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Appendix A. Present address

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Appendix B. Personal Christian Experience

“Being born into a Christian family does not guarantee you are automatically a Christian. It is like if even you were born in a car park, you would never be a car.” I was very impressed when I heard this allegory in a Christian event when I was a teenager. However, at that time, I was already very sure that I am saved and born again. I have the salvation from God. Therefore, there is a purpose for my life and I ought to “walk in a manner worthy of the calling with which [I] have been called. (Ephesians 4:1)

My parents play an important role in building my Christian character. They are devoted Christians. Therefore, since I was a baby, we have never ceased from going to church service. My parents taught me according to the teaching from the Bible. I went to a Christian primary school where the school principal is a Christian vocalist. Hence, our school had a strong emphasis of hymn singing and music. I value Christian education because it is truly a blessing that I could grow up with lots of Bible stories and Hymns. I accepted Christ as my saviour when I was eight. Unlike many Chinese parents who always tell their children to study hard and become professional, my parents have encouraged me to practise playing the piano since when I was at a very young age. Therefore, I can serve God as a church pianist. Rather than becoming a doctor or a lawyer, being a church pianist was my only “career goal” when I was young.

On the day I registered for the music foundation program in university, I have a strong feeling that God would use my music talent. At that time, I was encountering some setbacks academically. I did not plan to study music. I simply did not have any plan for my life. Out of curiosity, I randomly applied this program, and I was admitted. At a time during which I felt so lost, God opened this door for me. Hence, I was determined to serve him with music. This idea was reinforced when I was officially admitted as a university student in 2002. On that day, I attended a Christian singspiration event. When I sang “Let every breath, all that I am, never cease to worship You.” (From the worship song “Shout to the Lord”), I made a decision to offer my life to God, for his service, in any ways He wants me. As Romans 12:1 says, “To offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” I felt the urge from the Holy Spirit, and I made this important decision very naturally that day.

God opened my eyes to the need of the community via attending Keen Men Church during my adolescence. In Keen Men Church, I was able to encounter youths who were less well off. I also came to know brothers and sisters who have various backgrounds—many are new immigrants from China; Some of them have misfortunate stories in the past. Being a church member, I learned the importance of impacting human souls and the community through the gospel. I also witnessed my pastor, also my godfather, dedicating his life to serving the youth and community with humbleness, perseverance, and obedience to God’s will. A vast majority of my brothers and sisters in that church are ordinary workers, but, in Christ, all of us have

experienced the love through the church, and I see the regenerating power of Christ in us. In this loving Christian family, we learned to be the imitators of Christ. Also, we learned to love each other. All these experiences have consolidated my faith, and this has led to the decision of furthering study in the Seminary.

Appendix C. Spiritual Gifts

People often identify music as my strongest spiritual gift, however, I personally believe being influencing, processing a lot of creativity and perseverance, and being introspective are the strongest spiritual gifts that help facilitate my ministry and music.

I often bring joy to others with my presence, to my friends, family, students, co-workers, choir members, and even strangers. I have a natural vibe to spread positivity and dynamics in groups. I always create a fun and harmonious environment for rehearsals and teaching. Hence, the choirs, bands, and teams I led always work towards our goal with excellent team spirit. In music ministry, it is vital for Christians to strive for excellence in order to properly reflect God's excellence through our works. To attain excellence, many will embrace the authoritarian approach. However, I trust that ministry is about relationship, as 1 Peter 5:2-4 states, "Shepherd the flock of God among you, exercising oversight not under compulsion, but voluntarily, according to the will of God; and not for sordid gain, but with eagerness; nor yet as lording it over those allotted to your charge, but proving to be examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory." During my service as the choir coach of Yan Fook Church Hong Kong, the rehearsals were often full of laughter. It was my privilege to share a very wonderful fellowship together with my choir members while working progressively with them.

Creativity is another spiritual gift I possess. I often come up with lots of ideas and teaching strategies that facilitate my ministry and teaching. For example, I can break down a task into small and attainable steps that my students, choir members, or colleagues can follow. I can explain or present an idea in various ways. I can carry out many innovative plans and strategies for the development of the teams. Being creative has made me an effective church or school music educator.

I believe God has a mission for me in every stage of my life, and He continually reveals it to me through my ministry and career as a teacher. When I was a university student, I got a scholarship because I was voted as "the most influential student" by the music faculty. At that time, I did not quite understand how I could work with God with this character of mine because I knew I could be a leader when I ought to, but, at the same time, I also enjoyed working as a team.

