

My Eyes Have Seen God

TESTIMONY SERIES



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Contents

Preface **6**

Introduction **8**

Testimonies of Grace **12**

From the Beginnings of Belief to Entering the Ministry..... 14

1. First belief..... 15

2. Dedication..... 38

The Blessings Received By My Wife's Family..... 83

1. My brother-in-law's first experience of God..... 83

2. My mother-in-law escapes from the bondage of Satan..... 85

3. Father-in-law and mother-in-law baptized into Christ..... 89

4. My father-in-law receives the Holy Spirit before passing away..... 91

5. My wife's uncle has a dream from God..... 92

6. My mother-in-law dreams of paradise..... 94

7. My mother-in-law departs from the world peacefully..... 95

Effective Prayers..... 97

1. According to the Father's will..... 98

2. With a pure faith..... 102

3. Steadfast and earnest..... 105

4. Seek diligently..... 111

The Path of Ministry **118**

The Great Downpour of the Holy Spirit in Wentzu..... 120

The Ministry in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia..... 134

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Preface

“I HAVE HEARD OF YOU BY THE HEARING OF THE EAR, BUT NOW MY EYE SEES YOU” JOB 42:5

This declaration by Job is one of the most oft-quoted verses in the Bible. It declares the true abidance of God in one's life, as experienced by Job. But before he was able to behold the majesty of God, he had to endure a series of trials and sufferings. At one point during this testing, he tried to reason with God, but in the end he realized how insignificant he really was. It was only when he denied himself that he saw God.

Like Job, we are gradually transformed as we go through life, progressing from merely hearing to seeing. And when we reach this point, we are able to face whatever comes our way with joy and thanksgiving.

In this book, the author Elder Shun Dao Hsieh tells his personal story. He recounts his agnostic beginnings and how he later came to witness God's magnificent acts. He also describes his struggles relating to life and faith, his determination to serve and how the Holy Spirit guided him. In his forty-five years of service as a full-time minister of the True Jesus Church, his life has indeed been full of God's wondrous grace.

Elder Hsieh documents his experiences in a frank and, at times, humorous way. We learn, for example, of his first encounter with the Holy Spirit in a village church, which served as a thunderous wake-up call; his bittersweet story of being a rookie preacher in a big city church; the mighty work of the Holy Spirit in Wentzu, where people flocked to pray for the Holy Spirit; and miraculous healings and the casting out of demons. All these testimonies are vividly depicted, making the book a compelling read.

Elder Hsieh's testimony was originally written in Chinese and published by the Taiwan General Assembly of the True Jesus Church (TJC) in November 2001. It was later translated into English by the youths of Irvine TJC in California and edited by Julius Tsai. The final stage of editing was undertaken by the UK Department of Literary Ministry. May the devotion and diligence of all these workers be remembered by our Lord.

I would also like to thank the members of the International Assembly Review Board who put in time and effort to check the book for doctrinal soundness. May our Lord continue to guide and bless their ministry.

And finally, may this book bring to light the work of the Holy Spirit in His church.

Deacon KCTsai
Department of Literary Ministry
International Assembly of the True Jesus Church

Introduction

When we read the story of Job, we can see that he encountered great trials in his life. But despite his suffering, he continued to praise God's name from the bottom of his heart. He even admonished his wife for complaining against the Lord. How was he able to show such strength? Undoubtedly, his strength came from the knowledge that all he possessed was given by God and, whether he experienced blessings or calamity, the divine will works in all things (Job 1:1–4, 13–19, 21; 2:7–10).

Indeed, God's will is behind everything that happens. But then the question arises: What is God's will? This was the question that Job wanted an answer to. He had reached a point where he was unable to withstand his trials and even cursed the day of his birth (Job 3:1–3). He was tormented day in and day out, not by his sufferings, but by the inability to find an answer.

At the end of Job's ordeal, God spoke to him out of the whirlwind. Job confessed he had not initially understood the meaning of his trials and sufferings because of "things too wonderful for me". But after encountering God, Job was comforted and he finally received the answer he had been seeking. Job said to the Lord, "I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You" (Job 42:3–5).

My family has, likewise, been through many trials and much suffering over the last fifty years. When we found ourselves in the midst of hard times, we would sometimes wonder, *Why are these things happening to us?* Indeed, it is through the mercy of God that not only could we remain faithful amid these trials, but we also learned a few valuable lessons along the way. Moreover, the Lord removed the afflictions in time, and went on to grant us even greater blessings than before. My spirit and soul, like Job's, thus cry out in unison, "Lord! I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You!"

In over forty years of serving the Lord, whether pastoring the flock, preaching the Lord's gospel of salvation, laying on of hands in prayer, or writing about the insights I have gained from studying the Bible, I have felt my heart being filled, time and time again, with

a power from above. Because of all the wonderful works God has accomplished in my life, I want to shout out in thanksgiving to Him: “Lord! I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You!”

Louis Berkhof, a professor of theology who taught at the Calvin Theological Seminary, wrote in his book *A Summary of Christian Doctrine*¹ that while the gift of healing may have been prevalent in the days of the apostles (1 Cor 12:9, 10, 28, 30), this gift departed from the world along with the apostles themselves. Despite what Berkhof says, my path of faith over the last fifty years, including more than forty years as a minister, has proved the opposite to be true. Miracles are not just historical phenomena; they are still used by God today to display His mighty power. “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8), and His power, love and faithfulness remain the same. The Lord’s divine qualities will never, and *can* never, change.

This book is divided into two main sections. The first part, Testimonies of Grace, records my journey of faith from when I first believed to when I offered myself up for His ministry. I also include testimonies of how my wife’s family came to Christ, and of the powerful effects of prayer. The second part, The Path of Ministry, is a collection of reflections on my ministry: testimonies of the miracles and the great downpour of the Holy Spirit at Wentzu; and perspectives on the ministry in Hong Kong and Southeast Asia.

I have entitled this book *My Eyes Have Seen God* because, throughout my walk of faith and ministry, I have continued to encounter and see the Lord. Dear reader, may the message conveyed in these pages serve to strengthen your faith, so that you too will be able

to look always upon His glory (Jn 11:40) and say for yourself: “Lord! I have heard of You by the hearing of the ear, but now my eye sees You!”

May all the glory, honour and praise be to the name of our one true God in heaven, now and forever.

Amen.

¹ Louis Berkhof, *A Summary of Christian Doctrine* (Michigan: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1938).

ALSO I HEARD
THE VOICE OF THE
LORD, SAYING:

“WHOM SHALL I SEND,
AND WHO WILL GO
FOR US?”

THEN I SAID,
“HERE AM I!
SEND ME.”

ISAIAH 6:8

Testimonies of Grace

FROM THE BEGINNINGS OF BELIEF TO ENTERING THE MINISTRY

I was baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus on 5 July 1947 at the True Jesus Church in Huwei. It has been fifty-four years since then, and I have been a minister for forty-two years (forty-three if one counts the year I spent in the seminary). Over these past decades, my family has experienced numerous miracles—fourteen in total, if we do not count the minor miracles. I have set down my recollections of these experiences to show how we came to worship the true God, to believe in Jesus Christ as our Saviour, and to enter into the true church, and why this was the correct path to take. My experience of entering the church may differ from those who were baptized when they were too young to decide for themselves, but this is not to say that one way is better than the other. The decision to come to Christ was made by their parents on their behalf and was the correct choice for their situation; it was just as valid as my decision to enter the church as an adult.

I have mentioned that I am not counting the minor miracles. You may be wondering, *How can some miracles be considered as “minor”?* These incidents include the times my children were ill in the middle of the night, often with fever or stomach ache, crying and unable to get to sleep. As it would have been difficult to find a doctor at such an hour, all my wife and I could do was pray for our children. Once we had done this, fevers would abate, stomach aches would disappear, and illnesses would be healed. These are what I class as minor miracles.

With six children, illnesses were frequent in our household, and there were times when more than one child was ill, so I cannot recall every case of healing. However, I do recall the fourteen major miracles,

and would like to share these instances of God’s grace with you, to glorify His name.

1. First belief

1.1 BEFORE BELIEVING IN THE LORD

On 15 August 1945, the emperor of Japan announced on the radio that Japan had surrendered to the United States, marking the end of World War II. Following this, on 25 October, power in Taiwan was transferred from Japan back to the Taiwanese.

At the time, I was in my third year at the Agricultural Polytechnic School in Huwei, Taiwan, and had been educated within the Japanese educational system. In fact, I am only able to speak Mandarin and write Chinese because I taught myself, which is why my Mandarin is far from perfect and tinged with a Taiwanese accent. In September 1946, I began studying at Nanshi Teaching Academy, a teachers’ college in the city of Tainan. Even though we were no longer under Japanese rule, there were still students who carried on living the old way of life—they spoke Japanese and would beat us if we failed to salute them in the streets.

The following April, in 1947, I withdrew from the teachers’ college. I was nineteen years old. I had originally enrolled to lighten my parents’ financial burden—the school was publicly subsidized, so I did not need to pay tuition and even received a stipend. But after eight months of studying, I was certain that I did not want to continue. Before I believed in the Lord Jesus, I was very ambitious. I figured that if I finished the course, the best I could hope for was to become a school

principal, something that I no longer considered to be such a great achievement. Going against the advice of my father and my teachers, I withdrew from college and started studying day and night so I could retake my university entrance examinations.

I was born in the tiny township of Tuku in Yunlin County. My sister, who is six years older than me, was married and lived in Huwei, only five kilometres away (in those days, both Tuku and Huwei were under the jurisdiction of Tainan). In June of the same year, she invited me to stay with her while I prepared for my exams, so I could study in a more peaceful environment.

At the time, my sister and her family were pursuing the gospel at the True Jesus Church in Huwei, but they were not yet baptized. Nonetheless, they were quite zealous and attended services every night. On Saturday, the Sabbath, they would rest from their work and go to worship. Not only that, my sister would preach and testify to everyone she met, and would not stop until the other person had had enough.

After I arrived at her house, before I even had a chance to get comfortable, she started to preach the gospel to me. “You should come and believe in Jesus,” she said, “for worshipping Jesus is to worship the Creator of the universe, the Almighty God.”

I asked her, “How tall is your God? How fat or thin is He?”

She paused to think, then replied, “We can’t see God with our eyes, so how would I know how tall, short, fat or thin He is?”

Then I said, “Since you can’t see God, how do you even know there is a God? There’s no God in the universe, because anything that cannot be proven scientifically is not worth believing in. If I had to guess what God is, then I’d say that god is the conscience within every one of us. So I don’t believe in God; I believe in myself!”

My sister replied, “I’m not that familiar with the truth, so I don’t yet know how to answer you. But if you really want to some answers, you can come to church and ask the minister.”

I thought to myself, *This will be interesting. I’ll go to church tonight and challenge the minister. Let’s see how he responds.*

1.2 PURSUING THE TRUTH

That night I went to church. This marked the beginning of my pursuit of the truth. I listened very closely to the sermon, not because I wanted to believe in Jesus but because I wanted to find fault with the minister’s message. In those days, I loved arguing with others and found great satisfaction in winning debates. I relished the thought of defeating the minister in an argument and making him suffer the humiliation. I was eager to see the expression on his face when he lost the debate, so I listened intently to the sermon. However, the minister spoke of nothing but the Bible from beginning to end. Even if he had made a mistake, I would not have known since I had never touched a Bible. I had no questions for the minister that night, which left me quite frustrated.

I made up my mind to not only go to church every night to listen to the message, but also to study the Bible on my own so that I would become familiar with it. Then I would surely be able to catch any mistakes the minister might make. Even though I had visited my sister with the intention of preparing for my exams, I ended up putting aside my books to study the Bible and listen to the word of God.

I continued to do this for about a month, but there were two things that made me anxious. The first was the appearance of the believers when they were filled by the Holy Spirit. When they prayed,

they spoke in tongues, so observers could not understand what they were saying. Furthermore, their bodies would tremble and shake. If they were only pretending to be under the influence of the Holy Spirit, why would they assume this less than graceful form? Perhaps they were not pretending; perhaps there really was a power emanating from within them. The second thing that gave me pause was the presence of divine miracles. During that time, there were many miracles and wonders at the church in Huwei. Many who were ill were healed after coming to church to pray. After seeing these miracles, I began to think that perhaps there really was a God in this church.

The fact that I was experiencing a 180-degree change of heart caused me to doubt myself. You may think I was confused, but I felt my mind was clear. You could say I was being flippant, but my attitude was very serious. Maybe I was being weak, even though I had a stubborn personality. Or maybe I compromised, and yet how could I do so as a committed atheist? Why did I experience such a dramatic change? I can only say that this was a miracle, wrought by the compassionate love of God and the movement of the Holy Spirit.

In a short amount of time, I found the answers to the questions I had asked my sister. First, Jesus Christ possesses both a human nature and a divine nature. In terms of His humanity, He was a Jew, the descendant of Abraham and of David. In terms of His divinity, He is above all things and prior to all things. All things were made through Him and are sustained by Him. He is the God who is eternally to be praised (Mt 1:1–18; Rom 9:5; Col 1:15–17).

Second, God is Spirit and not a physical entity. He cannot be seen with human eyes nor touched by human hands (Jn 4:24). He is so large that He can fill the universe and so small that He can

dwell within a person (Ps 139:7–10; Eph 4:6). Thus, humans cannot determine how tall or large, short or thin, God may be.

Third, this world can be divided into two realms: the physical and the spiritual. Science seeks to solve questions concerning matters within the realm of the material world. Religion, however, deals with questions about the world beyond the physical realm, with matters of formless spirit. Thus, science has no means to verify the existence of God, and yet His existence cannot be denied (Rom 1:19–20).

Fourth, the spirit of a man is the lamp of the Lord and can perform the function of God in examining the innermost being (Prov 20:27). It can also help a person determine what is right and wrong (Rom 2:14–15). Thus, the conscience is a result of the working of the spirit, but the conscience is not God and cannot help people gain the power to abandon evil and follow good (Rom 7:18–20). I had always thought I could rely on my conscience, but in the end it cannot be relied upon (Rom 7:21–24).

1.3 COMING TO THE LORD

On Saturday, 5 July 1947, a Sabbath day, the church in Huwei held a special service and also offered water baptism for those who wanted to be baptized. My sister's family had registered for baptism. She asked me, "Would you like to sign up too?"

"Let me think about it," I replied.

"What is there to think about?" she said. "No one has listened so intently to the sermons as you. What other doubts do you have? If you still have questions, just ask the minister. Baptism doesn't happen that often—in fact, only once a year, or at the most, twice. If you don't get baptized this time, who knows when you'll get another chance?"

After my sister's encouragement, I began to give it some serious thought. If I missed this opportunity, I might not get another one. Moreover, having witnessed numerous miracles and how the believers were filled with the Holy Spirit, I felt this faith was worthy of acceptance. So I decided to be baptized. But I did so without the blessing of my parents, because my father was a stubborn man who was always teaching me with the words of Confucius. If I wanted to believe in Jesus, I knew that he would oppose me to the end. However, believing in Jesus was something wonderful, and I could not give it up just because of his disapproval. I decided not to tell my father; I knew he would be angry when he found out, but I would deal with that when the time came.

Twelve were baptized that day. Before the baptism, everyone stood in prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to personally guide the baptism. Then we sang a hymn as each person went down into the water to receive baptism. It was a solemn scene. After being baptized, my heart felt relaxed, at peace and filled with an unexpected joy. I felt that I was starting a new life as a disciple of Christ.

Among those baptized was an elderly sister from the countryside who had never received an education and was simple at heart. When she went down into the water, she said, in astonishment, "Why is the water red?"

The believers replied, "How blessed you are! You've seen the blood of the Lord Jesus!" This sister's testimony greatly encouraged me in my own faith.

Afterwards, we returned to the chapel to pray for the Holy Spirit. Many received the Spirit, but I did not. I asked the brothers and sisters, "Why have I not received the Holy Spirit?"

They told me, "Your faith is still not sufficient, and your prayers are not fervent enough."

I asked them how I should pray, and they replied, "You can fast and pray, which means not eating or drinking, in the mornings."

I decided to try this and found it easy to do, but I still did not receive the Holy Spirit.

I returned to the brothers and sisters, and they said, "You're still not praying enough."

At this point, I started wondering if I was fasting enough; maybe I could try fasting for three whole days. That should do it! But by the end of the three days, I was hungry, thirsty, and tired as well. I asked the brothers and sisters again for advice, but they again said I was not praying enough. I thought, *If fasting for three days is not enough, should I do it for five days?* I simply could not continue in this way, so from then on I changed tack and only fasted every morning during breakfast.

It was around this time that my sister decided to visit my parents and invited me to join her. As soon as we entered the door, my father noticed that I had lost weight.

"Why are you so thin?" he asked me.

I dared not reply, but my sister responded, "He believes in Jesus now and is very fervent. He fasted for three whole days and is earnestly seeking the Holy Spirit!"

My father grew silent. It was as if oppressive black clouds had descended upon us. I could feel a storm was coming. I knew my father was angry but to my surprise, he spoke with deliberate calm: "You believe in Jesus? You haven't eaten for three days? Do you want to starve to death?" He then said, "How dare you! Why didn't you tell me you were converting to Christianity? Did any of our ancestors ever

worship Jesus? Since you don't seem to acknowledge me as your father, I will not acknowledge you as my son!"

I thought to myself, *I've committed no crime in believing in Jesus!* But then I realized that if I change my character and become more obedient to my father, then he might change his mind.

Later that night, my sister was to return home. She asked if I wanted to come back with her. "Sure," I replied. "I need some shelter from the wind and rain." And so we went back to Huwei, and I continued going to church.

Thank God, my father eventually came to respect my faith. Whenever a new year or a holiday came around, my father would instruct my mother to prepare a portion of the meal that had not been sacrificed to the gods. This was because he knew that I held fast to the biblical teaching of not eating food offered to idols (Acts 15:28–29; 16:4–5).

1.4 RECEIVING THE HOLY SPIRIT

The 14th of July marked the tenth day since I had received water baptism. Everyone had gone home after the evening service, but I stayed behind to pray by myself in the prayer room.

I knelt down before God and sincerely addressed Him: "Hallelujah, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ I pray. Praise the Lord! Please let Your Holy Spirit fill my heart." I then made the determination that if I did not receive the Holy Spirit that night, I would pray until the next morning. Perhaps God wanted to test my faith so He did not grant me His Holy Spirit immediately. I prayed for over an hour and my legs grew numb, but there were still no signs of His Spirit. *Forget it, I thought. I'll try again tomorrow.* But then I thought about how long I would have to wait till morning came. *If I*

give up now, it might be even more difficult for me to receive the Holy Spirit in the future. So I continued praying.

At that moment, there was a sudden power that flowed down from above. *Could this be the Holy Spirit?* I prayed even more fervently. Then my body began to shake and my tongue started to roll. My heart was cleared of all of its burdens and I experienced a joy that no pen could ever describe. I realized this was true inner peace, a joy in the Lord that I was experiencing for the first time in my life.

I thought everyone had gone home, but a pastor and a brother were, in fact, waiting for me. I heard the pastor very clearly telling the brother that I had received the Holy Spirit, so I continued to pray zealously. During my prayer, I saw a bright light flash three times. It was a powerful light, like lightning. Even though I had my eyes closed, I could see it clearly, which made me even more joyful. After my prayer I asked the pastor what those three flashes of bright light were. He said, "Thank God! You saw the glorious light of God."

This was my experience of receiving the Holy Spirit.

In his testimony, *From Doubt to Faith*, Elder Elisha Huang gives an account of the doubts he had when he was first baptized into the true church. He writes: "I originally wanted to use logic to believe, but only now do I understand that belief comes from experience." His words reflect my own experience of seeking the truth.

Jesus once proclaimed:

"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. If a son asks for bread from any father among you, will he give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will he give him a serpent instead of a

fish? Or if he asks for an egg, will he offer him a scorpion? If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"

Luke 11:9–13

In my experience of receiving the Holy Spirit, God's words were completely fulfilled. I understood that whoever seeks with sincerity and urgency will certainly receive the promised Holy Spirit. For those who have not yet received the Spirit, do not be discouraged; continue to ask of Him. You, too, will one day be filled with the Holy Spirit and share the same joy I have experienced.

For my father, alcohol was a vital part of life. He would drink it with every meal, apart from breakfast, and his alcohol tolerance was very high. But in late July 1947, he was admitted to Chiayi Shun Tiantang Hospital for health problems caused by his excessive drinking. My mother had to take care of him at the time.

Back then, local churches would have spiritual convocations during the summer so that students on summer break could help with the holy work. On 2 August, which was a Sabbath day, I attended the spiritual convocation at the church in Chiayi. After the service, I went to pray in the prayer room. The Holy Spirit filled me, and in my prayer I made a vow to God that I would one day become a pastor. Afterwards, I told Elder Yichen Chien, who had been sent to help with the spiritual convocation.

"How long have you been baptized?" he asked.

"I studied the gospel for one month and received baptism almost a month ago," I replied.

After he heard my answer, he could not stop laughing. But, at the same time, he did not want to discourage me in what he must have seen as my extreme naivety.

When I first believed, I would often hear pastors proclaiming that the second coming of Jesus Christ was near. I imagined He might come within the next ten years, though no pastor had expressed that view. I thought, if Jesus Christ really were to come back within the next ten years, He would come just as I finished college and military service, and would be about to start a career. If He were to come so soon, why should I simply waste the next few years? Taking these thoughts to their logical conclusion, there no longer seemed to be any point in resitting my university entrance exams.

1.5 TEACHING ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Upon the restoration of Taiwan after the end of Japanese rule, all the Japanese teachers returned to Japan. This meant that teachers were in great demand. At that time, local government was divided into large counties and metropolitan areas. Tainan County was comprised of the cities currently known as Yulin, Chiayi and Tainan. I resided in Tainan County, whose county seat was in Hsinying. Later, Huwei, Touliu and Peikang would come to comprise Yunlin County. In order to take the teachers' proficiency exam, I had to travel to Huwei to register at the Department of Education. While there, I saw a beautiful girl who also happened to be submitting her application. She left a deep impression on me.

Only four months before, I had left the teaching college in Tainan because I did not want to be an elementary school teacher for the rest of my life. Yet, here I was, applying for the teachers' proficiency test again. If my life was a fictional story, this plot twist would seem a

little far-fetched. However, looking back, I am certain I made the right decision. First, I no longer wanted to pursue a university degree, and I needed to find a job to support myself. Second, being a teacher was a secure and stable job because unexpected layoffs were rare. Third, the life of a teacher was a simple one, so I would be able to maintain my faith better. But the most important thing was that God was guiding my footsteps (Prov 16:9; 20:24).

I received my results in late August; praise God, I passed. At the end of August, I reported to work as a teacher at the Tungshih Public School, which at that time belonged to the Huwei district of Tainan County. To my surprise, as I stepped into my office I saw the girl from the Department of Education. *What a small world!* I thought. She was from the local area and happened to be teaching second grade as well, so we had many opportunities to discuss work issues. Because I had undergone teachers' training that month, I knew a little bit more than she did, so she would sometimes ask me for advice. Even more coincidentally, her desk was directly opposite mine, so every time I looked up I would see her. Later, a relative who taught at Longyen Elementary School told me that, according to the Department of Education records, I was originally assigned to Longyen Elementary School but my actual summons had sent me to this school instead. My relative did not know the reason for the last-minute change, but I thank God that it led me to my wife. Eventually, in His mercy, He would call my wife and her family for Himself.

Three months later, I knelt down to pray and then wrote her a letter that said: *I like you very much. Will you allow me to have such feelings for you?*

The next day she replied simply, *I will allow it.* I was exhilarated. I kept the letter in my pocket and read it over and over every day.

1.6 MARRIAGE

My wife and I were married on 2 May 1950. By the time we were engaged, she had resigned from her teaching post because of health issues. According to church regulations, we could not hold our wedding ceremony in the chapel because she was not yet a member of the church. Instead, we held a simple wedding at home. My father had already passed away, so my older brother officiated at our wedding.

He said, "Now that the wedding ceremony is over, the groom shall escort the wedding party to the temple in order for us to show our gratitude."

I said, "I cannot go against the teachings of the church."

"You don't need to worry," he replied. "Someone will take your place in offering the incense. All you need to do is accompany them."

I thought to myself, *I'm not offering incense, nor am I entering the temple, so strictly speaking I won't be going against the church.* Without a second thought, I consented.

Word later travelled to the church in Huwei that I had gone to worship idols. Deacon Yunghui Tsai approached me to find out the facts. I told him, "I did not worship idols. I didn't even step foot inside the temple. Rumours are unreliable."

"Although you did not worship idols, you compromised with the devil," he replied. "This is also trespassing against God, so you need to repent and ask forgiveness."

I heeded his admonishment and knelt down with him to pray. However, the Holy Spirit had already departed from me. I could not speak in tongues, nor did my body move during prayer. I do not know when God had taken His Spirit away from me, but I was very anxious and started to reflect upon my sin. I began to weep, and Deacon Tsai wept with me. During that prayer, God forgave me and bestowed the

Holy Spirit upon me once more. I could once again pray in tongues and experience the movement of the Spirit. I was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to cry even more, my tears running down like rain and my heart burning like fire. I continued to cry for a long time, even after Deacon Tsai left.

