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Twice Redeemed

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Twice Redeemed

by Ka-Wah Cheng*

The thought was always in my mind: One day I will make a lot of money, have a good life, and care for my parents.

Worshipping Idols as Family Tradition

After WWII, my parents fled from Mainland China and found refuge in beautiful Hong Kong. With five children, our family of seven lived in a very small house, and my parents worked tirelessly and diligently to make ends meet. I, the third eldest child, was very touched by my parents' love, always thinking of ways I could share their burden. What I could do was help take care of

my younger brother and sister, study hard, and focus on cultivating my character. Thus, I became known as the “good kid” or “mature kid” in my family, as well as in my community. The thought was always in my mind: One day I will make a lot of money, have a good life, and care for my parents.

Even though Hong Kong was under British rule at that time, my parents maintained the tradition of our people and worshipped idols. Like most Chinese people, they didn't really know why they worshipped idols; they simply followed the tradition—if the other Chinese did it, so should we! As a good son to my



parents, I naturally followed suit and worshipped idols with them.

Joining Christian Fellowship

After I graduated with excellent grades from secondary school, my parents worked very hard to send my second elder brother and me to the States to study. For pragmatic reasons, I chose to study civil engineering, wanting an occupation that would make earning money easy, so I could take care of my family. I was 19 years old.

My brother went to the States before I did, and we both studied at the University of Illinois. It was a joyful

time when I joined him there in 1975. We might have considered ourselves poor in Hong Kong, but the two of us got along well and lived harmoniously together. My brother always thought of me as compliant, yet when he invited me to go to church with him, I was surprisingly reluctant. I had grown up worshipping idols—though I did not believe gods existed. I was, in fact, an atheist.

Then, I thought, for a young person like me in the States, it was important to make some friends. It would be nice to make friends in church and talk them out of being deluded by superstitious beliefs

in gods. But once I set foot in church, I was surprised by the many students from Taiwan and Hong Kong, and even some professors, who were passionate about their faith. They were humble—always offering a hand to newcomers. How could these people with so much knowledge and life experience be Christian as well? This led me to start seriously contemplating the meaning of true faith.

After a half year of studying the Bible, I repented and willingly accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior. I got baptized and later started leading Bible study classes, helping other students who were newcomers. It was during this time, at one of the church fellowships, that I met my future wife.

Starting a Business with My Family

Fast forward a few years. After I completed my master's degree in 1981, I married the girl I loved, and we had two children. Following my parents' example, I accepted my duty to my family, reminding myself that I should work hard to earn more money for my children. By 1990, we had made several moves from Illinois to Houston, to Washington, and ended up in Southern California. After many discussions, my wife and I decided to start a wholesale business of building materials. I felt comfortable in this profession since I

had studied civil engineering.

After a few ups and downs, our business grew, and we were regarded as successful businessmen in our community and church, as our good reputation continued to spread in the Chinese community. I thought, "Well, if I have what it takes to run a business, I can't let it go to waste!" I felt that a successful business could bring glory to God. So, I decided to expand into real estate development projects. Caught up in my business, I had no time to serve God in the church. I had previously taken part in Bible studies, prayer meetings, and Sunday services. But now, I felt that my time was wasted when I attended Sunday service. Even when my body was in church, my spirit was elsewhere.

I was familiar with the teachings of the Bible: *"Do not love the world or anything in the world. If anyone loves the world, love for the Father is not in them. For everything in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—comes not from the Father but from the world"* (1 John 2:15–16). Yet, I could not escape the temptations of the world, nor did I wish to depart from them entirely.

Experiencing God's Mercies

During those years, my business was mainly timber sales. Towards the end of winter 1999, the real estate

business in southern California was at its peak. I knew from my past successful business experiences that timber prices would skyrocket in the spring of 2000, and money would be rolling in. As expected, timber prices doubled in the spring. I had the market all figured out!

Then, in came my crisis. (Though man may propose, God often disposes!) Just as I was gloating on the inside over my success, a client report alerted me to termite trails in my timber. I was extremely concerned but couldn't trace the source of termites. How could this be? If I couldn't nip this in the bud, termites would be all over my timber in less than a month. I could pile the timber on a plot of land 200,000 square feet and build a special net, covering this piece of land, to exterminate the termites.

But if any of my clients saw that, no one would dare to buy timber from me for at least half a year or maybe longer. That would definitely lead to my bankruptcy.