I started to be aware of this spiritual gift, the quality of being influential, after I have become a music teacher in a secondary school. I applied this fulltime job because I wanted to prepare myself for my future ministry—to gain experience through working with my colleagues, and to understand the operation of an organization. My first task was to renew and revitalize the school choir and band in my boys' school. It was a challenge because I had to start from square one—my school did not have a band, and the size of the choir was small at that time, and I am the only music teacher. With support from the management, I was able to promote music activities creatively in the campus. Indeed, making the boys to fall in love with music

required a lot of effort and perseverance. Teaching the boys could be difficult. Thus, I ought to rely on God every day, and prayed for daily strength from above. After one year, the brass band plus a strings ensemble were formed. After three years, I expanded the choir to a group of 120, and the brass band to a group of 45. Once, I shared this update with my seminary professor, she responded, “You are a very good recruiter!” This is a very interesting comment. Yet, this captured my attention and this can be part of God’s calling for me. I started to come up with a thought—we Christians are the ambassadors of Christ. What about being a very good recruiter for God? If I am good in promoting and organizing activities, forming teams and keeping the spirit of the groups, then what else can I do for God? If God has a mission for me in each stage of my life, what am I here to do with my spiritual gifts, so that the impact and influence I have can further contribute to God’s kingdom?

I am an introspective person. I often talk to God through prayers and I enjoy the intimacy with Him. Although living in Hong Kong is often busy and fast-paced, I have almost one hour to practise the presence of God during my walk to and from work every day. Sometimes, I do this in a subway. Usually, I pray and sing some silent praise songs. Sometimes, I just simply talk to God. Through prayers, scripture reading, reflection, and contemplation, I can gain spiritual discernment on life decisions. By counting the blessings in silence, I review God’s mercy and mightiness, and I find support and comfort in Him.

Being introspective also makes me bounce back fast when I encounter setbacks. I am a sincere person. I have a growth mindset and I am not afraid to ask for feedback and suggestions. Therefore, I can always make adjustment flexibly. It is my belief that once I go back to Jesus, there will be solutions. It is essential to feel God’s omnipresence and remind myself that He is Emmanuel, especially during hard times. I can recover fast because I can find strength in Him through seeking him.

Appendix D. Calling to Ministry

I have been called since I was a child, and gradually I feel God is revealing a plan for me, and He is equipping me for His use. When I was a child, I was quite sure I would be a church pianist; I became a worship leader during my teenage years, and I thought I would lead a worship team and I would be a layman church choir conductor when I finished my college education. I was planning to apply for graduate school in USA to further my studies in singing, and I found Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where I received my church music and theological education.

Getting to know the Seminary was the result of a chain of coincidences, before that I had never thought of going to the Seminary. In my final years, I was brought to Fort Worth, Texas, for a performance tour with Hong Kong Baptist University; In Fort Worth, I had a home stay in a Taiwanese Pastor (Pastor Ding)’s home. One night, we started to talk about Hong Kong. Pastor Ding asked me if I knew a girl from Hong Kong who studied in Southwestern Baptist Seminary. This was nearly impossible because I went to a small church. However, at an instant, I found out she had been a substitute music teacher in my secondary school. I was overwhelmed because I admired this music teacher, but, I had lost my contact with her when I wanted to ask her about her education in USA; After the tour, I travelled alone, and I had a lot of time to reflect and pray on the flight back to Hong Kong. The next day, I shared this with my pastor, I asked, “There is a Seminary in USA that offers quality graduate school program, God has already brought me there. I am learning music because I

want to serve the church, and a church music school in a Seminary will fulfil this purpose. What about going to USA and study in this Seminary?" My pastor responded, "Good! Keep praying. God will use you."

I also shared the same story with my classmate, this is her response—"You are always zealous when you talk about the church. You should seriously consider this." When I told my parents about applying the Seminary, they were a bit amused at their "miss happy-go-lucky" as they thought I planned to become a preacher. I explained, "If I am going to serve God with music for the rest of my life, there's no harm for me to learn more about church music." I regard the chain of coincidences as a call for studying in the seminary. In 2006, I became a seminary student.

In the seminary, besides advancing my music skills, the seminary life has completely changed my life. Unlike studying in other music universities, where music students compete for resources and fame, the seminarians support each other in their studies because we all have a common goal—we will serve the world when we graduate. Each of us will become a servant of God and contributes in the ministry of His kingdom. We made breakthroughs for evangelism together, and it was a great time to practise servanthood. In 2008, the seminary choir was on tour to Korea. During the trip, we worked as a music missionary team. Upon graduation in 2009, I felt I was ready to serve, both musically and spiritually.

