roses. I experienced another huge blow when my ambition to be an artist did not come true, because of strong objections from my parents. In their opinion, both music studies and art studies are equally useless. I was totally disappointed with their negative responses, and began to harbor bitterness in my heart. I confess that I was full of resentment against my parents for disregarding my feelings.

During my secondary school years, approximately 50% of Malaysia school subjects were taught in Bahasa Malaysia which happened to be the language I disliked. My greatest wish was to escape from the study of Bahasa Malaysia by pursuing either art studies or music studies in some private college, but none of my dreams came true. I pondered, "Since I cannot fulfill my dream of being an artist or a musician, and at the same time I dislike Bahasa Malaysia, perhaps the best option is to get out of Malaysia and pursue some kind of study in a foreign country." In doing so, I might be happier to start life afresh in a foreign land. Hopefully that approach may help reduce the hatred I had against my parents.

With that thought in mind, I mustered up some courage and voiced out to my parents that I wish to go overseas to further my studies just like my two elder brothers who at that time were studying in Manchester, the United Kingdom (UK). Unfortunately, at that time there was a tuition hike in the UK which made it too costly for me to pursue studies there. Besides, my dad did not entertain my suggestion as he felt it was unsafe for a girl to leave home for a faraway land. So my dream to be a musician, to be an artist, or to escape overseas had all vanished into thin air! I was lamenting, "Why am I so unlucky! I must be the unluckiest person in the world!"

In my disappointment a thought surfaced on my mind. At that juncture, I remembered what the church pastor had once said to me: “Don’t be dismayed! Go before God and make your requests known to Him.” There was no time to lose; all I needed to do was to pray. So I decided to pray to God as I believe that God will hear everyone’s honest prayer (though I later also learned the principle, “whatever we ask we receive from Him because we keep His commandments and do what pleases Him,” 1John 3:22). Anyway, I was at my wit’s end! My simple mind thought, “Oh well, no harm in giving it a try. Who knows, God may have pity on me, and open a way for me.”

I started praying earnestly to God: “God, I was told that You listen to prayers. I desperately need Your help. My greatest wish is to leave Malaysia. It doesn’t matter which country I go to, so long as I can escape somewhere. I am all ready to fly!” I continued to pray that same prayer for about two weeks.

## **Hallelujah! God opened the way for me to escape to Canada**

After two weeks of persistent prayer, lo and behold, my father ran into one of his old friends whom I addressed as Uncle Koh. They met for a coffee break and chatted. Amazingly, Uncle Koh told my dad that he had become an

agent for a school in Hamilton, Canada. That was a pleasant surprise! I was wondering, “Since when did Uncle Koh become an agent for a foreign school?” He also shared with my dad that he had helped his younger brother and another friend to submit the registration for Grade 13 education in that school. It so happened that these two young men were both my ex-classmates. How wonderful, isn’t it?

My dad has always been an obstinate person. No one has ever succeeded in changing his view or decision on anything. I guess God must have heard my prayer of desperation. I am convinced He must have been the One who had moved my dad’s heart. Out of the blue, dad become very interested in knowing more about pursuing studies in Canada. Uncle Koh explained to him the registration procedure, and also told dad to rest assured that everything would be well taken care of by the school representative in Hamilton. He also highlighted to dad that the next day was the closing date for registration.

To my amazement, dad did not discuss with Mum first before making his decision. That was his typical style! Without delay, dad told Uncle Koh to immediately help me with the submission for registration as he had made up his mind to let me fly to Canada. That was totally unbelievable! What an amazing encounter!

That evening dad came home with the good news. I was stunned when I received it. I almost couldn't believe the total change in my dad's attitude. All I could say was, "That must be another divine intervention! A miracle indeed! God had answered my prayer." Our God is awesome!

As I reminisce about the past, Uncle Koh appeared in the nick of time! He must have been an angel sent by God to rescue me from my dreadful situation. If dad had met up with Uncle Koh just a day later, I would have missed the closing date for registration! It was absolutely beyond my imagination that God would pave the way for a nobody like me. That incredible encounter spurred me on, leading me to press on further in my search for the true meaning of "God is love".