The prophet Isaiah spoke concerning the attitude of the Lord Jesus towards sinners: “A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench...” (Isa 42:3). Both “a bruised reed” and “smoking flax” can represent those who are weak in faith and overcome by sin. Like a bruised reed, I had been tied down by the worries and cares of the world; like smoking flax, I was unable to shine the light to brighten this world. Yet the Lord Jesus used the truth to heal the bruises on my body, to revitalize me. He again granted me the Holy Spirit to light my lamp, invigorating my quenched flame. Indeed, the length, breadth, height and depth of God’s love are immeasurable (Eph 3:18–19). This is something I will never forget.

During the autumn after our wedding, my wife began to suffer from a serious stomach ailment. She would be perfectly fine during the day, but would experience pain at night. Her father was a seasoned doctor but even he had never seen this type of illness before. The pain was not continuous; it would return intermittently throughout the night. For three nights, neither of us slept very well. But while she could sleep in, I had to teach in the mornings. I felt like I would probably collapse before she did if things continued like this.

My mother-in-law came to visit my wife one day. “How can you sit there and watch her suffer like that?” she scolded me. “You should take her to hospital to get a complete check-up. Just because you’re young, don’t presume you can marry again if she passes away. She’s my

only daughter, and at my age I can’t give birth to another one, even if I wanted to.”

After saying this, she departed. She was distraught at the thought of losing her daughter because in the previous two generations of her family there had only been sons. There had been three daughters in my wife’s generation, but the first two had died young, so my wife was the only daughter and was greatly treasured by her mother. My wife had graduated from a Presbyterian-sponsored school in Tainan called Evergreen All Girls’ High School (during the Japanese occupation of Taiwan, it was referred to as Evergreen Women’s Senior High School), and had therefore regularly worshipped at the Presbyterian church. Her father, for his part, had attended the Presbyterian church for twenty years, but neither he nor my wife had been baptized there.

During this time of crisis, I suddenly remembered that the true church is the church with God’s abidance. Why not ask God to have mercy and heal my wife? I testified to my wife, saying, “Even if I take you to the hospital for a physical examination, there is no guarantee they will find the cause of the illness. The True Jesus Church has been blessed with many miracles and wonders, and also the presence of the Holy Spirit. Why don’t we kneel down and pray together? I will pray for you. As long as you have faith and pray earnestly, God will heal you.”

My wife had a simple faith and immediately indicated that she wanted to pray. Since there was no True Jesus Church in the vicinity, and I was unable to contact any brethren, I was the only one interceding for her. I had seen many instances of healing brought about by the ministers laying hands on the sick, so I laid my hands on my wife’s head to help her pray. Soon after, her body began to tremble, and I thought to myself, *Could this be the movement of the Holy Spirit?*

We prayed for a long time, and after I stopped praying her body was still moving. I thought, *This shaking can't be good, especially as she hasn't eaten in the last few days.* So I told her to say "Amen." She did so and ceased praying. After this, she told me that her body had been moving during prayer and her heart had been filled with joy. But she, too, was a little worried that she might carry on shaking till the next morning!

During the prayer, I had felt a cold wind leave her body. Even the windows shook as the wind passed through. I said to her, "The devil has gone. Your sickness is cured!"

Indeed, from that night on, she was completely free from pain and her illness was gone. Even though her father and two other local doctors had not been able to cure her, through this prayer her illness was immediately healed. In this, I experienced the promise of the Lord Jesus: "And these signs will follow those who believe... they will lay hands on the sick, and they will recover" (Mk 16:17–18). This was surely a miracle—the first I experienced since believing in the Lord.

1.7 BECOMING A FATHER

In the spring of our second year of marriage, our eldest daughter (who is now married to Preacher Shengchuan Chen) was born into the world. It was a day I had been waiting for with great anticipation. Before she was born, I often remarked to myself in wonder, "I'm going to be a father!"

Sometimes I would touch my wife's growing stomach and the two of us would smile with delight. At other times, my wife would say, "Look, the baby is moving again!"

I would place my ear close to her stomach to listen and gently say to our baby, "Be nice and quiet, okay?"

As long as mother and baby were fine, it did not matter to me whether it turned out to be a boy or a girl, because "children are a heritage from the Lord" (Ps 127:3). Whichever God chose to bless us with, I would be happy.

When my daughter was one month old, she suddenly developed a fever. My father-in-law and two other local doctors examined her but could do nothing to help. The baby cried day and night. As parents, we felt helpless. Thank the Lord that during this urgent time, He reminded me that He is the Almighty God; as long as I earnestly prayed to Him, any kind of trouble would be resolved.

I told my wife, "The doctors can't do anything, so we should pray and ask God to heal her. Do you remember the time you had stomach pains? Wasn't it God who healed you?" So the two of us interceded for our daughter. I was filled with the Holy Spirit and laid hands on her during the prayer. Afterwards, I took her temperature and found that it had returned to normal. Three doctors could not heal my daughter's sickness, but God listened to our prayers and her fever subsided. This was the second miracle I experienced.

There was no True Jesus Church in the Tungshih area (an urban township in eastern Taichung County), nor were there any church members living there. Because I was unable to attend services or discuss the truth with my fellow brethren, my faith could not progress. At first I did not mind since I had already received the Holy Spirit and felt I was somewhat versed in the Scriptures. I thought, *Is it so wrong that I can't attend services?* But humans are inherently weak; I soon began to neglect praying and lost interest in reading the Bible.

After the Lord had healed my daughter, I thanked Him for His mercy and grace. My faith was renewed and I began to read the Bible

and pray zealously. However, as there was no church nearby, my spirit began to thirst and my faith became weak, even lukewarm.

In the third year of our marriage, on 17 March 1952, our second daughter was born. But just as with our first daughter, she was struck with a fever when she was less than a month old. Her condition was similar to what her elder sister's had been, but less severe. Even so, the fever would not subside. My father-in-law and two local doctors examined her, but none of them could provide a remedy. This led me to recall the two previous miracles.

I told my wife, "Let's pray for her!"

I was filled with the Holy Spirit and laid hands on her in prayer. Afterwards, I felt my daughter's forehead; her fever persisted. Since the prayer did not appear to be effective, I took her to the hospital. The doctors tried to treat her, but to no avail. So I turned back to God for help. This was a very difficult time—I was stressed and exhausted from seeking both the help of God and the help of the doctors; and yet there was no sign of improvement. We continued to go back and forth between doctors and the Lord Jesus for about two years.

Before the summer break in 1952, a thought came to me during prayer that perhaps God did not want me to live in Tungshih. There was no church there, and because it was inconvenient to travel so far, I had to wait until I had time off to attend services at the in Huwei, in midwest Taiwan. In the previous five years, God had not ceased in His mercy toward me. Perhaps, through this long period of trials, He was compelling me to leave my home and move closer to a church, to keep my faith alive. Thus, for the sake of my family's peace and happiness, not to mention their faith, I considered applying for a transfer for the following semester. I shared this thought with my wife, who said, "Do what you think is best."

I prayed to God, saying, "Lord, if you disapprove of me staying here and want me to move to a place where there is a church, please let it be done according to Your will. Lord, if You arrange for this to happen, I will serve You as a religious education teacher and take on other holy work to repay your grace. Lord, please hear my earnest prayer. Amen."

Afterwards, I wrote a letter to Superintendent Shih at the Yunlin County Department of Education. The letter went something like this:

I am a teacher at Tungshih Public School and a member of the True Jesus Church. There is no True Jesus Church in the area where I live, so during these past few years I have not been able to attend services regularly. I have felt a lack of peace in my heart and in my family life, which I fear might affect my teaching. It is my wish to transfer to Huwei because there is a church there, and it is also where I was baptized. If I receive approval for the transfer, I will attend services frequently and have joy in my heart. I will be invigorated to teach, and I promise that my students' grades will continually improve.

I was very naïve at the time—why would the education board even be concerned about the religious needs of one teacher?

Three days after sending the letter, I went with high hopes to see Superintendent Shih. I said to him, "I'm a teacher at Tungshih Public School and I sent you a letter three days ago. Have you received it?"

"Yes, I've received it," he replied. "You believe in Jesus and I believe in Confucius. While I don't understand your faith, I can still relate to your plight. I'll grant you your request to transfer to Huwei next semester."

On 1 September 1952, I was transferred to Lijen Middle School in Huwei. I am convinced that this was the result of my prayer. From then

on, I took my wife and daughters to attend services every night. And on Sundays, I would teach religious education (RE) classes and lead the students in worshipping God.

1.8 MY WIFE AND DAUGHTER ARE BAPTIZED

That year, the church in Huwei held their three-day spiritual convocation from 26–28 September. The 28th was a Sunday, which happened to be a teachers' holiday, and it was on this day my wife and two daughters were baptized. We returned to church after the baptism and prayed. By the grace of God, my wife received the Holy Spirit and was sealed as a child of God. Now my entire household believed in God: we held the same hope and were walking the same path towards heaven. Our hearts were filled with inexpressible joy (Acts 16:33–34).

This was not the end of the grace that God was to bestow upon me. Besides assuming the becoming an RE teacher, I was also blessed with the gift of delivering sermons. Whenever the preacher was not scheduled to pastor the church in Huwei, I would occasionally be assigned to deliver a sermon on the pulpit. I took this opportunity to edify the congregation, as well as strengthen my own faith.

One Sunday, after RE class, I spent half the day concentrating on preparing what I thought were very exhaustive notes for a sermon. In my mind, I anticipated it would be a resounding success and that many people would be impressed. But this was not to be. When I stepped up to speak, I immediately started by going off topic. I did not know what I was talking about and was unable to complete my thoughts. I began to panic and lose focus. My face turned red, and the more I spoke, the less sense I made. The sermon was a total failure! The Scriptures say, "Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding" (Prov 3:5). In hindsight, my poor delivery of the

sermon was a consequence of relying on myself; I had forgotten about the importance of prayer in my preparation.

On another occasion, Deacon Tsai's wife approached me just before the start of service and said, "The preacher has gone to a house in the village to conduct a family service, and Deacon Tsai is not here. Could you deliver the sermon tonight?"

I replied, "How can I deliver a sermon at such short notice?" But I had no choice other than to agree.

I prayed to God earnestly, "Lord, I have not prepared anything for tonight. I can only entrust the sermon into Your hands. Please guide me to speak what needs to be said. Amen."

Thank God, on this occasion the sermon went surprisingly well. As the Bible says, "Now therefore, go, and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say" (Ex 4:12). I truly experienced the power of these words.

After moving to Huwei, I often asked the minister to lay hands on my daughter and pray for her. The brothers and sisters also interceded for her, but her condition did not improve. Even though she had a big appetite, she did not gain any weight. She was just skin and bones. Several of the brethren remarked that her wrinkled face resembled that of a monkey. She could not stand, sit or crawl, so if she was not being carried, she would be in bed. And, because she seemed so frail, people were afraid to hold her in case they accidentally dislocated her joints.

My wife had a cousin called Doctor Cheng, a paediatrician in Huwei. He said my daughter had "summer fever", an illness characterized by fevers in the summer and improvement in the cooler seasons. However, her fever had persisted for two years and never really subsided. Another physician, Doctor Lee, who specialized

in internal medicine, said she was suffering from a hereditary heart condition that was almost impossible to cure. Even if she were fortunate enough to be cured, she would not be able to have children because of her weak heart. In addition, she should not be allowed to run, as this would put stress on her heart. In short, he concluded that this child would be a burden to us throughout her life.

1.9 HONOURING MY VOW

During a prayer in June 1954, I recalled a Bible verse: “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you” (Deut 23:21). This verse reminded me of the time when I first got baptized: whilst attending an evangelical service at the church in Chiayi, I had vowed to God that I would dedicate myself as a minister.

I told my wife of my vow, the Scriptures’ teaching, and how God would demand its fulfilment. I added, “I believe our daughter’s affliction must be God’s doing. Otherwise, how can we explain that you and our first daughter were healed through the laying on of hands and prayer, but the same method has not worked for our younger daughter, even with the ministers’ help? If this is the case, I must fulfil my vow; otherwise God will hold me accountable.”

My wife and I prayed together. I told God, “O Lord! If You are holding me to account for the vow I made, I will surely make good on it. Please grant us clear, unambiguous proof by lowering my daughter’s temperature. If her temperature does not go down by tomorrow, then I will take this as a no. O Lord! If there is some other reason for the illness, give us some time so we may examine ourselves further. O Lord! Please look upon our affliction with compassion and hear our prayer. Amen!”

Miraculously, my daughter’s temperature dropped immediately. In over two years since her birth, this was the very first time her body temperature had been normal. I said to my wife, “This is a sign, beyond the shadow of a doubt. This is amazing, and I’m filled with fear. The God we worship is truly a genuine, living and awesome God. If I don’t follow through with my vow and God’s anger flares up again, where can we possibly hide? I must dedicate myself as a minister.”

My daughter was healed and was quickly restored to full health. She was no longer skinny and bedridden, but plump and actively crawling, squatting, sitting, standing and walking. All of her organs began to develop normally. Thank the Lord for extending His merciful hand to save our beloved daughter from the verge of death. I shall never forget His abundant favour and wondrous grace.

When I was still teaching at Huwei, my colleague’s eldest daughter suffered from postnatal heart-valve failure. Her condition was not as serious as my daughter’s: her fever was not constant and she could even sit and walk. But by the time she turned twelve, she appeared malnourished and looked as if she were only seven or eight years old. In comparison, my daughter’s congenital heart failure was more severe and gave rise to worse symptoms; yet, after the Lord’s healing, she was able to develop normally.

A few years later, I watched as my daughter ran back from school. At that moment, I recalled the doctor’s earlier warning about not letting her run in her condition. After she regained her health, I did not see the need to stop her from running. Since then, she has grown up, married, and given birth to three healthy children without experiencing any problems. These events remind me once again that God’s power of healing goes way beyond any doctor’s clinical abilities. I am grateful to God for being so compassionate to us, and not letting

our daughter become a lifelong heartache. This is the third miracle that I experienced.

2. Dedication

2.1 ENTRANCE EXAM TO THE THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

According to the public school regulations of the day, if an employee wished to resign during the semester, they had to give six months' notice. I submitted my resignation letter accordingly, and it was quickly accepted. So I only received half a month's pay during July and no salary in August. It just so happened that, around the same time, the General Assembly in Taiwan opened up the registration process for its very first theological seminary. The two-year programme consisted of theological training in the first year and practical training in the second. I submitted my application immediately without hesitation. I did not notify my mother, nor did I discuss the matter with my in-laws. Since God had already made His wishes plain, no one could have dissuaded me. Rather than inform them and face stiff opposition, I thought it would be better to act first and let them know afterwards. As I expected, as soon as they found out, they were completely opposed to my decision, arguing that my children were still young and that my wife's health was too frail.

I took the entrance exam in early August. The first part was a written test, which was followed by several short sermons and, lastly, an oral interview conducted by fifteen examiners.

The chief examiner, Elder Yichen Chien, asked, "In the first year of the theological seminary, students are paid a stipend of only two hundred dollars a month. Will that be enough for you?"

At first I thought, *Why bother asking? Obviously this is not enough.* But I figured that if I said this, he would tell me to go home. I was already past the point of no return, so I answered, "God will provide." I said this despite not having any other sources of income; perhaps it sprang from the movement of the Holy Spirit.

Deacon Chungtao Lin was moved by my answer and shouted, "Hallelujah!" as if to encourage me.

My monthly salary as a public school teacher had been NT\$500 a month, with additional subsidies in the form of rice, cooking oil, salt, coal and other things. Though it did not provide a rich life by any means, it was an adequate livelihood. Once I became a theological seminary student, my monthly pay dropped to less than half of my previous income. Taking into account the loss in food subsidies and the NT\$20 of tithes I would offer, how could we possibly survive on NT\$180 per month? But thank God, we managed by relying on His grace and holding firm to our belief that He would always provide.

2.2 EVERYTHING HAS ITS TIME

*To everything there is a season,
A time for every purpose under heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die;
A time to plant, and a time to pluck what is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
A time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;*

*A time to mourn, and a time to dance;
 A time to cast away stones, and a time to gather stones;
 A time to embrace, and a time to refrain from embracing;
 A time to gain, and a time to lose;
 A time to keep, and a time to throw away;
 A time to tear, and a time to sew;
 A time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
 A time to love, and a time to hate;
 A time of war, and a time of peace.*

Ecclesiastes 3:1–8

Looking back on how my journey of faith has unfolded, I find this passage quite fitting to my own experiences. If I had resigned from Nanshi Teaching Academy and visited my sister earlier, she would not yet have discovered the gospel. If I had come later, she would have lost some zeal and might not have preached the gospel to me. As for fulfilling my vow to become a minister of God, had I done so earlier, there would have been no theological programme for me to enrol in. Moreover, the next seminary enrollment took place five years later and was targeted towards rural students, rather than city-folk such as myself. Just imagine, at the time, I was acquainted with barely half of the Bible and lacked pastoral knowledge and skills. If I had not been able to train as a seminary student, how could I have met the challenges of being a minister?

Consider the plight of the Israelites in Egypt, and why God granted their desire for freedom:

*Then the children of Israel groaned because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry came up to God because of the bondage...
 And the Lord said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My*

people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows. So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey."

Exodus 2:23b; 3:7–8a

If the golden age inaugurated by Joseph had continued, such that the Israelites remained in a position of privilege in Egypt, they would have become too comfortable and would never have dreamed of leaving. However, God's will was to lead them to the land flowing with milk and honey, to fulfil the promise He had made to Abraham. Thus, God allowed the Egyptians to persecute the Israelites, then He listened to the cries of the Israelites and stretched out His mighty hand to save them.

The fact that I had been able to make the decision to leave Tungshih and a career in teaching has much in common with how the Israelites came out of Egypt. Every time I think about this, I am impelled to cry out, "Hallelujah!" and sigh in amazement at the wondrous nature of God's plan. If I had enjoyed a smooth life in Tungshih, I would never have been willing to move to Huwei. Then I would have begun to indulge in worldly pleasures, to act according to my desires and, over time, completely abandon my faith. Another scenario is if we had moved to Huwei and God answered my prayer to heal my daughter immediately: I might have been grateful for a while, but would not have remembered my initial vow to the Lord. If that had happened, I would not have been willing to leave the educational profession and the warmth of my family for the seminary. I would have lived an utterly ordinary and unremarkable life. As the psalmist says, "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn Your

statutes” (Ps 119:71). Also, in Romans we read: “And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Rom 8:28). These two verses encompass my own experiences perfectly. Praise God!

2.3 GOD’S GRACE IS SUFFICIENT FOR ME

During this period, we kept thirteen chickens—eleven hens and two roosters. When I started my theological training, we would get thirteen eggs a day from our chickens, but do not think for a minute that our roosters were capable of laying eggs! (I suppose if God were to perform a miracle, even this might be going a bit too far.) In general, if eighty percent of your hens lay eggs, you would make a profit. For us, however, the rate was over one hundred percent. My wife would take some of the eggs to exchange for chicken feed and sell the rest for a small sum.

When the owner of the feed store heard about our chickens, he said, “How could this be possible?” Nevertheless, our chickens continued to lay eggs at the same rate, almost every day. The owner told my wife, “It’s a waste to sell these eggs for food; you should be raising chicks from them. You could be making two or three times what you make now.” He advised that it might be risky to try this in the first month, but eggs laid in the second month would be fit to be sold for this purpose.

Later, the owner of the feed store told my wife he had in fact taken the whole batch of the first month’s eggs and sold them to people who wanted to raise chicks—and the success rate had been one hundred percent. He said he had never seen such a thing, and that the usual success rate was only eighty percent. Consequently, he helped us to spread the word and everyone knew that our eleven hens were laying

thirteen eggs a day. From then on, people came to our house to buy eggs every day. And since the hens only laid thirteen a day, we had to put people on a waiting list. One time, there was an egg that was irregularly shaped. My wife was just going to sell it for food, but one of our customers said, “That’s a waste of an egg. Let me take it home and try to hatch it. I’ll do everything I can to raise a chick from it.”

These were the fourth and fifth miracles: the ability of eleven hens to lay thirteen eggs a day; and the one hundred percent hatch rate of these eggs.

2.4 A LITTLE OIL LASTS MANY DAYS

At each lunar new year, it was our tradition to prepare new year radish cakes. One year, when we came to make them, we found that we had only a little oil—not enough to make radish cakes, fry the fish and prepare our meals. We could not buy more as I had not yet received my salary. My wife wanted to conserve oil by lightly frying the radish cakes, but the children insisted that they be fried properly, or else they would not taste as good. So whenever my wife was about to fry the radish cakes or the fish, she would say, “Hallelujah,” and the kids would also say, “Hallelujah!” Miraculously, the oil just kept coming, and it did not run out until I received my salary from the General Assembly. This was the sixth miracle.

This incident reminds me of something that happened during the reign of King Ahab, when the land of Israel fell under three-and-a-half years of drought. The Lord commanded the prophet Elijah to go and seek out a widow for support. This widow only had a handful of flour and a bit of oil left in her house. Elijah told her to make a small cake for him to eat first, before she fed herself and her son. If she did this, the oil and flour would not run out until the drought was over. The

widow was full of love and faith, and obeyed the words of the prophet. Indeed, the oil and flour did not run out until the end of the famine, just as the man of God had said (1 Kgs 17:8–16). What happened in our household was a similar, though less spectacular, miracle.

2.5 MISCELLANEOUS INCIDENTS BEFORE AND AFTER ORDINATION

On Friday, 1 October 1954, I returned home to see my wife and children. I had only been away for a month but, since I had never been so far away from home, it felt like a lot longer. When I stepped in through the door, my wife was cleaning the backyard. I thought she would be overjoyed to welcome me home but instead she quietly sobbed and quivered. The sight of her filled me with sorrow and pain. I dared not ask what was troubling her in case she burst into tears. I did the only thing that came to mind, which was to turn away, pretending I had not noticed. The next day at sunset, I would have to leave to resume my training in Taichung. In those days, the theological seminary schedules were tightly packed with classes every day, aside from on the Sabbath. Furthermore, students would only be reimbursed for one trip home per month. As I said goodbye to my wife and children, my heart ached with pain.

On 23 August 1955, I concluded my year of theological seminary training. In early September, I was assigned to accompany Deacon John Yang to intern as a minister in Hualien. I felt great joy for being counted worthy to participate in the Lord's work.

On 8 September, as I passed through Hualien, I visited my second older sister's family. When she saw me she was overjoyed, clapping her hands like a little child. "What brings you here?" she asked.

"I'm no longer a teacher, I've dedicated myself to being a full-time preacher," I replied. "I'm assigned to the east coast to get hands-on training, which means I'll be away from home for three months."

On hearing this, a look of bewilderment crossed her faced. "When did you become so irresponsible?" she scolded. "Don't you care about your wife and daughters and their needs at home? What if some accident were to happen when you're away preaching? How do you expect them to deal with it? How can you fulfil your responsibilities as a husband and father? It makes no sense!"

I responded, "If you were speaking to my former self, then I would agree with you. But you don't understand: now I have the abidance and protection of the mighty God, so even though I'm not at home physically, my family will still be safe and protected. If God were to forsake me, terrible things would still happen even if I stayed at home. Because of my faith, I've entrusted every care to God and I seek His protection. Although I'm far away from home, I can't describe the joy in my heart. It's something that's beyond imagination."

When she saw how steadfast and at peace I was, she realized it would be useless trying to argue. She simply sighed, "You believers of Jesus always talk about 'God this' and 'God that.' I just don't know what to do with you!"

At this, we both burst into laughter.

Soon after my ordination, I returned home. My eldest daughter was playing next door in Deacon Chen's yard. She did not recognize me, but her younger sister reminded her: "That's Daddy!"

As it dawned on her, she cried out loudly, "Daddy!"

I could not help but feel conflicting emotions.

Another time, when I stepped through the door, my third daughter hurried over and asked, “Daddy, how long will you be staying with us this time? When will you go home?”

“This is my home!” I said loudly.

But she did not agree. “No, this is Mummy’s house. Your home is in Taichung!”

Such innocent dialogues took place a few more times until my daughter was old enough to understand. I thought to myself, *Ever since I became a minister, my once permanent home has become a temporary dwelling place. Wherever I am assigned, that is my home.* It felt like I was at home everywhere, yet nowhere.

Eight years after my ordination, my wife revealed a secret to me. She said, “While you were in training at the theological seminary and getting paid only NT\$200 a month, we continued to offer tithes to the church in Huwei. Money was very tight.”

Even so, she had not spoken a word of complaint throughout all those years. If I had known how they struggled to get by, I would have worried constantly. Thank the Lord for preserving my wife’s faith, and for blessing me with such a prudent wife. Because of her quiet strength, I had no reason to worry and could concentrate on working for God.

Such occurrences remind me of the Lord Jesus’ teaching: “If anyone comes to Me and does not hate his father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters, yes, and his own life also, he cannot be My disciple. And whoever does not bear his cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple” (Lk 14:26–27).