I was at my wits' end and grew white hair overnight. In desperation, we prayed and prayed, asking for God's mercy. At midnight on the third day, when I was drifting in and out of sleep, I seemed to hear God asking me: "Are you very troubled?"

I answered in a heartbeat: "I am! I am! I really need Your help now."

"Do you really yearn to become very rich? Are riches that important? Have you thought that if you become as rich as you wish, you may lose your family, your son? Are you willing for that?"





“No, absolutely not! I am not willing.”

Then, a scripture verse came to my mind: *“For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life”* (John 3:16). Such a familiar verse! I recited it when I first believed in God. Yet, I had never properly pondered it. Why would God be willing to lose His Son? It was because of His love for me.

I prayed to God in tears, “Oh God, I have wronged You. For years, I have run after fame and money more than I ran towards You. Please forgive me. It’s not important whether my

financial situation resolves or not. I just pray for a chance to repent again.”

Then something miraculous happened: My heart was filled with peace, and I fell asleep, deeply and soundly. *“The Lord is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit”* (Psalms 34:18).

The next morning, with still no way to fix the issue with the termites, I suddenly had a new idea: Why do you keep thinking the termites are in the old batch of timber? Take a look at the new batch of timber. So, I told this to my staff and they said, “That’s not possible. The new batch of timber is fine.” But I insisted on having them

check. And, sure enough, we found the source of the termites there—in the new lumber! The supplier worked with me and dealt with the source of the termites. Later, the termites gradually disappeared from the rest of the timber. Afterwards, the supplier asked if I regularly treated my timber with solutions against termites and other pests. No, I never had. Only then did I realize that I didn't have the basic knowledge of how to maintain timber! For 10 years, my timber had not been treated, and I had no issue. I praised God at once: "Oh, God! You are the one who helped me make money. It is not because of my ability, for without Your protection, I wouldn't be here today!" God, in His wonderful ways, had protected me from bankruptcy.

Following God and Receiving His Calling

Now, I prayed to God in complete surrender: "Oh God! I have been lost all these years. Please let me come back to You. Once again, I repent before You. I will no longer make the call on the future of this business. Please take charge!"

Even with this prayer, my heart seemed willing, but my mind was weak. I bargained with God: "Forties is a good age for doing business. Plus, my business is so successful right now. What about if I stay in business for five, 10 more years? Then I will serve You full time." But

God's calling was clear: "You need to serve Me, with all that you have, starting now." I continued resisting: "Oh, God, a business of this scale, more than ten years of sweat and tears, a success like this, I really can't let it go. And I have to consider my wife as well. If she is unwilling to let go, then I can't either."

After praying for some time, my wife sensed my anxiety. One day, she said to me: "Let's leave business behind." I asked: "What else could we do?" She said: "Let's serve God together with all that we have." I knew then that God's time truly had come. So, my wife and I obeyed and followed God's calling. We received theological training and later became full-time pastors.

Jesus once asked: "*What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?*" (Mark 8:36–37). I now understand that a renewed, redeemed life is more precious than anything. Fame or money are not eternal. So why did I think so highly of these brief, earthly achievements? Today, the Word of God is alive in me. Once again, I live my life for God, I surrender my all to Him and serve Him with all that I have. ■

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MY PATHS MADE



STRAIGHT



by Cori Pickering

The First Years of My Life

My parents were both from large families—Mother, from a family of seven children, and Dad, a twin, was the eighth of nine children. Dad's family were Texas sharecroppers. By the time my grandma had the twins, she was so worn out that picking cotton seemed to be an easier task than taking care of babies. Therefore, her oldest daughter took over the tending of the little ones and Grandma went back out to the fields.

Because his family was poor, when Dad came of age, he joined the Navy. That was where he met my mom,

who was in the U.S. Marine Corps. Dad and Mom both drank, with Dad eventually becoming an alcoholic. When I was born (February 1956), Dad dropped Momma off at the hospital and went to celebrate the birth of his first child at the local bar, where he got into a fight and was sent to jail. Poor Momma had to call one of his sisters to come pick us up from the hospital.