## Canada Days

### **How God led me to my first church in Hamilton, Canada**

**F**inally the day arrived for me to fulfill my dream of starting life afresh in a foreign land. At the end of 1980, I flew over to Hamilton, Canada, together with two friends. It was the very first time I had stepped into an airplane. My heart was thumping with joy and excitement! Though I did not know what to expect in the coming days, I was very thankful that at last I could be freed from my sad situation at home. I started Grade 13 education at Columbia Secondary School of Canada in Hamilton from June 1980 to June 1981.

Right from the moment I stepped on the land of Canada, Yahweh God knew my heart and my thoughts. If I had remained in Malaysia, I would have harbored deeper hatred against my parents. I would have lived in self-pity and dread over the pathetic situation I was in. My heart

probably would not be open to God to work in me. I strongly believe that God had paved the way for me to go to Canada for a special purpose which was to make the commitment to Him in His time. You will see how God's perfect plan was fulfilled in me and through me as you read on.

Although at that time I was a so-called unbaptized "Christian," my heart yearned to attend church service after settling down in Hamilton for two weeks. But I was a brand-new resident in Hamilton, and didn't have a clue as to which church I should go to. Instead of going ahead in a frantic search, I turned to God once again for His guidance. One Sunday morning, I decided to wake up before sunrise and prayed, "God, please lead me to someone who will bring me to church."

After that short prayer, I looked out my bedroom window. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw an old couple walking out of the house next door. They were around the age of seventy plus and looked Chinese. What actually caught my attention was that the elderly uncle was holding a big Bible in his hand. I guessed they must be going to church. So I quickly dashed out of my room and went forward to ask him, "Uncle, may I know if you are going to the church?" He replied, "Yes." Oh wow! How wonderful! How marvelous! That surely was God's answer to my prayer. My heart was filled with joy and thanksgiving when I heard the old uncle's short and sweet reply.

After a short conversation, I found out that they were Vietnamese. I asked them if I could accompany them to attend Sunday service. They said, "Sure. We warmly welcome you." So that was how God had sent someone to lead me to a church. The church I attended was Hamilton Chinese Church, attended mainly by Chinese from many different countries. That was the first amazing miracle I encountered after arriving in Canada. How awesome!

## **How God saved me from deportation**

A year later, I finally graduated from Grade 13 education with flying colors. In July 1981, I started applying for admission to a few universities in Ontario, Canada. At last, I received good news from York University in the city of Toronto. In view of my good performance in Grade 13, York University offered me an entrance scholarship. I accepted the offer immediately. I was looking forward to a new phase of my life as I packed my belongings and moved to Toronto in August 1981.

Around July that year, I decided to take a breather together with a group of friends. We went on a short trip to the city of Ottawa. It was love at first sight when I first set my feet on that lovely city. At that time, some of my Malaysian friends were already studying at Carleton University in Ottawa. They gave us a guided tour of their

beautiful campus. I was very impressed with the whole city of Ottawa and immediately fell in love with Carleton University. After that trip, I regretted that I did not pick Carleton University as one of my choices.

After returning from my Ottawa trip, I started my university life at York University, Toronto. I wasn't keen on any field of study at all apart from music and art studies. In reality, my dad had sent me to Canada to get a degree of his choice, not my choice. It was tough choosing which faculty of study I should pursue. After much consideration, in the end I decided on Business Management Studies.

Before the commencement of my first semester at York University, I made blunders in my course selections. I literally had to drag my feet to class every day as I was totally sick of most of the courses. Finally, I decided to make the bravest decision in all my life, which was to submit a letter of withdrawal from York University. After making that decision, if I were to remain in Canada, I would have to apply for a new student visa. The only solution was to attend courses at another college for one term while applying for admission into Carleton University in Ottawa.

I decided to register for some courses at Southern Ontario College in Hamilton. After receiving a letter of acceptance from the college, I proceeded to the Canadian Immigration Office to apply for my new student visa. To my shock, something unexpected happened when I was at the

immigration office. I almost suffered a heart attack when the officer refused to issue me a new visa. He said to me, "I am so sorry that I can't issue you a new visa. We do not encourage students to move backwards! Once you have been accepted by the university of your choice, you should proceed with your studies there and not move backwards to attend a college. You will have to return to York University or risk being deported!"

I was in great shock when I heard the officer's words! I didn't expect that outcome. I voiced out to the officer, "Sir, I have withdrawn from York University. I can't go back there anymore! Please, I beg of you. Please issue me a new visa for my study at Southern Ontario College." He shook his head while looking at my sorry state. He then told me to give him some time to consult a higher-ranking officer to hear what he has to say about my case.