May the Lord’s Spirit continue to work with me, to grant me a double portion of power from above, so that I can deepen my understanding of the Lord’s instructions and faithfully obey Him until the end. Amen.

2.6 MY WIFE COUGHS UP BLOOD

In the spring of 1962, I was assigned to pastor the churches in Chiayi and Neipu. By the grace of God, two consecutive miracles led to two families being baptized, which greatly encouraged the church members and made them even more zealous for the Lord. I, too, was carried away in the jubilant atmosphere. However, because I let down my guard, Satan took advantage and began to work (Mt 26:41).

On the afternoon of 18 August, a Sabbath day, I was delivering the sermon at the church in Neipu when Deacon Tefeng Kau, who was in charge of religious affairs at Chiayi, arrived on his motorcycle.

After the service he told me, “Your wife is ill. Your neighbour, Deacon Chen, informed us by phone.”

He drove me to the train station in Chiayi, and from there I took a train and a bus home. I arrived to see my wife lying in bed; she was motionless and unable to speak.

“What happened to Mummy?” I asked my children.

“She was vomiting blood,” they replied. “We don’t know what’s wrong with her.”

I took her to the hospital. The X-ray exam showed holes in both of her lungs, indicating the most severe type of tuberculosis.

Why did this happen? Of course it was the work of Satan, who was “luring the tiger out of the mountain” in order to disrupt the holy work. Aside from that, my wife had been suffering from malnutrition and over-exertion from taking care of our many children (at the time, we had five children and another one on the way).

Her illness lasted for more than seven years. Whenever she started coughing up blood, she would lie in bed for two to three days until the bleeding stopped. Then she would get up and continue her work. This vicious cycle caused her condition to deteriorate. During that period,

I was constantly out of town helping with spiritual convocations and evangelical services in various places. Whenever I spoke about miracles on the pulpit, I would think of my sick wife at home. I encouraged others to pray for healing, and yet my own wife was still ill after ceaseless, but ineffectual, prayers. My heart was heavy and, privately, I felt I was being dishonest in my preaching.

This led me to attempt resigning on three separate occasions. The first time was after my wife became ill and I had returned home for a few days to care for her. I came back to Chiayi, accompanied by my five-year-old son, who was my youngest child at the time. When he heard I had returned, Elder Wuchen Lin, who lived next door to the church, came to visit me. I wept as I unpacked, telling him that the next time I packed my bags for home, I would not be coming back again.

He asked, “Why not?”

“You’re a doctor yourself, so you must know this very well,” I answered. “My wife will need a lot of rest to recover. And my children are young and need my care. I am very reluctant to quit my work as a minister, but I have no other choice.”

Elder Lin heard my grievances and replied, “Don’t quit. You should pray and entrust everything to God.”

Because of what he said, I dared not insist on resigning. This was the first time I tried to resign from being a preacher.

On one occasion, I was on my way to Tainan to lead a spiritual convocation and some evangelical services. As I was passing through my hometown, Huwei, I decided to check on my family. I knew my wife would hide any news about her illness so as not to worry me and

distract me from my work. When I arrived home, I found she had been in bed for about two or three days.

I summoned all of our children together. I said to them, “Daddy is on his way to Tainan to help with the evangelical services. Before I go, let’s pray together for Mummy.”

After the prayer, I picked up my luggage, with tears flowing down my cheeks, and continued on my way.

A few days later, my wife felt better, so she rose from her bed and resumed her chores. Much later, I learned that while my wife was confined to bed for three days, my children ate cookies for every meal. On the fourth day, my oldest daughter told her mother, “If we go on like this, we’ll starve to death.”

On another occasion, I fasted and prayed for my wife for three days. After this, I joined the spiritual convocation and evangelical services at the church in Tatung in Taipei, where I met with Elder Yichen Chien.

“I have been fasting and praying for my wife for three days,” I said to him. “I will quit my post if God doesn’t heal her by the end of this fourth day.”

“Why?” asked Elder Chien.

I replied, “I have been travelling to convocations and evangelical services everywhere to testify about miracles of healing and the casting out of demons. But my own wife is seriously sick and still has not been healed. How can I continue to preach?”

Elder Chien said, “God does everything in His time. How can you force God to do things your way? When His time comes, He will heal your wife; but if His time has not yet come, even your fasting prayers will be in vain.”

I agreed with him completely. Effective prayers take patience. We should not lose heart because our prayers are not answered. When it is God's time, all things will be fulfilled. This was my second attempt at resigning from my ministerial post.

As my wife's illness grew worse, I looked to an old classmate from the teaching academy in Tainan for help. He was now the principal of a rural school near Huwei. I asked him, "Could you place me in a teaching position?"

He replied, "Didn't you quit teaching because you thought it would be better to be a preacher? Why have you changed your mind?"

I did not want him to know that my wife was ill, so I answered, "It is good to be a preacher. But I'm often away from home and can't take care of my family. That's why I no longer want to be a preacher; I want to go back to teaching."

"You left teaching a long time ago. It won't be easy for you to pick it back up, unless you are willing to take a position in a remote area where most people are reluctant to go. You may be transferred back here after a couple of years. Would you like to give it a try?"

"Yes, of course!" I said. And so my friend promised to help me.

My wife was at home resting in bed. When I told her the news, she asked, "Why did you do this?"

"You're constantly sick and the kids are young," I answered. "If I return to teaching, I'll be around to take care of you and the family."

"This isn't right!" she exclaimed. "My illness is my business—it's between me and God. Your being a preacher is your business, which is between you and God. They are two unrelated matters that should not be confused."

I was deeply touched by her strong faith, which was evidently stronger than mine. After all, she was the one who was sick, not me. She was the one who was suffering. Because of her objections, I no longer insisted on giving up my work. Thank God for His mercy and for granting my wife a strong faith that could stand up to this test. This was my third and final attempt at resigning from my ministerial work.

2.7 MY WIFE'S SOUL LEAVES HER BODY

During the most serious phase of my wife's illness, she vomited blood continually for seven days. Usually the bleeding would have abated after a few days of rest, but this time it was different. Our older relatives warned me that if a patient's calf muscles are atrophied, and the muscle between the thumb and index finger is shrivelled, these indicate extreme muscle loss. My wife's condition matched these descriptions exactly. I quickly phoned my mother-in-law and told her that this time it was worse than usual—that we should prepare for the worst. My mother-in-law rushed to our house, and wept loudly as soon as she entered the door.

"Mother, please don't cry here," I pleaded. "Go to the back of the house. I want to cry too, but I'm trying hard to hold it in!" But she could not contain her weeping.

I went to kneel on my bed, facing the wall, and interceded for my wife. The sheets became soaked with tears. During the prayer, I saw an image of my wife's soul leaving her prostrate body and walking away. I understood this to mean that she was going to pass away. But how could this be? I wept bitterly and prayed, "O Lord, please don't do this! I have so many children and they are all young. They need their mother's care. How can You take her away?"

After the prayer, my wife's eyes opened and the bleeding stopped. Praise the Lord for His mercy and compassion.

On 25 to 26 February 1995, my wife and I attended a seminary family fellowship at Sun Moon Lake. On the morning of the second day, I shared this testimony with the congregation. Sister Jungling Huang was sitting next to my wife, and noticed her shed some tears. After the service, my wife told Sister Huang that during my intercessory prayer, she felt as though she had been unconscious—but for how long she did not know. Thank the Lord for preserving her life.

2.8 MY WIFE'S ILLNESS IS FULLY HEALED

Elder Wuchen Lin, an experienced doctor, once told me, "You should send your wife to a clinic that specializes in the treatment of tuberculosis. She should spend three years there resting and recuperating. And you should hire a reliable nanny to look after your children. Such an arrangement would allow your wife better care and time to rest; otherwise her recovery will be difficult. What's more, you wouldn't need to worry about taking care of the children. You can dedicate yourself fully to the divine work."

I truly appreciated his suggestions. They were to the point and well considered. However, I felt that they were beyond my means. First of all, it would cost too much to send my wife to a recovery centre and hire a nanny for three years. Secondly, as none of our parents lived with us, my wife and I would worry about having a stranger care for our six children. How would my wife possibly recuperate in peace? And how would I focus on my work for God?

Later on, I told my wife that we could not carry on like this. I decided to start fasting and praying every morning for her. She said

she would do the same. However, I was not keen on this idea: "You're too weak to make fasting prayers. You need to build up your health by eating more. It's fine for me to fast on my own."

But she answered, "How can I let you fast for me by yourself?"

"Very well," I replied. "Since you have such faith, our joint fasting will be even better."

From that day forward, both of us fasted each morning in prayer. During the first year of doing this, she still had a few episodes of coughing up blood. In the second year, she experienced only one such episode. By the third year, she had none. This was how God healed my wife. Nonetheless, because I feared a relapse, I continued to fast and pray in the mornings for a total of seven and a half years. As for my wife, she has continued for over thirty years, and is still going strong at the time of writing this manuscript (November 2000).

My wife had been seriously ill for over seven years. Neither Western doctors nor Chinese ones had any clue as to how to help her. Her ailing health drove me close to the brink of despair. At my most helpless moment, God finally extended His merciful hand to cure my beloved's sickness. This allowed me to experience once again the truth of the sayings: "The Lord will surely provide" and "A dead end for man is just the beginning for the Lord". I was left with the deep impression that God faithfully protects His chosen ones, like "the apple of His eye", as described in this passage:

*He found him in a desert land
And in the wasteland, a howling wilderness;
He encircled him, He instructed him,
He kept him as the apple of His eye.
As an eagle stirs up its nest,
Hovers over its young,*

*Spreading out its wings, taking them up,
Carrying them on its wings.*

Deuteronomy 32:10–11

Once, when my wife caught a cold, she went to see Doctor Huang, an elderly brother in Huwei. It was sometime later that he told me that her tuberculosis had calcified.

“How do you know?” I asked.

“Because there is no longer a raspy sound in her lungs,” he replied.

Afterwards, X-rays confirmed that calcification had taken place.

Thank the Lord for His merciful healing. This was the seventh miracle.

My wife had suffered miserably for over seven years. The Lord knew of her mental anguish and physical pain. Our six innocent children suffered as well, for they were deprived of the memories of a normal, happy childhood. The Lord must have been especially aware of my eldest daughter’s experience—she had to look after the household as a substitute mother, thereby sacrificing her academic grades. He must also have known that I considered resigning from my post as a minister three times. I am deeply convinced the Lord will remember everything and bless us.

2.9 INSOMNIA CURED WITHOUT MEDICATION

On 15 November 1965, the General Assembly assigned me to pastor the church in Hsinchu for a three-week period. The church had experienced harassment from certain members of the New Testament Church and, consequently, many shallow-rooted believers were led astray. They desperately needed someone to remind them and bring them back. By the mercy of God, many returned. However, about ten

members left to join the New Testament Church. Maybe this situation was making me stressed, or perhaps it was the devil’s work, but I began to suffer from insomnia. I would not fall asleep until 2 or 3 am, only to wake up a short while later. Afternoon naps were brief as well; I simply could not sleep. Not only that, I also suffered from a humming sound in my ears, dizziness and a urine infection. This situation lasted for over two years, and gradually my health deteriorated.

Brother Minchin Kuo in Taichung was a doctor of Chinese medicine, so I went to seek his help. He told me to bring him a morning urine sample the next day. When he saw the amount of white, cloudy sediment in the sample, he said, “Your illness, especially your insomnia, will be hard to treat. But I will do some research to see if there is a cure.”

I visited him again a few days later, but he had nothing to tell me.

By my fourth visit, he still had not found a cure, but instead shared the following testimony: “A Brother Wang Lai came to see me one day and said, ‘My whole body has been feeling unwell for four months. I’ve been to many doctors, without any effect. I have so many things wrong with me that I don’t even know where to begin. The worst is that I haven’t slept for four months. Please prescribe me some medicine so I can at least fall asleep tonight. I don’t care if I only get one good night’s sleep.’

“I told him that there was no such medicine. He was very disappointed to hear this. I went on to tell him that, although there is no prescription, there is a solution. When he heard this, his eyes lit up. I told him that the solution was prayer.

“He responded, ‘I’ve prayed every day, but it’s useless.’

“I said, ‘You are praying in the wrong way. Don’t be too wordy. Just say: “O Lord, please let me fall asleep!” That’s all.’

“He asked, ‘How long should the prayer last?’

“I said, ‘There’s no restriction. It can be half an hour or five minutes. Just pray until you feel drowsy.’

“ ‘What if I still can’t fall asleep?’

“I told him, ‘Just get up and pray again!’

“ ‘If I do that, I’ll be up all night! What will I do the next day?’

“I said to him, ‘Don’t worry about the next day. You haven’t slept in four months. Isn’t every day still the same day for you? If you have survived four months, what’s another day without sleep?’

“He thought about it and agreed. That night he prayed for five minutes and then lay down to sleep. But his eyes kept staring at the ceiling.

“He then got up to pray again, saying, ‘O God! I beg of Your mercy! I haven’t slept for four months. If You don’t heal me, I will die.’

“After this, he fell asleep!

“His faith was stronger the next night. Before he went to bed, he prayed, ‘Lord, You heard my prayer and let me fall asleep after I prayed twice. Tonight, please let me fall asleep after just one prayer.’

“Miraculously, he fell asleep straight away! What’s more, his other symptoms were also healed.”

After Brother Kuo told me this, he silently studied my face, as if trying to work out what I was thinking. I knew that he had shared this testimony in the hope that I would start relying on God through prayer, rather than on medication. I understood and made a resolution to fast and pray, to beg for God’s healing. Soon afterwards, the insomnia, the humming in my ears, the dizziness and the urine infection—all of which I had suffered for two years—were miraculously healed. This was the eighth miracle.

2.10 MY THIRD DAUGHTER CURED OF NASAL DIPHTHERIA

In January 1967, my third daughter was taking her final examinations at middle school when she noticed some ulceration in her nose. She also found that she could no longer speak properly. The doctor extracted two hard, yellow, foul-smelling objects from her nose. He diagnosed her with nasal diphtheria and gave her an injection. He said that the treatment would not take effect for twelve hours, and he would not be held responsible if something were to happen before the medicine had time to work. He said this because, just a few days before, he had given this same injection to another girl who had been suffering from the same condition. She died before the treatment could take effect. He added that if her symptoms did not worsen by the same time tomorrow, my daughter would need to come in for another injection.

Once I received news of my daughter’s illness, I immediately sent my wife a letter by express mail explaining that I was unable to come home because I was busy with church work. However, I would pray for our daughter throughout the night to plead for God’s mercy and healing. That night my wife did the same. My daughter woke up in the middle of the night to see her mother praying earnestly. It gave her the assurance that she would not die after all, and she was able to go back to sleep. The next day, while taking her final exams, a foul-smelling discharge came out of her nose. After that, her symptoms did not get any worse so she was able to receive another injection. A week later she was completely healed.

Even though my daughter’s nasal diphtheria was cured through a doctor’s treatment, I am convinced the healing was really God’s answer to the night-long prayer my wife and I made. The doctor made it very clear that the treatment would not take effect for twelve hours. Furthermore, another girl with nasal diphtheria had died before the

treatment took effect, so if my daughter had passed away, the doctor would have denied all responsibility. It was obvious from the doctor's disclaimer that he was doubtful the treatment would work. Therefore, I believe it was a miracle that my daughter's symptoms did not grow worse and the treatment worked to preserve her life. This was the ninth miracle.

2.11 MY WIFE CURED OF KIDNEY STONES AND A UTERINE TUMOUR

In November 1968, I went to the island of Penghu to evangelize for two weeks. On my return, my wife testified that while I was away she had experienced a sharp pain in her lower abdomen. She had gone to see Doctor Cheng, her cousin.

He said, "You are suffering from kidney stones, so drink more water. If it is still small, the stone will pass. Otherwise, you will need to have an operation."

She drank a lot of water but her abdominal pain persisted, so the doctor told her to prepare herself for surgery. But my wife was worried that if she had surgery, there would be no one to look after the children. So she began to pray and asked God to heal her. One night, she dreamed she had got up to use the bedpan. She heard a sharp clack, as though she had passed a stone. The next morning she got up to examine the bedpan and found there was neither urine nor a kidney stone. It was only then she realized that she had not actually woken during the night. Amazingly, though, her abdominal pain had disappeared, and did not return—she was truly cured. This was the tenth miracle.

In 1970, my wife experienced a new abdominal pain, so I accompanied her to see a gynaecologist. The check-up revealed a tumour growing

inside her uterus, for which the doctor recommended surgical removal. Since my wife did not want to go under the knife, she began to fast and pray for two weeks. There were days when she would only have one meal, while other times she ate nothing for the whole day. Thank God for His great mercy—a large amount of filthy substance was expelled from her body, and she no longer felt pain in her abdomen: she was completely cured. This was the eleventh miracle.

2.12 THE LORD JESUS CAN DO ALL THINGS

At noon on 26 July 1976, after morning classes at the seminary had ended, I was going downstairs for lunch. It had been raining for a few days and water had come in through the windows and into the basement. It was quite dark and I slipped; my right knee to smashed into the ground. The pain was so great that I almost fainted. I was carried up the stairs by Pastor Juiche Chang (who was the local minister in Taichung at the time) and two fellow theological students, one of whom was a brother from Japan. One supported my back; the other, my waist; and another, my legs. I was then driven to Huwei to see a doctor. The doctor said that my kneecap was broken into six pieces and that I needed to stay there for treatment. I did not return to Taichung until my treatment ended forty days later.

A year later, even though I could walk, I was still unable to kneel down to pray. One day, Brother Pingrung Wu, a renowned bone specialist from Niutiauwan, came to Taichung for a service. I told him about my knee, and asked him, "Even though I can now walk, why is it that I still can't stoop down or kneel to pray?"

He felt my knee and said, "Your kneecap has not been put back together correctly. You're lucky you can walk—don't even think about kneeling in your condition."

“What should I do?” I asked.

He replied, “It’s been over a year, so there’s not much that can be done. The only thing I can suggest is for you to see a bone specialist and ask him to operate on your knee to put things back in their proper place.”

I thought to myself, *If I do this, I’ll be in the hospital recovering for weeks.* I was so busy with work—how would I have time for a long hospital stay?

So I asked Brother Wu, “If I don’t have surgery, what will happen?”

“If you don’t, things will stay the same,” he replied. “You’ll be able to walk, but you won’t be able to kneel or stoop down.”

“If that’s the case, won’t I be, in effect, a cripple?” I asked.

Brother Wu patted me on the back, saying, “The Lord Jesus can heal you!”

I thought, *Does he think I don’t know this? After all, I also tell the believers, “The Lord Jesus can do all things!”*

After Brother Wu returned home, I continued to think about what he had said—that the Lord Jesus can heal. How much did I believe it? Was this something that I upheld only in theory? How deep was my faith in reality? Did Brother Wu not tell me “The Lord Jesus can!” as a reminder that if I did not want to undergo surgery, I should focus on prayer? I thus began to fast and pray, asking the Lord to extend His merciful healing hand. Soon afterwards, I felt that my knee joint was more flexible than before. Slowly, I regained the ability to kneel and pray, and to stoop down.

After my knee was healed, the General Assembly sent me to Putzu to help with their spiritual convocation and evangelical services. As soon as Brother Wu saw me he asked, “How’s your knee?”

“Praise the Lord, it’s completely healed!” I said. “Let me stoop down for you to see.”

He asked, “Did you have surgery?”

“I didn’t,” I replied. “I was healed through prayer.”

He patted me on the shoulder and said, “Praise God! This is the healing power of the Lord Jesus!”

Twenty years later, on 15 November 1996, I suddenly felt a sharp pain in my spine; it also hurt when I bent down at the waist. I thought I might be suffering from osteoporosis, so I went to see a bone specialist at Chengching Hospital. Brother Yang from the church in Taichung was the doctor who attended to me. He took some X-rays and asked me to come back in three days. On November 18, when I returned to see Doctor Yang, the first thing he did was to place some X-rays on an illuminated table.

“Do you feel any pain in your right knee when you walk?” he inquired.

“Why do you ask, Doctor Yang?” I replied.

“Your kneecap was fractured and not set back correctly. You should feel severe pain when you walk.”

I said, “Not only can I walk painlessly, but I can even run and go hiking. Over the last twenty years, no matter how the weather changes, I have never felt any pain there.”

“Do you use your right knee when you hike?” Brother Yang joked.

“Are you asking whether I’ve been hopping up mountains on my left leg and then hopping back down?”

“I’ve never seen such a case before,” he said in amazement.

I then testified to him: “This is a blessing I received from the Lord through fasting prayer.”

Up until today, when I look back at these events, I feel that if the Lord had wanted to restore my knee to its original shape, He certainly could have. But He was not willing to do so; He left the knee in its damaged state—fractured and protruding at the outer edge. Even though walking should have been painful, it was not. I was even able to go running and hiking. Was this not a greater miracle than if God had simply restored my knee to its original condition? This was the twelfth miracle.

2.13 CHILDREN ARE A HERITAGE FROM GOD

On 10 May 1982, my daughter suddenly came down with a fever, the cause of which was unknown. She was pregnant at the time, but we were not overly worried because her temperature was below 38 degrees Celsius. But after a week, her temperature rose to 39 degrees. I accompanied her to a local clinic to see a doctor, who then referred her to Yingchuan Hospital. However, she did not go to hospital until her work colleague took her on May 19, feeling that she should not delay any longer. On May 21, with the cause of the fever still a mystery, my daughter felt her symptoms were getting worse and, this time, went to the emergency room at Chungshan Hospital. During her stay there, her temperature hovered between 39 and 40.2 degrees. She was kept on intravenous fluids to prevent the fever from burning too high and to replenish her body with nutrients. Even though she was three-months pregnant, her body weight dropped to thirty-eight kilograms. During this time, I was away pastoring the churches in southern Taiwan, before going on to the churches in the eastern region.

On May 22, my son-in-law phoned me at the church in Nantzu. As soon as the call was connected, he began to weep and could not speak a single word.

“Why don’t you hang up and call me back in a few minutes?” I told him. I immediately began to imagine the worst—was my daughter already dead?

After a few minutes, the phone rang again. My son-in-law said, “Father, they still don’t know what’s wrong with her.”

“Pray!” I told him.

“It’s not working!” he replied.

“Keep praying, even if nothing seems to be happening,” I said. “There’s nothing else I can suggest.”

On May 24, I returned to Taichung from the eastern region and immediately went to Chungshan Hospital with my wife. My daughter told us that the doctors had suggested she have an abortion in order to increase the success of her treatment. Since her fever had raged for more than ten days, it would be hard to ensure the safety of the child. Her colleagues and one of her uncles agreed with the doctor, but her husband did not.

She asked me, “Dad, what’s your opinion?”

“I also do not agree,” I told her. “According to medical advice, an abortion is the rational thing to do. But we are people of faith. We believe that life is in the hands of God. If He wants the child to live, then the child will be preserved. If it is not His will, then the Lord will have His way. But we should never kill an innocent life. Let’s entrust this to God and ask Him to do His will.”

I continued, “During these past few days, the brothers and sisters have been fervently praying for you. Although the doctors have examined you, they are still not able to find the cause of your fever, or to bring it down. The Bible says, ‘In the day of adversity consider’ [Eccl 7:14]. You should reflect on whether you have sinned against God.”

The next day, my wife and I visited our daughter again. She told us that she had figured things out. After her first daughter was born, she had hoped her second child would not come too soon, so as not to overburden herself and her mother-in-law. She had not imagined that she would become pregnant again so quickly! So she felt very unlucky.

“I know this is not right,” my daughter said, “for the Bible tells us, ‘Children are a heritage from the Lord, the fruit of the womb is a reward’ [Ps 127:3]. I should thank the Lord for His blessing. How could I say that I was unlucky?” Thus, my daughter repented and asked God to forgive her for her careless words.

On 26 May, the doctors finally diagnosed her with paratyphoid and began giving her antibiotics every two hours. By 29 May, her temperature had come down to 36 degrees Celsius and she was moved from intensive care to the normal hospital wing. Her antibiotics were also reduced to one dose every six hours. On 4 June, she returned home, safe and sound.

During the fifth month of my daughter’s pregnancy, the baby began to move. She told her uncle, “The child is still alive! It’s moving!”

Her uncle said, “Don’t get your hopes up. Who knows what the child will be like when he or she is born?”

On 18 November, when my daughter was in labour, my wife and I rushed to the hospital. After the birth, we went to the infant room to see the newborn: it was a boy. He was peering all around him; he seemed very lively and intelligent. My wife asked a nurse, “Are there any problems with the baby?”

“Everything’s quite normal,” the nurse replied.

But my wife was not convinced. She took off the baby’s clothes to examine him all over. Only then did she believe that the child was perfectly normal. This was the thirteenth miracle.

2.14 WE STILL LIVE IN AN AGE OF MIRACLES

I accepted an invitation from the US General Assembly to assist with the holy work in the Los Angeles area from 14 August to 12 October 2000. Ten days before my departure, I started to haemorrhage every time I went to the toilet. Not only would the toilet paper be soaked in blood, but there would also be blood in the toilet bowl. If it had been a gastric haemorrhage, then my blood would have been a deep crimson colour, but instead it was bright red. Alternatively, if it had been haemorrhoids, I would have felt pain from the inflammation. I did not have any of these symptoms, so I assumed it was intestinal bleeding. My wife wanted me to see a doctor, but since the date of my departure was drawing near and I did not want to delay the sacred work in the United States, I did not see a doctor in the end.

