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# Challenger

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## I Still Have *Dreams*

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A Film Director's Testimony

/ My Life Rebuilt

/ Love, the Best Healer:  
The Story of Kimsang

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## A Shocking Miracle of Rebirth

In 2001 as I stood in front of my television watching the 9/11 attack, my heart and chest seemed to tear apart. In late October, I experienced further heart stress when my oldest brother passed away due to a sudden heart attack. Then on December 29, an unbearable pain in my chest and stomach rushed

me into the emergency room. A cardiologist immediately performed an emergency quadruple bypass on my heart.

Right after the surgery, I was rushed back into the operating room due to uncontrollable internal bleeding. Praying beside my bedside, my husband was simultaneously calling our families and friends about my



# Still Have *Dreams*

by Lily Lee

urgent medical situation. Though I was unconscious at that time, I still vividly remember that I was calm and peaceful, knowing fully that it was God's gentle hands leading me through the shadow of death.

After a month in intensive care, I was discharged to go home. It seemed as if I had been reborn with a new lease on life, but I was actually physically

and emotionally depleted. I could not sit or stand beyond 10 minutes, I didn't want to eat or talk, and I could not focus on anything. I wondered if I might be handicapped for life.

Every night, an unbearable pain would wake me up before midnight. All I could do was to whisper to God, "Lord, help me sleep till one o'clock tomorrow! "One-thirty tomorrow!"

"Two o'clock!" That was the way I struggled through the physical pain and slept longer and longer. Forcing myself to read the Bible aloud, I couldn't even finish a line before I would lose my attention. Again, I asked God, "Lord, can I read two lines tomorrow?" "Four lines tomorrow?" Gradually, I was able to finish a whole page of my Bible reading. In similar manner, I tried to fight my memory loss by memorizing Psalms—one verse, two verses, half a page. I struggled this way for almost four months.

## A Rebirth of Life and Vision

In the Fall of 2002, after having taken a leave of absence for a whole semester, I struggled to go back to my college and resume teaching, to affirm to myself that I was still able to work! In early November, when I was

feeling somewhat stronger, I went to church and worshipped. I prayed earnestly to God, "Lord, I have talked about life dedication for 20 years. Today is the time for action!" My prayer and tears of joy mingled with the excitement I felt at God's continued use of me in His work.

So, at the end of 2002, I finally laid down my teaching profession and entered into full-time Christian ministry. For many years, I had served as the board chair of Chinese Christian Herald Crusades (CCHC), headquartered in New York, and now I joined the organization as a co-worker. In amazing ways, God opened doors for us and made my longtime dream come true: to minister to women so that the image of God is restored in them, and they live out the abundant life as promised by Christ.



*Lily (second right) with Debbie (far left) and the steering committee of the Cambodian ministry*



*With the girls in Pleroma Home for Girls (PHG)*

We entered China and began to establish the Children's Village in Fujian to take in and serve orphans who had lost one or both parents, and also children whose parents were in jail. Two years later, we established our second Children's Village in Guangxi, and then another in Sichuan. We also founded Garden of Hope in New York (GOH-NY) to care for and rebuild the lives of domestic violence victims and break the silence and traditional taboo of wife-abuse among Chinese communities. Abused women victims were being healed and restored to self-respect in the image of God.

In the beginning of 2007, at a staff prayer and fellowship meeting, I excitedly shared stories of God's blessings on our ministries as "dreams come true." Almost in unison, the sisters and brothers asked, "Lily, do you still have dreams?" Suddenly, I realized that there was indeed a vivid dream bubbling inside me! However, this "dream" seemed too remote and too huge to even think of it! Dare I share it with them?



*Lily with husband Denny*

I slowly shared: I hope I can witness with my own eyes someday within my lifetime, that some Chinese Christians will start a ministry to combat human trafficking, to rescue and restore women and girls who are exploited into sexual trafficking, to clothe them with Jesus' love and the gospel, and to wrap them with Eden's glorious fullness, just as Jesus said in the parable, "When I was naked, you clothed me!"

### **A Ministry of Action in Cambodia**

The same year, during a retreat with Fullness in Christ Fellowship (an organization I had co-founded in 2001), I was pushed by the Holy Spirit to share the issue of global human trafficking—that women all over the world are being discriminated against, humiliated, abused, and even slaughtered. That day, the sisters wept for the women and girls who literally live in hell on earth. And together we asked God, "What can we do?" knowing that Christ also died for women such as these.