At that juncture, fear began to creep into my heart. I started sobbing uncontrollably. I refused to accept the officer's explanation on why I must return to York University. After much consideration, I guess it might be because I was a foreign student. There could be stricter rules imposed on foreigners which were unknown to me.

After a short pause, I remembered that it was God who had opened the way for me to fly over to Canada. I believed with all my heart that He would surely allow me to remain in Canada for some specific reason. God had helped me

before and perhaps He will help me again! I was panic stricken, yet I decided to look to God in prayer. My heart uttered an earnest plea to our almighty God Yahweh. I prayed, “God, I am in a fix again! Please save me! I have withdrawn from York University and I can’t go back there anymore. I need a new visa or I will be sent back home to Malaysia. I can’t go home without my degree. My parents might skin me alive! Help me, please!”

It so happened that early that dreadful day, I picked up a silver necklace with a cross pendant to wear it with my smart casual attire before stepping out of my apartment. That necklace was a very special birthday gift which I had received from one of my Christian friends some time ago. While I was crying out to God, suddenly I heard someone call out my name. A higher-ranking officer had taken over my case. The first thing he noticed was my teary red eyes. Then he spotted my silver cross pendant necklace right away. He was a gracious gentleman. I can never forget his bright smiling face and gentle voice. He did not reprimand me for what had happened. At that moment I sensed God’s mighty hands were holding me up when I was about to collapse. That officer must be a guardian angel sent by God to rescue me. After a moment of silence, he gazed at me, and in a soft tone asked me one simple question: “Are you a Christian?”

That question caught me by surprise! My immediate thought was, “Dear me, what is the connection between a Christian and my visa approval?” In actual fact, there was no connection whatsoever. But I wondered why he posed such a question.

In any case, I regarded myself as a Christian because I was told that once I say the “sinner’s prayer” and invite Jesus into my life, I am a Christian. So my reply to the officer was, “Yes, I am a Christian.” To my amazement, he did not ask me any further questions. He nodded his head as a sign of approval. Thereafter he issued me a new student visa! Before I stepped out of his office room, he gave me a bright smile, shook my hand, and wished me all the best. In my heart I exclaimed, “Oh my goodness! That was a narrow escape. Once again God has made my day in the nick of time!” My heart gave thanks to Yahweh God for saving my life!

After receiving my new student visa, I left the immigration office with a big sigh of relief. That was absolutely incredible! I was overwhelmed by God’s intervention. I thanked God for coming to my aid. From that day onwards, I began to think hard about getting serious with God.

## **How God led me to a church in Ottawa, Canada**

Finally I was accepted by Carleton University, in January 1982. I looked forward to my new school year and my new life in Ottawa. After three weeks of campus life, I began to miss attending church service. I prayed and asked God, “God, please lead me to a church.” Lo and behold, one day, while I was walking to my class, a striking poster caught my attention. I stopped to take a closer look. The heading of the poster read, “Ottawa Chinese Bible Church – Welcome new students night”. I read further to see the date of the event. Oh dear, what a pity! It was too late! That special event was over, having taken place three weeks earlier! Though I was disappointed, I decided to jot down the address of the church in case I might wish to go there one day.

In the 80s we did not have mobile phones or email. The only way to get in touch with the pastor of Ottawa Chinese Bible Church (OCBC) was by postal mail. So I wrote a letter to the pastor and explained to him that I wish to visit his church. He wrote me a heartwarming reply. His name is David Pan. In his letter he offered to fetch me to church on the following Sunday. The congregants were mainly Chinese. The church held its service on Sunday afternoons at a rented premise in downtown Ottawa. I attended the



Sunday service at Ottawa Chinese Bible Church for about a month. After that I stopped attending due to some intense struggles I was facing.

## **God's protection when I was suffering from depression**

In February 1982, I started my school year at Carleton University. I was facing a lot of struggles in my studies. The root of the problem was my dislike of the area of study I was pursuing. At that time, I was quite rebellious, and said to myself, "Since I cannot pursue my dream to be a musician or an artist, it really does not matter what choice I make in my education path. All I need to do is to attain a bachelor's degree for my parents' sake."