However, it is uncommon for churches in Hong Kong to hire full-time music ministers. Hence, I planned to work as a music teacher and serve in the church as a volunteer. 2019 marks my tenth year of work and I found it rewarding—God has used my job experiences, and the ministry in Yan Fook and Levite institute, to nurture my confidence in leading the music groups, improve my social skills, and equip me with administrative skills. Last but not least, as mentioned above, operating the current school music program let me reflect on my competency—I can be "a very good recruiter/ promoter of God". I am even more ready for a full-time ministry now.

"I am a very good recruiter and I did the work well. Wouldn't it be perfect if I can use my strength to serve the Lord?" Whenever I archive a goal, this thought will come up in my mind. I think the Holy Spirit is urging me to be aware of His calling and be open-minded to any possibilities.

Last winter, knowing Minister Ho Yuen Yee will be retiring in 2020, Mr Chu Siu Wah invited me to go to LA to visit FCBCLA. Before the Sunday worship, I had an individual coaching session with a young brother from the choir to polish his conducting and congregation song leading techniques. The teaching went well because my character naturally made me a cheerful music coach. I also had the opportunity to join and sing in the worship service. Besides, I also visited and rehearsed the Cantonese Choir rehearsals.

Before the trip, I knew that FCBCLA is a big church and it has a well-established music program. I was a bit nervous before the rehearsal. However, I was soon relieved because I clicked with the choir members after interacting with them for three minutes. I realized that the atmosphere of the choir in FCBCLA is very close to the one in Yan Fook Church Choir, and this familiarity made feel that I can confidently do well in the ministry of FCBCLA.

During my two weeks of stay in LA, I have observed that the Sunday teaching of FCBCLA is very solid, and this is reflected on the participation of the congregation—I was first warmly

welcomed by the brothers and sisters before and after the service. The congregation were actively engaged in the worship. I also had a look at the children's ministry, Mandarin ministry, and Sunday school. All of these showed signs of a healthy church, and I will be more than happy to join the congregation and the ministry in FCBCLA.

At the end of my trip, I asked for feedback from Minister Ho. I asked, "Now, Do you think I can do well as a music minister?" She replied, "Sure! Why not? Experiences and ability accumulates over time." As Minister Ho is an experienced music minister, her feedback was truly encouraging to me. I started to pray and talk to God on the calling.

In LA, I observed that the demographic around the Chinatown is changing. On the other hand, the world is globalized. Built upon the strengths to serve the Chinese, it is possible that Chinese churches could serve the community by reaching out to non-Asians. Born as a Hong Konger, attended a mandarin church during my study in USA, and getting along well with friends who have various ethnicities, I have the creativity, diligence, and the organizational skill required to cope well with the challenge in a globalized environment. I believe I can contribute to the growth and the development of FCBCLA.

"To have Eternal Ambition" is a slogan of my friends' church in Silicon Valley. It is to encourage believers to serve God with their professional knowledge. Christians should prioritize God, and pursue life purposes with eternal value. Music is my professional knowledge, and it is clear that God has chosen and affirmed me to be His servant. As 1 Thessalonians 5:19,21 says, "Do not quench the Spirit; ...But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good". FCBCLA could be the place where my spiritual gifts flourished for God for His given eternal ambition, therefore, in peace, I am applying to the position. Under God's sovereignty, I know I am in the good hands of His will.

Appendix E. Pastoral Experience

During my high school and university years, I was a worship leader and keyboard player in the worship band in Keen Men Church. Also, I was an activity coordinator for "Summer English Course" every year. The teachers of this program were university students from Texas. The goal for this program was evangelism by the means of English teaching. My duty was to assist the teachers' teaching, translate, and take care of the teachers' living in Hong Kong. All of us in the team leded singspiration, shared our testimony, and organized activities in the camp. Many students turned to Christ and this leded to the growth of the church. I made friend with many students and we still keep in contact now. Since I studied overseas in USA, I could no longer serve the ministries in Keen Man Church.

During my three-year seminary study in USA, I was a member of Glory Chinese Baptist Church (GCBC). I established a children's choir, and I was responsible for the singspiration of Children's Sunday school. I used the curriculum and teaching plans I designed for the church music education course in the Seminary. To evaluate the significance of the children's choir ministry, I thought it was very important because I could teach the Word of God through music, and children learnt to serve God through the choir. The Children's choir offered opportunities for them to discover their talents and gifts. I was very glad to know that many of the children I served, and the youths I partnered with, are now serving faithfully in the youth and young adult ministry.