Needing to focus a ministry on a specific location, throughout the year 2008, the idea of Cambodia never left me. At the retreat that year, I shared the results of my year-long, in-depth research on Cambodia, a country rebuilt after the collapse of the Khmer Rouge but one that experienced a rampant surge of the

sex trafficking plague. I also shared some workable ministry strategies that came to my heart through prayer.

At that meeting, sitting beside me was Debbie Choy, whom I didn't know at the time. After hearing me share, she revealed that she had been a missionary in Cambodia for more than a year and came back to the United States to get medical treatment. Shocked, I uttered, "Take me to Cambodia!"

The following year—on March 8, 2009—we flew to Cambodia together. This was my first time to set foot in a country that was so foreign and strange to me—yet so deeply impressed on my heart. Debbie, however, revisited her old place and was happy to reunite with her old friends. On the day I was leaving, I asked Debbie, "Would you consider coming back to Cambodia to serve?" Throughout the following year, God put His love for the Cambodian girls deep into Debbie's heart! God's calling came quietly and vividly.

On March 8, 2010, Debbie resolutely set foot in Cambodia again and became our first missionary in Cambodia! She is now the field director of Pleroma Missions in Cambodia (PMC), entrusted by God to develop this ministry. By March 8, 2011, our first project, Pleroma Home for Girls, was officially launched in Phnom Penh, and a dedication ceremony was held!

Seeking to follow the ministry of Jesus, PMC is a holistic ministry, actualizing and manifesting Micah 6:8—*"to act justly and to love mercy."* Helping to liberate girls and women who have been trampled on, we provide hope and opportunities for healing through counseling, rebuilding, education, and reintegration back into society. Restored in the glorious image of God, these girls and women are able to live lives of fullness in Christ.

In 2021, I celebrated the extra 20 years of life the Lord had given me to see a dream come true—the Pleroma Home for Girls in Cambodia. Before my bypass surgery, I conceived of the Christian life theologically. But afterwards, I knew God wanted me to launch into a new journey of Christian action.

*"He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God" (Micah 6:8). ■*



*Lily Lee was one of the founders of Fullness in Christ Fellowship, ex-chairperson of the Board, and is the current president. She is also the founder and executive director of Pleroma Missions in Cambodia, PMC.*



# OUT OF DARKNESS INTO LIGHT: A FILM DIRECTOR'S TESTIMONY

by Li Guang

*My name in Chinese means “light of sunrise,” depicting the breaking out of light from the darkest hour of the night. The first 23 years of my life were in the darkest hours of the night. Then I met the True Light who rescued me from doom and eternal death.*

## **A Childhood of Darkness**

As a child, I was a burden to my parents and an outlet for their abuse. Kicked around like a ball, I had to change schools often because they placed me in homes of different relatives, denying me the parental

love that other kids enjoyed. I suffered scorn, bullying, and neglect, and I was a loner. Later, my parents divorced, and I was left to stay with my father. Though he would tell me he loved me, he had unstable jobs, was often broke, and left me with no money and no one to care for me.

Later, when I stayed with my mother, she vented her anger and bitterness on me, beating me sometimes, making my body bruised and bloodied. I was ashamed to go to school because my clothes were always torn or burned, and my shoes were worn out. My life was miserable and lonely. I was forced to do all the domestic chores in freezing weather, and my mother would scold me in front of people, so that I was scared all the time and deliberately stayed away from the looks and company of others.

I was in so much pain that the thought of dying was better for me than living. My father broke my heart when he told me he was going to abandon me after he married a new wife. I had no one to trust! When I

was 10 years old, while staying with my mother, I did all the household chores while enduring her constant beating and swearing. One day, I accidentally smashed a bowl while washing dishes, and she—like a crazy person—began to smash all the bowls in the kitchen before driving me out of the house. Totally shaken and dumbfounded, I felt utter helplessness.

## A Wish to Destroy Life

As a young person, I hated life and wanted to commit suicide because there seemed to be no purpose for me to live. The fighting and abuse of my parents left me feeling totally hated. One day, a wish suddenly fell into my heart like a seed: I want to be a film director to express my experiences of pain, doubt, and bitterness through a film. This desire brought a soberness to my mind that caused me to prefer living to dying. At this time, I was living with my grandmother, and with her urging, I was admitted into a reputable high school in Beijing to prepare for an eventual career in film and television editing and directing. I later graduated from Beijing Normal



University with a degree in art.