As I advanced into my second year, my struggles intensified. Eventually I sank into depression. I often cried uncontrollably and began to develop suicidal thoughts every now and then. The truth of the matter was that I didn't even know I was suffering from depression.

There was one time when I had to sit for an examination. The night before the exam, I did not sleep a wink. I was crying and mourning all through the night. The next day when I walked into the examination room, my mind was totally blank. I scored an F for that course. It was the first time in my life that I had a fail in my studies. I couldn't

accept my failure, and as a result, I sank deeper into depression.

Looking back, our gracious God Yahweh must have been keeping watch over me during those darkest moments of my life. Although I had suicidal thoughts, I did not commit the act of ending my life. It must have been another divine intervention that prevented me from committing that grave mistake.

In my struggles, I met a course-mate from India. She was a kindhearted lady who would often listen to me about my woes. At that time, she must have been the soulmate sent by God to encourage and comfort me when I was sinking deeper into depression. She shared with me that she had joined a Christian Bible study group on campus, namely, Campus Crusade for Christ. The group leader was a Canadian lady.

My Indian friend was very concerned about my plight. She wished I would spend more time getting to know God through some systematic Bible studies. She invited me to join her and five others in their weekly Bible study session which was held on campus. I decided to join her in attending the Bible study sessions on a regular basis. Through the study sessions, I began to understand more about the teachings in the Bible.



*A Friend in Need (September 2014)*

## **God redirected me back to Ottawa Chinese Bible Church again**

Ever since I started attending regular Bible study sessions, I began to pray more fervently. With the change in attitude, I discovered I was slowly fading away from depression. I guess it must have been God who was leading me out of depression. Thank Yahweh God for His mercy and love.

One day, while I was taking a short nap in the library cubicle after a long night of working on my assignment, I heard an inner voice. It was a faint voice that said to me, "Please go back to Ottawa Chinese Bible Church! I have something in store for you there!" I woke up from my sleep in a state of shock! I wondered, "Where did that voice come from?" I looked around me; there wasn't anyone at the cubicle. There was only me and me alone!

After that strange encounter, I sensed a very strong force which urged me to go back to Ottawa Chinese Bible Church. I knew it was the work of the Holy Spirit. Without much consideration, I decided to obey that voice and returned to that church once again.

When I returned to Ottawa Chinese Bible Church, Pastor David Pan greeted me with open arms. Amazingly, three of my Campus Crusade Bible study group members were already in that church. That motivated me to stay on comfortably. Upon returning, I was very eager to find out why

on earth did that voice I heard at the library instruct me to return to Ottawa Chinese Bible Church once again? What was God's plan for me?

Besides attending the Sunday service, I started joining the Youth Fellowship which was held every Friday evening. There were about thirty plus attendees, mostly foreign students from Malaysia, Indonesia, Singapore and Hong Kong. As I was very eager to find out what God's plan for my life was, I started to become an active church member. I joined the church choir, and helped out in some church work.

After some time, the Pastor of the Youth fellowship decided to recruit new members to serve in the Youth Fellowship. He knew I could sing well and he thought it would be great if I could be in charge of the Youth Fellowship Singspiration Ministry. He also recruited my future husband Bong as the chairman of the Youth Fellowship. I thank God for granting me the opportunity to serve in the music ministry. He had placed me at the right place to serve Him in His time!

In those days, Bong, my future husband, was studying at the University of Ottawa while I was at Carleton University. Apart from meeting each other in church, we seldom see each other. However, after co-working with Bong for a period of time, both of us felt very comfortable with each

other's companionship. I believed Bong must have consulted God regarding His will for both of us.

One day, he initiated a meet up. To my surprise during that meeting, he didn't ask me if I would be willing to be his girlfriend as what we often see in TV dramas. Instead, he said to me, "If I were to go for full-time training and thereafter serve God as a full-time worker, will you be willing to follow me?" That question caught me by surprise but my reply to him was immediate. I said, "Yes, I will." That was how we started a relationship in 1984!

Soon our church brethren got to know of our relationship. Out of deep concern for me, a church brother from Malaysia asked me, "I gathered from you that one of the reasons you escaped to Canada was that you disliked Bahasa Malaysia. I understand that you and Bong are now in a relationship. How will you cope in Indonesia when Bahasa Indonesia is the main language of communication, which is very similar to Bahasa Malaysia, the language you dislike?" I replied, "I will go wherever God wants me to go. God will surely enable me to cope with the language for I know that everything is possible with God." That was the power of love!

