vol.65 no.2

Challenger

◄ APR-JUN ► 26

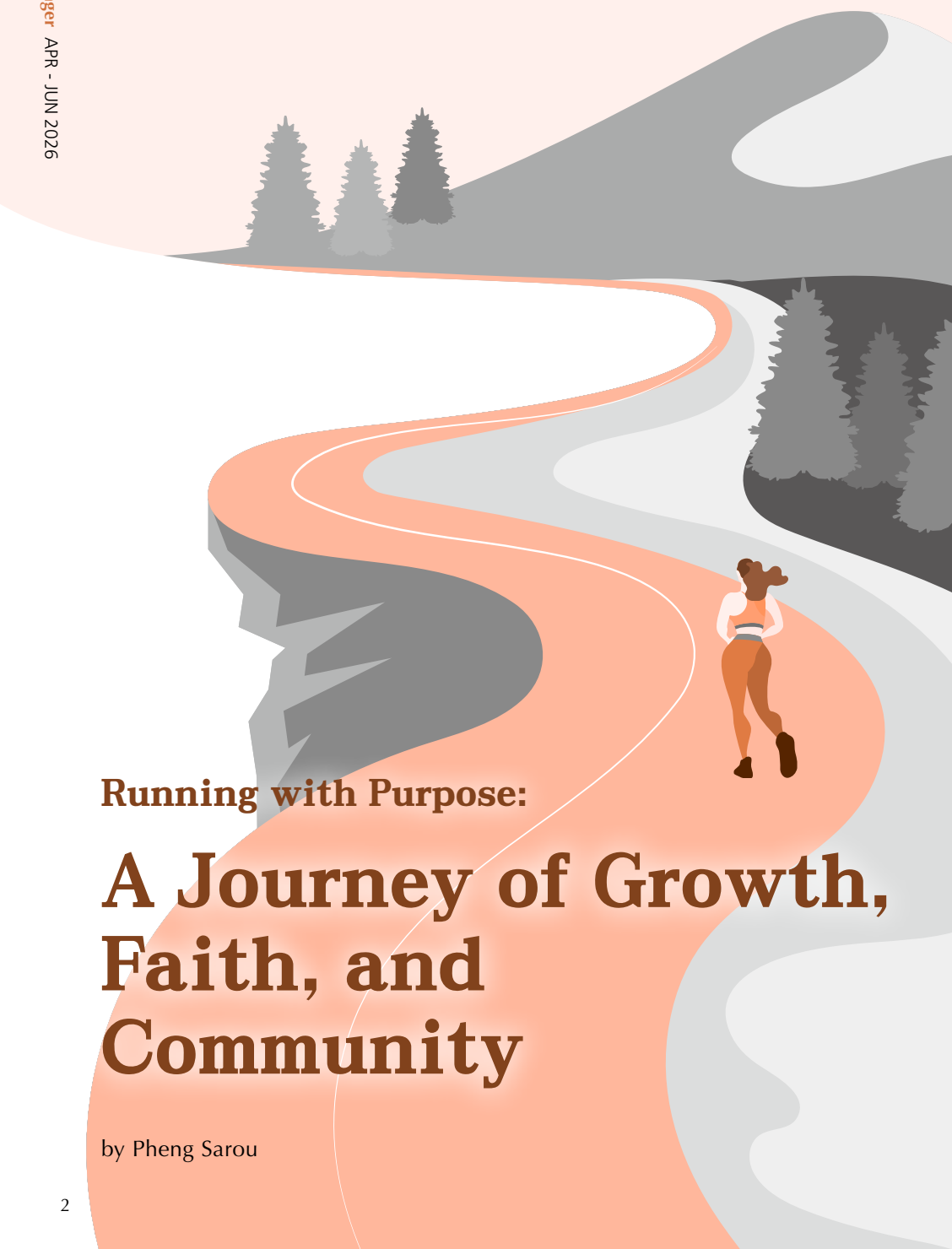
Running with Purpose:

A Journey of Growth, Faith, and Community



/ Modern Science in the Bible
/ Sovereign in Every Dot
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/ Between Two and Four O'Clock

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Running with Purpose:

A Journey of Growth, Faith, and Community

by Pheng Sarou

Every step became a small prayer of gratitude—thankfulness for the strength of my legs, the air in my lungs, and the quiet reminder that I was never truly alone.