On 14 August, my wife accompanied me to Chiang Kai-shek International Airport (now Taiwan Taoyuan International Airport). She said, “After you arrive in the United States, remember to visit a doctor!”

I did not heed her advice, however. Instead, I entrusted the matter entirely to God and begged for His mercy and healing. I knew that doctor consultation fees in the United States were very expensive, and I did not bring much money with me. If I needed to be hospitalized and undergo treatment, not only would I be unable to assist in the holy work, but I would also become a burden to the local church members. So I decided neither to see a doctor nor to request for intercession from brothers and sisters; instead I prayed to God, alone. I knew in my heart that my wife would be steadfastly praying for me.

After returning to Taiwan, my second daughter informed me that during the two months I was away, her mother had prayed two hours a day for me. It was just as I had assumed, praise God!

From 14 August (the day I arrived in Los Angeles) to 24 August, I continued to haemorrhage while using the toilet. But by the 25th, I was healed. The entire ordeal lasted around twenty days. Thank the Lord for His mercy and grace. This was the fourteenth miracle.

Some theologians and ministers of other churches doubt the veracity of the miracles recorded in the Bible, viewing them as merely myths. Some have even said that miracles and wonders are things of a past era—an era that ended during the time of the apostles. However, the Bible says: “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8). The power, love and faithfulness of the Lord Jesus have never changed and will never change. What *has* changed, on the other hand, is how much faith we have in Him.

The miracles that God revealed to me and my family during these past years have confirmed that today is still an age of miracles; they are not confined to the past. May all glory be unto the holy name of the Lord Jesus Christ from now until forevermore. Amen!

2.15 GOLDEN ANNIVERSARY

My wife and I were married on 2 May 1950, and our fiftieth anniversary was on 2 May 2000. In the West, the fiftieth wedding anniversary is called the Golden Anniversary, and, indeed, it was an occasion that we treasured greatly.

The Bible says that “a prudent wife is from the Lord” (Prov 19:14), and “her worth is far above rubies... She does him good and not evil all the days of her life” (Prov 31:10, 12). My wife is this “prudent wife”. She has willingly accompanied me throughout half a century, which is truly a blessing from God. Looking back at my forty years as a minister, I have come to realize that God not only chose me to become

a preacher, but He also chose my wife to become a preacher’s wife, to become my partner for life. Had it not been for her help and support, I would have quit my post as a minister a long time ago. I have written more about how she has supported me in subsequent parts of this book, but I would like to take the opportunity to express my debt of gratitude to her here too.

2.15.1 BUDGETING FOR OUR INCOME AND EXPENSES

In July 1954, I resigned from my job as an elementary school teacher in order to take the entrance exam for the provincial theological seminary programme. At the time, my monthly salary as a teacher was NT\$500, with financial subsidies in the form of cooking oil, rice, salt and coal. In accordance with the Department of Education regulations, I handed in my resignation letter six months in advance and promptly received permission to leave my post. Since the summer break began in mid-July, I only received half a month’s salary for July and no income at all for August. My year of training at the theological seminary started on 1 September, with a monthly stipend of NT\$200, but no subsidies for daily necessities. Back then, I had four other mouths to feed: my wife and three children (a four-year-old, a three-year-old, and a nine-month-old baby). Compared to my previous salary and benefits, my income had suddenly been reduced by seventy percent. I had no idea how we were going to get through the year.

After I graduated from the seminary programme, I began my career as a resident minister. Although the General Assembly adjusted my salary, one by one, more children arrived in our family and we ended up with three more mouths to feed. Besides the basics such as clothing and food, we also had to provide them with an education. Our financial burdens seemed to increase daily. Nevertheless, my wife

had many methods up her sleeve to stretch my meagre salary and take care of the family.

First of all, my wife purchased a family budget diary. She listed all the monthly expenses by category and meticulously recorded every single expenditure. No matter the circumstances, she stuck to her principles: never exceed the budget and never increase the budget for any single category, although a reduction was acceptable. In actual fact, we had practised this sort of financial planning ever since we first got married, except now we had to scale down the budget dramatically. Of all the expenses, we allocated the least of the budget to medication, since most of the money was spent on basic necessities. So what did we do when our children got sick? We took them to see the “free Physician” of course!

The fact that our family experienced so many merciful healings was largely because we had no other choice but to rely on God. Some brothers and sisters may wonder why the True Jesus Church experienced so many more miracles in the past compared to the present. One reason is that back then, Taiwan had no national health insurance. Going to the doctor was very expensive, so many believers were forced to see the free Physician instead. Through the mercy of God, the prayers of the sick and the needy were answered, and thus miracles abounded. However, when Taiwan rolled out the national health insurance programme, the fee to see a doctor was reduced to NT\$100. Also, with ever-advancing medical technology and medication, the opportunities for God to demonstrate His mighty power have diminished. Just think about it: With the present situation being what it is, can God work His miracles in the same way?

Secondly, my wife was quite methodical in the way she did her grocery shopping. According to her, “When you go shopping at the

street market, go around noontime when the vendors are about to close up. Things are a lot cheaper since the crowds have thinned out by then. With fewer customers around, the vendors also recognize me as an old regular, so they give me discounts or extra for free.” Not only that: “Only buy fresh produce or fish. Don’t bother buying things that are expensive, new, or limited in availability. The prices for such items will drop by a huge amount when they are in season.”

Her rules for shopping were: do not buy non-essentials; save whatever you can, whenever you can; and, unless absolutely necessary, do not waste a single penny on discounted items. She was so frugal that she managed to stretch a dollar to three times its value. It was as if she had doubled our income without knowing it, making our lives more comfortable. There are some homemakers who complain that the household income does not begin to cover expenses. I wonder if this comes down to some wasteful habits in their budgeting.

Besides this, she had an ingenious method for frying fish. Her secret was to keep the frying pan covered. She said, “This prevents the cooking oil from splattering and the fish cooks quicker. It not only saves oil but also fuel.”

The old saying “Necessity is the mother of invention” reflects how we handled financial difficulties as a family. Whenever we were pushed into a corner, we used our ingenuity to find a way out. More often than not, these solutions were able to sustain us and lead us to prosperity.

2.15.2 WORK DILIGENTLY

Although being frugal can reduce your spending, it does not solve the basic problem of having insufficient income. After all, you cannot cook a meal without any ingredients. So in order to supplement our family income, my wife took up raising chickens, packing peanuts, making

paper bags, disassembling old sweaters, knitting nylon nets, and sticking soles to the bottom of shoes. She took on whatever home-based job she could find, no matter how little the pay. Though the wages were meagre, the money added up to help the family.

We had a neighbour who distributed peanuts wholesale, so my wife worked at his store, packaging the peanuts. As for the paper bags, which were used for medicine, the pharmacy would deliver the raw materials to our home. Each bag had to be glued along three seams, and then they were tied into bundles of ten. On one occasion, when my daughter was helping to count the finished paper bags, she asked curiously, “How much money will we get for these piles and piles of bags?”

“Two dollars,” her mother answered.

“What? So little!” she gasped.

My wife got the job of unstitching old sweaters and bundling them into balls of yarn by visiting the weaving shop. The sweaters had to be unknotted, washed, dried, and the yarn bundled up into balls. The pay for each processed sweater was five dollars.

The job of knitting nylon lace was done with hooks, to form intricate designs over a steel mesh. The finished nylon knit was then attached onto women’s shoes to make them look more attractive. Sometimes, after the children finished their homework, they would pitch in to help their mother assemble the shoes. The superglue they used gave off such strong fumes, it would make them lightheaded.

There was a large agricultural field nearby, adjoining a water treatment plant. My eldest daughter and her siblings used to work there peeling corn. Since the ears of corn were dry, they were difficult to peel. The skin on my children’s fingertips was often so damaged they would crack and split open. My daughters were not paid for their work,

but were allowed to bring home the bare corncobs to use as burning fuel, thus saving the family some money.

We used to live next door to the old chapel of the church in Huwei. Several trees were planted in the front yard, and in autumn, the leaves would fall. My wife would sweep the yard each day and bring home the leaves to use as fuel, which was a blessing for her labour.

My family’s main source of income was my salary from the General Assembly. We would run into situations where the money was all gone before the next payday arrived. On one occasion, we could not even afford to buy rice. My third daughter told her younger sister to bring out her piggy bank to be “sacrificed”. Of course she refused. Her older sister told her, “Our family has run out of money. We are all going to go hungry! You have to slaughter your piggy bank!”

My daughter had no choice but to hand over her beloved piggy bank. The problem was solved and everyone rejoiced. Nevertheless, my youngest daughter wept for three days, as I learned from her sister many years later. Had I been home at that time, I would have approached fellow church members to borrow some money. That piggy bank was a culmination of all the pocket money my daughter had carefully saved up. I can imagine how she must have smiled with a great sense of accomplishment when she held her little piggy bank. As it became heavier, she may have even thought about buying some of her favourite things. But, out of the blue, all of her painstaking efforts were forfeited and her dreams were dashed to pieces. Her tender heart must have hurt so, but does not my heart ache with hers also?

As I recall these past events, I can only offer her my apologies and my blessings. I would like to tell her: “My dear daughter, Daddy is so very sorry. May God remember the noble sacrifice you made for our family, and may He repay you for all the disappointment you suffered.”

During this period, my wife set careful budgets to balance our income and expenditure, without squandering a single penny. She worked hard and took on low-paying jobs to supplement our family's income. These two virtues alone qualify her as a truly prudent woman. Her sense of thrift and industriousness also made a deep impression on my daughters as they were growing up. Naturally, they also exhibit these fine virtues as adults. Thank the Lord!

2.15.3 A HAPPY AND CONTENTED NATURE

People who are content with their lot in life are generally happier and more at peace. This peace with one's destiny comes from knowing that the heavenly will is not something we can easily alter. In other words, God is the Master of heaven and earth, and holds absolute sovereignty. No human being can protest against what God desires to do. We can paraphrase the proverb in this way: *Every person who is content with his situation in life understands that God has His good will in everything, and this is the kind of person who can rely on God wholeheartedly in all matters.* Thus, whether a person is in poverty or in wealth, he will be able to deal with his situation, being joyful and free of worries. Just as Paul wrote, "Not that I speak in regard to need, for I have learned in whatever state I am, to be content: I know how to be abased, and I know how to abound. Everywhere and in all things I have learned both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need" (Phil 4:11-12).

Job had 7,000 sheep, 3,000 camels, 500 yoke of oxen, 500 donkeys and many servants. The Bible tells us that among the people of the East, no one was as wealthy as he. Not only that, Job had seven sons and three daughters, all of whom had grown up and enjoyed a wonderful closeness with each other (Job 1:1-4). At that stage in

his life, Job had no worries about food or clothing, and enjoyed a harmonious family life. His whole household was so blessed.

However, Job was suddenly stricken with a series of disasters. All his animals were either stolen by bandits or burned by fire, and all his children died in one fell swoop. He lost everything (Job 1:13-19). But Job did not complain against God; instead, he praised Him: "Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord" (Job 1:21).

Following that, Job was afflicted with boils from head to toe. His flesh began to rot away, and no sooner had it healed it would break out again (Job 2:7; 7:5). Job's wife, seeing him in such suffering, said impatiently, "Do you still hold fast to your integrity? Curse God and die!"

Job, however, replied, "You speak as one of the foolish women speaks. Shall we indeed accept good from God, and shall we not accept adversity?" (Job 2:9-10).

The Bible says that in all he did, Job never sinned with his lips; he did not complain against God, or misjudge Him. Job was able to be so strong because he knew that everything he possessed was a gift from God. Even his misfortunes were from God's hand. Furthermore, he knew that God has His will in everything He does, and he believed deeply that God never errs. With this broad understanding and perspective, he was able to accept and be content with all that God had arranged for him.

When I talk about Job's longsuffering, it is not just to compare my wife to him. As everyone knows, Job was praised by God for being blameless and upright, a righteous man who feared God and stayed away from evil (Job 1:8; 2:3). He is affirmed in the Bible as a mighty

man of faith (Ezek 14:14; Jas 5:11). My wife is just an ordinary person, and the extent of her faith and suffering amidst trials cannot compare to Job's. One might wonder, if the experiences of Job and my wife are so far apart, how could I possibly talk about them in the same breath? My wife's sufferings were not of the same order as what Job experienced, and her faith cannot be said to have been as strong as his, but she showed herself to have a similar character. She was able to accept God's arrangement, as a happy and contented person.

Let me mention four points that will help you to see what an enlightened perspective my wife had. Her father was an established doctor, so before our marriage she enjoyed a life of material abundance compared to some other families. When we were newlyweds, and I was an elementary school teacher, we lacked nothing in our daily lives. But when I became a seminarian, our monthly income dropped dramatically. After graduating from the seminary, even though my salary from the General Assembly increased, the number of our children also increased from three to six, and our expenses grew daily. Despite these things, over the past few decades, my wife has never complained to me about having to get by on such a meagre income, or questioned how our children's tuition fees would be paid. This is the first thing I want to share.

Over the last thirty years, in order to provide for our family's needs, my wife worked hard and took on any additional jobs that came her way. She needed to care for several children, which is exhausting in itself, but she continued to work day after day to earn a little extra. Her health was never at its best, maybe because she made sacrifices in her own diet, as well as from physical exhaustion from her work—but she never complained. Whenever she received her wages, she would

comfort herself with this thought: *It is not a big deal if I must suffer a little.* This would keep her going. This is the second point I want to share.

In the middle of August 1962, my wife was afflicted with tuberculosis. Because she had to take care of the children, she could not rest and her condition worsened. Her illness lasted for seven years. During this time, there were three occasions when I wanted to resign from my work as a minister. My colleagues and elders within the church rejected my first two attempts. The third attempt came about when an old friend from the teachers' college in Tainan, who by then was an elementary school principal, promised to recommend me for a teaching position. At that time, my wife was coughing up blood and confined to her bed. When I returned from my old classmate's home, I revealed to her my intention of resigning and becoming a teacher. I thought she would be relieved, but instead she objected. I was deeply moved, for I realized then that her faith was even stronger than mine. She was the one who was sick and suffering, not I. I could not bear to see her in pain and wanted to be there to take care of her, but she had discovered how to entrust her life to God.

Jesus said to His disciples, "Peace I leave with you, My peace I give to you; not as the world gives do I give to you" (Jn 14:27). Paul also wrote, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus" (Phil 4:6-7). Thank God! The Lord Jesus promised to grant us peace in the spirit. Paul described this peace as one that surpasses all understanding. My wife, through her suffering, learned the meaning of entrusting

everything to God, and obtained all that was promised. This is my third point.

During my first year in the seminary, I could apply to be reimbursed for only one journey home a month. Because of the tight class schedule, I could only take time off between Friday and Saturday afternoon; I would rush home and then rush back again to the theological seminary. After I graduated, I was allowed three days at home each month, as per the General Assembly's regulations. For the rest of the month, I had to stay at the church where I was assigned to minister. For ten years, from April 1983 to March 1993, I worked at the International Assembly and was often assigned to go abroad to assist in the sacred work. Prior to that, I had also travelled abroad quite frequently. The first trip I took began on 19 October 1973 and lasted 200 days. I travelled with Elder John Yang to Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia and Malaysia (including Sabah). After retirement, aside from teaching classes at the theological seminary, I also set my mind on serving God through my writing. Looking back on my life as a minister these past forty years, I feel that the church has been my home, and can count on the fingers of one hand the number of days I stayed with my whole family. Even so, my wife has never complained, and has taken it all in her stride. This is the fourth point.

2.15.4 POWER FROM SINGING HYMNS

Humans are fleshly beings of little significance (1 Chr 29:14; Ps 8:3-4). Consider Elijah: he possessed the courage to reprimand King Ahab openly and to challenge hundreds of false prophets of Baal (1 Kgs 18:17-19, 36-40). Yet, even he faced trials when his faith was at its lowest point (1 Kgs 19:1-4). Now consider my wife, who is simply an

average person: was she stronger than Elijah? She, too, had a frail side. There were times when she felt so lonely that waves of panic seized her. In order to counteract such loneliness and anxiety, she led our children to sing the hymn *God Will Take Care of You*. The lyrics are as follows:

*Be not dismayed whate'er betide, God will take care of you;
Beneath His wings of love abide, God will take care of you.
Through days of toil when heart doth fail, God will take care of you;
When dangers fierce your path assail, God will take care of you.
All you may need He will provide, God will take care of you;
Nothing you ask will be denied, God will take care of you.
No matter what may be the test, God will take care of you;
Lean, weary one, upon His breast, God will take care of you.
God will take care of you, through every day, o'er all the way;
He will take care of you, God will take care of you.*

As they sang this hymn, they would meditate upon the lyrics. Suddenly, a surge of power from within would well up to wipe out the loneliness and panic. As Psalm 8:2 states: "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have ordained strength..." The *Contemporary English Version* gives this translation: "With praises from children and from tiny infants, you have built a fortress. It makes your enemies silent, and all who turn against you are left speechless."¹

During the reign of King Jehoshaphat, the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Meunites came with their vast armies to wage war on him. In his distress, Jehoshaphat resolved to inquire of the Lord, and he proclaimed a fast for all Judah. After consulting with his people, Jehoshaphat appointed priests to sing to the Lord and to praise Him

¹ Scripture taken from the Contemporary English Version © 1991, 1992, 1995 by American Bible Society, used by permission.

for the beauty of His holiness. They went out to the front of the army, proclaiming: “Praise the Lord, for His mercy endures forever.” As they began to sing and give praise, the Lord caused the Moabites, the Ammonites and the Meunites to destroy one another. When the men of Judah came to the place overlooking the wilderness and looked towards the vast army, they saw only dead bodies lying on the ground. No one had escaped (2 Chr 20:1–3, 21–24).

My wife led the children to sing *God Will Take Care of You* in order to drive away the loneliness and despair which stem from the evil one. Their experience confirms the power of praise seen in David’s Psalm 8, and the testimony of Jehoshaphat’s singing choir of priests who wiped out the enemy. This helps us to understand that hymnal praise is vital for ensuring a victorious spiritual warfare.

Elderly members tell us that, during the early days of the church in China and Taiwan, whenever they were preparing to cast out demons, they would first sing hymns to praise the Lord. Consequently, their prayers were answered, as evidenced by God’s power to defeat Satan. As we reflect, we cannot help but feel that such a fine tradition has somehow been lost.

2.15.5 THE BEST PRAYER PARTNER

The Lord Jesus once told his disciples, “Again I say to you that if two of you agree on earth concerning anything that they ask, it will be done for them by My Father in heaven. For where two or three are gathered together in My name, I am there in the midst of them” (Mt 18:19–20). In my opinion, of the “two or three” that the Lord mentions, the best prayer team consists of a husband and a wife, since they are one and share an intimate relationship (Gen 2:22–24). If the heavenly Father

answers the prayer of any two disciples who pray together, how much more effective will it be when both husband and wife pray with the same heart and mind? For over half a century, my wife has been my best prayer partner. Our many answered prayers bear witness to God’s glory. Let me enumerate some examples.

Firstly, soon after we got married, my wife suffered from stomach cramps, which no medication could relieve. She and I prayed with one heart, and I laid my hands on her head to assist her. Soon afterwards, she was moved by the Holy Spirit and her body shook until we finished praying. She was filled with great joy, and during the prayer, she exhaled something cold. Afterwards, her stomach no longer ached.

Secondly, when my eldest daughter was one month old, she came down with a high fever. The doctor’s treatment proved useless, so my wife and I prayed for her. I was filled by the Holy Spirit and laid my hands on her head during the prayer. Afterwards, I took her temperature; it had returned to normal.

Thirdly, my second daughter was born with congenital heart-valve failure and suffered from daily fevers, a condition that lasted for over two years. We took her to see several doctors and also asked ministers and the brethren for their prayers—all to no avail. During a prayer, I remembered Deuteronomy 23:21: “When you make a vow to the Lord your God, you shall not delay to pay it; for the Lord your God will surely require it of you, and it would be sin to you.” I also recalled that I had made a vow to God, promising that I would dedicate myself as a preacher. After being reminded of these things, my wife and I prayed with one heart and mind to acknowledge to God that I would make good on my vow. Immediately, my young daughter’s temperature dropped to a normal level. Amazingly, her congenital heart-valve failure was also cured from then on.

Fourthly, my wife contracted tuberculosis and was ill for more than seven years. She saw both Chinese and Western doctors, but to no avail; in fact, her condition became progressively worse. Later, we both started to fast and pray daily, pleading for the Lord's mercy. In the first year that we began praying, she coughed up blood on several occasions. In the second year, this happened only once. In the third year, she no longer coughed up blood—she was completely cured.

Finally, ten days before travelling to Southern California in the United States, I began experiencing bleeding whenever I went to the toilet. After arriving in the United States, my condition persisted. I entrusted the matter into the Lord's hand by praying every day. By the tenth day of my visit, I was completely cured. When I returned, my daughter told me that her mother had been praying for me, two hours every day for the entire duration of my two-month trip.

Besides the above experiences, whenever I was sent by the General Assembly to assist with spiritual convocations or evangelical services, when I travelled abroad to participate in various types of holy work, and when I was writing, I would sometimes feel a surge of power either pouring down from above or springing forth from within. It was at these moments that I sensed my wife was interceding for me. For over half a century, she has been my loyal and faithful praying companion.

2.15.6 THE SACRIFICE OF A WHOLE FAMILY

A few years ago, at the opening ceremony of a new academic year at the theological seminary, I addressed the newly enrolled students and their families in my capacity as the principal. I used these words: “When an individual dedicates himself to be a minister, it means his whole family also has to dedicate themselves. Parents offer up their

son; a wife, her husband; and children, their father. If even a single family member is against his decision to become a minister, then it will be extremely hard for that individual. And if a family appears to be supportive, but is not in reality, the road ahead will be filled with many obstacles.”

In more than forty years as a minister, I have spent most of my days away, working for the church. In order to support my family, my wife has had to play both the roles of a mother and a father. Though she had a husband, it was as if she did not. As my children grew up, I rarely had time to spend with them. Though they had a father, it was as if they did not. Looking at things from this perspective, my wife has had to sacrifice her husband, and my children, their father. The whole family was joined in my dedication.

After David defeated the Amalekites, he returned with many spoils of war. However, there were some among his followers who remarked that whoever had been too exhausted to go to war did not deserve to share in the spoils (1 Sam 30:9–10; 19–25). David answered them, saying, “But as his part is who goes down to the battle, so shall his part be who stays by the supplies; they shall share alike” (1 Sam 30:24). In other words, although those who fought on the frontline deserved credit, those who stayed behind to defend the camp were also worthy of due credit and a share in the spoils.

According to David's principle, my wife and children deserve a share of my reward—that is, if I, myself, am deserving. If not for their teamwork and numerous sacrifices in the course of supporting me—having to suffer immensely in their daily lives—I could not have possibly continued on this road of dedication to God.

At this juncture, I would like to tell my wife and children this: I am deeply indebted to you all for the past many decades. I am

also deeply sorry: I am unworthy to be called either a husband or a father. You have helped me so much in every aspect of my life. I am profoundly grateful and love you all dearly. May the Lord remember the sufferings you endured and richly reward you for everything you have done. Amen.

THE BLESSINGS RECEIVED BY MY WIFE'S FAMILY

1. My brother-in-law's first experience of God

In 1953, my wife's brother suddenly became possessed by an evil spirit. Whenever he was under the control of the demon, he would either shut his eyes and begin to write Chinese calligraphy with brush and ink—each stroke executed with fluency and vigour—or begin to speak in fluent Mandarin, just like a Beijing local. The odd thing was that he had never taken any lessons in calligraphy and he could not speak proper Mandarin. Sometimes he would just lie in bed, doing nothing for the entire day. My father-in-law was bewildered and completely helpless.

One day, when my wife was visiting her father, he said to her, “You've told me your church has many miracles and wonders. Since your brother is having a nervous breakdown, why don't you pray for him and see what happens?”

Later, my wife went to her brother's room, knelt on the bed and began to pray earnestly for him. During the prayer, she was filled mightily by the Holy Spirit and spoke loudly: “In the Lord Jesus' name, I cast out Satan. Demon, be gone!”

Thank the Lord, the demon left immediately and her brother soon regained consciousness. My father-in-law marvelled at this, but he still did not believe in the Lord's gospel.

A few years later, when my brother-in-law began to seek the truth himself, he noticed that whenever he came to the Sabbath

service at the church in Huwei, he was the only person who smoked. He often had to suppress his desire to smoke until after the service had ended, and then quickly go outside to have a cigarette. But he began to feel that his secret smoking habit was wrong, so he prayed to the Lord to help him give up smoking in a painless way. The Lord Jesus immediately answered his prayer and promptly removed his smoking addiction. Thank the Lord for allowing my brother-in-law to experience the effectiveness of prayer, and to recognize the truth in the Bible verse: “I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me” (Phil 4:13).