As the days went by, I continued to learn more about what it means to be a true disciple of Christ. Finally, on 15<sup>th</sup> April 1984, I made my commitment to God. It was a glorious day when Pastor David Pan baptized me in a

beautiful church. So, at last I found the answer to that voice which directed me back to Ottawa Chinese Bible Church once again.

There were two reasons:

- ***Firstly, to know the true and living God Yahweh and to make my commitment to Him.***
- ***Secondly, to know my future better half who would serve God together with me.***





# My Three Years in Jakarta, Indonesia

## **The beginning of a new life in Jakarta, Indonesia**

**I**n August 1985, Bong and I both graduated from our studies. We never felt that we would stay back in Canada. The main reason was that Canada is extremely cold during the winter months. I had a hard time surviving when the temperature went below -30 degrees Celsius. So we decided to return to our respective homelands. Bong got back to Indonesia and I returned to Malaysia. We were separated for more than two years before we got married in December 1987.

Before I moved over to Jakarta, Indonesia, I thought that the environment over there would be quite similar to that of Malaysia. But after staying in Indonesia for a time, I realized it wasn't as I had perceived it. Living in Indonesia,

we continued to seek God's will to be fulfilled in our lives. We found a church near my in-law's house to worship God. It was known as Kelapa Gading Evangelistic Church.

During the first few months of my stay in Jakarta, I faced lots of difficulty in understanding and communicating in Bahasa Indonesia. I could barely communicate with anyone. Most of the time I was tongue-tied. Life was extremely challenging when Bahasa Indonesia was the main medium of communication in Indonesia. Can you imagine that over the last twenty-six years I had been speaking mostly in English and Mandarin but now I had to switch to speaking a brand-new language in Indonesia? That was absolutely unthinkable! It was a huge challenge for me.

In my struggles I had to plead before God for His mercy and grace to sustain me during my days in Indonesia. I asked God to remove the obstacles which were standing in my way. Amazingly, I experienced God's transformation power at work within me. He had removed my dislike for Bahasa, be it Bahasa Malaysia or Bahasa Indonesia. I started learning Bahasa Indonesia, which was quite different from Bahasa Malaysia. I learned it mostly by reading the newspapers and watching some TV programs. In those days, my Bahasa Indonesia dictionary was my best companion.

How true it is, that slow and steady wins the race! Eventually God enabled me to understand at least 80 to

90% of the weekly Sunday sermons. I also began to read the Bahasa Indonesia Bible with the help of my dictionary in order to equip myself for my future service to our God Yahweh.

After settling down in our new church for some time, God gave us another new mission. Because Bong and I had some experience in serving with the Youth Group in Canada, our church pastor thought it would be great if someone with this kind of experience could help out in managing a Youth Group. So our pastor decided to engage both of us to start a Youth Fellowship. With a grateful heart, we started a Youth Fellowship which consisted of mainly students and young working adults. We started off with a group of 15 young adults.

We were thankful to God for calling us to serve Him. Amazingly, Bong served as the Chairman of the Youth Fellowship and I was in charge of the Singspiration Ministry, just as how it was when we were in Ottawa Chinese Bible Church, Canada. With my talent in singing, I served faithfully as a song leader during my three years' stay in Jakarta, Indonesia.

Around June 1988, my church's Christmas Planning Committee decided to stage a drama performance for that year's Christmas event which will be performed by the teenagers from the Teenage Fellowship. The Fellowship's group leader came to know of my talent in painting. She

approached me and asked if I would be willing to paint a large canvas backdrop which will be hung across the stage for their drama performance. I had never ever dreamed that I would be engaged in such a unique project. Much to my delight, I was given the chance to paint once again.

“The Nativity Story,” also known as “The Christmas Story” or “The Nativity of Jesus,” is reenacted in the Christmas celebration of many churches to tell the story of how Jesus came into this earth. Throughout the many centuries of Christianity, the Christmas story has developed into a yearly tradition and is central to the celebration of Christmas in the Christian faith.

My heart was filled with joy and thanksgiving to Yahweh God for granting me the opportunity to paint a large canvas backdrop of the Nativity scene for our church drama performance that year. I started my painting project in July 1988, and it took me approximately 50 days to complete it.