A Race I Never Planned to Run

If someone had told me years ago that running would become a meaningful part of my life, I would have laughed and said, "Running isn't for me."

Today, not only do I run regularly—I lead a school running team, mentor young women, and have completed several races, including a 10K in under an hour and a 5K where I earned first place. But beyond medals and finish lines, running has become a reflection of something deeper: perseverance, gratitude, and the quiet presence of God who strengthens me step by step.



Received first place at the 5K race

Finding Purpose in Leadership

My name is Pheng Sarou, and I am the principal of Pleroma School for Girls. I began working with the Pleroma ministry in 2014, when the school was still being built. When it opened in 2015, I joined as an English teacher. Over the years, I was promoted to vice principal in 2019 and principal in 2023.

Through my time in education and leadership, I've learned that the most powerful way to serve my community is by being an example—living with compassion, humility, and hope. My work has always been about helping young women see their potential and discover the light within them. Running became one of the unexpected ways this mission unfolded.



Pheng Sarou receiving 4th place at the Women's race

When the Path Feels Foreign

In 2017, while I was studying abroad, I faced one of the loneliest seasons of my life. Everything was unfamiliar—the language, the people, even the weather. I missed home and felt invisible.

Each day after school, I cycled home and stopped by a quiet park. There, I would read, reflect, and spend time in God's Word. Writing in my journal, I poured out my thoughts as a stranger in a foreign land.

In those quiet moments, I found peace—like a whisper of assurance that I wasn't alone.

One afternoon, I noticed people jogging—free, focused, joyful. For a moment, I wondered if I should try. But I quickly dismissed the idea. Running didn't seem like something I could do.

A Spark in the Wilderness

Seven months later, I was sent to volunteer in a remote forest camp. With no cars, no shops, and no distractions, life slowed down. One afternoon, a friend invited me to jog to the nearest store—about two hours away.

We ran, stopped, laughed, and encouraged each other. That day changed me. For the first time, I experienced the simple joy of

movement—the rhythm of breath and heartbeat, the freedom of open space.

In that stillness, I felt alive again, and sensed a quiet whisper in my heart: *You are not alone. Keep going.*

Returning Home, Running Forward

When I returned to Cambodia, I continued running—two or three kilometers at first, sometimes five. I didn't have proper shoes or a training plan. I just ran to clear my mind and breathe.

Each run became like a prayer in motion—thankfulness for strength, for life, for the One who renews me from within. It wasn't about speed or distance; it was about showing up.

In 2018, I joined my first 10K race. It took me 1 hour and 45 minutes, but I finished with tears of joy. Every step was an act of perseverance—and faith. Encouraged by that, I joined a 21K the next year, though I fell ill afterward. It was a humbling reminder that true strength is not only about endurance, but about listening—to my body, my heart, and to God's gentle guidance.



More training

Running Against Expectations

In my community, running—especially for women—was rare. Many believed women should focus on family duties and avoid sports that might affect their appearance. When I ran, people stared. Some questioned my choices. Sometimes I felt embarrassed.

But running gave me something precious: confidence, clarity, and freedom. It helped me understand my body and emotions, and to feel proud of who I was becoming. More importantly, it taught me that courage often grows quietly, in the space where faith overcomes fear.



Pleroma High School Running Team training session



Pleroma High School Running Team training session 2

Running Together, Growing Together

In August 2024, Pleroma School partnered with the SUSU Running Team to form our very own Pleroma School Running Team. I became the team leader, guiding our students in weekly training sessions.