At age 22, I wrote a script about my own experiences and was eager to film it before I might take my own life. During this time, the mother of my good friend from the university preached the gospel to me. Hearing it brought an indescribable peace and longing to my heart. She asked me to believe in this God of creation, and I said “yes” right away in response. I remembered that in my childhood and adolescent years, whenever I saw the symbol of a cross, I felt an inexplicable intimacy with it. So, I bought a cross pendant, and held this cross tightly in my palm on countless nights when I was tortured by my mother or had to walk down a dark corridor after doing laundry at night.

### Success and Still in Darkness

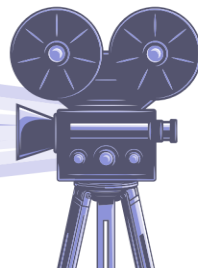
After graduating from the university, I joined the film crew of the famous director Zhang Yimou, and film became my passion. With one film after another, I gradually grew into an independent director, winning several domestic and foreign awards. I was then not even a “Sunday Christian”—I was so busy that I didn’t think I had time to know and seek

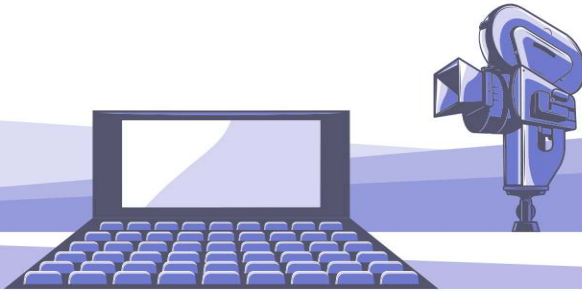
God. Outward success filled my life but did not fill my inner void, which I began to fill with drugs and gambling until I lost interest in both.

In 2008, I still had no faith in God, and the emptiness of my heart forced me to look for other things. I became a close disciple of Nan Huaijin, a master of sinology. Every day I made 108 kowtows, worshipped, and repented as a ritual to eliminate karma. One day, my master said to me: “Li Guang, you must know that the path of life is sad and confusing.” So, it turned out that my so-called master had no answer about the meaning of life either.

### Turning Toward the Light

In 2009, my enthusiasm for films suddenly disappeared, and I seriously questioned what I was doing: Was movie-making worth pursuing? Was I producing some garbage that polluted people’s minds? At this point, I started thinking about the true meaning of life and was brought back to the gospel I had heard long ago. For many years I had been drifting in the world without a purpose. Now, seriously intending to find the real answer to life, I began listening to





sermons and reading the Bible in earnest. The story of the prodigal son returning home after wandering for years touched my heart. The father stretched out his arms to hug and kiss him and gave him the best welcome to celebrate his return. My Heavenly Father did the same for me as I confessed my sins to him in prayer. He held me tightly in his arms, and with my repentance, my spiritual eyes were opened.

In the past, the movie “The Passion of the Christ” had seemed to me to be bloody and disgusting, but now I realized it was my sin that made him suffer the most horrible punishment in the world! It broke my heart to ponder this verse: *“But he was wounded for our transgressions; he was crushed for our iniquities; upon him was the chastisement that brought us peace, and with his stripes we are healed”* (Isaiah 53:5, ESVUK). Understanding that Jesus Christ died on the cross to forgive my sins was a true turning point in my life. I understood that God so loved the world that He gave His only sinless Son, Jesus, to redeem all who

believe (John 3:16). Jesus was nailed to the cross, died, and resurrected—and his blood washes away our sins. He rose again on the third day to conquer death. Because of this, we have the promise and hope of eternal life. God’s love is beyond human comprehension, and I long for my heart to be filled with it.

## New Birth and New Light

In 2010, I uttered this prayer to God: “Father God, I feel that everything I have been doing has no value and meaning. Now, I only long for you because you are the eternal God who created Heaven and Earth. Please let me know you better, get close to you, and experience you!” Then I added: “Now, I really do like film directing. It’s my major. Would you let me know you better through my major study?”

On the second day after this prayer, I was offered a job as stage documentary director in Israel. The core members of the team were all Christians. Everyone prayed together every day and followed God’s leading step by step. When the documentary

was broadcast, the then Israeli president, government officials, and an audience of over 2,000 Israelis watched the performance. President Peres gave it high praises.

To better film this documentary, I read lots of books on the cultural history of Israel and compared them with the Bible. I began to realize that God is omnipresent, transcendental, omniscient, and omnipotent. He created all things in the universe, and He loves me in the smallest detail. Despite my miserable childhood, his love has always been in my life. He sowed the seed of movie dreams in my heart, taking me through the darkness of life. His will and ways for me are the best! I was deeply moved and made a promise from the bottom of my heart: “God, I am willing to submit to your leadership in everything I do, and I surrender the sovereignty of my life to you!”