Besides painting the large canvas backdrop of The Nativity Scene, I was given the task of designing the cover of the invitation brochure for our Christmas event. Oh what joy! Oh how marvelous it was to be given the opportunity to serve our most high God Yahweh in this manner!

It was Yahweh God who had rekindled my passion for painting and drawing. Truly, I felt honored to do it for the glory of God! Indeed, glory be to God for His mercy and love! My dream to become an artist did not come true, but

most importantly I could finally serve God through my artistic talent. That brought me tremendous joy! I felt the blessings of God overflowing!



*Watercolor painting Christmas Card (November 2014)*

## **God's grace is always sufficient for us**

In our time in Indonesia, I maintained my Malaysian citizenship. As I am proficient in Mandarin, I could easily find jobs in companies which were looking for employees fluent in Mandarin. But in the end, I was not offered any job because it was illegal to employ foreigners. After many failed attempts, I had no choice but to accept God's will for me as a full-time homemaker. So Bong had to work harder as he was the sole breadwinner. Life was tough those days because we could barely make ends meet with Bong's low monthly income.

One day, we ran into deficit. In those gloomy days, God's gentle reminder came in timely fashion. I read the Word of God in Matthew 7 verse 7 which says,

*“Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. (Matt. 7:7 ESV)*

So, with that assurance from the Word of God, we prayed and looked to Yahweh God for His provision. One sunny afternoon, out of the blue my heart desired to spend some time reading. In actual fact, I had not read any book in a long while. So I decided to browse through my collection of books. One of the titles caught my attention. I picked it up and flipped through its pages, and lo and behold, I found

some money in that book. It was exactly the amount we needed. Praise God!

I quickly asked Bong, “Did you put the money here?” He said, “No, I didn’t. Who on earth would use a bank note as a bookmark?” I thought, “That makes absolute sense. Bong was right to say that!” Oh wow! Once again, our God Yahweh had met our needs. He carried us through another trial. Indeed, His grace is sufficient for us. He is forever faithful! Oh how I thank Yahweh God for His unfailing love.



## Migrating to Singapore

### **God's way: Our next move to Singapore**

**I**n May 1989, God bestowed upon us a beautiful baby girl. We thank God for His blessings. Despite our busyness as young parents, we continued to serve God faithfully until He called us for the next mission. In March 1990, the boss of Bong's company had a plan to start a branch office in Singapore. He approached Bong and asked him if he would be keen on operating a new company in Singapore.

At that juncture, we were unsure of God's plan for our lives. As always, we would come humbly before God and pray. This time we decided to pray a specific prayer. We prayed, "God, if it is Your will for us to leave Indonesia and go to Singapore, please direct someone to knock on our door and indicate his/her desire to purchase our house."

After committing our prayer request to God, we waited upon God. To my amazement, the following day a gentleman came knocking on our door. He asked, "Madam, may I know if you are selling your house?" My jaws dropped when

I heard his words! I wondered how on earth he found out that we might want to sell our house? Oh wow! How wonderful! I was truly amazed by how quickly God had answered our prayer. That was the indication from God that we should leave Indonesia. God answered our prayer in accordance with what we had prayed for. I thank Him for answering our prayer. Without further delay, we packed up, sold our house, and left for Singapore.

## **In search of a church in Singapore**

A few months after settling down in Singapore, in 1990, I discovered I was expecting again. My second pregnancy was unplanned. It just happened as God had intended. For your information, my second child Brendon was diagnosed with autism at the age of three. For those who are keen to know more about the arrival of my miracle baby Brendon, you may go to the website of Christian Disciples Church ([www.christiandc.org](http://www.christiandc.org)) and download my book, “Embracing the World of Autism with my Autistic Son”. In that book, you will learn about the many miraculous encounters in my journey of raising my autistic son over the past 31 years. May you be richly blessed as you read through my book.

Alright, back to my sharing. After settling down in Singapore, we were in search of a church. Finally, we found

a Baptist church which was quite near our house. We attended that church from 1990 to 1992. However, we felt uncomfortable in that church because it had a large congregation of more than 400 people. We prayed for God's direction to lead us to a smaller church where we could worship and serve Him.