Since then, running has transformed from a solitary act into a shared joy. I discovered that the real beauty of running is not in running alone, but in running together.

It's in cheering one another on, sharing encouragement, and learning that we are stronger as a community.

Through this partnership, we've joined several events and achieved more together than we ever could alone. Watching our students grow more confident and resilient fills me with deep gratitude. I often think of it as a glimpse of grace—a picture of what happens when love and encouragement take root in young hearts.

The Joy of Community and Calling

Today, I also serve as a committee member of SheRuns, a women's running club that empowers Cambodian women to grow stronger and healthier together. I've met many inspiring female runners—role models who reflect dedication, humility, and light.

Running has strengthened my patience and shaped my mindset to face challenges with peace and perseverance. It reminds me that life is a journey—one that's not meant to be rushed but run with purpose and trust.

When I run, I often reflect on God's goodness—thanking Him for strong legs, clear air, and a heart that still beats with joy. Every step is a small act of worship, a reminder that true strength flows not from willpower alone, but from grace.

Passing the Baton of Hope

I thank God for the SUSU Running Team and for everyone who has walked—or run—alongside me. Together, we've helped our students discover their potential, build confidence, and understand that caring for their bodies is also caring for the gift of life itself.

When our girls grow in strength and self-belief, they don't just transform their own lives—they uplift their families, communities, and nation.

I believe that health, wholeness, and faith are all interconnected. These young women will become leaders who carry light into every sphere of society.

More Than a Race

Running has taught me many things: patience, gratitude, and trust. It has shown me that the finish line isn't the goal—the journey itself is the reward.

And sometimes, when I run, I hear a quiet assurance within: "You are strong…because I am with you."

If you've ever thought about running, I encourage you to take that first step. Don't worry about how far or how fast. Just begin. Every step forward is a step of faith—a small but beautiful way to move closer to who you were meant to be.

"Let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us" (Hebrews 12:1). ■

**Pheng Sarou is the principal of Pleroma School for Girls in Cambodia. Her desire is to inspire others to walk in faith with strength and love guided by God's grace.*



SheRuns training session with some committee members



Modern Science in the Bible

by Tielou Zhou

The Bible is not a physics textbook. Its purpose is to reveal the relationship between God and humanity. Yet the Bible also contains a wealth of verifiable historical and scientific facts. Only in the 20th century, as human understanding of science began to expand, did we realize that the Bible's descriptions not only harmonize with science but, in many cases, anticipated discoveries by more than 3,500 years. Still, Scripture does not dwell on these matters—its focus remains on God's relationship with His people.

The Hydrologic Cycle

Take for example Ecclesiastes 1:7: *"All streams flow into the sea, yet the sea is never full. To the place the streams come from, there they return again."*

The writer, King Solomon, was not attempting to teach science here but his point was: human life flows on, generation after generation. Just as rivers run endlessly into the sea, so human desire is never satisfied, leaving life empty and restless. This is a feeling we can still relate to today. Only in Christ can the human heart find true fulfillment.

From a scientific perspective, however, Solomon's words also describe the hydrologic cycle. You may say, "Is that really the hydrologic cycle? Perhaps it's just a poetic expression." Indeed, Li Bai, the great Chinese poet, famously wrote: *"The Yellow River comes from heaven, rushing to the sea, never to return." He described water as "never returning,"* without any cycle, but under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Solomon expressed the crucial truth: the water returns.

Modern science tells us that the transformation of water's three states (solid, liquid, and gas) is the internal mechanism that produces the hydrologic cycle; and solar radiation and gravity provide the driving force for this process. The sun radiates an immense amount of heat energy, of which about 23% that reaches the earth is consumed in the evaporation of water from oceans, lakes, and soil. Each year, an estimated 577,000 cubic kilometers of water rise into the atmosphere, which then return to the ocean and land through precipitation as rain, snow, or hail. This cycle extends upward to the tropopause, about 11 kilometers above the surface, and downward to groundwater about a kilometer deep. In various forms, water circulates between atmosphere, land, and oceans.