On October 1, 2010, I was baptized in the Jordan River as a life-changed Christian. The Bible says: “If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away, all things have become new” (2 Corinthians 5:17, NKJV). Before knowing Christ, I had very low self-esteem. I was sensitive, weak, and emotionally unstable. My relationship with friends fluctuated, and the atmosphere in my family made me upset and irritable. I even felt nauseous when my mother touched me. But with Christ as my Lord, my heart softened,

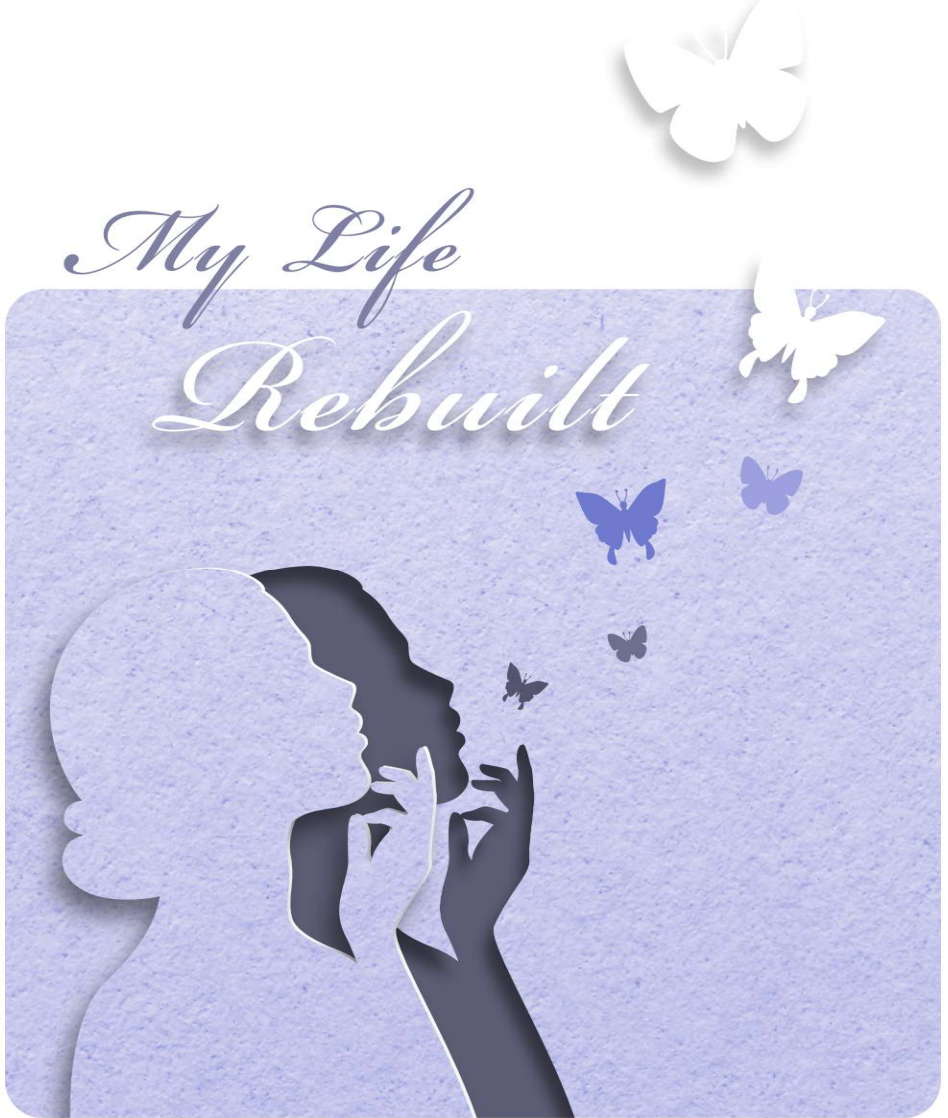
and my hatred toward my mother disappeared. I have truly forgiven her and even love her with hugs and kisses. In 2016, my mother, who was also a victim of abuse, believed in Jesus and was baptized. She became a completely softened and loving person, like an innocent child.