The early years of my life were tumultuous, though I have few memories of them. The problems stemmed mostly from Dad's drinking and my parents fighting. During the first year of my life, we moved

13 times. Back then, landlords didn't require rent to be prepaid, so Dad would move us in and then out again when the rent came due. At one place we lived (I was told), Momma had to cover my bassinet with cheesecloth to protect me from the wood rats. Today, as I think back to the early years of my life, I feel sad that a little child lived under such circumstances.

At five years of age, I remember Momma waking me up in the middle of the night and sending me down the street to get a neighbor because she was in labor with my brother. I already had a sister who was three. This was during the Vietnam War years, and Dad was not at home. He was a Navy corpsman and did three tours in Vietnam. Because he was stationed at different bases on the West Coast, we moved several times.

Another memory seared in my mind is, when I was ten, hearing my parents screaming at each other. I had found Dad's wallet in the back seat of the car and gave it to my mom. When she opened it, she found pictures of Dad's other family! Apparently, he had two children while serving in Vietnam. Neither of our parents ever explained to us children what was happening. We were confused and just knew that Dad moved out, and the family I knew was no more.

Soon afterwards, a man started coming around our house in the evenings. He and Mom would drink

together, and later he would go home to his own family. Somehow, in my little mind and heart, I already had a sense that some things were wrong. During these years, to have time to herself, Mom would drop us kids off at a small Baptist church for Sunday school. (She had been raised by a wonderful stepmother who was a Baptist.) When I was eight, I attended Vacation Bible School and heard that Jesus loved me and died for my sins. This was good news to me. I wanted Jesus' love and to belong to Him. Throughout my life I never lost the sense that Jesus loved me, even when I was living a wayward life.

A Young Bride, A Young Mother

When I was 14 years old, my father and his twin sister were killed by a drunk driver. My father WAS that drunk driver. Their deaths caused me to begin thinking about life and death. I knew it was important to be prepared for death—to die as a good person—yet at this point in my life, I didn't know how. By this time, my mother's affair with the other man had ended, and she had moved us to Cheyenne, Wyoming. We did not attend church, had no Christian friends, and I began mixing with the wrong crowd and drinking. I knew that what I was doing was wrong, but, unfortunately, my parents had set a poor standard. By then Momma was sick and could not guide me through those teenage years. During high school, I started dating a guy eight years older than I was, and before I

graduated, we were married. Philip and I both worked—I, as a telephone operator, and he, for the local newspaper. Then in rapid succession, I gave birth to four babies in five years. I was 23 years old, a stay-at-home mom, and happy as a wife and mother. Later, Philip's folks bought a small 24-hour café, and he took over the night shift. Not having Philip at home in the evenings was difficult, but I managed to read Bible stories to my babies every night, in hopes of instilling a love for Jesus in them.

My mother-in-law lived in the same city and was helpful with the children. Her lifestyle was very attractive to me. She was plain and pious and belonged to a church called The Order of Aaron, a small religious group that believes its members are descendants of Aaron (Moses' brother). The church, headquartered in Eskdale, Utah, is a communal settlement, not affiliated with the Mormon Church. On Sabbaths, my in-laws would have church in their home. Philip and I and our children would attend these gatherings where we prayed, sang, and worshipped Jesus as the Son of God.

Life Changed Quickly

When Philip's parents realized the café could not support the two families, his mother persuaded us to move to Eskdale, where we lived



for nearly two years. I loved the structure of life there and felt safe. The community was organized in a circular fashion with the sanctuary at the center and homes surrounding. The boys loved farm life. Every evening after supper, the children would be bathed and put in pajamas, and then families would go to church to sing. For me, it was an idealistic life.

I fit in at Eskdale, but Philip did not. One day he announced that we were moving to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. During the first year and a half after our move, Philip embezzled money from his employer (an engineering firm). He was arrested, convicted, and sent to the state penitentiary. When this happened, I started proceedings for a divorce and was given custody of the children. Overwhelmed, I believed our lives were ruined. I had to get my boys out of town before they were taunted as being convict's kids. Having no income, I packed up the boys and went back to Cheyenne where my mother, sister, and relatives lived. It was 1986, and I was 30 years old.

I went on welfare, used food stamps, and entered the Displaced Homemaker Program—a program that helps women transition out of homemaking into the workforce. The program offers educational assistance and other support services. I enrolled in a two-year program at the community college. When the program was complete, counselors

were there to help me figure out what to do with my life.

