



Still a Professional, but with a Transformed Heart: One Woman's Story about Following God

How did God purposefully shape the World Christian journey of Lisa? And how does her journey illustrate some common themes Asian Americans share in realizing our calling for the Kingdom as World Christians? Read on to find out more...

Lisa's story. The beginning of Lisa's story may sound familiar to many of you. Her parents came to the United States in the late 1970s. The family attended a Chinese church "mostly for social reasons." Lisa loved to learn and excelled academically, gaining admission to a top-tier university where she was—what else?—a premed student. However, despite her parents' expectations, Lisa is not a medical doctor. Instead, she is a first-year Ph.D. student at an influential West Coast university with a clear vision: to become a professor focused on poverty, inequality, and the disadvantaged and to use her expertise to create educational opportunities for children around the world.

Familial expectations. During college, Lisa majored in chemistry to be "practical" but took anthropology classes "for fun." When she casually mentioned a potential anthropology major, her mom said, "Anthro-what? How do you spell that?" and then told her that anthropology was what people in her home country studied when they couldn't do anything else. Lisa got along well with her parents until she decided to forego medical school and teach high-school chemistry instead. This first step toward God's calling in her life and away from her parents' expectations greatly strained their relationship. Although Lisa felt devalued by their clear disapproval, she stuck with her decision but also strove to honor her parents, even living at home while teaching at a suburban high school.

Discovering herself. Lisa taught for two years. Realizing she "only had one life" to pursue her passion, Lisa decided to accept the challenge of an "unmarketable" degree and pursued a master's in social anthropology. God prompted her to take a culture-and-society class that opened her eyes to the plight of the urban poor. After her master's, Lisa taught in the inner city and was appalled by the conditions she found there. Looking back, she sees that God was slowly transforming her heart, planting a new desire to help children imprisoned by poverty. As she began discerning her God-given talents for investigation, research, and communication, she felt God leading her to academia so that she could effectively impact children around the world.

Faith adventure. The path to Lisa's dream has been marked by intentionally aligning her choices to the big-picture vision that God has given her. Though fearful, Lisa believes that God may be leading her to add a rigorous yet "painful" economics masters degree to her program because it could open up strategic opportunities overseas—especially with those who prefer the language of money to pleas for compassion. Ultimately, Lisa is driven by the vision of God obtaining the greatest glory by setting

the captives [children] free. Lisa muses, "It's not about me, about whether I say yes or no. But it's my joy to say yes. Do I see it [the call on my life]? And if I do, do I believe God enough to say yes to the next step?"

Moving beyond fear. Lisa is under intense academic stress from her Ph.D. advisor who insists on straight As, and she fears academic failure—not measuring up to God's call. "It takes so much courage to follow the call of God...When you see it or know it, there's a lot of fear. What if I am not enough for what God has given me to do?...It's such a lie of the enemy because we do [performance] because we are [loved by God]. I'm in this program because I care [about the children of the world]." To battle these fears, Lisa embraces Col. 3:23, remembering that she is working for the Lord—not men—with all her heart.

To sum up (in Lisa's words and chosen Bible verse):

- "We all as Christians desire to do good. But we just don't have the strength or commitment to follow through. Deep down, as much as I want to help children, without Jesus in the picture, I wouldn't be doing it because it's not worth it. It's too painful..."; "God worked on my heart the most—the heart is everything."
- "But rejoice that you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed" (1 Pet. 4:13).

What we can learn. Lisa's story may resonate with many Asian American Christians. We struggle to follow God, even though we know He calls us to eternal things beyond our earthly goals of academic/financial success or parental approval. Lisa's story offers hope for those struggling with...

- **Choices.** Lisa sought to understand what God is doing in the world and then purposefully made choices to align her life with His plans. With each step forward, she trusted God to enable His work through her.
- **Calling.** Lisa was led into academia by prayerfully examining her God-given passions and talents. Sometimes we think God calls all Christians to live in a hut in Africa. Lisa is still called to be a professional, but her new focus on the poor stems from her transformed heart.
- **Parents.** Looking back, Lisa believes that her parents' faiths were deepened by her example of living by faith. "At first, I thought they [Lisa's parents] were my enemies, but they turned out to be my cheerleaders."
- **Fear.** Lisa realized that God is not limited by unmarketable careers, parental expectations, or even our own fears. With God, all things are possible (Mat. 19:26).

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A Tribute to Susan Leong: A World Christian Who “Walked the Talk”

By Jane Y.

*“Whoever serves Me must follow Me: and where I am, My servant also will be.
My Father will honor the one who serves Me” (John 12:26).*

Do you know Susan Leong as a fellow World Christian? No matter how long you had the pleasure of knowing Susan, we can agree that she was indeed a woman of God who lived her life with abandonment for her Master and who “walked the talk.”



Our Lord redeemed Susan more than 30 years ago. Susan accepted Jesus Christ to be Lord of her life when she was in college, and from that time onward, He grew in her a heart for the nations.

After graduation, Susan served overseas in the Philippines and in China. Susan returned to the San Francisco Bay Area when she

felt the Lord compelling her to be with her aging mother. Susan always had hoped to return to serve in China one day. But the Lord had different plans for her, and her ministry thrived in the midst of her struggle with illness.

Susan battled colon cancer for seven years before the Lord received her peacefully to her eternal home in heaven on June 20, 2007, the day God honored her very last prayer request.

The Lord refines us in our World Christian journey as we “take up our cross daily and follow Him” (Luke 9:23). A few observations of how Susan “walked the talk” follow:

Authentic Christianity. Susan’s faith was not based on going to church or being busy “doing church.” It was her assurance that her Lord and Savior Jesus Christ was waiting for her on the other side of heaven that gave her purpose for living. Susan’s personal study and memorization of God’s Word and spiritual disciplines in her prayer life prior

to her illness sustained her throughout her illness and in her last days on earth. *God is faithful!*

Family and friends. Susan valued spending quality time with her family and friends, as many of you can personally testify. The Lord surrounded Susan with wonderful family members who sacrificially supported her and took her into their homes for hospice care. Many of her friends (locally, across the country, and overseas) also faithfully rallied around Susan and brought fellowship to her bedside. *God is faithful!*

Simple living. Although Susan was very well-compensated financially in her secular career, she consistently chose to live simply and to give generously to the cause of Christ. *God is faithful!*

Finishing well. Susan took the initiative to design a detailed program for her own “home-going celebration,” which included a personal testimonial video. *God is faithful!*

We can only imagine how Susan’s face must have beamed on June 20 when the Lord greeted her at the pearly gate, saying, “Susan, ‘you good and faithful servant!...Come and share your Master’s happiness’” (Mat. 25:21). May the Lord convict each of us to reexamine and rededicate ourselves to our Master and to “walk the talk!” May the Lord be glorified! Amen.

**Please visit and leave a message on Susan Leong’s
memorial blog site set up by her family:
www.celebratesusanslife.blogspot.com**