In the past, I hated birthdays, hated my life, had no hope, and lived like a dry skeleton. Today, I am a living testimony that the power of God can change anyone into a clean and beautiful person, made in his image. He rekindled in me my passion for movie production, and I make movies to show forth God’s glory, to help people understand that the Lord—Jesus Christ—is God, the Creator and Savior of mankind. He is the merciful God, full of grace and truth, who sympathizes with our weaknesses, renews our lives, opens our hearts, and turns us from darkness to light! ■



*Li Guang received a Master of Fine Arts in Film Directing at Beijing Film Academy. She has filmed and produced numerous*

*commercial, promotional, and short story films, MVs, documentaries, etc. Her productions have received a number of internationally prestigious awards. This article was adapted from a story originally published in Chinese in Chinese Today (February 2022 issue) and translated by Philip Yu.*



by Esther Chan\*

*As a teenager, I wandered around with hopelessly vulgar friends, but I always held my bottom line—I would never be physically or sexually abused by anyone! Now, as an adult, awaking from a drug coma, I realized I had been sexually molested by a complete stranger!*

### **A Childhood of Upheaval**

The man I knew as a father sneaked into Hong Kong from Mainland China as a fugitive when I was a little kid. Soon after my mother married him, she found out that he had another wife and two daughters, all

of whom came out of China later to live with us as one big household. I was sent to live with my grandmother until I returned home at age eight to witness the stressful conditions my family lived under. My father was addicted to heavy drinking, abused all members of the family, and drove my mother to attempt suicide. Mother was a gentle and timid person who had no skills to cope.

Two years later, my father died of cancer. Having never received love and protection from him, his death left me with the terrible impression I had always had of him. I hated him and felt much relieved when he died, thinking I could never ever forgive him for the way he abused my family.

## Like a Floating Buoy

Because I always felt that I was living in a war zone, I could not open my mouth to release the anxiety I felt in my heart. Constantly lamenting why I had to come into this world, I floated along in life without purpose or meaning—with no goal, just an empty existence. Always puzzling about the meaning of life and suffering immensely, I was like a floating buoy in the sea, lost in the tides of infinite water currents with no anchor or destination.

Until I entered Form II in middle school, I had been a good student. But I began following a bunch of wild kids in the neighborhood,

started being truant from school, and was expelled by my school in Form IX. Rebellious at heart, I ganged up with my sister to steal goods from local stores, so that over time stealing became a compulsion for me, and I felt comfortable stealing by myself.

At age 13, I began using narcotics and soon became addicted to drugs. The highs of drugs led to bizarre fantasies and delusional sensations, always ending in continual compulsion to pursue repeated highs. I was caught and arrested for doing drugs at age 16 for the first time. The judge, suspecting that I was mentally ill, sentenced me to be treated by mental health professionals and receive therapeutic treatments.

Feeling worthless, I obsessed with suicidal thoughts and yearned to end my life as a hopeless person without significance. In my school years at a Buddhist elementary school in Hong Kong, I had been taught about a guilty life of preexistence that led to difficult situations and suffering in this life. Caught in this constant puzzling, remorse, and uncertainties, I wanted to escape by ending my life by my own choice.

## In Prison and Out

At age 19, I met my ex-husband and lived with him without any sense of security, while taking drugs to escape reality. Two years later, I was arrested for drug trafficking, and detained in

a women's prison, which was a scary place to be! After being released from prison, we got married and had a baby girl when I was 23. Discovering later that my ex-husband was having an affair, I developed insomnia and other physiological and mental disorders. To escape reality, I reverted back to taking drugs and had to hand the care of my daughter over to the custody of my ex-husband.

During the four times I was in and out of prison, I had the opportunity to hear about the love of Jesus from prison pastors. They tried to convince me that God was willing to forgive me, a sinner, but I was not able to embrace the truth of unconditional love. Buddha had failed to save me from my miserable life, and I wasn't ready to give Christianity a try.

After getting out of prison, I lived in the home of a boyfriend whom I had grown up with. His mother persuaded me to go to a Christian church with them where I made a public stand to believe in Christ. However, there was

no true repentance or submission to Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord. I did, however, begin to hate myself with utter disgust, and I prayed to God for help.

### **The Incident of the Hundred-Dollar Bill**

Later, a bizarre incident turned my heart to want to seek God. I was renting a room in a squalid area where scoundrels and prostitutes gathered and lived in filthy, inhumane lodging conditions. I always took caution to avoid speaking to anyone who lived there. Once, after injecting some drug, I stepped out to the street in a trance and began a conversation with a man. Afterwards, I awoke from this encounter to discover that I was lying naked on my bed, and a hundred-dollar bill was lying beside me.