I was shown a catalog featuring various jobs I might pursue. Flight attendant was one of the jobs that sounded interesting and within my skill level. The problem was that I would need to relocate and go into training for six weeks. How could I find someone to care for the boys? By this time, Philip was out of prison and living in a halfway house. Even though he was not a good provider, he loved his kids. He had only seen them once during the time he was incarcerated, so he agreed to care for the boys while I was trained by American Airlines in Dallas/Fort Worth, Texas. After my initial interview, I was hired, and in February 1989, I moved to Texas alone. Upon completion of my training, I worked for American Airlines for the next 20 years.

Life in Dallas/Fort Worth

In 1987, the year my divorce was final and I was still in Cheyenne, I met Brad. He had his own construction business, and I worked for him part time while attending school and raising the boys on my own. Brad was a single parent with two children, the same ages as two of mine. His ex-wife had moved to Washington State with his two children. Brad was very good to me and the boys: He fixed my boys' bikes, helped with a garage sale to make money, put gas in my



Cori and Brad



Cori with some of her grandchildren on Mother's Day

car, and during the summer when he had visitation with his children, he took all of us to the lake and taught the kids to water ski.

In 1989 when I got the job with American Airlines, Brad provided money to rent an apartment close to the airport. Once I started flying and had an income, I made plans to bring the boys, who were now 10, 11, 12 and 14, to Texas. When school started, Philip's parents offered to pay for the two oldest boys to go back to Eskdale for school. Philip had earlier filed a suit against me, to get full



Cori and Brad with their children when they were younger



Cori with her grown sons

custody—claiming I had abandoned my children by moving out of state. With full custody, he would not have to pay child support, and he never did. He was fine with me having the kids, as long as I had no legal right to take him back to court. I cried out to God: How am I going to support four children on my own? God's solution was to send Brad, once again, to my rescue. He left Wyoming and moved in with us, although neither of us felt comfortable with the arrangement,

since we were not married. The thought that my children would tell their friends that their mom was living with her boyfriend felt shameful to me. When Brad came to Texas, he had no job, and I was flying three-day trips—away from home two nights—which left him to be the parent to the kids. Stress began to build. Feeling like a failure, one day Brad broke down. He had grown up as a Catholic and knew how important church was. He understood the Gospel, but he had never had a personal relationship with the Lord. Brad knew that for us to succeed in marriage, and to be good parents, we needed to be in church. He was okay with attending a Baptist church, so we contacted the pastor of Grace Baptist Church in Arlington, Texas. The pastor led Brad to understand his need for forgiveness. He accepted Christ as his Savior and surrendered his life to the Lord. Two weeks later, we were married by the same pastor, and two weeks after that, we were both baptized as followers of Christ into the fellowship of the church. We were indeed raised to walk in newness of life. We immediately began to be disciplined by mature Christians in the church. Brad met with a group of men for Bible study each week. I attended a women's Bible study, and the boys got involved in a youth group. Each week we heard the Word of God preached, and we began to grow in our faith and understanding of how to live the Christian life. However, unforgiveness for Philip and the lies

he told about me burned in my heart. It would be many years later that the Lord would give me the peace that comes with forgiveness. It did not come easily, but the Holy Spirit who is my Teacher and Comforter led me to understand my own need for redemption through making amends.

One More Time

In 1990, I received a letter from a Cheyenne court requesting that I be a character witness for Philip, as he was being tried for burning down the family café. Traveling back to Cheyenne was like revisiting bad memories of my past. Along with his father, Philip was indicted for money laundering, arson, and insurance fraud, among other crimes. Both men were incarcerated in separate federal prisons. During this vulnerable time in our sons' lives, they struggled with knowing who they were—with both their father and grandfather in prison. Brad and I did all we could to help them, holding on to our faith that God works all things for good to those who love Him (Romans 8:28).

God's Faithfulness Continues

In 1992, we purchased our home in Hurst, Texas. We joined First Baptist Church, where we found a community of love, belonging, support, friendship, shared faith, and Bible study. We heard the Word of God preached and learned how to apply it to our lives. Twenty years

later we are still in the same church. God has been so faithful. Brad and I have had opportunities to share our life stories—that, in Christ, we forget those things which are behind and reach forward to those things which are ahead (Philippians 3:13–14). And, as Jeremiah 29:11 says, God's plan is to always give us a future and a hope. During these years, we have had the joy of being involved in the ministries of prayer and service. And we continually forge healthy relationships with our adult children and 17 beautiful grandchildren with whom God has blessed us. It is a high calling.