A more detailed description of the process is as follows:

1. **Evaporation**: Solar radiation causes water to evaporate from the surfaces of oceans and land, and also to transpire from plants, turning into water vapor that becomes part of the atmosphere.

2. **Transportation of vapor**: Water vapor is carried by air currents from one region to another, or from lower altitudes to higher altitudes.

3. **Precipitation**: Water vapor in the atmosphere condenses under suitable conditions and, under the influence of gravity, falls to the earth in the form of rain, snow, or hail.

4. **Runoff**: During precipitation, some water evaporates and returns to the atmosphere, while some is intercepted by plants, infiltrates the ground, fills depressions, or stays temporarily on the surface. Eventually, through various routes, it becomes surface runoff, overland flow, or groundwater flow, converging into rivers and ultimately reaching lakes and seas.

It wasn't until the 17th century in France that Pierre Perrault (a scientist) and Edme Mariotte (a physicist and plant physiologist) demonstrated the scientific reality of the water cycle. Yet Scripture had already alluded to it nearly three millennia earlier.

Noah's Ark

Another striking example is Noah's Ark. In Genesis 6, the earth was filled with violence and corruption, and humankind's thoughts were continually evil. God resolved to bring judgment through a great flood, sparing only Noah and his family, because Noah *"was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with*

God" (Genesis 6:9). God gave Noah precise instructions for building the ark: *"Make yourself an ark of cypress wood; make rooms in it and coat it with pitch inside and out. This is how you are to build it: The ark is to be three hundred cubits long, fifty cubits wide and thirty cubits high…"* (Genesis 6:14–16). A cubit is about 18 inches.

The ark was a three-deck vessel roughly one and a half football fields long and four stories tall, with a length-to-width ratio of six to one, the same ratio used in modern ships. From a technical standpoint, it represents the most stable and safe design for a ship at sea. By contrast, until the 16th century, sailing ships were typically only twice as long as they were wide, making them unstable in rough waters. In 1594, Dutch merchant, Pieter Jansz Liorne, inspired by the proportions of Noah's Ark, commissioned a vessel built with a four-to-one ratio and a flatter hull. The ship was a resounding success: it carried over three times the cargo of its competitors, required no extra crew, sailed faster, and remained more stable.

The relationship between science and faith remains one of the most debated and sensitive topics of our time. In his book, *Song of a Wanderer*, author Li Cheng classified people's perspectives on science and faith into three categories:

1. **Conflict**: Science and faith are utterly opposed and mutually exclusive.

2. **Separation**: Faith exists only in areas where science has not yet reached.

3. **Harmony**: The Christian perspective: faith transcends science and is not in conflict with it, for the same God who created the universe also established its natural laws.

Scientists are not creators. They only explore and discover the natural laws that God has already established. As Dr. Francis S. Collins, former director of the Human Genome Project, once said: "I believe that science is the process of uncovering, one by one, the truths that God already knows." Scientific discoveries are consistent with the natural laws God has created. God reveals Himself in nature through the patterns science discovers, and He reveals Himself in Scripture through the enlightenment of Holy Spirit. Together, these two forms of revelation complement each other and help us understand God's creation and His mighty power. ■

Tielou Zhou is a retired professor of physics.

Sovereign in Every Dot:

Pages of Grace

by Julie Criscuola

I used to think my life
was a series of pages I had to fill.
Ink smudged with striving,
lines pressed heavy with worry,
chapters shaped
by what I could not change.
But His hands turn the pages,
steady, unshaken, sure.
What I called endings,
He calls beginnings.
What I saw as ruins,
He rebuilds with grace.
Even in the silence between sentences,
His goodness is still writing,
His mercy still unfolding,
His love still carving beauty
out of every ache,
every waiting,
every wonder.
The story is not mine to write,
but to trust—
to watch His goodness
carry every line to redemption,
to let hope spill into the margins
until I can finally see—
My future was never uncertain.
It was always in His hands. ■

Sovereign in Every Dot

"Your dots are right where they need to be," my dad often said to me.