At that moment, I recalled a companion of my youth who had broken her addiction through a gospel program, and I wanted to give it a try—to break my addiction once and for all! The hundred-dollar bill incident was the critical issue that led



*Esther and her husband Andy*



*Esther and Andy*



me to call a medical social worker to ask for the “gospel treatment.” For some 30 years I had lived a sinful life, but through the hundred-dollar bill incident, I became willing to seek the help I needed through Jesus Christ.

## The Grace to Quit

Today at age 46, I am completely out of the pit of drug addiction and am clean in body, soul, and spirit! On my own volition, I entered Barnabas Christian Love Service for drug addicts in Kwai Chung Mental Hospital in Hong Kong to get treatment through biblical means. The loving support of sisters I could confide in was essential in my recovery process. I heard the gospel of Jesus Christ taught with truth and sound doctrine, and I became a born-again Christian. Because of God’s unconditional forgiveness to me—which I felt deeply and received—I was able to forget all the grudges and hatred I felt toward my parents. I even forgave the abuse of my ex-husband. Having a new identity in Christ, I abandoned all my previous wayward wanderings. At age 35, I completed the entire two-year rehabilitative course of therapy through gospel means, and from then on, I have never touched pot or drugs again!

## Beginning a New Life

During the two years I lived at

Barnabas, I was able to take many courses of study, such as the art of tree-tending, a lifeguard course, writing classes, and classes in computer usage. At the end of my stay, as a successful ex-drug addict, I was able to give my testimony at different local schools. That’s how I met my future husband, Andy. He had had the same drug experience as I but was recovered and working with male addicts in a Lutheran institution.

Two years later, a Christian plastic surgeon hired me as a nurse’s aid to work in his clinic. I often had opportunities there to share about my past and the calling I had to help other addicts. Within that year, I was called to return to Barnabas to work as a counselor for drug addicts. I knew this was God’s calling, and I thanked Him that as an ex-addict, I could return to serve other drug addicts. By this time, Andy and I were married, and this job change allowed us more time together in the evenings.

Then one day, I received a phone call from the executive director of Barnabas. She informed me that there was a vacancy for a part-time position for a “Sharing Minister” and urged me to apply. Believing this was the will of God for me, I responded, and God answered my secret prayers openly by giving me such a meaningful job suited to me. Shepherding work had always been

my burden—to serve frontline in sharing the gospel with addicts.

I was also given the opportunity to enroll in theology studies at the seminary. In November 2020, I graduated with a bachelor's degree in pastoral ministry and in February 2021, began full-time ministry at Barnabas.

Looking back, my previous life was filthy, broken, resentful, and bitter—until I met Jesus. He broke my bondage to sin and rebuilt my life anew. By His amazing grace I am now able to serve Him and others. All praise to Him! ■



*\*Esther Chan is a full-time worker at the Barnabas Social Service Center of Hong Kong, rehabilitating women*

*who have been criminals and drug addicts, and restoring their lives through theological and therapeutic training. Esther shared her story in an interview with Kelly Kwok Hoi Wong, contract editor of Chinese Christian Mission. The interview was translated into English for Challenger by Kelly's husband, Philip Yu. Philip and Kelly attend Rutgers Community Christian Church in New Jersey. They have been ongoing contributors, writing articles for CCM's literary publications for over 20 years.*



When I first went for an interview at the Pleroma Home for Girls\*\*, I instantly fell in love with the children. Some of them were so young and cute and reminded me of Andrew, who I will tell you about shortly. I knew I could pour out my love on these children. It was such a good feeling—I could love many, many more Andrews!

If Andrew were still with us, he would now be eight years old. Four years ago, during the holiday season, Pastor and his wife were busy rehearsing for the church Christmas



# Best Healer: The Story of Kimsang\*

Written by Cecilia Yau  
Translated by Emily O'Neale

program, and they left their two sons, Andrew and his younger brother, Philip, in my care. I took them home with me, and as soon as I stepped in the door, Andrew started yelling for something to eat. He was hungry, so I hurried to get him something to eat. But when I turned around, he was gone. I raced out the door, just as a motorcycle swooped past me. By the time I could see clearly, Andrew was lying on the ground, bleeding from his head and ears.

Pastor arrived shortly after receiving the news. Unfortunately, the clinic

in the village was not in sufficient condition, so we had to send Andrew to the hospital in Phnom Penh. The doctors tried their best, but in the end, they were not able to save this little life. I was heartbroken and beat myself on the chest! *God, why did Andrew die like this? I would rather have died than him. It was my mistake! What about his parents? Oh God, what should I do?*

Adding to my sense of shame was my aunt. I lived with her, helped her with housework, and made a little extra money to pay for my tuition. She was

a Buddhist and didn't like that I went to church. She almost kicked me out when I told her I believed in Jesus. After she learned about the accident, she did not comfort me, but scolded, "You killed someone's child! Tell me how you are going to pay the parents back?"