The testimony of our lives can be summed up in this verse: *“Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight”* (Proverbs 3:5–6, BSB). ■



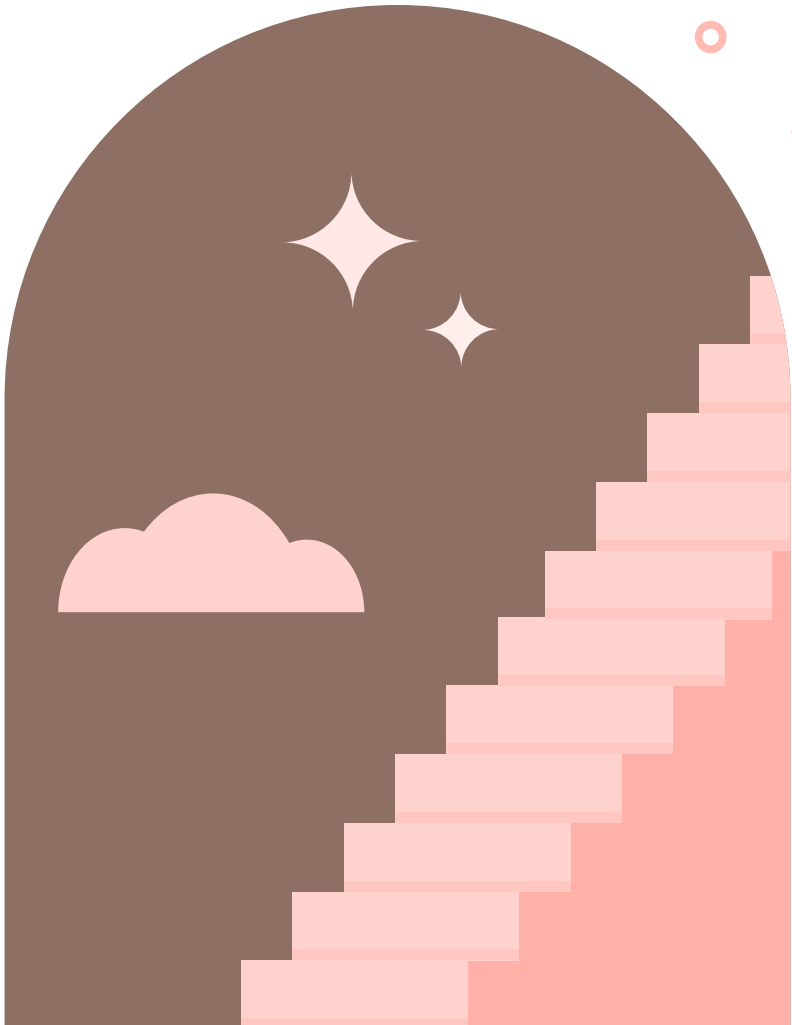
*Cori Pickering—
wife, mother, and
grandmother—
considers herself at
heart a homemaker.
Known for her*

*buttermilk pies and beautiful quilts,
she uses her talents to bless others.
Married to her husband, Brad, for 35
years, Cori enjoys serving together
with him in ministries through
their church.*

When Beauty Meets Purpose:

A Life Transformed by God

by Alice Dan Xu





During my high school and university years in China, I was introduced to the transformative power of love and faith through literary works such as *Jane Eyre* and *The Resurrection*. Then, I was introduced to the Bible and the Gospel—the greatest love story! A university classmate invited me to a Christian fellowship led by an American missionary couple, and I began to study the Bible. I came to personal faith, repented of my sin, and accepted Christ’s death on my behalf.

After moving to Canada, I joined a Chinese church, was baptized, and began my journey in ministry. I joined the youth choir, taught Sunday school, and am currently leading a group called Life Fellowship. I earned my early childhood educator certification and the American Montessori teaching certification. I served as a children’s program supervisor at the Pacific Immigrant Resource Society—all while working at a Montessori school. Eventually, I opened my own preschool, which gave me a great sense of accomplishment, even amidst the busyness.