It began many years ago when I applied for a job that required a personality test as part of the hiring process. The results came back with pages of charts and dots mapping out my strengths and weaknesses with codes of numbers and letters. It was complicated, and I could barely make sense of it. I showed it to Dad because I was excited—I had gotten the job!

We both laughed at how confusing it all looked. However, he didn't need an explanation. He saw more than charts and graphs and turned it into one of his most consistent ways to encourage me.

Whenever I told him about a decision I was making, a challenge I was facing, or even just the everyday ups and downs of life, he would remind me: Your dots are right where they need to be.

Those words became his playful way of pointing me back to my identity in Christ—that even when life felt confusing, God's design is always good. A reminder that if I followed God, I'd always be right where I was supposed to be.

And looking back, it wasn't just something he said to me—it was also how he lived.

Three years ago, I lost my dad to Alzheimer's. Even in his hardest season, he wrote, leaving behind examples of his faith in words.

In 2019, he wrote one of his last poems, "Alzheimer's Hope," in which he talked about not wanting to be a burden in life but looking forward to the reunion in heaven. Just days later, he wrote his final poem, "Where There Is Hope," reminding us, his family, not to fear, because God would be with us, and there is always hope.

His words written then echo encouragement to me now: Our dots are never out of place with God.

Back-to-school season makes me think of Dad even more. He loved his five grandkids fiercely and would have been so proud to see their smiling faces heading into new school years.

I miss him every single day—his encouragement, his joy, his words. But I also see now that even his journey with Alzheimer's was part of his "dots." The disease was

by Julie Criscuola

not something we would have chosen, yet it was still within the boundaries of God's plan for his life. And just as he always reminded me that God didn't make a mistake with my dots, He didn't make a mistake with his either.

That's the mystery and the comfort of faith: God's sovereignty doesn't end where our suffering begins. Even through Alzheimer's, Dad's life pointed to Christ. His last poems were filled with hope, not despair. His faith was tested but never undone. And in the end, he handed down to me not just words of encouragement, but a testimony of trust in a God who is good even when life is hard. ■



Julie Criscuola is a writer from Fort Worth, Texas, where she lives with her husband and three children. Through storytelling and Scripture-rooted reflections, she explores faith, family, and God's presence in the grace-filled, ordinary moments of life. This is a beautiful story about her late father Richard Grisham.

Sovereign in Every Dot:

Where There is Hope!

by Richard Grisham

Where there is hope

We need not fear:

God alone is everywhere!

Why do we fret and wonder why?

God our Father, Christ His Son,

And the Holy Spirit, three in One!

God knows every thought and word:

Do not worry! There is HOPE! ■



Richard Lee Grisham

Born to Be a Missionary

by Peter Tow



The author's family, who ministered several times with him and his coworkers

"I know, O Lord, that the way of man is not in himself, that it is not in man who walks to direct his steps" (Jeremiah 10:23, ESV).

By God's amazing grace, I am a fourth-generation Christian—and it is a great blessing to be born into a devout Christian family. As I reflect on my spiritual journey from the time I was born, lodged in my mind are many wonderful memories of God's saving grace and His multiple blessings upon my family and me. My father was a third-generation believer, and my mother—while not having the benefit of a Christian upbringing—blessed our family by her godly example and life, which was marked by gentleness, helpfulness, and cheerfulness.