Three days later, some friends came by to visit him and they offered him a cigarette. He declined, saying, “Thanks, but I’ve quit smoking for three days now.”

Still, his friends urged him on, saying, “But these are American cigarettes. It would be a waste not to try one.”

Because they were so insistent, he tried at first to make excuses, saying, “I’m really busy now. I don’t have time to chat.” However, he eventually accepted a cigarette and took one puff, but he dared not inhale. Instead, he quietly went into the room where his father, a doctor, stored his medication. He exhaled the smoke and threw away the cigarette.

Strangely, after his friends had left, my brother-in-law noticed some pain and swelling in his throat. The pain was unbearable, to the extent that it hurt even when he swallowed.

He told his mother what had happened and asked her to pray for him. But she replied, “If you’ve done something wrong and don’t repent, your prayer is not going to work.”

“Is it because I took one puff from a cigarette?” he asked. “But I blew it out right away!”

“That’s got to be it!” his mother replied. “Quickly repent and ask the Lord to forgive your weakness.”

Both mother and son prayed together with one heart to beg for God’s forgiveness. Miraculously, as soon as my brother-in-law repented, his inflamed throat was healed and the pain disappeared. God indeed answered their prayers.

On my brother-in-law’s walk of faith, he witnessed many of God’s wonderful deeds with his own eyes, and experienced firsthand the truth in the words of the Bible:

*“My son, do not despise the chastening of the Lord,
Nor be discouraged when you are rebuked by Him;
For whom the Lord loves He chastens,
And scourges every son whom He receives.”
... For they indeed for a few days chastened us as seemed best to them,
but He for our profit, that we may be partakers of His holiness.*

Hebrews 12:5b–6, 10

2. My mother-in-law escapes from the bondage of Satan

Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, “Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me: When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, that same wicked man shall die in his

iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”

Ezekiel 3:16–19

It was early autumn in 1954. During a Sabbath service, Deacon Yunghui Tsai quoted the above passage to encourage the congregation to perform their duty and preach the gospel to unbelieving family members and relatives. The sermon struck a chord with my wife and helped her recognize her responsibility. So she began to pray earnestly for her family, beseeching the Lord to extend His saving hand to them.

One day, my mother-in-law went out to the fields to check on some recently seeded bean plants. Suddenly, she felt a cold gust of wind, which sent chills down her spine. She became so ill that she had to stay in bed, and exposure to light would give her a headache. She locked herself in her room and stayed there for the entire day.

One month later, my brother-in-law arrived in Huwei to tell my wife their mother had been sick for a whole month. She promptly went home to visit her mother, and preached the gospel to her, saying, “You need to believe in the Lord Jesus. As long as you beseech Him, you will become well again.”

“Close that door, now!” my mother-in-law shouted. She then vehemently rejected the gospel, saying: “I will not believe in Jesus! There are more than ten villages in Tungshih, but no one else besides you belongs to the True Jesus Church, isn’t that right?”

My wife was stumped, so, after this visit, she consulted with Deacon Tsai as to what she should do next. His answer was: “Pray to God. Ask Him to move her!”

Before the concluding prayer of the evening service, Deacon Tsai asked the congregation to pray for my mother-in-law, to ask the Lord Jesus to heal and save her.

The next day, my wife returned to see her mother. She pushed the door open and called out to her.

Strangely, her mother did not scream at her to close the door, as she did before. Instead she asked, “Did your whole church pray for me last night?”

“Why do you ask?” my wife responded.

“Because when I woke up this morning, I felt completely well, and the light doesn’t bother me anymore.”

Her mother then went on to describe what she had experienced: “A month ago I had a dream. There was a person, dressed in black, who wanted me to watch over the nest of a hen and her chicks. He ordered me: ‘Don’t leave them!’

“Last night, I had another dream. A messenger, dressed in white, commanded me to get up. I said, ‘I’m afraid. I’ve been detained here for over a month!’

“But the messenger in white told me, ‘Do not fear. Quickly get up and follow me!’

“So I mustered up my courage and followed him. Although the road was tiny and narrow, it was white and bright, lined on both sides with many brightly coloured flowers in full bloom. The flowers were astoundingly beautiful. On the way, the messenger in white told me, ‘I will take you to see a very awe-inspiring Person. He is almighty and knows everything. He even made a ladder that reaches to heaven.’

“After arriving, I saw the awe-inspiring Man, dressed in a long white robe. He looked extremely tall and stood with His back to me.

The messenger in white reported in a respectful manner, 'I have brought the one whom You wish to see.'

"Then, the great Man turned around to look at me."

My wife interjected, "What did He look like?"

Her mother replied, "His face shone with such blinding brilliance that I couldn't get a good look." She continued, "I told that awe-inspiring Man, 'I've been trapped for over a month. I should go home now.'

"He replied, 'That's fine. I will ask someone to take you back.'

"Then the messenger in white commanded me to close my eyes and follow him. Soon, he said, 'Open your eyes and look!'

"It was then that I found myself standing before the front door. I looked around, but the messenger in white had disappeared. What's really amazing is that when I woke up this morning, I felt so refreshed, both in body and mind. It's as if I've been released from utter despair."

My wife took this chance to tell her mother, "The brothers and sisters in church will continue to pray for you. But you also need to pray constantly. The church is holding a spiritual convocation in a few days. You must come and study the truth."

Her mother no longer objected and agreed to go.

A few days later, the autumn spiritual convocation was held at the church in Huwei. It lasted a total of three days, from Friday to Sunday. My wife brought her mother to Huwei the day before it started. My mother-in-law was not comfortable sitting in the chapel, so for the first day of the convocation she stayed at home to listen to the sermons in her bed (the church was right next door, so close, in fact, that the pulpit was just under her bedroom window). On the second day, which was the Sabbath, my children brought a bench and placed it

outside, under a tree in front of the chapel, so my mother-in-law could sit and hear the sermons better.

During the afternoon prayer, my wife encouraged her mother to go into the chapel to pray for the Holy Spirit. However, because the chapel was full of people, she could not squeeze in. My wife brought her a prayer mat so she could kneel outside the chapel door. Thank God! During that very prayer, my mother-in-law was filled with the Holy Spirit and her heart overflowed with joy. From that moment on, she no longer had any doubts. She said, "I want to go home to get a change of clothing. Tomorrow, I will come to be baptized!"

3. Father-in-law and mother-in-law baptized into Christ

When my mother-in-law returned to Tungshih, she told her husband that she had attended the spiritual convocation in Huwei, that she had received the Holy Spirit and wanted to be baptized the next day.

My father-in-law asked her, "Did anyone touch your head during the prayer?"

He asked this question because he remembered hearing a Presbyterian Church member say that ministers from the True Jesus Church would touch a believer's head to perform sorcery, putting that person under a spell.

However, my mother-in-law replied, "No, I received the Holy Spirit while praying by the front door."

Her husband believed her, but later went on to ask, "How can you get baptized after hearing the truth just once? If you are going to be

baptized, we should be doing it together. You always used to follow my lead, so why are you doing this without me?”

Soon after, my wife went to preach to her father, earnestly inviting him to listen to the truth at church. But he refused, saying, “God? What God? I don’t know any God!”

My wife tried her best to persuade him, to save his soul, but he remained unmoved. Seeing how stubborn he was, my wife began to cry. Due to his advanced diabetes, the muscle on her father’s calf had started to decay. The area of gangrene was expanding progressively, growing worse with each day. Having seen her father’s health deteriorate, and knowing the consequences of him rejecting the gospel, my wife’s weeping grew more sorrowful.

On seeing this, her father was moved. “Don’t cry!” he said. “I’ll go to church with you. Is that all right?”

The tears had indeed worked wonders.

Later, both of my in-laws came to study the truth at the church in Huwei. In 1955, after a period of Bible study, my father-in-law finally accepted the gospel, became rooted in the faith and received baptism together with his wife. Thank God, after his baptism, his advanced diabetes was quickly and miraculously cured by God. What I am most thankful for is that my father-in-law’s conversion opened up the door of salvation to his many family members. One by one, my wife’s brothers and their families came to be baptized into the Lord: a total of twenty-four souls.

My in-laws’ baptism into Christ reminded me of something my mother-in-law once told me: When the matchmaker first proposed marriage to her daughter on my behalf, my mother-in-law was opposed to it. Later, a person dressed in white appeared to her in a dream, saying, “You can let your daughter marry him.” Only then did she feel

at ease about letting me marry her daughter. God has fulfilled His wonderful salvation plan. Long before they were baptized, God had already chosen my in-laws’ family and predestined them to become His children in Christ (Eph 1:4–5; 2 Tim 1:9). I truly believe this to be the case.

Before my mother-in-law came to Christ, she had been a devout idol worshipper. After her conversion, she redirected her religious zeal to the true God. She prayed earnestly each day with all her might. Such devotion lasted more than twenty-five years. In the final year of her life, she testified to the above during a service dedicated to the elderly at the church in Huwei.

4. My father-in-law receives the Holy Spirit before passing away

On 5 September 1958, at 2.20 am, my father-in-law suffered a heart attack and was called back by the Lord to rest in peace. He was sixty-three years old. After he passed away, I recalled the time, shortly after I was married, when my father-in-law told me about his encounter with a fortune-teller. The fortune-teller had predicted his lifespan would be fifty-nine years, and that he would suffer an inexorable fate in his fifty-ninth year. Thank the Lord, because he was chosen by God and was baptized into Christ, my father-in-law received God’s protection and lived until he was sixty-three.

As my father-in-law was about to breathe his last, he tried to get up from his bed. His son, feeling that it was best for him to remain calm and to rest, restrained him. At that moment, my father-in-law suddenly started uttering incoherent words. My wife and her mother

was at the bedside praying, when her brother asked, “What is Dad trying to say?”

His mother answered, “Listen carefully. He might be saying his final words.”

“But I don’t understand a word he’s saying!” he replied.

A short while later, my father-in-law passed away peacefully. The entire family felt confident that my father-in-law had received the Holy Spirit during that prayer.

The Bible states that the Holy Spirit is promised to God’s chosen people, so that they may be called His children (Rom 8:16; Gal 4:6), receive the inheritance (Eph 1:14) and have a guarantee of resurrection (Rom 8:11; 2 Cor 5:1–5). The Bible emphasizes that the Holy Spirit is “the promise of the Father” (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4–5) and is called the “Holy Spirit of promise” (Eph 1:13; Acts 2:33). According to this promise, all who repent and are “baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins...shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:38). The question is not if you will receive the Holy Spirit, but, rather, *when* you will receive Him. The fact that my father-in-law received the Holy Spirit at the very last moment is clear evidence of this promise.

5. My wife’s uncle has a dream from God

Just before dawn on 5 September 1958, at around 4 am, my wife’s uncle had a dream. In the dream, he heard jubilant sounds coming from outside, so he went out to see what was going on. He saw that someone was getting married and, incredibly, the members of the wedding party were all clothed in white and had wings. They glided gracefully

through the air like white cranes. They were also singing beautiful and moving songs accompanied by an ensemble of instruments. As they passed by his house, they suddenly stopped, and all the music and singing came to a halt, as if they were letting him have a closer look. But then the entourage began to move on again. The sound of the singing and the music resounded as they gradually moved further and further away.

In the morning, my wife’s uncle immediately shared this dream with his wife. He said, “My older brother has perhaps passed away already.”

Indeed, immediately after he said this, news came that his older brother had died.

My wife’s uncle lived in Chiayi, which is approximately thirty kilometres away from where her father lived. He was originally a bicycle shop owner and a long-time Presbyterian. Through Brother Youyung Tsai, whom he met through his work, he was introduced to the true church. Eventually his entire family came to receive baptism at the church in Chiayi. He personally told me the above testimony when he visited us at my father-in-law’s house, after hearing the news of his passing.

His dream reminded me of what is written in the Scriptures, that we have a husband–wife relationship with Christ (Eph 5:31–32). The true church is the holy city, New Jerusalem, which has descended out of heaven from God. She is the bride of Christ, who is the Lamb of God (Rev 21:9–10; Jn 1:29). When we have prepared ourselves as a new bride and wait for the Lord to take us in marriage, then we shall be caught up together in the clouds to meet Him in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord (Rev 21:2; 1 Thess 4:16–17).

6. My mother-in-law dreams of paradise

After my wife's father passed away, her mother was lonely and mourned for her husband for a time. One night, she dreamed she was in paradise with her husband. There, she walked around and saw all sorts of wonderful things and the beautiful homes of the saints. My mother-in-law said to her husband, "This place is truly marvellous. I can't bear to leave; I want to stay here with you!"

My father-in-law asked, "Who invited you here?"

"No one. I came by myself," she replied.

"That won't do!" he said. "One can't just come in without an invitation. Go home and come back later."

My mother-in-law received a tremendous amount of comfort from this dream and her grieving ended. Afterwards, she would often say to her family members, "It's important to keep the teachings of the Lord Jesus and follow the will of the heavenly Father, so that we can go to the heavenly kingdom one day. Everything there is so wonderful!"

"What exactly is so good about it?" her family would ask.

"How can I explain it to you?" she would reply. "You just have to go and see it for yourself!"

Her experience brings to mind the story of a man who, according to Paul, "was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter [he was unable to describe what he experienced]" (2 Cor 12:4). Paul also said, of himself, "I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better" (Phil 1:23). David also wrote of having a similar inclination: "As for me, I will see Your face in righteousness; I shall be satisfied when I awake in Your likeness" (Ps 17:15). No wonder my mother-in-law was unable to describe the wonders of paradise.

7. My mother-in-law departs from the world peacefully

The year my wife's mother turned eighty-two, she became seriously ill. As family members were praying for her, she suddenly heard a voice saying, "I'll let you live until you're eighty-six." First, she thought these words were spoken by a child, but when she opened her eyes to look around, there were no children present. So she closed her eyes and continued to pray. Shortly after, she heard the voice again, this time more clearly, saying, "I'll let you live until you're eighty-six." Only then did she realize that these were the blessed words of the Lord Jesus. Miraculously, she was now healed of the illness that had been afflicting her!

When she turned eighty-six, she prayed, "Lord, four years ago You said You would let me live until the age of eighty-six. Now that I have reached that age, I hope You will fulfil two requests of mine. First, if You want to take me back to my heavenly home, please don't let me be ill, so that my family will not be troubled. Second, my grandchild is studying in Changhua and will not graduate until June. Please spare my life until June, so I can see him one more time."

Clearly, she had absolutely no fear of death and could face it openly.

On 19 June 1980, the day her grandson graduated, my wife's mother waited all day, and started to worry when he did not come home. He eventually came the next day, having spent the night at a classmate's house. Upon his return, the two chatted happily. Since she had raised this grandson herself, they were especially close.

After a long conversation, my mother-in-law went to take a bath. As she came out of the bathroom, she felt lightheaded so she went to

lie down in her room. Her family waited a long time for her to come out and thought it strange that she was still in her room. When they eventually went inside, they discovered she had already passed away peacefully. Just as the Lord Jesus had said earlier, she passed away at eighty-six years of age. And, just as she had requested in prayer, she left without suffering any illness and was able to live for one day more to see her grandson graduate and return home. From this, we can see that we believe in a God who is indeed faithful (2 Tim 2:13), and full of compassion and love (Ps 103:8). May all glory, honour and praise be to Him forever. Amen.

EFFECTIVE PRAYERS

It has been said that those who make it to heaven get there on their knees. With this in mind, when Paul asks us to “work out your own salvation”, he might also have meant that one should do so on one’s knees (Phil 2:12, 10). In other words, the more one puts into kneeling in prayer, the greater one’s chances of being saved. Precisely for this reason, there are others who say prayer is our “spiritual breathing”. As everyone knows, if a person stops breathing, they will die. In the same way, a Christian who stops praying has inadvertently reached the edge of destruction.

When we look at the purpose of prayer, we can divide it into four types: praise, thanksgiving, repentance and request. Prayers of praise and thanksgiving are the basic responsibilities of a Christian (Eph 5:19–20). Prayers of repentance are the appropriate expression of a sinner (Ps 51:17; 1 Jn 1:8–10). Prayers of request are made by those who have needs to be made known to God (Phil 4:6–7). Therefore, a Christian’s life of faith is a prayerful life (1 Thess 5:17). In the course of daily life, only those who understand the need to pray in all things, and who pray consistently, can be considered healthy Christians. The Lord Jesus promised He would cause us to have life, and have it more abundantly (Jn 10:10).

The effective prayers to be discussed here are not prayers of praise, thanksgiving or repentance; the focus will be on prayers of request. Surely, regardless of what is being requested, we always hope that God will heed and answer our prayers. When our prayers are answered, we deeply feel and experience His abidance with us, strengthening our belief that the Lord is indeed wonderful. How then should we pray

in order for our prayers to be effective? I have outlined four points in answer to this question.

1. According to the Father's will

The first thing to consider is whether what we ask is according to God's will. John tells us that God likes to hear our requests and wants to grant us our prayers, if our prayers are asked "according to His will" (1 Jn 5:14–15). On the other hand, if we "ask amiss", that is, if what we ask is not according to His will, then we will not receive what we seek (Jas 4:3). This is because our Lord is the God of heaven and earth, King of kings, and has absolute sovereignty, such that even the mighty angels obey His commands and fulfil His will (Acts 17:24; Rev 19:6; Ps 103:19–20). Considering our own existence, which is so minute in comparison, should we not all the more revere His will? (Ps 8:4; 1 Chr 29:14).

Paul told the believers in Rome that he had intended to go to them many times, even saying: "I long to see you." In order to realize his hope, he not only prayed constantly, but also asked the believers to support him in prayer. Even so, Paul never dared to forcibly demand this of God, but hoped: "that I may come to you with joy by the will of God" (Rom 1:10–11, 13; 15:22–24, 28, 30, 32). From this we know that when Paul asked something of God, he did so under the principle that the outcome depended upon the will of God. This sets a very good example for us to follow.

On the night the Lord Jesus was betrayed, when the bitter trial of the cross lay before Him, He arose in sorrow, anxiety and great anguish: "Then He said to [His disciples], 'My soul is exceedingly

sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little further on, fell on His face and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will'" (Mt 26:37–39).

"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death." This sentence allows us to see that because Jesus was God in the flesh, or God manifested in physical form, He possessed a human nature (Jn 1:14; Rom 9:5). Thus, He also had human weaknesses (Heb 4:15). The "cup" He referred to was the bitter cup of suffering on the cross, which Jesus described as "the baptism that I am baptized with" (Mk 10:38–39), also called the "baptism by fire" (i.e. trials). When Jesus prayed, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me," He was expressing His innermost need at the time. He fully revealed His weakness, for the cross would bring Him extreme agony (Mt 27:45–46; Ps 22:14–17), something too terrible to even contemplate. "Not as I will, but as You will"—this last sentence shows how Jesus would never forcibly demand anything in His prayers to the Father, how He would consistently follow God's will. In the end, He resolved to consume the bitter cup of the cross (Phil 2:8). This is worthy of our emulation.

"For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways," says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts'" (Isa 55:8–9). God's will is so unfathomable and lofty, how can we understand it? And what exactly is His will? Do we not often find ourselves standing at the crossroads, troubled by not knowing what to do and where to go?

Paul talks of how we can "know His will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law" (Rom 2:18). This is to say that all the words written in the Bible are the revelation of

God (2 Tim 3:16) and the illumination of His will. Thus, if we go to church daily to listen to His word and put our efforts into studying the Scriptures, then we will gain a direct path to understanding His will. Luke describes how Jesus would go with His parents to Jerusalem every year to observe the Passover. One year, when Jesus was twelve years old, His parents returned home after the festival, unaware that they had left Him behind. In fact, Jesus had remained in the temple, sitting among the teachers of the law, “both listening to them and asking them questions” (Lk 2:41–46). He was paying attention to and inquiring of the words of the Bible, which would allow Him to understand more deeply the will of God. Jesus’ zeal in learning is wonderful and a worthy example for us to follow.

The Bible says, “Who is the man that fears the Lord? Him shall He teach in the way He chooses. . . . The secret of the Lord is with those who fear Him, and He will show them His covenant” (Ps 25:12, 14). From this we know that, to all who revere God and make a determination to keep His will as their principle in life, God will reveal His will. If we make a commitment to follow His will, we can come to a clearer understanding of that will. Then we will be able to walk on the way of the Lord more assuredly and follow His path with peace of mind. These factors have a knock-on effect, continuing in a “virtuous cycle”.

When Jesus asked John to baptize Him, John at first refused because he knew that Jesus held a more noble status than he did (Mt 3:11–14). However, Jesus said, “Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness” (Mt 3:15). What does it mean to “fulfill all righteousness”? Why did John accept this reason and baptize Jesus? Jesus knew John was a prophet sent by God (Mt 11:13–14), and He knew that John’s baptism came from God above

(Mt 21:23–27). Thus, to accept John’s baptism was to revere God and follow His will; it would be considered righteous in the eyes of God. Moreover, Jesus said, “it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness”, which is to say, *Even though I am more noble, I should still seek to fulfil all righteousness. If I need to do so, do you not also?*

Jesus’ response, to “fulfill all righteousness”, means that God’s will needs to be performed completely. For this reason, He humbly submitted to John’s baptism—which was only one of the requirements of righteousness. Because Jesus loved the word of God since childhood, striving to learn through listening and questioning, He was determined to keep the principle of fulfilling all righteousness from the start of His ministry. Thus, the heavenly Father proclaimed twice from heaven, “This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased” (Mt 3:17; 17:5). Because of this, everything Jesus asked of the Father in the following days was answered and He was able to manifest great signs and miracles.

To summarize, a prayer that accords with the will of God is not one that insists on His granting our desires, which is, in effect, asking God to change His own will to conform to ours. It is one that asks God to transform our attitude so we can accept His arrangement. God is love (1 Jn 4:8), so everything He allows us to encounter is for our own benefit (Rom 8:28). As long as we are committed to submitting to His will, we will experience the grace of God, even if we face tribulations (Gen 39:1–5, 19–23). If we are able to accept this, we will no longer feel the urge to force God to answer our prayers.

2. With a pure faith

Jesus once said to His disciples, “Therefore I say to you, whatever things you ask when you pray, believe that you receive them, and you will have them” (Mk 11:24). The Moffatt New Testament translates the latter portion into “believe you have got it and you shall have it”. The Japanese translation is similar. However, the words can appear quite paradoxical. Why would we ask for something we already have? If we ask for something, surely this means we have yet to receive it. In actual fact, Jesus is reminding us that when we request something from God we need to ask with an innocent, child-like faith.

For example, when a father is about to go on a long journey, he might say to his young child, “Daddy will be back in a few days. If you behave and do as Mummy says, Daddy will buy you a new toy car. I’ll get you one that runs by itself and, when it gets to the edge of a table, turns itself around without falling off!”

The child will be delighted, and say, “Thanks, Daddy!” Then he will rush to tell all his friends the good news. Even though the child has yet to receive the toy car, in his heart, it is as if he has already received it. When we see a child with this pure and complete faith in the words of his father, we know the father would do anything to fulfil his promise.

The Lord Jesus had this “believe-you-have-already-received-it” faith in God. In John 11:17–44, when Jesus arrived at the tomb of Lazarus, He asked that the stone blocking the entrance be removed even though Lazarus had been entombed for four days.

Martha, the sister of him who was dead, said to Him, “Lord, by this time there is a stench, for he has been dead four days.”

Jesus said to her, “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” Then they took away the stone from the place where the dead man was lying. And Jesus lifted up His eyes and said, “Father, I thank You that You have heard Me. And I know that You always hear Me...” Now when He has said these things, He cried with a loud voice, “Lazarus, come forth!” And he who had died came out.

John 11: 39b–44a

There are three sentences in this passage that are worth our consideration. The first is: “Did I not say to you that if you would believe you would see the glory of God?” On the other hand, if you doubt, you shall not see the glory of God. The author of Hebrews writes: “But without faith it is impossible to please Him [if one does not please God, one cannot see the glorious deeds of God], for he who comes to God must believe that He is [we must believe that He truly exists] and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him [even though we have not yet received what God wants to give, we deeply believe it will be done]” (Heb 11:6).

The second sentence is: “I thank You that You have heard Me.” Even before receiving what He asked for, Jesus believed the heavenly Father had already heard His prayer. This is the faith of one who believes he has already received something—the faith of an innocent child. For many adults, this pure faith has been lost.

The third sentence is: “I know that You always hear Me.” Notice how Jesus said, “I know” and not “I believe”. In order for God to hear our prayers, we must believe; but this is still a step away from the realization of the prayer. “Knowing” refers to hope becoming reality, something that is already experienced. After Namaan’s leprosy was

healed, he said, “Now I know”, and not, “Now I believe”. This was because his original belief had been fully realized (2 Kgs 5:14–15). When Jesus said, “You always hear me”, He was expressing His regular experience. He was in fact saying, *Father, You have always heard my prayers, so now You will surely hear this one*. This prayer gives us the following insight: When we ask something of God, if we first recall all our past experiences of answered prayers, then our faith in the present moment will be strengthened. This is because “Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever” (Heb 13:8). His power, love and faithfulness will never change. Just as He has listened to us in the past, so will He listen to us today.