For three years, I was guilt ridden, unable to eat or sleep well. But during this time, Pastor and his wife were amazingly comforting to me, telling me that it was not my fault, and they fully understood—and God understood too. But once, when we went to visit Andrew's grave together, they couldn't hold back their wailing, calling their son's name, "Andrew, my child, I miss you so much! Come back! Come back!" My heart was torn to shreds. I seemed to have fallen into a dark pit from which I could not climb out.

Pastor and his wife truly loved me, even telling me that God took Andrew and gave them me! Pastor gave me a

job in the administration department of his organization, where I had the opportunity to meet different people. I got to visit the co-workers in the organization's workplace and learn new things. Through this couple's unconditional love and acceptance, God began to mend my broken heart.

Once I dreamed that I was walking alone in the dark when suddenly, I saw thousands of bright lights shining in front of me. The road was covered with diamonds. I heard a kind voice saying: "Don't be afraid, I will lead you with the light of life." Then I walked into a beautiful garden where a lovely fragrance filled the air. Many people were there, people who loved me. They were brothers and sisters in the church.

Then I woke up. Later I found out that this was not just a dream. It was real life. God had prepared many brothers and sisters for me who understood me. I began to receive counseling, and gradually the dark



*Kimsang and family*

shadow disappeared. I was free! Moreover, there is a deep love in my heart. I have a special sympathy for those who are hurt by unfortunate circumstances. I want to hug them and encourage them not to be afraid and not to give up. I want to tell them, "The eternal love of Jesus can heal you and lead you to a place of light."

\* \* \*

When I heard that Pleroma Home for Girls needed a social worker, I knew this was where I belonged—God wanted me to love these children! One day, as part of my responsibilities, I was out in the countryside going through the formalities for accepting girls into our Home. As I walked along the muddy village road, noticing the sparse village houses with no walls and doors, I felt as if I were back in my own home. Ten years earlier, I was like one of these children playing on a bamboo mat. But I had been more fortunate than many rural girls. I had the opportunity to go to school. Of the three girls in my family, I was the only one who could go to school. My older sister wanted to go, but since our family was poor, she insisted that I should have the opportunity because she said I could read better. My younger sister liked boys' work, so she became a cowgirl, watching cattle in the fields every day.

Memories from the past flooded my mind. One day, on my way home from school, a female classmate ran up to me out of breath, very upset, and said, "Go home quickly; your sister is dead!" I was startled and ran home without asking what happened. Before I got to the door, I heard the sound of crying. My heart was pounding when I saw my younger sister lying on the ground. Her hair was burned, her legs were broken, and she seemed to have stopped breathing.

Seeing me, my father, pulled me aside to tell me that my younger sister had been struck by lightning and died in the field. I was stunned! How could this be possible? My sister was a hard worker and everyone loved her—she shouldn't have died! Still today, every time I think of her, my eyes fill with tears as I relive the feelings of loss and confusion.

\* \* \*

"Here we are," my co-worker tugged at my sleeve. "What have you been thinking?" We had arrived at the house of the family we were going to visit. The eight-year-old girl of that home was raped by her stepfather's younger brother. Her mother agreed that it would be safer for her to come to our Home for Girls. I looked at the girl, her face filled with bewilderment and loss. Oh, after 10

years, I was very familiar with that look. I had lost my sister, and this small child had lost her virginity. At that age, her dignity was still very fragile. And her self-confidence had not yet been established. I never fail to ask, "How can it be that she could be so ravaged?" I held her hand and told her softly, "I'm sure you will like the Home for Girls." ■



*Editor's Note: Kimsang is currently the director of Pleroma Home for Girls. Although it is never easy to change someone's life, she says, "My greatest strength comes from prayer and depending on God." Her hope is that one day girls and women in Cambodia will be free from being bound and exploited by sexual crimes, and girls will have the opportunity to be educated, to understand they are valuable, to have hope for the future, to have the ability to choose their own lives, and more importantly, to know God.*

*\*This story was told in first person by Kimsang, written by Cecilia Yau, and translated into English by Emily O'Neill.*