A Path I Hadn’t Expected

Around 2012, I developed an unusual skin condition. When I was overworked, stressed, or sleep-deprived, my face would swell in various areas. At times, one

eye would swell while the other remained normal, leaving me looking asymmetrical. Feeling self-conscious and anxious, I would often hide, overcome with frustration. I even returned to China to consult top hospitals, where I was diagnosed with angioedema, a form of vascular neuro-allergic swelling. Currently, there is no targeted cure. Doctors advised me to avoid exhaustion, and to relax and get plenty of rest. Following their guidance, I decided to close my preschool.

During that time, I was constantly plagued by questions, wondering why I had developed such a strange illness. Struggling with insomnia—or even a little stress or fatigue—would trigger symptoms. Doubts and complaints toward God overshadowed any sense of gratitude for His goodness. It was then that a friend recommended the book *The Purpose Driven Life*, and I began reading it during my sleepless nights. Gradually, God used it to untangle my inner conflicts, revealing my self-centeredness, and leading me to surrender and trust that God would never abandon me. This quote from the book was especially helpful to me:

“Resentment is the greatest barrier to friendship with God. Encouragingly, God’s beloved friends—like Moses, David, Abraham, and Job—also had doubts. But rather than covering up their fears with pious clichés, they

honestly expressed these feelings. Sometimes, expressing doubts to God is the first step toward a closer relationship with Him."

Helping Others, Helping Myself

One day, I came across an article discussing new advancements in medical aesthetics that could effectively alleviate facial swelling. Intrigued, I began to research the topic extensively, which eventually led me to enroll in a medical aesthetics program and obtain professional certifications. Through this training, I developed a thorough understanding of the field and found myself adopting a more positive and open perspective. During my studies, I encountered images of severe skin conditions, which deeply resonated with me. This experience sparked a strong desire within me to help others who face similar skin issues, using both my personal experience and my newfound professional knowledge.

In 2014, I opened a medical aesthetics spa. Every step of the journey—from choosing the location, designing the space, selecting equipment, to hiring staff—was bathed in prayer, seeking God's guidance. At the spa, I use the lymphatic drainage techniques I learned to relieve swelling, both for myself and my clients. Over time, I began to appreciate the profound impact of medical aesthetics. Many people, especially women, feel self-conscious about visible skin

imperfections, which can affect their self-esteem and even lead to psychological struggles. Through my work, I am able to support them in a meaningful way.

I daily ask God to use my spa as a place where I can be salt and light, to share His love and the Gospel. I also seek His help in caring for my staff and serving clients with integrity. Each person who walks through our doors is prayed for.

At this time, I was also asking God for courage to face my own skin condition. When I woke up to a swollen face, I learned to stay calm—even if customers sometimes looked at me with curiosity. I became more composed and confident, letting go of my old self and relying on God in everything. My heart truly was filled with peace and joy! About a year after opening the spa, God—in His mercy—allowed my skin condition to improve, and it eventually disappeared.

Sharing the Gospel in Conversation

In the waiting area of my spa, I have placed some Christian magazines, Bibles, and pamphlets that share the truth of the faith in both Chinese and English. When chatting with customers, I often ask, "Do you go to church on weekends?" Some clients mention that they have gone with friends or family members, and I



might then ask, “Which church have you been to?” This opens the door for deeper conversations and discussion about faith.

Some clients tell me they have never been to church; and, if they are interested, I take the opportunity to introduce the Gospel to them. I also share my own faith journey—how my beliefs have shaped my life. Sharing my faith has been a valuable lesson for me, reminding me that it is less about convincing others and more about letting the changes in my own life be a testament to God’s work. I pray that God will continue to refine me, helping my life bear the fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-

control. Through these qualities, I hope to touch others’ lives in a genuine and meaningful way.

One of my clients enjoys chatting and often shares her thoughts on Buddhist teachings and philosophy. I listen patiently, allowing her to express herself fully, then I share my own Christian beliefs. One day, as she was discussing Buddhism, I felt a strong inner prompting by the Holy Spirit to speak to her, asking God to guide my words and work in her heart. I began sharing about how I raised my child in church and how he has grown to be a thoughtful son, who prays for himself and for our family. To my surprise, before she left, she expressed a desire to take her own children to church.

I recommended a Chinese church to her, and a few days later, she sent me a message saying she had attended a service, joined a Bible study, and even made new friends, including people from her hometown. She was so joyful!