John 4:46–53 recounts the incident of a nobleman whose son was ill to the point of death in Capernaum. When Jesus was in Galilee, the nobleman came and implored Him for healing, saying, “Sir, come down before my child dies!”

Jesus replied, “Go your way; your son lives.”

The nobleman believed Jesus and made his way home. On the way there, his servant rushed to meet him with good news that confirmed the words of Jesus. Even more wondrously, the time that his son’s fever had abated corresponded with the exact hour that Jesus had said, “Your son lives.” After this, the nobleman and his whole family believed.

It is more than twenty miles from Cana to Capernaum. Logic tells us that neither the nobleman nor Jesus could have seen for themselves the condition of the child. Yet Jesus told him, “Go your way; your son lives.” And the nobleman believed in Jesus’ words. This belief enabled the official to see the same thing that Jesus did—that his son lives!

What is faith? The author of Hebrews tells us “faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen” (Heb 11:1). In another translation of this verse: “It is the assurance of things

hoped for [certainty that what is hoped for will be realized], and conviction regarding that which has not been seen [seeing what cannot be seen].” This is the kind of faith that believes what has been asked for has already been received—the faith of a pure, innocent child.

What is it, then, that we should believe in? First, we need to believe that God is almighty (Gen 17:1). There is nothing He cannot do (Gen 18:14), and anything He wishes to do will be done (Isa 46:10). Second, we need to believe that God is love (1 Jn 4:8). Out of this love, He gave up His Son for all of us, so He will give us all things freely (Rom 8:32)—as long as we ask according to His will (1 Jn 5:14–15; Jas 4:3). Third, we need to believe that God is faithful (1 Cor 1:9). Because He is a trustworthy God, all His promises are true (2 Cor 1:18, 20); He will do as He says and will grant us what we request (Mt 7:7). God’s almighty power, love and faithfulness comprise the assurance of our faith in Him.

3. Steadfast and earnest

In his epistles, Paul repeatedly stresses the importance of “continuing steadfastly in prayer” (Rom 12:12). He also exhorts, “Continue earnestly in prayer” (Col 4:2). To “continue earnestly” or “steadfastly” (*proskartereo* in the original Greek text) in prayer means being persistent, immovable and determined. It means praying wholeheartedly, and not giving up until we reach our goal.

Being steadfast and being earnest are in fact two different matters. Some people are steadfast, but may be inclined to drag their feet, lacking enthusiasm and motivation. Others may be earnest, but their zeal is short-lived. The Bible contains many examples of steadfast,

earnest prayers that truly embody genuine faith. We notice that those who have a “genuine faith” (2 Tim 1:5) offer up prayers that are always both steadfast and earnest. Let us look at some biblical examples.

In the parable of the friend who comes to borrow bread at midnight, the Lord Jesus teaches us that the borrower finally receives what he is after because of his passion and persistence. The borrower comes at midnight, when the lender has already gone to bed. Naturally, he is told to go away, but he begs with such determination that he eventually receives what he asks for (Lk 11:5–8).

The Lord Jesus told this parable to remind us that even an uncompassionate person can be persuaded by earnest persistence. How much more will the merciful, compassionate heavenly Father grant our requests if we ask Him with the same attitude?

The Lord Jesus continued, “If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!” (Lk 11:13). This passage is an encouragement for those who have been praying for the Holy Spirit for a long time. As long as our faith in the heavenly Father remains strong and steady, and we continue to pray with zeal and persistence, eventually God will fill us with His Holy Spirit.

Then [Jesus] spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: “There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, ‘Get justice for me from my adversary’. And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, ‘Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.’ Then the Lord said, “Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him,

though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily.”

Luke 18:1–8a

By common logic, an unrighteous judge who neither fears God nor cares for other people would certainly not render justice to a widow who has no influence or money and is of no significance to him. Yet, because of this widow’s persistence, the judge finally gives in and renders her justice. In contrast, our heavenly Father is full of mercy and compassion (Ps 103:8), so would He not be even more inclined to answer our prayers? Certainly, as long as we imitate this widow’s immovable persistence, He will hear us.

Matthew 15:21–28 records a moving passage where earnest pleading and persistence paid off for the one who sought God’s mercy:

Then Jesus went out from there and departed to the region of Tyre and Sidon. And behold, a woman of Canaan came from that region and cried out to Him, saying, “Have mercy on me, O Lord, Son of David! My daughter is severely demon-possessed.”

But He answered her not a word. And His disciples came and urged Him, saying, “Send her away, for she cries out after us.”

But He answered and said, “I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.”

Then she came and worshiped Him, saying, “Lord, help me!”

But He answered and said, “It is not good to take the children’s bread and throw it to the little dogs.”¹

And she said, “Yes, Lord, yet even the little dogs eat the crumbs which fall from their masters’ table.”

Then Jesus answered and said to her, “O woman, great is your

¹ According to Jewish custom, dogs were unclean animals. Gentiles were uncircumcised and thus viewed as unclean and undeserving of God’s grace.

faith! Let it be to you as you desire.” And her daughter was healed from that very hour.

The Canaanite woman begged Jesus to heal her daughter, but was rejected four times—each rejection more cruel than the one before. The first time, Jesus “answered her not a word”. The second time, the disciples urged Jesus to drive her away. The third time, Jesus made it very clear He was sent in search of the lost sheep of Israel. The fourth rejection was the worst: Jesus compared her to a filthy dog. In other words, she was unworthy of God’s grace and should not bother seeking it. In spite of all that, her pleading became more insistent and humble. First, she followed and cried out behind Jesus and His disciples. Next she knelt before Jesus, imploring Him for help. Finally, she acknowledged that she was unworthy, but would be satisfied with any small portion of grace she might receive. Jesus was greatly moved and granted her request: He healed her daughter that very hour.

Why did this Canaanite woman not give up after repeated rejection? How did she put aside her dignity in the face of such great humiliation? There is only one answer: motherly love burned within her. For the sake of her daughter’s peace—for her to be freed from the demon—this mother was willing to endure such disgrace. We can imagine that she might have wept quietly when her daughter became demon-possessed—when she lost her mind, lost her speech, began acting strangely and was publicly mocked. The mother’s extraordinary maternal love was transformed into an indomitable strength that gave her great persistence and humility. She would have endured any degree of disgrace. Surely the Lord Jesus did not mean to shame her, but rather to test the extent of her love and faith. And, indeed, she passed the test.

Let us ask ourselves: When we pray for our family or fellow brothers and sisters, have we ever done so with this Canaanite woman’s insistent love and undeterred faith, in order to move the Lord Jesus to answer our requests?

Hebrews 6:13–15 states that Abraham received God’s promise of great blessings and many offspring because he persevered in waiting upon the Lord. Genesis 12:1–5 records how he followed God’s instruction to go to Canaan at the age of seventy-five. God promised him, “I will make you a great nation; I will bless you and make your name great; and you shall be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and I will curse him who curses you; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed.”² Abraham had full conviction, without a shadow of doubt, in God’s promises. His patient endurance is the manifestation of a genuine faith.

Concerning this, Paul writes in Romans 4:18–21:

[Abraham], contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that he became the father of many nations, according to what was spoken, “So shall your descendants be.” And not being weak in faith, he did not consider his own body, already dead (since he was about a hundred years old), and the deadness of Sarah’s womb. He did not waver at the promise of God through unbelief, but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God, and being fully convinced that what He had promised He was also able to perform.

After the Lord Jesus was resurrected from the dead, before ascending to heaven, He told His disciples, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high” (Lk 24:49).

² This blessing was fulfilled through Jesus Christ the Saviour, who brings blessings to all (Gal 3:16).

In Acts 1:4–5, Luke notes:

And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, “which,” He said, “you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

The Lord Jesus told His disciples to wait for the downpour of the Holy Spirit, without specifying when it would happen—only that it would be “not many days from now”. The disciples themselves did not ask when the Spirit would descend. This tells us that it was more important for the disciples to pray persistently and earnestly each day until the fulfilment of the heavenly Father’s promise. Therefore, after witnessing the Lord’s ascension, they followed His command and returned to Jerusalem. About 120 people gathered in an upper room, continuing in one accord in prayer and supplication, until the Holy Spirit descended (Acts 1:9–15).

Even as the days passed, with the Holy Spirit yet to descend, the disciples did not doubt. Rather, they were convinced it would happen imminently. The Bible records, “When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind.... And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit” (Acts 2:1–4).

The disciples persisted in their daily prayers with single-minded determination because they understood that they were asking for the promised Holy Spirit (Lk 24:49; Acts 1:4–5; 2:33, 38–39; Eph 1:13). They also knew they worshipped a faithful God (Deut 7:9; 2 Tim 2:13).

“For all the promises of God in Him are Yes” (2 Cor 1:20). Today there are some believers who fail to receive the Holy Spirit. Could it be

that their faith in God is inadequate and they lack persistence in their prayers? Earnest, persistent prayer is the manifestation of a genuine faith. It is also the secret to an effective prayer, and this applies whether one is seeking the Holy Spirit or praying for any other matter.

4. Seek diligently

God once made a promise to His elect through the prophet Jeremiah, saying, “Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you” (Jer 29:12). In what manner were they to pray for God to grant their requests? The following verse tells us: “And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart” (Jer 29:13). Do we also have a part in this promise? From the perspective of the Old Testament elect, we have no rightful share in this promise since we are Gentiles who lack the physical mark of circumcision. However, the New Testament tells us that we *do* share in this promise: “[I]s He the God of the Jews only? Is He not also the God of the Gentiles? Yes, of the Gentiles also, since there is one God who will justify the circumcised by faith and the uncircumcised through faith” (Rom 3:29–30). No matter what our request may be, as long as we seek with all our hearts, God will answer.

In the Sermon on the Mount, the Lord Jesus said to the multitude:

“And when you pray, you shall not be like the hypocrites. For they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the corners of the streets, that they may be seen by men. Assuredly, I say to you, they have their reward. But you, when you pray, go into your room, and when you

have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you openly."

Matthew 6:5-6

The main lesson the Lord Jesus wants us to take away here is: When we pray to God, our motive counts more than the content and urgency of our prayer. Hypocrites are often motivated by a desire to move their listeners with eloquent words or to receive praise from others. Such tainted prayers mean nothing, no matter how elegantly they are made. Jesus teaches us, "[W]hen you pray, go into your room, and when you have shut your door, pray to your Father who is in the secret place." In other words, prayer is a channel of spiritual communion between man and God, and a means of finding fulfilment from God. If we pray with the correct motive, He will be pleased and will surely answer us.

From another perspective, the Lord Jesus is also teaching us about focused prayer. Once you have entered into your room and shut the door, you will no longer be disrupted by outside noises, nor will you be concerned with the reactions of others. Instead, you can pour out your whole heart to God, one to one, without distractions. Such intensely focused prayer is truly powerful. For Christians, this entails "spiritual communion in the secret room". Whilst you are inside, you set aside everything else in the world to spend time alone with God, to pray in depth and with concentration. Such spiritual communion is sweet and effective.

When I was in elementary school, more than sixty years ago, someone gave me a magnifying glass. My teacher taught us that, on a hot summer's day, if you hold it up at just the right distance, a focal

point of light will appear. If you concentrate the ray onto a match, it will ignite. The smaller the focal point, the more intense the heat and the more easily the match will light up. If the focal point is dispersed, the intensity of the heat will diminish and the match will not ignite. After I had learned this, I immediately took a box of matches outside to experiment. The results of my tests proved that my teacher was absolutely correct. Test after test, the match never failed to ignite.

This rather fun experience left a deep impression on me. Forty years ago, while conducting a prayer session for the Holy Spirit, I suddenly remembered this incident and decided to use it to encourage the congregation. I said, "What is concentrated prayer? It requires narrowing your faith's focal point. The more you concentrate, the smaller your faith's focal point becomes, and the power of your prayer will be magnified. Your prayer will definitely be effective!" Many people received the Holy Spirit during that prayer meeting.

I would like to share three testimonies where the Holy Spirit was received through focused prayer, to encourage those who have yet to receive the Holy Spirit.

In 1928, our early-church worker, Elder Shengming Tsai, received the truth in Tainan and returned to Min-hsiung to preach the gospel zealously. On one occasion, an elderly man, now our Brother Wang, heard the gospel for the first time.

As he made his way home, Brother Wang prayed as he walked along, saying, "Hallelujah, Lord Jesus, please fill my heart with your Holy Spirit."

Amazingly, after a few prayers, he received the Holy Spirit. Thrilled, he quickly ran back to tell Elder Tsai, saying, "I've received the Holy Spirit!"

Elder Tsai responded, “How is that possible? You have only heard the gospel once.”

Brother Wang replied, “I really did receive the Holy Spirit. I can pray the same way as you do—my tongue rolls by itself!”

Elder Tsai said, “Fine, let us pray and see.”

So Brother Wang prayed and, indeed, he had received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Thereafter, he received water baptism and became the first believer in Min-hsiung. Brother Wang received the Holy Spirit so easily because he had a simple faith and made an intensely focused prayer. He was praying for the Holy Spirit whilst walking!

In 1954, there was an elderly Brother Kuo in the church in Taichung who had been baptized for a while, but had not received the Holy Spirit. Undeterred, he continued praying urgently, pleading to the Lord to give him the Holy Spirit. One night, while he was sleeping, he was suddenly filled with the Holy Spirit and incredible joy. When he woke up, he realized it was a dream. But amazingly, when he knelt down to pray, he had truly received the Holy Spirit. Thank God! Brother Kuo’s prayer was likewise very focused; he had even been praying for the Holy Spirit in his sleep. Because he thirsted so deeply for the infilling of the Holy Spirit, praying day and night, the Lord answered his prayers.

When Elder John Yang was twenty years old, he was invited by a church member to seek the truth at the church in Pingtung. One Sabbath day, he was greatly moved by the sermon. During the concluding prayer, a surge of power suddenly poured down from above, causing his body to shake involuntarily. At the same time, his

tongue burst forth with an unfamiliar sound, and his heart was deeply moved. The following day, he received water baptism. Surprisingly, when he returned to church, he found that the Holy Spirit, who had overwhelmed him so strongly the day before, had disappeared.

The resident minister, Deacon Huiming Chu, consoled him, “The Lord loves you. In order to bring you to His fold sooner, He gave you the Holy Spirit even before you were baptized. If you pray earnestly, you will definitely receive Him again.”

Though Elder Yang prayed day and night, the Holy Spirit remained absent. Twenty-five days after baptism, he reflected deeply and realized that he had not been focused during his prayers. So he locked himself in his bedroom in a bid to concentrate, and managed to receive the Holy Spirit once again. The following is his personal testimony:

I prayed for the Holy Spirit in my bedroom, which was one of the dorm rooms for employees of the Pingtung Bus Company. Since other employees also lived there, you were not allowed to lock the door as you pleased. My faith was still weak at the time, so I was afraid non-believers might overhear my prayers. I did not dare to pray loudly and listened for footsteps so I could stop praying before anyone opened the door. Once I realized my problem, I decided to start locking the door from the inside when I prayed, so my heart would not keep drifting or worrying about things.

Thank the Lord! Soon after I began my prayer, the Holy Spirit started to move me mightily—with far greater intensity than the first time. While kneeling on the tatami (a Japanese-style straw mat), both of my knees were lifted up into mid-air, bouncing and moving around. Though both of my eyes were closed, I did not bump into the wall

or fall off the bed. A torrent of power surged forth from within me, causing me to speak powerfully in tongues and to sing spiritual songs.

My neighbouring room-mate, Elder Linchuan Yang, heard my voice and came over to see what was happening. He knocked on my door, asking to come in, but I told him not to bother me so that I could be completely filled by the Holy Spirit. I had a very clear mind and I could hear every word spoken outside my door.

This continued for about an hour. I felt completely carried away by the Holy Spirit and I sweated profusely. The feeling was an inexpressible sense of great joy and blessing. Though the skin on both of my knees was scraped, I somehow felt no pain. And because I feared the Holy Spirit might leave me once again, I continued to pray without ceasing, pleading for the Holy Spirit to continue filling me from that day forth.

Elder Yang's experience of receiving the Holy Spirit exemplifies the type of focused prayer the Lord Jesus described—of going into the inner room and locking the door. Having a single-minded attitude, where one temporarily casts aside everything in the world, is the true key to a successful, effective prayer. This approach applies not only to praying for the Holy Spirit, but also to anything else one might pray for.

The above methods are the keys to effective prayers: praying according to God's will, with simple faith, persistence, urgency and focus.

In practice, these methods are not extraordinary; rather, they are common sense. Nonetheless, few people truly apply these principles. Would it not be a shame to know these principles but not carry them out, and so forfeit the Lord's blessings?

“BUT BY THE GRACE OF GOD
I AM WHAT I AM,
AND HIS GRACE TOWARD
ME WAS NOT IN VAIN...”

1 CORINTHIANS 15:10

The Path of Ministry

THE GREAT DOWNPOUR OF THE HOLY SPIRIT IN WENTZU

On 21 September 1958, the Holy Spirit poured down mightily upon the church in Wentzu and rekindled a flame of revival. During the following nine days, a total of 109 people received the Holy Spirit. Many saw visions, spoke in tongues and experienced miraculous healing.

Ten years later, from 14 to 23 March 1968, the Holy Spirit again descended on Wentzu and 139 people received the Holy Spirit. The following is an account of the events that transpired, starting from 10 March.

The beginning of the downpour

On Sunday, 10 March 1968, the church in Huwei organized a prayer session for their RE students, and the teachers requested I lay hands on the children so that God might grant them His Spirit. In the morning, the elementary classes met first for their prayer session, but no one received the Holy Spirit. It might have been that the children were young and did not know how to ask for the Holy Spirit. In the afternoon, the junior classes had their prayer session. After receiving some encouragement, the students knelt down to pray earnestly in one accord. Four students received the Holy Spirit—two experienced His infilling and saw the same vision.

After the prayer, I returned home to rest, since I lived next door to the chapel. My younger son ran to me and said, “Dad, Chaohsiung saw a vision.”

Chaohsiung was a student in the junior class. I told my son to bring him to me. When he came in, I asked, “What did you see?”

He replied, “I saw the Lord Jesus surrounded by eleven apostles— Judas was not there—and they all wore white. They were preaching together.”

“How did you know that it was the Lord Jesus?” I asked. “And how did you know that Judas was not there?”

“I knew right away when I saw them!” He continued, “I also saw the Lord being nailed to the cross; it was dark all around.”

I then questioned him, “Was the Lord clothed? Was He bleeding? Was His head bowed or facing upwards?”

He replied, “Jesus was not clothed. His hands and feet were marked with dark bloodstains. He was not bleeding and His head was bowed.” Then he added, “In the third vision that I saw, there was a strong light passing in front of my eyes. It was extremely bright, even brighter than the sun!”

“That’s wonderful,” I exclaimed. “Let’s go over to the chapel to share your testimony with your classmates.”

I brought him to testify in front of everyone. All the students listened attentively.

When he finished, one of the students called out, “The vision I saw was just like his!” I thought this was odd: *Could there be such a coincidence? Is he making it up?* But then I thought, *I’ll let him speak about what he saw. Surely, if he is lying, we will catch him out.*

So I asked him to come up and testify. Indeed, his testimony was identical to that of Chaohsiung. I was amazed.

That night during the youth service, I asked Chaohsiung to come into the chapel to share his testimony with the youths. After he finished, I gave a few words of encouragement and asked those who

had not yet received the Holy Spirit to come to the front to receive the laying of hands. Everyone prayed earnestly and in one accord, asking the Lord to grant His Spirit. In that prayer, two youths received the Holy Spirit: one was a baptized church member, while the other was a truth-seeker.

On 11 March, I left Huwei and travelled to the church in Wentzu. I planned to stay there for a week and work on some theological teaching materials for the Book of Psalms, so I brought some of my notes with me.

When I looked at the Wentzu church service records, I discovered that attendance was low. Evening services were attended by twenty to thirty people—fifty at the most. Sabbath attendance was also low, reflecting a worrisome decline in the faith of the members. I felt that this lack of zeal must be directly related to a lack of prayer; the only solution was to encourage the congregation. At the first evening service, I testified about what had happened at the church in Huwei the previous day, telling them about the visions and the descent of the Holy Spirit, as well as the experiences of the youths. I also testified about the great downpour of the Holy Spirit in Wentzu in September 1958, in the hope that these testimonies would encourage the members to pray. Over the course of three evenings, I shared many more testimonies and passages from the Scriptures so that they would understand how to pray fervently and with faith. Though no one received the Holy Spirit in those three days, I was not disheartened and continued to encourage them.

Finally, the Lord showed His compassion and listened to the congregation's collective prayers. From 14 March to 23 March, God showered down His Holy Spirit every night: 139 people received the Holy Spirit, more than the number of believers who received the Spirit

in 1958. Attendance at evening services increased dramatically from between twenty to thirty people, to a maximum of 328. Believers came from neighbouring churches, such as Changhua, Hemei, Hsienhsi (today known as Shengkang), Tsaokang, Lunwei and Lukang, just to attend these special services devoted to praying for the Holy Spirit. They came by all manner of transport—taxi, motorcycle, freight truck and bicycle. The area surrounding the chapel was filled with parked vehicles, spilling over to the believers' houses next to the church. The prayers were deafening and the atmosphere was electric. The services started at 7.30 pm and ended around 10.00 pm. In every single prayer, people received the Holy Spirit. The sick were healed, and even members who had been away from the church for eighteen years came back to the Lord. The workers of God who helped to minister were Deacon Hsiangchen Chen, Preacher Shenchu Chen, Preacher Chaohsing Hsu and Preacher Tingchia Huang. Their presence meant there were sufficient workers to lay hands on the brothers and sisters. Praise the Lord for His providence.

The following is a day-by-day account of the downpour of the Holy Spirit in Wentzu.

Thursday 14 March

No one received the Holy Spirit during the evening service on 14 March. Afterwards, when half of the congregation had left, a few brothers and sisters stayed behind to continue praying. While I was speaking with some of the church council members in the chapel, I suddenly heard loud praying coming from the prayer room. One

person appeared to be speaking in tongues very fluently, and the sound of his voice continued loudly for about an hour.

I thought to myself that if this brother had just received the Holy Spirit, this was something to be excited about. His experience would serve as an encouragement to the congregation the following night. At that moment I felt like Elijah. Even though Elijah's servant had only reported that he could see a cloud as large as a man's fist, Elijah knew that God had already answered his prayer for the drought to end (1 Kgs 18:44).

I asked the council members, "Who is the brother who has just received the Holy Spirit?"

They answered, "We don't know. He doesn't attend services often."

After the prayer, the brother came out of the prayer room soaked in sweat. I asked him, "Did you just receive the Holy Spirit?"

"Yes!" he answered joyfully.

It is hard for me to describe how happy I was at that moment. I thought, *The Lord Jesus has indeed heard our prayers. The Holy Spirit has started to work among us!*

Friday 15 March

After dinner on the 15th, I testified to the congregation about how the brother had received the Holy Spirit the previous night. I encouraged everyone, saying, "Since the Lord has been listening to our prayers over the last few days, we need to continue praying fervently tonight, and surely more people will receive the Holy Spirit. As He has done

this one thing for us, He will surely do more. We need to have faith, and not doubt."

After that, I asked those who had not yet received the Holy Spirit to come to the front to pray. In that prayer, eleven people received the Holy Spirit, which gave us great joy!

I grasped the opportunity to announce: "Tomorrow night, youth classes will be cancelled and replaced with a special service to pray for the Holy Spirit. Not only should all of the youths come, but the whole congregation should attend as well. The Holy Spirit has begun His good work! Ten years ago in Wentzu, there was a great downpour of the Holy Spirit; now another one is coming upon us. Come along, whether you have received the Holy Spirit or not!"

Saturday 16 March

On the evening of the 16th, twenty-two members received the Holy Spirit, which was twice as many as the night before. There were 130 people at the service, many more than the usual number of people who attended Sabbath services. Once the Holy Spirit started to work, it was natural that the believers' zeal would be roused and that attendance would increase.

I told the congregation, "The Holy Spirit has indeed begun to work mightily. What happened ten years ago is happening again. Our experience tells us that once the Holy Spirit has started to work, it is easier to receive Him. Pray with faith and don't let this opportunity pass you by."

Sunday 17 March

As on any other Sunday, there were RE classes in the morning and afternoon. During the morning elementary class, no one received the Holy Spirit. Perhaps this was because the children were still young and did not fully understand how to pray fervently.

During the junior class in the afternoon, twelve students received the Holy Spirit. I asked the RE teachers to help me count the number of students who had received the Holy Spirit, so they recorded the names of those who were speaking in tongues. After the prayer, I asked each youth on the list if they received the Spirit for the first time in this prayer, or if they had already received the Holy Spirit before. Then I removed the names of the youths who already had the Holy Spirit from the list. The council members and I used the same method to count the number of people who received the Holy Spirit in the evening prayer service. For the sake of accuracy, we asked the council members from neighbouring churches to count the members from their respective churches. For each person, I firstly had to verify if they had indeed received the Holy Spirit before recording their names on the list. This ensured that we did not count the same person twice, especially as there were so many people receiving the Holy Spirit.