*\*\*Pleroma Home for Girls, a ministry of Fullness in Christ Fellowship ([ficfellowship.org](http://ficfellowship.org)), is a facility in Cambodia that provides a safe haven for girls under the age of 18 who have been—or are—at high risk for being sexually abused or trafficked.*

(Continued from back cover)

The main driving force of the body's transport system is the heart. It beats about 80,000 to 100,000 times a day, transporting about 2,000 gallons (7,600 liters) of blood via the blood vessels. The heart of an 80-year-old person, for example, would have transported approximately 50 billion gallons (190 billion liters) of blood in his or her lifetime! Despite such a large load, the heart works continuously on its own without resting or closing for maintenance. No manufactured machine can come close to such performance and durability! The survival of every organ depends on the heart. When the heart stops pumping, the entire body shuts down. Without oxygen, all the organs stop functioning, and within half an hour, the cells begin to die.

## The Amazing Formation

The way the heart and blood vessels are formed is truly amazing! New life starts when a sperm meets an egg, forming a zygote. Immediately, successive cell divisions begin with one cell becoming two, two becoming four, and four becoming eight, etc. This cluster of cells forms the primitive embryo. Within three weeks of conception, the primitive embryo has three primary cell layers: the ectoderm (outer layer), mesoderm (middle layer), and endoderm (inner layer). In general, cells in the outer layer develop into the nervous system, eyes, inner ears,

skin, and connective tissues. Those in the middle layer develop into the circulatory system, skeleton, muscle, and kidneys, and those in the inner layer, the respiratory system, digestive system, bladder, etc. These cells differentiate in a predictable and orderly fashion, as if they receive certain instructions to do so. The way each cell from the same layer is predestined to develop into distinctive tissues and organs is a mystery for scientists.

The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us: *“He (God) has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the hearts of men, yet they cannot fathom what God has done from beginning to end”* (3:11).

The circulatory system, which develops from the mesoderm, the middle layer, is the first system formed, and the heart is the first organ formed in the baby. Within three months of conception, the fetal heart is fully functional, just like the heart of a newborn. Meanwhile, the blood vessels continue to grow and become arteries and veins for various parts of the fetus, completing the initial development of the circulatory system.

## The Amazing Design

The driving force of the heart comes from the heart muscles. The key to the heart’s powerful contractile force is its unique structural composition

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providing excellent mechanical advantages. Scientific research about the heart has led to two conclusions:

1) There is still a lot we do not understand about the heart; and  
2) We must admit that both the heart, muscles, blood vessels, and nerves are perfectly designed to give the heart incredible functions and durability.

Every part of the body—not just the heart—is wonderfully made! Nothing is randomly made. God the Creator has wonderfully designed the human body. As King David of Israel once proclaimed: *“For you created my inmost being. You knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Your works are wonderful; I know that full well”* (Psalm 139:13–14).

In His designing of the human body, our wonderful God created both male and female. The genetic codes are passed on from generation to generation through marriage and reproduction. Sadly, throughout human history, people rarely ponder or show appreciation for the mysteries of His creation. Instead of glorifying God and praising His



name, they refuse to acknowledge the existence of an infinite God. As in Adam and Eve's rebellion against God, they pass on the sinful nature to future generations, with thoughts and deeds which contradict God's holiness.

The Bible teaches that we all have sinned, and the consequence of sin is death. But our loving God sent His son Jesus Christ to this world, born of the virgin Mary, to die on the cross to redeem us from our sins. He arose from death on the third day and promises us: *"I am the resurrection and the life. Whoever believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die"* (John 11:25-26). If we believe in Him, confess our sins and repent, He will redeem us, accept us as His children, and grant us eternal life. This is one of God's mysteries that is beyond our comprehension. And it is the source of true blessings. ■



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*of clinical medicine at the University of California San Francisco, chief of cardiology, and assistant chief of physicians at Kaiser Medical Center in Fresno. (The content of this article is excerpted from the original article published in Chinese Today, Issue No. 666.)*

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# THE AMAZING HEART



by Chun-Wai Chan, M.D.

## The Amazing Function

A beating heart signifies life. The main mission of the heart is to keep the body's circulatory system going. Transporting blood to 60,000 miles of blood vessels, it delivers oxygen from the lungs, nutrients from the gastrointestinal tract, hormones from endocrine glands, as well as other substances to the cells. It carries waste products from the cells to the liver or kidneys to be broken down or excreted outside the body. In addition, the circulating blood maintains body temperature, acid-base balance, and readiness for deployment of the immune system. All this is essential for cells to survive.



(Continued on page 20)

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