I thank God for letting me witness this miracle—a reminder that it is *“not by might nor by power, but by My Spirit”* (Zechariah 4:6). We may plant the seed, and others may water it, but *“only God makes it grow”* (1 Corinthians 3:7, NOG). This experience of being led by the Spirit to open my mouth and speak of Him deeply moved me and became one of the key reasons I decided to pursue theological studies.

Renewed Values

In the spring of 2020, I began my studies at seminary, completing a Master of Arts in Christian Studies by spring 2022, and continuing to a Master of Divinity program. This journey in theology has profoundly shaped me, prompting me to be mindful of my words, actions, and thoughts, and to seek God’s guidance to illuminate my path. God has gently untangled my past emotional struggles and inner conflicts. Becoming more aware of my weaknesses, learning humility, and discovering how to accept both my own and others’ imperfections has allowed me to grow in forgiveness and compassion.

God also opened my eyes to a truth I had overlooked. I had always based my self-worth on hard work and worldly success. Yet, as Christians, our true value is found only in Christ. We are precious as God’s creation, made in His image, which leaves no room for self-boasting. I am gradually learning to place God first, to resist making work an idol, and to avoid letting it replace God as the center of my life. Scripture reminds us, *“Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for human masters”* (Colossians 3:23). While we are called to work diligently, we do so for the Lord. When God holds the highest place in our lives, we won’t fall into the trap of workaholism. By entrusting everything to Him, we receive His grace—grace that surpasses all and is always sufficient. ■



Alice Dan Xu is the founder of Peony Beauty and Medical Spa Club and the Green Olive Tree Book Club and

Fellowship in Vancouver, Canada. She is currently enrolled in a PhD program in Theological Studies, with a research focus on Jürgen Moltmann’s Theology of Hope in dialogue with Chinese Neo-Confucian culture and its implications for the faith practice of Chinese Christians.

A Marvelous Universe

When I was 12 years old, my family moved from Hong Kong to the U.S. Desiring that I attain a high level of education, we settled in California where I eventually did graduate study in the field of electrical engineering at the University of California. My upbringing had been to believe only in scientific facts. My father did not follow any religion and did not believe there was a God. Thus, I felt comfortable studying science and technology and found it intriguing.

In my first job, working as an engineer, I gained a strong background in space and technology. A few years later, as an engineering specialist, I entered the workforce of the world's largest maker of commercial satellites, advancing to the position of space environmental specialist and managing an entire department. At NASA, I worked on spacecraft that traveled to outer space, to destinations such as Mars and Jupiter. Through my work, I gained insight into the science of space environment and came to appreciate that the universe we know is marvelous—a creation of Almighty God. Today, working as a consultant for a satellite manufacturer, I have come to appreciate God's creation at a deeper level.

Consider the Earth's Atmosphere

God created the universe in an amazing way, especially Earth and

its features that support human life. The appropriate distance between the Sun and the Earth sets the right temperature for us to live. The Earth's tilt of 23.5 degree sets the four seasons for plants to grow for our consumption, as well as the temperature changes that we appreciate. The five layers in the atmosphere provide oxygen for us to breathe, filter out harmful ultraviolet (UV) radiation from the Sun, regulate temperature, and prevent large temperature fluctuations between day and night.

We cannot survive in terms of temperature even at a high altitude of the lowest atmospheric layer. The higher the altitude, the more radiation there is. Even at altitudes where airplanes fly, we can receive significantly more radiation than on Earth, particularly near the poles. Thus, God's creation allows us to exist on Earth in a safe environment.

The spacecraft I designed had to be able to operate in many harsh space environments. I needed to monitor the space weather, giving special attention to meteorite storms because meteoroids can impact satellites at a very high altitude. When a meteorite showers in the sky, it is the moment a small piece of space debris enters Earth's atmosphere and burns up. This creates a streak of light in the sky. God protects us from outer space debris while at the same time giving us a spectacular nighttime show.