After the junior class service in the afternoon, Preacher Chaohsing Hsu and I visited the churches in Tsaokang and Lunwei with the news of the Holy Spirit's downpour in Wentzu. We invited all those who wished to receive the Holy Spirit to come so that they would not miss the opportunity.

That evening, 240 people attended the service, including some members from Tsaokang and Lunwei, and almost all the members in Wentzu. Twenty-five people received the Holy Spirit that evening.

So that day, a total of thirty-seven believers received the Holy Spirit, including the RE students earlier on.

After the prayer, a brother gave the following testimony: "I used to love watching movies, joking around and even gambling. During this prayer, I thought of all my sins and asked the Lord to forgive me. The Lord listened to my prayer and granted me the Holy Spirit. From this day forward, I will be much more careful in my words and deeds."

After he finished, another brother stood up and said, "I am very similar to this brother in that I also love watching movies. I prayed for forgiveness from the Lord, and He granted me the Holy Spirit as well. I will not dare to watch movies anymore."

After this, a member in his early thirties, who had come to the front for the laying of hands, had this to say: "When I was young, I had asthma. Whenever I had an asthma attack, I would have to sit upright all night and wouldn't get any sleep. I suffered a lot. I tried medicine and acupuncture, but these only treated the symptoms and didn't cure the illness. Neither Chinese nor Western doctors could heal me. During this prayer, I was filled with the Holy Spirit and was able to interpret my tongues, which said: 'I have healed your illness. You are cured!' After the prayer I felt good, so I know the Lord has healed me."

There was another brother who had believed in Christ for some twenty to thirty years, but had not yet received the Holy Spirit. During the Friday evening service, he had come to the front of the chapel to pray but did not receive the Holy Spirit. The next night, he was reluctant to do it again, but his younger brother encouraged him. His reply was, "It's shameful to go up empty-handed and return empty-handed!"

Nonetheless, because his younger brother insisted, he went up and duly received the Holy Spirit.

Monday 18 March

On the evening of the 18th, 248 people attended the service and twenty people received the Holy Spirit. The services for the past few days had consisted of a short sermon, lasting for about half an hour, followed by a longer time dedicated to prayer. Due to the number of people, chairs had to be moved to the rear or outside of the chapel to make space.

Tuesday 19 March

On the evening of the 19th, 274 people attended the service. Everyone prayed fervently and twenty-seven people received the Holy Spirit.

After the prayer, a sister testified, “A month ago, I fell and twisted my left arm. I’d been to four chiropractors but I still couldn’t lift or stretch my arm. When I came to the service tonight, I said to myself, *Tonight I will go to the Lord Jesus for healing. He is the great Physician; I will surely be healed.* See, the Lord has healed my arm. He is the most wonderful Doctor!”

I asked her to raise her arm. She effortlessly lifted her left arm to the top of her head and then straightened it.

“Now lower it!” I said. She immediately did so.

The Lord’s power is indeed wondrous. The entire congregation marvelled and praised God.

Wednesday 20 March

On the evening of the 20th, 328 people attended the service. Again, the chapel could not accommodate everyone, so we had to move chairs outside. Ten people received the Holy Spirit during the prayer.

Soon after the prayer began, Preacher Hsu came to the pulpit and informed me, “Brother Chian is here, praying at the back!”

Brother Chian was a member who had not attended church for over ten years. When Preacher Hsu and I had visited him the day before, he did not even speak to us.

Later on, Preacher Hsu came to me again with more good news: “Brother Chian has just received the Holy Spirit. He is soaked in sweat and weeping loudly; he is greatly filled by the Spirit!”

I was somewhat skeptical and went over to see for myself. But it was true: Brother Chian had certainly received the Holy Spirit. I could not believe it! I wondered how he came to be here tonight and how he could have received the Holy Spirit so quickly.

At the end of the service, a sister testified, “I had a terrible cold over the last few days. My muscles and bones ached and I felt so weak. In this prayer, I was filled by the Holy Spirit. I began rubbing the parts of my body that were sore, and asked for healing. The Lord healed me and now I am completely well!”

Thursday 21 March

On the evening of the 21st, 250 people attended the service and nine received the Holy Spirit. Before the service, I asked Brother Chian, who had received the Holy Spirit the night before, to testify.

“I don’t know how to,” he replied.

“You don’t have to say much,” I told him. “Just say, ‘Hallelujah! Praise the Lord,’ and you will be fine. Because you haven’t been to church in such a long time, and you received the Holy Spirit as soon as you returned, you should bear witness for the Lord tonight.”

After the prayer session, a sister from the church in Hsienhsi stood up to testify. She said, “In the past, my faith had grown so cold I rarely came to services. I often thought that while I am still healthy and strong, I should focus on earning money to support my family, and that I can be zealous for God when I am older. But tonight, I saw so many people receiving the Holy Spirit, while I still had not. I began to think, *Without the Holy Spirit, there is no salvation. What would happen if I were to die young? There is no guarantee of how many more years I will live. Who can say for sure which day will be their last?* The more I thought about this, the more I panicked. So I asked the Lord to forgive me for my weak faith and my love for the world. I prayed earnestly for the Holy Spirit. Thank the Lord! He forgave me and blessed me with the Holy Spirit!”

After her testimony, I invited Brother Chian to come up to the front to testify.

“I haven’t been to church in over ten years,” he said into the microphone.

“How many years exactly?” I asked.

“Eighteen years.” He continued, “A couple of nights ago, my wife and daughters came to the service and all of them received the Holy Spirit. When they came home and told me this news I was moved to tears. I thought to myself, *I can’t believe the Lord loves my family so much!* So I made the resolution to come to the next evening service, which is when I received the Holy Spirit! I feel as if there are two ships.

One ship belongs to God, the other to the world. I was in the worldly ship, drifting further and further away from God. Today the Lord has been merciful by giving my entire family the Holy Spirit. I truly feel unworthy and full of remorse towards the Lord and to the church. Please pray for me.”

After the service ended, some people began to talk among themselves about the grace that Brother Chian’s family had received. It was revealed that, initially, he had been quite fervent, but later on he married an unbeliever. He stopped coming to church soon after because of some trivial conflicts in the church. So his wife and daughters were never baptized. Nevertheless, the Lord had compassion on him and allowed him to return, so that he would not be lost forever. The whole church was overjoyed and grateful for the blessings his family experienced.

“A bruised reed He will not break, and smoking flax He will not quench...” (Mt 12:20). Thank the Lord, Isaiah’s prophecy regarding the love of the Lord Jesus for humankind was realized in Brother Chian’s family.

Friday 22 March

I felt that the downpour of the Holy Spirit was coming to an end, so just before the service I made this announcement: “The downpour of the Holy Spirit is almost finished. Whoever has not received the Holy Spirit should pray hard tonight. If you receive the Holy Spirit tonight, you will be blessed.” Only one person received the Holy Spirit that evening.

Saturday 23 March

On the 23rd, I returned to the theological seminary in Taichung. Preacher Chuanshin Hsu told me later that a group of eighteen people from the church in Lukang went to Wentzu to pray for the Holy Spirit that day. They came in two taxis, even though it was pouring with rain. The Lord did not disappoint them: a retired soldier in the group received the Holy Spirit.

My original purpose for staying at the church in Wentzu was to make the most of the quiet surroundings to prepare some seminary teaching materials. However, because of the Holy Spirit's mighty downpour, I had to do many visits during the day, and evening services that lasted late into the night. The laying of hands also required much effort. As a result, I was often very tired and could not finish writing a single chapter. Even so, I received greater and unexpected blessings and gained invaluable experiences from the Lord. His will is surely hard to fathom. The Scriptures say: " 'For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,' says the Lord. 'For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts' " (Isa 55:8-9).

The impact of the events at Wentzu

Between May 1968 and June 1969, I attended spiritual convocations at many churches and testified about the downpour of the Holy Spirit at Wentzu. Consequently, the faith of each congregation was greatly stirred. The members would pray earnestly in one accord, and many

received the Holy Spirit. This proved to be another downpour of the Holy Spirit.

The following is the number of people who received the Holy Spirit at each location: at the church in Putzu, twenty-eight people; at the churches in Luotung and Keelung, twenty-three people; at the student spiritual convocation in Kaohsiung, fifty people on the first day, with a total of ninety-eight people by the end; during the autumn spiritual convocation at the church in Tainan, thirty-two people; and during the spring spiritual convocation at Taipei in June 1969, fifty-two people—more than at any other past convocation.

These events tell us that the God we worship is a living and true God (1 Thess 1:9). "Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for me with all your heart" (Jer 29:12-13).

We know that the church in Wentzu, like every one of our churches, is the church of God. Therefore, we have the assurance that since God was willing to pour down His Holy Spirit there, He will likewise pour down His Holy Spirit upon His church elsewhere.

May God's Spirit greatly inspire each reader to pray earnestly for His mighty downpour. And may the flames of zeal be rekindled within believers everywhere, empowering them to spread the truth throughout the world with urgency, so that we can be ready for the Lord's second coming. All glory, honour, power and praise be unto the name of the Lord Jesus Christ forever and ever. Amen.

THE MINISTRY IN HONG KONG AND SOUTHEAST ASIA

By the Lord's arrangement, I was given the chance to accompany Deacon John Yang on a pastoral trip to visit the churches throughout Hong Kong and Southeast Asia. It lasted 200 days and covered Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, the Malaysian Peninsular and Sabah. This was the first time I had left Taiwan. Even though I was nervous, I also felt excited, invigorated and grateful. What follows are reports from the places we visited.

1. Hong Kong

We flew from Taipei to Hong Kong on 19 October 1973. The flight took one hour and twenty minutes.

There were six churches in the Hong Kong region at the time. Hong Kong Church was located in a twenty-five-storey building at Royal Park Garden. The ground floor was designated for parking. The chapel was on the second floor and had three built-in air conditioners, so services were conducted in a cool and comfortable environment. There was also an electric organ that enhanced the ambience of worship. Its beautiful and majestic sound was so captivating that I almost forgot to sing.

From 21 to 25 October, we held Bible studies every day which were attended by about sixty people, including more than ten members from Kowloon. Three brothers received the Holy Spirit during these services.

From 26 to 28 October, we held a spiritual convocation and evangelical services. The former took place during the day and the latter during the evening. About 100 people came each evening—so many that the chapel was filled to capacity, and some had to sit in the lobby. The Sunday afternoon service was attended by 197 people, and both the lobby and the corridor to the left of the chapel were overflowing.

On the first night, two brothers received the Holy Spirit during the evangelical service. While experiencing the infilling of the Spirit, one saw a vision of the Lord being crucified and many people beneath the cross mocking Him. It moved him deeply and made him realize His commission to bring more souls to Christ.

During those three days, three people were baptized, six received the Holy Spirit, and 127 members partook of the Holy Communion. On the 28th, two ministers were ordained: Deacon James Chu and Deaconess Lydia Hsu.

From 30 October to 5 November, we were at the church in Kowloon for an RE teachers' seminar. The city of Kowloon could be reached from Hong Kong Island by ferry or a four-minute bus ride through a two-mile-long underwater tunnel. The seminar was attended by over forty teachers, most of whom were local youths.

On the morning of 3 November, which was a Sabbath, I accompanied Preacher Sihai Shih to the church in Tai Po to deliver a sermon. We returned to Hong Kong in time for the afternoon service. On the fourth night, the youths who were attending the RE teachers' seminar requested the laying of hands for the Holy Spirit. At first, ten members received the Holy Spirit; during the final prayer, another member received the Holy Spirit, making a total of eleven.

On 6 and 7 November, we conducted evening services at the churches in Tai Po and Cheung Muk Tau, respectively. The majority of the attendees were either elderly members or children, since most of the youths had emigrated to the United Kingdom, South America and Kowloon to make a living.

From 9 to 11 November, we held three days of evangelical services at the church in Ap Chau. The journey from Hong Kong to Ap Chau began with a bus to Kowloon, via Sha Tau Kok, and then transferring to a boat. The boat-ride took around half an hour. There was also a prayer house at Sha Tau Kok, next to a bus station, which we heard had many truth-seekers. Not long after this visit, a church was established there.

As we approached Ap Chau, we saw that the island resembled a duck floating on the sea. This is why the island was given the name Ap Chau, which is Cantonese for “duck island”. Nearby was an island that resembled a cracked egg, and another that resembled a standing duckling.

The population of Ap Chau was once around 1,000, but now only 500 people remained. Most of the youths had moved away to work—roughly 400 to the United Kingdom and 100 to Kowloon—so the population at the time consisted mostly of elderly people and children. Apart from a few who had strayed from the truth, all of the island’s inhabitants—seventy-five families in total—were members of the True Jesus Church. The houses on the island were two-storey white concrete buildings, built by the Hong Kong government. The members had built the chapel themselves, which contained twenty-seven long pews and was able to accommodate about 162 people. The chapel at Ap Chau was the largest in Hong Kong.

The island had an elementary school called Ap Chau Fishermen’s Children School, which was set up for the islanders by the government. The school had two classrooms, with different classes being taught in the morning and the evening. Each class had a mixture of children of different ages. There were five male teachers at the time, who lived in the school dorms during the week and returned to Hong Kong at weekends and holidays. Although they were not members of the church, they would often teach the students how to sing from the church hymn book during music lessons. During spiritual convocations, the school would have two days off (Saturday and Sunday), so the students, all of whom were church members, could attend.

The islanders were originally fishermen who had lived their whole lives on the sea, with no permanent abode on land. Their boats were both their homes and their means of livelihood. I once asked, “Since you live so close to the sea, don’t you worry when your children are running around?”

They replied, “All the children under the age of three stay by their mothers’ sides. Everyone aged four and above, both male and female, knows how to swim.” They added, “We teach our children to swim by throwing them into the sea and letting them swallow a few gulps of seawater. After a few tries, they soon learn.” Who would have imagined this method of teaching could be so effective!

The first group of people settled on Ap Chau in the 1950s. The population grew over time, but the inhabitants continued to rely on fishing for their living. They became members of the True Jesus Church mainly through Deaconess Mary Chu, who preached the gospel to them as they sat listening on their boats.

At the time of our visit, every family had children who had moved away to the United Kingdom or Kowloon to find work. Because the children would send money home, their parents were able to sell their boats and enjoy a comfortable life. Those who had moved to the United Kingdom gathered for services in three main locations; those in Kowloon attended services at the church in Kowloon.

During each day of the spiritual convocation, over 100 members attended. Twenty-four received the Holy Spirit and about 300 partook of the Holy Communion. There were no baptisms.

We stayed in Hong Kong for twenty-five days, from 19 October to 12 November. In total, three new members were baptized and forty-four received the Holy Spirit.

Hong Kong is divided into three areas: Hong Kong Island, Kowloon and the New Territories. The main island of Hong Kong covers a mere 82.9 square kilometres, yet the population at the time was 1.5 million. The population of Kowloon was about 2 million, while the population of the New Territories was about 1 million, so the total population of Hong Kong was 4.5 million.

Most people in Hong Kong are of Cantonese descent and speak mainly Cantonese. Very few spoke Mandarin at the time, so we regularly needed interpretation while we were working there.

Hong Kong is a lot like Keelung, a city in the mountainous area of Taiwan. Many skyscrapers have been built either on the hills or near the seashore. At night, standing by the harbour, I found the view of the city lights and the boats simply captivating. The glittering reflections on the water made it hard to tell if the lights were coming from the buildings and the boats, or from the sea itself.

The buses and electric trams were double-deckers. I preferred sitting on the top deck where I could enjoy the fresh air and the commanding view, watching the taxis speed past. Since I had not been on a double-decker bus before this, I found it quite exhilarating.

The traffic system in Hong Kong seemed very complicated. Even though there were a number of elevated highways, rising five metres above the surface highways, it was still hard to prevent traffic congestion. A common sight in the centre of Hong Kong was long lines of cars crawling slowly alongside the crowded streets.

Society also appeared to be quite disorderly. There were frequent reports of robbery and homicide; going out alone at night was not recommended. Moreover, as the residents of Hong Kong led a hectic and competitive way of life, it was not easy to invite people to church to listen to the gospel. But thank the Lord, through the tireless labour of Preacher Sihai Shih, who was sent by the Taiwan General Assembly, the work in Hong Kong has had some success.

2. Singapore

On 13 November, I travelled from Hong Kong to Singapore. The flight took three hours and ten minutes, which is about the same amount of time it takes to travel from Taipei to Tokyo. The church in Singapore was very spacious and had its own car park. Inside there was an electric organ that was similar to the one in Hong Kong. Behind the chapel was a two-storey building: the lower floor housed the RE classrooms, and on the upper floor was the RE teachers' office.

Youth services were held in church every Sunday at 9.30 am.

Afterwards, Brother Kemin Lee, the youth leader, would prepare lunch for everyone, and the youths would stay behind to do church work. This weekly routine enabled them to develop a close bond with each other and to become a united, joyful and vibrant group.

Even though the truth had been preached in Singapore for over forty years, there was only one church at the time, with few members. However, the foundation of the members' faith was stable, they were fervent in their service to God, and they got along well with one another. The youths were especially zealous and brought many truth-seekers to church. There seemed to be great hope for the future.

Singapore is a very small country. At the time of writing, it had a population of 2.1 million living in an area of 540 square kilometres. The lion is the national symbol, hence the country's nickname, the "Lion City". It was the fourth largest port in the world. Like Hong Kong, Singapore is built on reclaimed land, whereby new landmass is created by filling the sea with material taken from levelled hills. I found the city to be both clean and beautiful, with many styles of architecture: Western, Malay, Islamic, Indian and Chinese. It was very green with its many trees and flowers; the air was fresh and the environment was relaxing. It was obvious why tourists enjoy visiting this city.

The number of vehicles in Singapore was staggering—roughly one car for every three people. It was not uncommon for a family to own three cars. Not surprisingly, it was always difficult to find somewhere to park in spite of the many car parks.

The population of Singapore was made up of about 1.7 million Chinese, 300,000 Malays and 100,000 Indians. Among the Chinese population, the majority came from Fujian, while the rest were Hakka

and people who originated from Guangdong. Fujianese was often the dialect of choice when out shopping. However, in government offices, the workforce was so diverse—being made up of Indians, Malaysians and Chinese—that English was used as the official language. During evening services in church, sermons were delivered in Chinese and interpreted into English, since many of the younger members were English-educated. On the Sabbath, sermons were delivered in Fujianese and interpreted into Cantonese for the older members.

English is the official language of Singapore, and it is mandatory for children to learn it as a second language at school. One Sunday, I attended a children's RE class and discovered that the teacher was teaching Bible stories in English. Afterwards, I asked her, "How can these young children understand English? They have not even started kindergarten yet!"

She answered, "When you were born and your mother spoke to you in Taiwanese, you couldn't understand a single sentence. How is it that you now understand Taiwanese and speak it fluently?"

This made sense. There was only one sure way to begin learning a language and that was to hear it constantly. Regardless of race or culture, no child has ever acquired his own mother tongue by learning grammar. The reason is simple: the grammar of a language is interwoven with the words that a mother speaks to her child.

From 20 November to 16 December, we held the first regional theological training seminar. There were eighty students from four areas in attendance. Among them were sixteen from Singapore, forty-four from Malaysia, fourteen from Sabah and six from India. There were also thirty-seven observers, mostly from Singapore. The age range

of the students was broad—the youngest was eleven years old, while the oldest was sixty years old. Nevertheless, everyone shared the same eagerness to learn.

The food expenses were subsidized by the World Evangelical Fund Foundation. All the students, except for those from India, paid for their own travel costs, with some spending over NT\$7,000. Not only did they use their own money, many also set aside their work—as civil servants, farmers and businessmen—to study the gospel. This was indeed moving to witness. May the Lord bless them all.

Nine students received the Holy Spirit. One student in fifth-grade was filled with the Spirit and saw a vision during the morning prayer. Although she had not yet been baptized, having been brought to church by her older sister, she had already received the Holy Spirit. In the vision, she saw the Lord carrying a staff. His garment was brilliant white, but His face and feet could not be clearly seen.

When I related her testimony to the students, I added the following explanation: “The white garment represents holiness, and its brilliance represents glory; the staff represents guidance and protection. The Lord is holy and glorious, so we must stay holy and shine for Him in the world by walking with Him. In this way, He will be with us, leading our way and watching over us.”

Throughout the month-long theological seminar, Brother Kemin Lee woke up at 5 am each day to prepare breakfast for the eighty attendees, and would continue working until midnight. Other youths and co-workers helped by interpreting for the sermonizers, translating teaching materials, typing and copying, and generally working hard to make sure the event went smoothly. May the Lord remember their labour.

We were in Singapore from 13 November to 18 December 1973. We assisted with the theological training seminar, as well as a series of special services. Later, we returned, staying from 5 to 10 March 1974 (in between visiting Indonesia and Malaysia), and again on 12 and 13 April 1974. Each time we were in transit, taking the opportunity to stay for a few days.

When we next returned to Singapore from Sabah on 3 May, it was the end of the academic year. Elder Silas Lo told me, “The youths know how to make good use of their time. They want to hold some special youth and evangelical services; you won’t be able to rest while you’re here.”

“That’s all right,” I said. “I’ll rest when I get back to Taiwan.”

So, on 5 and 6 May, we held special services, with seven lessons a day starting from 6 am. Each evening, including that of 4 May, we held evangelical services. All the members were enthusiastic in bringing visitors, and many people attended. Eight people received the Holy Spirit—an unexpected harvest, for which I thank the Lord. We spent a total of forty-nine days in Singapore over the course of the trip, during which six people were baptized and seventeen received the Holy Spirit.

As in Hong Kong, the people in Singapore were very focused on earning a living. Many sisters took paid employment and took care of their families as well. Without God’s guidance and their own determination, it would have been difficult for the members to bring others to listen to the gospel. But thank God, many members were indeed zealous. I felt optimistic about the future of the church in Singapore. May the Lord inspire more workers to bring more souls to Him, so that the church in Singapore can continue to grow for the glory of God.

3. Indonesia

Indonesia is the third largest country in Asia. It is made up of 10,000 islands and covers an area of 1,564 square kilometres. At the time, it had a population of 160 million. Nevertheless, there were only eight churches in Indonesia and one prayer house. It was clear that more work needed to be done.

On 19 December 1973, we travelled from Singapore to Jakarta in Indonesia. The journey took one hour and ten minutes by air, which is comparable to the journey between Taipei and Hong Kong.

The General Assembly of Indonesia was located in Jakarta, in the same building as the local church. It was a grand, four-storey concrete compound: the front portion housed the offices of the General Assembly, a conference room, sleeping quarters, the chapel and an auditorium; the rear portion housed the Canaan School. Inside the chapel were an electric organ and a grand piano, which were used during the Sabbath and evening services.

Indonesia was once a Dutch colony which gained independence in 1945, following the end of World War II. At Merdeka Square in Jakarta, there is a monument commemorating the country's independence (*merdeka* means "independence" in Indonesian). The National Monument stands at 125 metres high and is topped by a golden flame, which weighs thirty-five kilograms. The Indonesian flag is red and white, and the national symbol is the eagle.

At the time of writing, there were 4 million Indonesians of Chinese descent out of a total population of 160 million. Although many stores were owned by Chinese immigrants, government regulations dictated that all signs were to be written in Indonesian—no

Chinese characters could be displayed. Also, the Chinese language could not be taught in schools, with a few exceptions. Many of the Chinese who had been born in Indonesia could not read Chinese; some could not even speak the language. They were fully assimilated into Indonesian society. Therefore, all our preaching had to be interpreted into Indonesian.

The Indonesian president at the time, President Suharto, was staunchly anti-Communist. He would invite various religious groups to preach in Indonesia for the purpose of fighting the Communist influence. Even though Islam was the national religion, President Suharto allowed Indonesians to choose their own faith. Not only did the government welcome various religious groups into the country, it encouraged them to set up schools. The government even required the schools to include religious education in their curriculum. These were ideal conditions for spreading the gospel.

The Canaan School, run by the Indonesia General Assembly, had forty elementary school teachers, a dozen or so middle school teachers and 1,200 students. Students began studying English at the age of seven or eight, so their level of proficiency was quite high. They also did well in other subjects. The school offered high salaries to attract good teachers, and this helped to ensure that the students achieved good grades. Even though the cost of tuition was higher than that of other private schools, many parents were happy to send their children there. In addition to religious education classes during the school week, elementary and middle school students also joined the afternoon Sabbath services. The textbooks used for religious studies were adapted from RE textbooks developed in Taiwan. Some of the students who had not been baptized into the church also attended Sunday RE classes and student spiritual convocations. At many student

spiritual convocations, there would be more un-baptised students than there were baptised members. Some of the school students and their parents would eventually come to church to receive water baptism. The school principal and teachers also enjoyed learning about the teachings of the church.

During our trip to Jakarta, the principal invited Deacon Yang to chair a gospel forum for all the teachers, which provided an opportunity for them to ask questions about matters of faith. Thank God, the event was well received. It convinced me that we needed to create more opportunities to interact with the students and the teachers at the school, and to share the gospel with them. In this way, we could increase the number of believers in Jakarta.