One day, while Bong and I were strolling along The Centrepoint located on Orchard Road, I voiced out to him, "We have been in Singapore for more than two years already, why haven't we run into any of our old friends?" As soon as I finished that sentence, a familiar face appeared right before my very eyes! He was a brother from our former church in Ottawa. He shared with us that he was attending Christian Disciple Church. What an amazing encounter! God had led us to someone who would show us His way.

Bong and I started attending Christian Disciples Church in 1993. Over the course of two years, we joined the "Commitment Training" and "Basic Training" conducted by our church pastor to equip ourselves to serve our almighty God Yahweh. As our God Yahweh has called us to serve His church, we have been serving faithfully as treasurers, as Bible study leaders, and as members of the Homemakers since 1998.

In 1996, I was invited to join the Music Ministry as a song leader once again. As I looked back, I had been serving as a

song leader ever since I first joined Ottawa Chinese Bible Church, in 1983. The truth of the matter is that God has given me the passion in music not for pursuing my dream to be a world musician but to serve Him and to glorify His Holy Name. How blessed it is to be given the talent in singing and the passion for music. My love for singing and my passion in music were fulfilled in my offering my best service to our God Yahweh. How blessed I am!

Although my dream of pursuing music studies has never been fulfilled, God has blessed me richly through my serving Him in the music ministry. There is no word to describe the joy of leading our church brethren in worship to our awesome God every Sunday. I will sing of Yahweh's great love, and proclaim His salvation to the ends of the earth. I will say, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His Holy Name!"

## **A new opportunity to serve Yahweh God**

In the course of serving Yahweh God faithfully, I was constantly seeking new opportunities to serve Him. On one of the rare occasions—I can't quite recall exactly which year it was—I was invited to be the emcee of the wedding of a couple from my church. Being the emcee for the very first time in my life, I was full of excitement! However, I was

stunned when I found out that I had to speak in both English and Mandarin as the emcee for that special day.

I admit that my heart was filled with anxiety as I had hardly spoken Mandarin in ages. Moreover, since 1977, I had not been exposed to the Mandarin language, for our mode of communication at home or with friends was solely English. I was caught in a dilemma. The only way was to commit my fear and anxieties into the hands of our merciful God and Father in heaven.

Eventually I learned that it was Yahweh God's way of preparing me for a new mission ahead, even beyond this public speech! He reminded me to exercise total trust in Him while I was preparing myself to speak in Mandarin in a public speech for the very first time in my life.

You may recall from the earlier part of my sharing that I was the oddball in the Ye Family as I didn't like the Mandarin language at all. Thus I opted for art instead of Mandarin as my elective course. Nevertheless, by the grace of God, I managed to speak reasonably good Mandarin on that wedding day. Indeed, glory be to God for enabling me to perform well. My heart gave thanks to God as I prayed, "Not my will but Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven."

Many years later, in 2012, Pastor Long's mother whom I addressed as "Auntie Long" had started attending our Sunday service. At that time Pastor Long was searching for someone to translate the Sunday sermons from English

into Mandarin for his mother. It was then that he remembered that I could converse in reasonably good Mandarin. So I was invited to be the translator. My heart was full of fear and trembling when I started my translation work. I had never dreamed that I would ever be a translator. Ever since the day I engaged in this translation work, a Chinese dictionary and the “Google Translate” mobile app became my close companions. Truly thank God for the availability of such wonderful tools.

It was amazing to experience God’s transformation power at work within me! Our awesome God has changed my heart! Through each passing day, I began to love the Mandarin language more and more. How miraculous it is when God works in one’s heart. He had removed all the obstacles before me. Throughout the years, Yahweh God has blessed me richly through my new missions work! I noticed that my Mandarin was improving by leaps and bounds. Indeed, God’s ways are higher than ours. Who can fathom the greatness of His love!

In September 2019, Auntie Long’s third son and his family were back in Singapore from Canada. I heard from her that the last trip they had made back to Singapore was 12 years earlier. Oh wow! What a joyful reunion for the Long family after such a long while. At that point in time, a thought came to my mind. I was thinking how wonderful it would be if Auntie Long were to commit her life to Yahweh

God so that her third son and his family could be present to witness her baptism.

Approximately two weeks before September 2019, Pastor Long informed our church members that there will be a water baptism on 13 October 2019. Amazingly, on the following day when I woke up before sunrise to pray, the Holy Spirit indicated to me who the baptismal candidate would be.