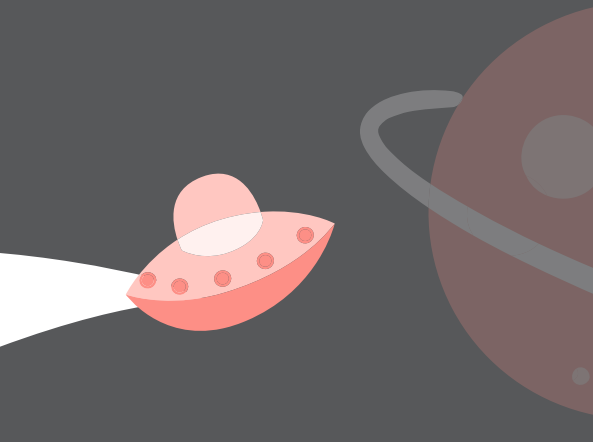
Atomic oxygen can be harmful to certain satellite material if the satellite stays at the upper atmosphere for a long time. High energy UV radiation from the Sun breaks apart oxygen molecules in the upper atmosphere through a process called photodissociation, splitting the molecule into two individual oxygen atoms. Atomic oxygen plays an important role in the formation of the ozone layer which protects life on Earth from harmful UV radiation.

During a solar storm, large amounts of charged particles (charged radiation) emit from the Sun and can damage spacecraft. It can cause catastrophic damage to humans, if not protected. The charged particles ejected from the Sun expand out as solar wind. When that wind slams into the Earth's upper atmosphere, it interacts with the Earth's magnetic field. The field lines create an invisible shield to deflect the particle radiation. The effect of this shield can be observed in an aurora, due to the charged

particles' interaction with Earth's magnetic field and channel towards the poles, where they collide with gases in the Earth's upper atmosphere, causing the gases to ignite and emit light in different colors. This is also called the northern lights, known as aurora borealis. Similar lights can be viewed at or near the South Pole as well. Thus, God protects us with this invisible shield against charged radiation while giving us a beautiful lightshow at high latitudes.

The Earth's magnetic field provides humans with the method of using a compass for navigation. Due to recent scientific research, we now know that another function of Earth's magnetic field is to serve as an invisible shield against harmful particle radiation from the Sun. Again, this is due to God's ingenious design.

When we observe the universe, we perceive marvelous examples in God's creation of His protection and provision for the human race. The



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Bible states with clarity in Romans 1:20: *“For since the creation of the world, God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.”* Everything in nature has been formed by the clear intention of God, the Creator. Thus, no one has an excuse for not recognizing the creative work of Almighty God.

God’s Love Through Jesus

Love of God’s creation was one of the reasons I came to believe in God—but the primary reason I came to faith in Jesus Christ, God’s Son, was the love of God reflected in God’s people (Christians). Shortly after I graduated from the university, while I was working full time during the day and attending graduate school at night, I was invited to various Bible study groups. I attended one during lunch at work, and another on Friday nights at a church near my university.

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The people I met in both Bible study groups were genuine, caring, and kind. The love that powered them was the love from Jesus. They shared with me that we all are sinners and cannot meet God's standard. God is righteous and cannot accept sin. So, He sent His Son Jesus to die in our place, for our sins, so that we can be united with God again. Jesus' love and the love shared by my Christian friends moved me to faith in Christ.

Meaning of Life

Through study of the Bible and observing the lives of my Christian friends, I came to understand the true meaning of life. It is not having a college degree, a good job, or a lot of wealth. I obtained my college degree, had a good job, achieved my goal, and should have been content. But the very short time of contentment did not last long. I started to search for the purpose of life. John 10:10 states, *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."* Satan is a thief and a deceiver who tricks us into believing that life revolves around worldly, material goods and fame—while denying the existence of God. After I realized that John 10:10 was the truth, my eyes and heart were opened, and I followed Jesus. The new life I experience is one of joy, peace, and hope, and is truly fulfilling—whereas material goods and fame can never be.



Belief in God and Scientific Facts

There is no disagreement between science and belief in God. God is a Spirit, and we worship Him in spirit and in truth. God created the universe, including all the science in it. He is almighty and can do miracles in ways that our limited scientific knowledge cannot understand. God is most concerned about each person's spiritual and emotional well-being, as we see in the way He has provided for all our physical needs in the universe. When you humble yourself and search for God, He will open your eyes and heart. He will accept you as His child when you turn to Him and accept Him as your God and Savior. You then will experience abundant life! ■



Frankie Wong is currently a part-time engineering consultant, and a church elder at Grace Gospel Christian Church.

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Engineered by God:

A Journey from Space Science to Spiritual Faith

by Kit Pui Frankie Wong

When God created the worlds, He clearly had the protection and provision for the human race in mind. The universe in all its wonder reveals that there is a Creator God. Studying space science introduced me to this wonder and led me to believe in this God Who cares.