From 22 to 25 December, I attended special services at Tangerang, while Deacon Yang remained in Jakarta. On the afternoon of the 25th, he and Brother Li joined us at Tangerang. After the evening service, I returned to Jakarta with Deacon Yang. During the four days of special services at Tangerang, thirteen people received the Holy Spirit.

Ninety-eight percent of Tangerang residents were Indonesian-born Chinese, but few could speak or read Chinese. Almost all who came to the services used Indonesian Bibles and hymn books.

I learned that the Indonesians love to bathe at least twice a day, like the aboriginal Amis people of Eastern Taiwan. Also, the Indonesian women could carry loads skilfully on their heads as they travelled from place to place. The ethnic Chinese also adopted this carrying technique.

The coconut tree is a symbol of the South Pacific and can be seen everywhere in both Indonesia and Singapore. The juice and flesh of the coconut are delicious, and help to cool the body and

prevent heatstroke. It is truly a gift from the Lord to the people of the equatorial regions.

From 28 December 1973 to 3 January 1974, we held a combined youth spiritual convocation, which lasted seven days. Fifty-two people attended and three received the Holy Spirit. During the last prayer on the third evening, Preacher Tsai heard the sound of angels singing from a distance, gradually drawing nearer. It was solemn, beautiful and pleasing to the ear.

On 4 January 1974, I travelled with Deacon Tzuyan Kuo to the church in Cianjur. Deacon Yang stayed at the General Assembly to conduct a Bible seminar. We went on the nation's highest highway, which was 1,800 metres above sea level. As the car travelled through the clouds and mist, the wind was strong and the temperature was low, and we saw tea trees that were being cultivated on both sides of the highway.

From 4 to 9 January, we held special services at the church in Cianjur. This was followed by four days of spiritual convocation and evangelical services from 10 to 13 January. The focus of the daytime services was on encouraging the members, while the evening services were for preaching the gospel. On 9 January, Deacon Kuo returned to Jakarta, and on the 12th, Deacon Yang joined me from Jakarta. During this period, five people received baptism, four received the Holy Spirit and ninety-one partook of the Holy Communion.

On 14 and 15 January, we held special services at the church in Bandung, followed by spiritual convocation and evangelical services at the church in Tasikmalaya from 16 to 20 January. Nine people received the Holy Spirit, forty-two partook of the Holy Communion, but no one was baptized. A Christian from another church received

the Holy Spirit and was healed of his chronic headaches. During this period, Deacon Yang remained at the General Assembly to lead a Bible seminar.

On 21 January, I left Tasikmalaya for Bandung to attend four days of spiritual convocation and evangelical services. Deacon Yang joined us on the 24th. On this occasion, fourteen were baptized, ten received the Holy Spirit and 201 partook of the Holy Communion.

From 29 January to 2 February, I travelled from Bandung to the church in Solo for five days of spiritual convocation and evangelical services. I was accompanied by Brother Sun from Bandung. Eight people received the Holy Spirit there.

On 2 February, I went to assist the holy work at the prayer house in Salatiga, where Preacher Tsai and his family lived. Since the prayer house had only been established for half a year, there had been no increase in membership beyond the addition of a family who had moved there from Burma. Sister Tsai offered free English lessons to about forty middle school students, with the intention of sharing the gospel with them. She would invite them to attend services and listen to the gospel first, and then she would give them English lessons. As a result, four of her students received baptism. The RE class on Sundays was attended by over fifty students, the majority of whom were children of unbelieving parents or members of other churches. After every service, they were given a voucher with the church seal on it. When they collected fifteen vouchers, they would receive a free notebook or some other item of stationery.

On 3 February, Deacon Yang travelled from Tasikmalaya to Salatiga to hold an evangelical service. He took along ten other members and, at 5 pm, held the service in a rented facility. One visitor received the Holy Spirit at this event.

On the morning of 5 February, eleven people received baptism: six were visitors from the church in Tasikmalaya, and the other five were students from Sister Tsai's English class. We held the last evangelical service at 5 pm. Afterwards, Sister Yang, who was sixty years old, told me that she had been baptized with her husband and two sons thirty years ago by Deacon Stephen Hsiao. After moving to Salatiga, she had lost contact with the church and started attending services at the Holy Spirit Church. Deacon Yang encouraged her to come back now that there was a church in Salatiga, and she promised to do so. On 13 February, we commenced five days of evangelical services, which this sister joyfully attended. She received the Holy Spirit on the third night. A lost sheep had returned to the fold after twenty years. Her experience reminds us of Jesus' promise that He will not leave even one of His sheep (Jn 6:37-39).

On 6 February, Brother Weng and I travelled to the church in Jakarta. Deacon Yang had been invited to Bethel Church (a Pentecostal church) by one of the preachers there, so he went to Pati and four other areas, preaching nine times in total. The ministers from Bethel Church came to our services and brought many members with them. Deacon Yang conducted additional Bible study sessions with them after each service. Their response was very positive. Their practice had been to perform baptism in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Deacon Yang explained these were not the names of God, and that His name is "Jesus" (Jn 17:11). He used the Bible to prove that the apostles had all performed baptism in the name of Jesus (Acts 2:38; 8:16; 10:48; 19:5). They immediately acknowledged their error and said they would change their practice from then on.

The Pentecostal Church was well established in Indonesia, with 2,500 churches there at the time. There were a few main offshoots:

the Bethel Church, the Holy Spirit Church, the Tabernacle Church, as well as a number of smaller sects. The headquarters of the United Pentecostal Church in Indonesia were in Semarang, and their affairs were overseen by ministers from the United States. The Pentecostal Church shares a number of beliefs with the True Jesus Church, including the speaking of tongues as the evidence of receiving the Holy Spirit (Acts 10:44–47). Deacon Yang had visited them before, but our communication with them on this occasion was very meaningful. Hopefully, our church can build on this foundation through continued interaction with the Pentecostal Church. Please pray that they may understand the complete truth and help spread the gospel in Indonesia.

From 8 to 10 February, I stayed at the church in Tangerang, where I led three days of spiritual convocation and evangelical services. Deacon Yang stayed in Pati. From 12 to 14 February, we held a spiritual cultivation workshop for elders, deacons, preachers and church council members. There were about thirty participants.

From 13 to 17 February, we held five evenings of evangelical services at the church in Jakarta, with 250 to 300 people attending each night. From 15 to 18 February, we held special services at the members' houses during the daytime.

At 2 pm on 16 February, we conducted the church dedication ceremony for the church in Jakarta and the Indonesia General Assembly. Brothers and sisters came from all over Indonesia to attend, as well as ministers from other denominations and some political leaders. The students from the Canaan School also presented some beautiful hymns. During the five-day spiritual convocation, twenty-nine people received water baptism, thirteen received the Holy Spirit, and 287 received the Holy Communion. At the baptism on

17 February, one sister saw a vision of the Lord's precious blood in the water, and testified of this miracle later that same day.

From 20 to 27 February, we held a spiritual convocation, evangelical services and special services at the church in Pontianak. Deacon Yang stayed in Banjarmasin. Pontianak lies on the equator, so it is especially hot there. However, when it rains, the temperature drops markedly, so that it suddenly feels like autumn.

In Pontianak, we met a sister in her eighties whose five-year-old granddaughter had died and come back to life a few years previously. While the family had gathered in mourning, this sister knelt down and prayed fervently for the Lord's healing. During the prayer, she received the Holy Spirit and her prayer was empowered. By the grace of God, her granddaughter was raised from the dead. This elderly sister now comes to church every day, accompanied by her granddaughter.

On 28 February, I travelled to Jakarta from Pontianak. On 2 March, Deacon Yang returned from Banjarmasin and reported that, during the spiritual convocation, six people had been baptized, twelve received the Holy Spirit and 113 partook of the Holy Communion.

On 5 March, I ended my two-and-a-half month stay in Indonesia and returned to Singapore. During this time, a total of sixty-five people had been baptized and seventy-three had received the Holy Spirit.

We had originally planned to go to Malaysia first, then Indonesia. However, we ended up changing our travel plans because our visas for Malaysia were delayed. Only later did we realize God's arrangement in this. The alteration to our schedule meant that we were able to attend both the week-long combined student spiritual convocation in Indonesia and the annual Singapore–Malaysia student spiritual convocation. If we had followed our original itinerary, we would have missed both of these important events.

Two things stand out in my memory from my trip to Indonesia: the bolster pillows (also known as body pillows, or “hugging pillows” in Chinese) and durian.

The first time I saw a bolster pillow was in the fourth-floor sleeping quarters of the Indonesia General Assembly. These pillows are cylindrical, about fifteen centimetres wide and ninety centimetres long, and filled with cotton. At first, I thought they were foot rests, so during the night I used one to prop up my feet. Only after Elder Tzuyan Kuo explained how to use them did I understand why they were called “hugging pillows”: one is meant to hug the pillow while one sleeps. That night I tried it, and it was indeed very comfortable.

It is said that, a long time ago, when the Spanish military was stationed in Southeast Asia, the soldiers used these pillows as substitutes for their wives, so the pillows became known as “Spanish wives”. Eventually, the pillows came to be used by people throughout the region. Another story claims that the pillows were brought to Indonesia by the Dutch, and then their use spread from the Indonesians to the Chinese. In Indonesian homes, everyone—young and old—uses these pillows.

The second thing I remember is the durian, which is a fruit that weighs about two kilograms. Its outer skin is covered with tough, pyramid-shaped spikes, and the inside contains more than a dozen seeds which are covered with cream-coloured flesh. When ripe, the fruit falls from the tree, but only at night. I can imagine that if one was to fall during the day, it would cause serious injury to any passers-by. At the time, a durian cost Rp 400 (about NT\$36) in Jakarta, while it was Rp 100 (about NT\$9) in Tasikmalaya or Salatiga. Those exported to Japan would be sold for more than ¥5,000 (about NT\$700).

The first time I saw a durian was in the dining hall of the Indonesia General Assembly. During lunchtime on 4 January, I suddenly became aware of an overwhelming stench. When I looked up, I saw Deacon Kuo and Deacon Yang eating from a durian fruit on the table. I could not bear the smell, so I got up quickly to leave. I did not care if people called it the “king of tropical fruits”, or extolled its aromatic, sweet and delicious qualities. It made me feel sick to the stomach and completely lose my appetite. I thought it very strange—how could anyone enjoy eating such a foul-smelling fruit?

On 16 January, while we were at the church in Tasikmalaya, a sister brought along three durians. After the members cut two of them open, they encouraged me to try some. One sister said, “Some people will take a mouthful, spit it out, try again, then spit it out again. But as long as you are brave and keep trying, you’ll end up loving it!”

They were so persistent that I could not refuse. I closed my eyes, took a deep breath, and took a bite. The smell was so overpowering that I could barely swallow. However, while eating my second piece, I did begin to detect a sweet aroma. Nevertheless, it took me an hour to eat five pieces, while others managed to do the same in three minutes.

On 21 January, while at the church in Bandung, another sister brought two durians and placed them in my bedroom. She said, “Don’t eat them now. Just breathe in the smell for three days. When you’re used to it, you’ll really like it.”

Indeed, when we came to eat them, I finished seven pieces in ten minutes. What was amazing was that I no longer detected a stench; all I could smell was a fragrant sweetness. After that, I ate more and more. I could now easily devour thirty pieces in one sitting. By the time I returned to Jakarta, I had become quite the durian connoisseur.

The word *durian* has been phonetically rendered into Chinese, and some people write the name of the fruit using the Chinese character for “lingering”. This is an apt translation. According to legend, the allure of the durian was powerful enough to cause Indonesians living abroad to rush back to Indonesia, vowing never to leave again. There is also an Indonesian saying: “During durian season, you’d sell your sarong to get some.” You do not need to look for proof—just try some for yourself. Today, I can appreciate why people call the durian “king of the tropical fruits”. I can also understand its powerful effect—luring Indonesians back from abroad and driving them to take off their sarongs! As I write, I find myself longing for some durian too!

4. West Malaysia

Malaysia was once a British colony. In 1963, its territory—from the southern half of the Malay Peninsula to Sarawak, and Sabah in Northern Borneo—was unified to become the country of Malaysia we know today. The capital of Malaysia is Kuala Lumpur. The country spans an area of 331,000 square kilometres, and its population at the time of writing was 10,800,000. There were thirteen churches and six prayer houses.

At 10 am on 11 March 1974, Brother Kemin Lee drove six of us from the church in Singapore to West Malaysia (also known as Peninsular Malaysia). The two countries are connected by a long bridge spanning the strait. The centre of the causeway marks the boundary between the two countries, and each country has a checkpoint station at their end of the bridge. Travellers wishing to

cross the bridge have to step out of their cars for the inspectors to check their passports and luggage. The distance from Singapore to Melaka, our first stop in Malaysia, is 154 miles. We arrived at around 5 pm and held a family service at Brother Chang’s house.

On the morning of 12 March, we headed out to the prayer houses in Seremban and Mahau. After we had conducted services there, we drove to Kuala Lumpur and stayed at Brother Minchan Lee’s home. On 13 March, we visited the prayer house in Yeyor, the church in Coal Mountain and the brethren in Kuala Lumpur. That evening, Brother Kemin Lee and Deacon Mark Tsai returned to Singapore.

West Malaysia is made up of several states, including Perak, Selangor, Pahang and Negeri Sembilan, which were independent until they joined the Federation of Malaysia. Sabah and Sarawak, in East Malaysia, are two states which also joined the Federation of Malaysia. The country’s capital, Kuala Lumpur, is a vast, clean and beautiful city with many grand buildings. Due to rapid population growth, many houses have been built on the mountains.

There were nineteen churches and prayer houses in Malaysia at the time. These were located in three regions: Kuala Lumpur, Ipoh and Sungai Petani. In each region, one of the larger churches served as a coordination centre for the advancement of the divine work. The deacons in each region were truly commendable: they led busy lives running their own businesses, but still worked hard to do the holy work.

From 15 to 17 March, we held a youth spiritual convocation during the day and evangelical services at night. Both were well attended. Deacon Yang and I took turns conducting the Sabbath and evening services. If one of us stayed in Kuala Lumpur for the youth spiritual

convocation, the other would go out to pastor the churches in Klang or Kajang.

During the evening service on 20 March, Deacon Yang and I bade farewell to each other with words of encouragement. The youth class also organized a farewell fellowship for us. Many stayed around long afterwards, lingering in front of the chapel to chat before returning home.

On 21 March, we took a taxi from Kuala Lumpur to Ipoh, a journey of 132 miles. We stayed in Ipoh and the neighbouring areas until 26 March to aid in the pastoral work.

On the way from Kuala Lumpur to Ipoh, we saw many rubber tree plantations up on the hills. West Malaysia is the world's top rubber producer, accounting for one third of the world's total output. Most of it is exported to Europe and the United States. The roads are paved with a mixture of rubber, asphalt and fine pebble, which makes them smooth to drive on. The mountains on the west are rich with tin ore, and Ipoh is the world's number one tin-producing region, exporting to countries like the United States, the United Kingdom and Japan. We passed one mountainous area that was covered in palm trees; Ipoh also produces palm oil—a key ingredient in many food products like margarine.

On 27 March, we went to the prayer house in Sungai Siput to conduct special services. We held spiritual cultivation services during the day and evangelical services in the evenings. Around fifty people attended, including many truth-seekers. On the 28th, we returned to the church in Ipoh after the evening service. That same afternoon, Deacon Yang and Deacon Chonsen Ho made their way to Sungai Petani.

At 8 am on 1 April, we took a taxi from Ipoh to Sungai Petani, a journey of 140 miles. We arrived around 11.30 am. Since Deacon Yang had already arrived several days earlier, they had been holding daily services: morning prayer sessions from 6.30 am to 7 am, followed by a service straight after. In addition, they were conducting evangelical services every evening. During the daytime, we would visit church members or hold special services at churches nearby. Deacon Yang left Sungai Petani that morning and returned to Singapore to catch a flight to Sabah.

On the morning of 2 April, we visited members in the Kulim and Padang Serai area. At 6 pm we held a special service at the church in Kulim, and at 8 pm we held an evangelical service at Padang Serai. Many members and truth-seekers attended, meaning the chapel was full to capacity.

On 4 April, we spent the morning at the Penang Immigration Office applying for a week-long extension to our visas. In the afternoon, we visited the brethren in Penang and held an evening service at the church.

After the evening service, we returned to Sungai Petani. Sungai Petani and Penang are about twenty-five miles apart. The journey by boat takes about twenty minutes. Penang is known as the park of Southeast Asia. Its roads, cities and coast are very beautiful. Penang has the largest commercial seaport in Malaysia and is home to booming industries, such as tin-processing and plastic production.

On 5 April at 2 pm, we visited the members at Alor Setar and held evening services. The church is located in the northern part of West Malaysia, thirty miles from the Thai border. Over ten years ago, Deacon Chonsen Ho from Sungai Petani had evangelized in Thailand and established a church in Hat Yai.

From 7 to 10 April, the church in Sungai Petani hosted a joint Singapore–Malaysia regional youth spiritual convocation, which was attended by 132 people. Nine people were baptized, seven received the Holy Spirit and 172 partook of the Holy Communion. The lessons were taught by deacons, some youths and myself. The participants showed tremendous interest in the Scriptures and asked seventy-three Bible questions over the course of the convocation.

At 5 pm on 11 April, Brother Kemin Lee drove us from Sungai Petani to Kuala Lumpur—a journey of about 243 miles. We arrived at 1.15 am and stayed at Brother Minchan Lee’s house again. The next day, we left Kuala Lumpur and drove back to Singapore—a journey of 245 miles—arriving at 7 pm, just in time for the 8 pm youth class service.

My assignment in West Malaysia lasted one month, from 11 March to 10 April. During this trip, nine people were baptized and seven received the Holy Spirit. Deacon Yang left West Malaysia ten days before me to assist the holy work in Sabah.

In Kuala Lumpur, the sermons were delivered in Mandarin and interpreted into Cantonese, except at the church in Klang where Fujianese was used. For some churches in the Siput area, sermons had to be interpreted either into Cantonese or Hakka. In the Sungai Petani region, only the members in Penang could understand Fujianese. For the rest of the churches in that area, the sermons were delivered in Mandarin with Hakka interpretation.

At the time, the Malaysia–Singapore Coordination Centre was strictly a channel for communication, with no leadership function. This meant there was room for improvement in terms of its role in supporting the divine work. The hope was that a general assembly could soon be formed to strengthen the organization of the church in

the region and to actively promote the sacred work. In this way, the work could prosper and glorify the name of the Lord.

5. Sabah

At the time of our visit, there were thirty-three churches and prayer houses in Sabah.

On 14 April, Brother Kemin Lee and I flew from Singapore to Kota Kinabalu in Sabah. The plane took off at 10 am and landed at 12.30 pm (1 pm local time). Simon Huang, one of Sabah’s regional coordinators, drove us to the church in Kota Kinabalu. When we arrived, Deacon Yang was in the middle of conducting the Holy Communion. The chapel, which was built on the mountainside, was huge and could accommodate over 500 people.

During three days of spiritual convocation and evangelical services, twenty-eight people were baptized, nineteen received the Holy Spirit and 569 partook of the Holy Communion.

Kota Kinabalu, which is near the coast, is the capital of Sabah. The name literally means “cannon station” and alludes to the city’s history as a military base. Kota Kinabalu is also known as Api, which means “fire” in Malay, since the area was once burned down by enemy troops.

From 15 to 18 April, we held a four-day RE workers’ seminar at the church in Kota Kinabalu. The daily schedule started with a morning wake-up call at 5.30 am, followed by classes from 6 am to 7 pm, led by Deacon Yang. After dinner, I conducted evening services. During the day, the local deacons and brethren took me to visit the other churches in Sabah, the prayer house in Kimanis, and the churches in Tamparuli

and Tuaran. We held special services in these areas and returned to Kota Kinabalu after 5 pm each day.

On 19 April, I flew from Kota Kinabalu to Sandakan, a forty-five minute journey. I saw mountains whose tops were in the clouds, rivers and streams meandering across the landscape like winding roads, and a turquoise ocean. The scenery was spectacular.

The church in Sandakan was on a mountainside. The chapel was complete with an organ and an electric piano. From 19 to 21 April, we held a spiritual convocation during the day and evangelical services in the evening. During this time, Deacon Yang went to pastor the indigenous believers in the mountainous area, while I led the services in Sandakan. Brother Kemin Lee joined us on the afternoon of the 20th and returned to Singapore on the 21st. Over the three days, nine people were baptized, six received the Holy Spirit and 174 members partook of the Holy Communion.

On 22 April, we held an evening farewell fellowship, with over 100 members in attendance.

We left Sandakan at 10 am on 23 April and arrived at Tawau Airport at 10.40 am. I stayed at Deacon James Feng's house, which was a fifty-minute drive away. His house was on a rubber plantation in the mountain area. There were so many mosquitoes that we needed to light two incense sticks if we wanted to use the bathroom at night.

From 23 to 25 April, we held three days of special services at the church in Tawau Seventeen Mile (now called Balung), with four sessions each day. During the day, we conducted spiritual cultivation services for the members and held evangelical services in the evenings. Three people were baptized, fourteen received the Holy Spirit and 146 partook of the Holy Communion.

From 26 to 27 April, we held special services at the prayer house in Tawau Three Mile (now the church in Tawau). Again, daytime services were for the members, while evening services were for evangelism. Numerous truth-seekers came. Two people were baptized, three received the Holy Spirit and ninety-two partook of the Holy Communion.

On 28 April, we flew from Tawau to Kota Kinabalu. For two days, we held youth fellowships which ran from 1.30 pm to 5 pm. During the concluding prayer of the first evening service, three people received the Holy Spirit. On the next evening, another two received the Holy Spirit.

On 30 April, Brother Tsiyuan Chang drove us to the church in Tamparuli. Here, we held three days of evangelical services. Each day we had four services: spiritual cultivation services in the daytime and evangelical services in the evening. During the convocation, twenty people were baptized, sixteen received the Holy Spirit and 281 partook of the Holy Communion. We were joined by Deacon Yang who had earlier been working in the mountainous area, where two people had been baptized and three had received the Holy Spirit.

On 2 May, we returned to Kota Kinabalu, where the youths prepared a home-cooked meal as part of our farewell. Over 100 people attended.

At noon on 3 May, Brother Tsiyuan Chang drove us to Kota Kinabalu Airport. Over 100 brethren came to send us off. The flight was scheduled for 1.45 pm, but take-off was delayed until 2.10 pm. The plane finally landed in Singapore at 4.10 pm (3.40 pm local time).

During our trip to Sabah, a total of sixty-four people received baptism and eighty-seven received the Holy Spirit.

The greatest obstacle to evangelism in Sabah was that we were not allowed to preach to the Muslim community. They could be easily identified by their black and white hats. Black hats were worn by those who had not visited Mecca, while white hats were worn by those who had. The pilgrimage to Mecca is a lifelong goal for many Muslims, such that even the very poor would scrimp and save in order to fulfil it before they reach old age. In Malaysia, it is forbidden to preach to those wearing black hats, but an even more serious penalty was associated with evangelizing to those in white hats. Just a week before Deacon Yang's visit to Kota Kinabalu, a pastor from another denomination had laid hands on the head of a Muslim wearing a white hat. When the government was alerted to this, they ordered him to leave the country within twenty-four hours. Even his sponsor was punished. We could have met with similar trouble if we tried to visit those church members who had converted to Islam.

It was, however, not illegal to preach to the indigenous people who were not of Malay heritage. These people accepted the gospel readily, and I believe that if we preach proactively to these communities, more new churches can be established.

From 4 to 6 May, we held three nights of evangelical services and two days of special youth services at the church in Singapore. Eight people received the Holy Spirit.

On 8 May, we flew back to Taiwan. We departed at 8.45 am and arrived at 3.45 pm, Taipei time. Many church elders, deacons and brethren came to welcome us, which touched us very much.

Our trip began on 19 October 1973 and concluded on 8 May 1974—a total of 200 days (six months and twenty days). During our ministry, 147 people were baptized and 228 received the Holy Spirit.

While abroad, I rarely felt homesick and did not keep track of how many days I had been away. It was only upon my return that I realized how long I had been absent from my family and my country.

Concluding words of thanks

There are many things to give thanks to God for. First of all, I thank Him for His protection. Not once did we fall sick or encounter any unexpected events. Secondly, I thank Him for His guidance and for allowing our plans to be carried out smoothly. Thirdly, I thank the Lord for abiding with us and blessing our work, so that the churches throughout Hong Kong and Southeast Asia were able to receive some encouragement from us. Fourthly, I wish to express my gratitude to all the elders, deacons and brethren in Hong Kong, Singapore, Indonesia, West Malaysia and Sabah for working tirelessly alongside us. I will remember their Christ-like love and the way they made us feel at home wherever we went. Finally, I would like to thank the elders, deacons and brethren in Taiwan and throughout the world for their unceasing intercessions. Without their prayers, we could not have completed this mission.

May all the honour, glory, power and praise be unto the holy name of our Lord Jesus Christ forever. Amen.