In GCBC, I also played the piano for church services and choir rehearsals. I sometimes led the rehearsal as a conductor, and sang in the Choir as a soloist and choir member. Taiwanese, Mainland Chinese, and Cantonese formed the church congregation. At that time, my church was about to build a new church building. Meetings about the church building were often scheduled after the service, before choir practice. Due to the segregated demographic backgrounds of the adults, heated discussion could always be found. However, when it was choir time, the choir members could always sing in unity, even they had just expressed different opinions about the church building. In a way, I believed the choir and other ministries stabilized the church at that time because the congregation could focus on God—People are to serve the Lord and please Him; In worship, His people are edified and mangled together beyond their differences. I am very blessed to be part of the music ministry of GCBC. Even though I got to leave my church family in Texas upon my graduation from the Seminary, the unconditional acceptance, love and care showered by the children and the rest of the congregations marked a great start of my Christian service.

I spent seven years coaching and conducting the Yan Fook Choir. In Yan Fook Choir, we embraced the scripture of Psalms 150:6, “Let everything that has breath praise the Lord”. Literally, the conductors’ team would support the improvement of musical literacy of choir members who did not have much musical background. I was one of the four conductors. We provided extra rehearsals for those who were encountering music challenges. As a vocal major, I focused on giving advice on enhancing the choir’s singing techniques with my knowledge in voice pedagogy.

In special occasions, I would sing the solo part, and also be the worship leader, with the choir. Besides the monthly participation in services, my team facilitated the musical growth through organizing concerts and participating in seasonal events—e.g. Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter celebrations. For years, we prepared Handel’s Messiah with orchestra. Through the years, the singing quality of the choir attained observable improvement.

In 2015, our choir, along with the choir band, organized a concert open to the church congregation and public. All the choir members worked diligently and their singing technique and musicality improved rapidly. We all experienced the guidance of God. Our team spirit was again elevated afterwards.

Serving in Yan Fook Choir was not without issues and conflicts, but, in our team, we highlighted the importance of love. With love, all the minor hassles could be concealed, as 1 Peter 4:8 says, “Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because love covers a multitude of sins.” We had prayer time every week before the rehearsals. This connected each one in the choir. Gradually, with the work of the Holy Spirit, the choir became a family in Christ. The choir members started to help each other by forming some small practise groups and practised on their own on Saturdays. The brothers in the men’s section even hired a violin teacher and formed a violin class to facilitate their music learning. “Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!” (Psalm 133:1). I was blessed to be part of this family!

My ministry in Yan Fook Choir came to an end along with the retirement of Pastor Alex Luen, who I reported to in Yan Fook Church. It ended joyously with a worship celebration involving all the teams in the worship department of Yan Fook Church.

After the ministry in Yan Fook Church, I volunteered in the ministry of Levites Institute (LI). With the support from the leadership of Yan Fook Church, LI was established for the training of worshippers. Serving in LI was like an extension of the ministry in Yan Fook. I actively participated in the core group for 18 months, during its establishment. In 2015, I recruited thirty singers, founded the LI choir and became the conductor of it. The function of the choir is to edify brothers and sisters from different churches, over various denominations through professional training and worship renewal. In the core group, I contributed in promotion strategies and planning. Since I took a full time job three years ago, I was not able to afford the time to serve in LI like a freelancer before. Hence, I passed the choir to my teammate from Yan Fook Church.

Now, I am still in support of the ministry of LI. I offer consultancy for the design of the vocal curriculum of LI. I was a juror for the students' recital. I still partner with the LI choir as a soloist. Sometimes, I substitute as a conductor or pianist when it is needed. I participated in LI's opening worship service, as well as LI's seasonal support provided for the Chinese Christian Church of Amoy during Christmas, Good Friday, and Easter. Recently, in cooperation with Far East Broadcasting Co. Hong Kong, I filmed three video programs which consist of hymn solos of works written by Fanny Crosby and solo pieces with the joint-church choir. In Amoy Church, I was invited to share my testimony and sang in an evangelistic event. I was invited by a fellowship (members in their 50s and 60s) to conduct a vocal training session during the fellowship time. From Yan Fook Church to Amoy Church, LI has provided a platform to serve churches across various denominations.