However, a week before the event, I sustained a torn ligament in my right knee while playing badminton with a group of friends. It took quite a long while for it to heal and I was unable to stand on my feet for more than 15 minutes. As I was eager to attend the baptismal service, I came humbly before Yahweh God and beg of Him to grant me the strength to attend the service. Yes, He heard my plea. I was given the extra measure of grace to go to church on that lovely day.

Lo and behold, on 13 October 2019, Auntie Long was the baptismal candidate just as Yahweh God in His lovingkindness had revealed to me. After seven years of translating the Sunday sermons and Bible studies for Auntie Long, she finally made her commitment to Yahweh God at the age of 87. It was a glorious day to celebrate her new birth. Oh, how I thank God for another new addition into our big church family. Praise God!

On that day, I shared the following with our church brethren. Here is a brief recap of what I shared:

*“I have known Auntie Long since 2008. Oh, how I treasure the 11 years of friendship with her. Thank God for granting me a senior friend like her. Two weeks ago, when I woke up to pray in the morning, the Holy Spirit indicated to me that Auntie Long would be baptized. I told God that with my knee injury, if I have to crawl to church to witness her baptism, I will do it. My heart’s desire is to share in Auntie Long’s joy as she is much like a dear mother to me. And to my amazement, my knee felt alright today and I didn’t need to crawl to church. Moreover, I am able to stand here and share some of my thoughts without experiencing pain in my knee. Oh wow! It is so great to be here to witness Auntie Long’s baptism. God is good all the time!”*

As I recall what had happened back then, my heart can’t thank Yahweh God enough for His unfailing love.

## **Spiritual lessons learned through serving Yahweh God**

As I have testified, I disliked Bahasa Indonesia, yet Yahweh God has called me to serve Him in Indonesia. Similarly, I did not like the Mandarin language, yet God has chosen me



to be the translator for Auntie Long. I felt so honored to serve Yahweh God wherever He calls me to. What spiritual lesson have I learned through it all?

I have learned that in our walk with God, it is absolutely essential to avail ourselves as an instrument to serve Him and His church. It doesn't matter if we have our areas of weakness and inadequacy. Our God Yahweh is looking for people who will say, "Yes, I will LORD. I am willing to offer myself totally to You. Please use me as Your channel of blessings to others." If our hearts are so willing to serve Him, He will grant us His strength and power to offer our very best service to Him and His church. Yahweh God will use us mightily when we are willing to offer ourselves in service to Him.

## **Last but not least, another great blessing from God**

Another great blessing in my life has to do with my daughter Sharon. Ever since she was young, she inherited my artistic talent. Her passion for art reminded me of the old me in the past. After she had completed her secondary school education, she decided to pursue art studies at Singapore's Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts. Truly, our God Yahweh had comforted my heart. I saw the joy in Sharon for being able to pursue art studies which was unattainable

to me in my youth. Formerly she worked as a game artist, but now she is working as an illustrator and animator. God is good all the time! My heart is eternally grateful to Him.

There is so much to share regarding the greatness of our God Yahweh. It would take an eternity to declare His mighty deeds! As I have tasted God's goodness over and over again, I just want to share about it so that the world may know that Yahweh God is real. He is the one and only true and living God. Indeed, He is a God of love who is constantly waiting for us to come before Him, to know Him, and also to know Jesus Christ whom He had sent into this world to reconcile men with God.

Before I end my sharing, it is the prayer of my heart that we continue to seek Yahweh God with all our hearts.

As the word of God says in Jeremiah 29 verse 13,

*You will seek me and find me, when you seek me with all your heart. (Jer. 29:13 ESV)*

Yes certainly, if we seek God with all our heart, we will find Him. As I have testified, even in my non-Christian days, my heart was open for God to reveal Himself to me. It took me more than seven years of seeking God before I committed my life to become a Christian. For those of you who have committed your lives to God, let us join our hearts in prayer to God, that He will use us as His channel of blessings to others.

As Matthew 5 verse 16 says,

*In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven. (Matt. 5:16 ESV)*

I earnestly pray and hope that more and more people will come to know the only true God Yahweh, and to know His only begotten son Jesus Christ.

May the name of Yahweh God be praised! Amen.



*Art gallery on a wall (December 2016)*