Growing up, our parents always taught us to seek God and His kingdom first (Matthew 6:33). They often reminded us of Grandpa's final wish that all of his children and grandchildren "keep good faith with Christ." As our parents were always grateful for God's mercy, grace, and love, they had a strong desire to see their children active in the service of God. At our nightly after-dinner family devotions, our parents would give a short devotion based on one or a few verses from Scripture. We often sang one of Mother's favorite choruses, *All for Jesus!*

Inspired by my grandfather, who was a Presbyterian pastor-missionary in China and Singapore, and my great grandfather, who was a Presbyterian minister in China, my mother had a strong desire to see one or both of her sons enter the pastoral ministry. Mother was a very generous person, always giving things away, so it was no surprise to me to learn that she had given my brother and me to the Lord at our births. When we were born, Mother said this sincere prayer over each of us: "O God, I offer my son to You. May he serve You all the days of his life!" Mother had a great passion for personal evangelism and missions. She was the principal of a government-aided Christian school (True Light School), and on many occasions, I saw her witnessing to



Preaching a gospel message to villagers

her students' non-Christian parents. She not only wanted her sons to be "preachers," she herself did her part to share the gospel with the unsaved.

As a child, I attended two different churches each week. On Sunday mornings our family attended the Cantonese service of the Grace Singapore Chinese Christian Church, a church now well-known for her strong global missionary work. Father was a board member of the church; Mother headed the missions committee. The church started a mission outreach in Pulau Tekong, a nearby island, and, during school holidays, my parents frequently brought my siblings and me along—sometimes traveling together with pastors and missionaries—to do outreach ministries in the gospel center there. As a boy of 10 or so, I did my little part in missions by handing out tracts and flyers to the people living there.

From time to time on Sunday mornings at the crack of dawn, while my siblings preferred to sleep in, I would accompany my parents to the beautiful MacRitchie Reservoir where Grace Church held many of its mission prayer meetings. In the quiet surroundings of the reservoir, this little band of prayer warriors gathered to pray for missionaries and their work. They often prayed for the spiritually lost in Communist China and in other atheistic countries like the Soviet Union. Although I did not join the small group as they prayed, even as I wandered around their meeting place by the still waters, I could hear their earnest cries to the Lord. Their prayers for the work of global missions moved me deeply.

On Sunday afternoons my siblings and I attended the English service of the Life-Bible Presbyterian Church, a mission-minded church pastored by my cousin, Rev. Dr. Timothy Tow.

Sensing the Lord's call to be a missionary someday, one night at the age of 12, as I was retiring to bed, I knelt down and vowed, "Lord, I will serve You as a pastor/missionary when I grow up." At age 17, in 1963, I consecrated my life to the Lord at the end of our church's youth Bible camp. Another teen, named Soon Meng (Sue), was also at the camp and later became my wife. Upon finishing secondary school, I enrolled at the Far Eastern Bible College. There, I learned much about evangelism and missions. During breaks, along with other students, I often accompanied the principal, Dr. Timothy Tow, to Malaysia to do missionary work. He was a pastor, theological educator, and evangelist all at the same time. His deep passion for winning the lost to Christ had a great impact on me. On one occasion, he assigned a classmate and me to spend six weeks doing evangelistic work in a little town in Malaysia called Pokok Assam. We stayed at a gospel center run by an Indian lay missionary, who was the principal of a school. As it was school vacation time, with his help, my friend and I were able to do different outreach activities and ministries with the Indian and Chinese there. During these six weeks serving in the little "mission field," I felt the Lord was training me to be a future cross-cultural missionary.

After finishing four years of basic theological training and feeling increasingly enthusiastic about world missions, the Lord led me to further my studies in theology and missions at the Reformed Bible College, Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, and Covenant Theological Seminary (1969–1974). My study of missions and mingling with missionaries from around the world, especially at the Trinity School of World Missions, and some years later, at the Fuller School of World Missions (1978–1980), solidified my passion for evangelism and missions.



Teaching at a class for Baptist pastors

In the 1970s, when I served in youth and pastoral ministries, I also taught missions at the Singapore Bible College where I formed the Student Missions Fellowship. During school breaks, missions came alive as I took my students on mission trips to Indonesia and Thailand. Later, from 1980–1994, when I pastored Baptist churches in Spokane, Washington, and Fresno and San Jose, California, I participated in global mission-related activities and went on mission trips from time to time.

