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Kenneth Leong's Testimony

October 11, 2020



God works in my mind in “funny” ways. Certain dates tend to trigger memories and sometimes action as in this case as I submit my FCBC membership application on the due date of October 11. On this date, I was baptized in the Cincinnati Chinese Church on October 11, 1981. On October 11, 2017, my father went home to be with the LORD.

Becoming a Christian

On the invitation of a coworker at the time, Margaret Wong, I had visited FCBC on a few Sundays during late 1980. I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior on January 11, 1981 upon Dr. Greg Owyang's sermon “*Come Out of Depression*” and on how God led Elijah out of his depression.

On that Sunday, I was depressed for some similar reasons that caused Elijah's depression, but for one reason in particular. Just in the prior week, my Belmont High School classmate, Paris Wan, husband of Caroline Wan and brother-in-law to Marcia Yuen, was murdered in a Chinatown restaurant by a Chinese gang member. Through Dr. Greg's sermon, I believed God was the only one who could give me the peace that I was hoping for. Upon closing his sermon, he asked us to bow our heads and close our eyes. Dr. Greg gave an invitation to become a believer. With the prodding of the Holy Spirit, I was the only one in the congregation to raise a hand.

At the service's end while we were disbanding, someone approached me, introduced himself as Wes Wong, and asked if I had raised my hand. Two thoughts raced to my mind. (1) You were supposed to have your eyes closed! And (2) Wes Wong, Margaret's husband, is standing next to me, are there more than one Wes Wong? Yes, it was Lillian Wong's husband, Penny Wong's brother, and Caleb & Alisa Wong's father, who kindly asked if I would like to confirm my new found faith with him. Not knowing him and still surprised that he didn't keep his eyes closed, I declined and said Margaret's Wes Wong can do that--to his surprise! Upon Wes' leading and prayer, I accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior on January 11, 1981.

Life Changes

God had helped me overcome my depression then and has brought about many changes in my life. During the next 4 months, I had interviewed and accepted a new job to move to Cincinnati, OH in May 1981. But, unbeknownst to me prior to that move, I met my future wife-to-be Karen Lee at FCBC. I had dated a lot before then but none of the relationships became serious. Since I had no commitments and not married, I decided on a career change going from civil service to private industry.

I joined the Cincinnati Chinese Church “CCC” in May 1981. 3 months later, Dr. Reginald Tsang, my mentor and one of the founders and Elders of CCC, handed me a Standard Publishing Sunday School Teachers Guide and said: “Kenny, you are now a Sunday School teacher and you can take over my class” of junior and senior highers. That opportunity would never have come about in such a short time had I stayed at FCBC. God gave me purpose: To minister to the youth. I was the only ABC young adult amongst foreign born adults and collegians whose first language was mostly Mandarin. God used my experience and upbringing as an ABC with immigrant parents to relate, empathize and minister to CCC youth with similar family backgrounds.

After a long-distance relationship, Karen and I were eventually married by Dr. Greg at FCBC on August 21, 1982 with Karen's moving to Cincinnati and serving at CCC. Upon hearing of the home-going of Dr. Greg and Deacon Fook Kong in July 1985, we fervently prayed to return to L.A. to serve with our hurting FCBC family. Although jobs were extremely scarce in my specialization in Los Angeles, God amazingly blessed us with our move back to L.A. in October 1985 with our Cincinnati born kid, Kimberly.

Upon returning to FCBC, I was hoping to serve in a similar capacity as at CCC. And, High School ministry was also one of Dr. Greg's passions. With the support of Chris Tomokiyo, High School Sunday School Superintendent, I became a Sunday School teacher's aide in his Sunday school department even though my application was rejected because of insufficient experience by the Sunday school Director at that time.

Becoming a Member of FCBC?

Frankly, I have enjoyed many privileges as a non-member friend of FCBC. I was able to teach in Sunday school for about 25 years (mostly in High School) which was my first passion, serve in many other ministries and take advantage of the many programs FCBC has offered. The reasons for my delay in transferring my CCC "membership" (that has been very informal) is because of so many fond memories of CCC. My most formative years of growing up as a Christian were at CCC that had only about 100 members. I remember: Being welcomed with open arms as an ABC, the intimate Bible studies and visitations with my mentor Dr. Reggie Tsang, being able to teach and moderate services as a baby Christian, driving thru snowy subzero degree weather to go Christmas caroling at various Chinese restaurants (including Walter Pong's father's), the weekly dinner invitations to members' homes, the birth of our number one child... And, maybe most importantly, my mother's being led to accept Jesus upon one of her visits to Cincinnati by Elderess (or Si Mo) Elaine Chu.

With the passage of time, memories, and people; I have decided to put the past behind me and I now wish to join FCBC as a member if accepted. I believe it is now time to legitimize my position with FCBC as a member rather than as a friend in my future service for FCBC whether in a "mission field" outside representing FCBC or within FCBC. As a member, I will have a legitimate "voice" to attend members meetings, provide input, and vote on important issues that are presented to the church. I have appreciated the support and encouragement received from and opportunities to give to brothers and sisters of FCBC.

God has blessed me immeasurably with my wife Karen, and our children: Kimberly, Kevin, Kristopher, and Kerry. As Pastor Herman once called us during a baby dedication: The K family.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kenny, Ken or even Kenneth (as you prefer)
Leong