Although I loved doing pastoral ministry, I often felt the Lord calling me to a global cross-cultural ministry, of which God had prepared me well from the early days of my Christian life. While I did not know where God eventually would lead me to serve, I was open to the prompting of the Holy Spirit. William Carey—an early English missionary to India—said it well: "To know the will of God, we need an open Bible and an open map."



Chinese Baptist Church of San Jose (1994)

In 1992, Dr. Thomas Wang, president of Great Commission International, spoke at the mission conference of my church, Chinese Baptist Church of San Jose. At that time, he was doing pioneer missionary work in the former USSR. He challenged us to go with him to help harvest souls for the Lord. A year later, in response to his invitation and God's call, I went with him and his team on a short-term ministry trip to Far Eastern Russia. During our two weeks of ministry there, the Korean missionaries with whom we worked kept reminding us, *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few"* (Matthew 9:37, ESV). When we saw almost 1,000 Ukrainians and 401 Chinese come to Christ during our short time there, I felt the Lord saying to me: "Return to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), the former Soviet Union, to preach and teach My Word to believers, many of whom are not receiving proper spiritual nourishment. Go also to preach the gospel to the unsaved, who have been deprived of the gospel for seven decades."

At the end of our missionary trip, our three Russian interpreters from St. James Bible College in Kyiv, Ukraine, pleaded with me, "Please come to Kyiv and teach at our newly opened St. James Bible College. We urgently need lecturers and teachers like you who have taught in a Bible college. We think you will fit well working with our Ukrainian people and culture."



With Rev. Thomas Wang in Kazakhstan (1995)



Preaching at a Ukrainian church worship service

On the last day of our mission trip in Vladivostok, Russia, I consulted with Rev. Wang, my mentor, and shared with him that I believed God was leading me to do cross-cultural missionary work in the Soviet Union, perhaps in Ukraine—and that our interpreters from St. James Bible College had invited me to teach at their school. Dr. Wang assured me that he too felt God was taking me out of pastoral ministry and placing me in cross-cultural mission work. He offered to introduce me, when we got back to California, to Rev. Don Sheley, the founder of St. James Bible College in Kyiv. When I met with Rev. Sheley (whose church is located in San Bruno, near San Francisco), he welcomed me heartily to teach at St. James Bible College when I was able to do so.

In October 1994, in response to God's clear calling to do missionary work in Ukraine, my church accepted my resignation and reassigned and commissioned me as her missionary. At the same time, I started my own mission organization, Global Missions Partnership. A year later, I was also commissioned as a ministry associate and evangelist-at-large with Rev. Wang's Great Commission International mission organization. In that capacity I did some preaching and teaching ministries at a few of the mission centers which he had established in Russia and in other countries of Europe.

From 1994–2008, as an itinerant evangelist and missionary, the Lord led me to preach, teach, and do charitable works cross-culturally—not only in Ukraine but also in other countries of the former Soviet Union. With the lifting of visa requirements to Ukraine, missionaries—both short and long term—began to



enter Ukraine in larger numbers. Consequently, the Lord redirected me to Asia, where I was more needed. Since 2008, I have been ministering in several Asian countries, mainly in Myanmar and Nepal.

As I reflect on my Christian journey, the following five verses sum up God's mandate for me: John 10:27–28 (conversion), Romans 12:1–2 (consecration), and Psalm 96:3 (mission calling). In the grand scheme of God's plan for His Church, we can clearly see He calls some to be apostles (missionaries), some prophets (preachers), some evangelists, some pastors and teachers (Ephesians 4:11–12). At the same time, He also calls others to serve Him in different ways and in different secular occupations, such as my elder brother who serves in the field of architecture. We need many different types of occupations to meet the manifold needs of humankind and thereby help fulfill God's plan on earth. Unworthy as I am, the Lord has graciously called me to be a pastor-missionary—just like he called my grandfather to be a pastor-missionary. After serving the Lord as a pastor for 17 years and a missionary for 30 years, my sincere prayer is that I will complete the task which He set in motion for me, even before I was born.

"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you, and before you were born I consecrated you; I appointed you a prophet to the nations" (Jeremiah 1:5, ESV).

"But I do not account my life of any value nor as precious to myself, if only I may finish my course and the ministry that I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God" (Acts 20:24, ESV). ■

Born and raised in Singapore, Rev. Dr. Peter Tow and his wife, Sue, are long-time residents of San Jose, California.

(Continued from back cover)

Experts suggest the answer lies in focus: they kept their eyes on the summit—the final prize—forgetting that the peak was nothing more than an external object, not part of their essence. Perhaps they had, even unconsciously, fused who they were with what they did or could achieve, equating themselves with being "elite climbers" or "top guides." In that fragile mix of identity and ambition, tragedy took hold.

This is only a theory, yet it carries a certain truth. Every person has dreams; every soul has a summit to aspire to. Yet how many can reach it safely, within the bounds of time and circumstance? For many, simply embarking on the climb is a triumph. Reaching the peak, planting the flag, declaring "I was here"—yes, that is impressive. But if you fall just short, should you not also celebrate the journey itself, the company of fellow travelers, the steps taken in courage? How sad it is to lose oneself in the pursuit of proving what one is.

Between two and four o'clock, what seems like progress toward the summit can, in fact, be a march toward death.

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Perhaps our summit is not Everest, and our journey carries no mortal risk. Yet if we cannot disentangle our worth from our accomplishments, success and failure can weigh unbearably heavy. This is not a call to abandon goals or ideals—it is a reminder to consider the attitude we bring to the climb.

I admire the Apostle Paul's perspective in the Bible: *"We are ignored, even though we are well known. We live close to death, but we are still alive. We have been beaten, but we have not been killed. Our hearts ache, but we always have joy. We are poor, but we give spiritual riches to others. We own nothing, and yet we have everything."**

Let me add this: though it may seem we have not reached the summit, our hearts are already on the peak.

If one day you too climb Everest, will you turn back at two o'clock sharp—whether you have planted your flag atop the summit—or linger somewhere along the mountainside?

*2 Corinthians 6:9–10, NLT ■



Carmen Tsui is Challenger's editor-in-chief. She is also a coach and coach trainer.

CHALLENGER
VOL. 65 NO. 2 APR-JUN 2026

Periodicals Postage Paid at Vancouver, B.C., Canada
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Published quarterly by
Chinese Christian Mission
1269 N. McDowell Blvd.
Petaluma, CA 94954
Tel: (707) 762-1314
E-mail: lit@ccmusa.org, ccm@ccmusa.org
Web: http://www.ccmusa.org

Distributed by
Chinese Christian Mission of Canada
4533 Kingsborough Street
Burnaby, B.C., Canada, V5H 4V3
Tel: (604) 877-8606
Fax: (604) 877-8676
E-mail: ccm@ccmcanada.org
Web: http://www.ccmcanada.org

POSTMASTERS:
Send address changes to
Challenger, CCM of Canada
4533 Kingsborough Street
Burnaby, B.C., Canada, V5H 4V3

Editor : Carmen Tsui
Assistant Editors : Margaret Gayle, Dominie Bush
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Printed in Hong Kong

Between Two and Four O'Clock

by Carmen Tsui



In 1996, on a bright January day, a group of seasoned mountaineers set out to conquer Everest, guided by a renowned Sherpa—a member of Nepal's mountain-dwelling minority, whose expertise has led countless climbers to the peaks. Every climber knew the cardinal rule: Begin descending before 2:00 p.m. No matter how far you have come, you must turn back. Push forward beyond this hour, and the consequences could be fatal.

Yet they pressed on, step by step, until nearly 4:00 p.m. Night fell, temperatures plummeted, and the mountain claimed most of their lives. How could a group of such experienced adventurers make this deadly miscalculation?

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