



Voices of the Movement



Called to a Path Unexpected

About seven years after accepting the call at WCC2002 to become a pastor, Terrence S. celebrates his graduation from Talbot School of Theology



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by Terrence S.

Pastor Terrence S. preaching to his flock in Southern California.

Born in Hong Kong and raised in Taiwan, Terrence immigrated to the United States in the third grade. In junior high he committed his life to following Jesus. After receiving a double B.A. in psychology and economics from UCLA, he went on to earn an M. Div. with an emphasis on evangelism and discipleship from Talbot School of Theology. Currently pastoring a church in Arcadia, Calif., he also actively teaches, trains, and serves the Young Adult Community fellowship group to become disciple-making disciples. Married since 2000 to Regina, his high school sweetheart, they have two kids, Thomas (7) and Rachel (3). His hobbies include all things LA (Bruins, Lakers & Dodgers), connecting with people via social media, and more recently, cycling.

"The mind of man plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps." – Proverbs 16:9 (NASB)

Hearing the call ❖ Before we continue, I have a confession to make. I've only attended one WCC (gasp!) — in 2002. However, God used that one President's Day weekend to invigorate a lifelong journey of faith that continues to this day. When a group of us hopped in a car to drive up to Santa Cruz, I had no idea what to expect. All I knew was that it was a gathering of people who cared about missions and I was personally excited to grow in that direction. Throughout the weekend, I was challenged by the messages, workshops, and

attitudes of the attendees, but the turning point occurred on Sunday morning during the worship time before the plenary speaker, Pastor Chi-Hok Wong, was going to speak. While my hands were raised and eyes were closed, the Lord put in my heart for the first time a call to full-time pastoral ministry. *It blew me away.* Even though I've enjoyed being active at church, it was another thing to consider pursuing that as a vocation because of my self-doubts, my wife's expectations, and my parents' (who are also believers) hopes. God had to work powerfully in my heart and around my circumstances to prepare me as an instrument for His use.

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I have always held pastors in the highest regard due to the shepherding nature of their ministry and their tireless commitment to teach the Word of God for our benefit. That being said, I never would have thought that God would call me to that vocation. There was so much I did not know about the Bible, my life reeked of character flaws, and my abilities to lead were emerging at best. Lunch immediately followed Pastor Chi-Hok's message that Sunday morning and all the attendees had the option of fasting, which allowed the saved money (that would have been spent on food) to be redirected towards missions.

That afternoon I took my Bible and hid away for a couple of hours while the Lord led me to look at the precarious beginnings of many important biblical leaders whom God called for His purposes: Moses was afraid to speak, David was just a shepherd boy, Peter denied the Lord three times, and Paul killed followers of Christ with reckless abandon. None of these men were perfect but all were called by God to serve Him. This beautiful truth arose: God does not really need us since He is the Creator of the universe and can do anything He wants, but He chooses to use us so that His "power may be perfected in weakness" (2 Cor 12:9). I realized that it's not about me, but about Christ in me, the hope of glory.



At World Christian Conference 2002, where Terrence received his calling to be a pastor.

Sharing the call ❖ Regina and I have been in a relationship for more than half of my life, ever since my senior year in high school. It was with great joy when we got married out of college and were just out of our newlywed year during WCC 2002. As lovely as she is, my wife was not one of those women who aspired to be a pastor's wife. It would have been easier if my calling came before we got married but since it did not, she had a set of expectations for our future when this news interrupted the retreat.

I knew that it was essential for her to come on board if I was serious about pursuing the call but I had no idea on what part of the spectrum – spanning from enthusiasm to rejection – she would stand. Therefore, after the lunch in which I fasted and read the Bible for discernment, I went and talked to her. We found an empty room and I immediately shared what God has impressed upon my heart.

Almost just as quickly, we began to pray. It was a powerful time and tears began to flow uncontrollably from both of us as we confessed our sins and professed our love for God and each other. At the end of the prayer time, she joyfully declared with fear and trembling, much like Ruth did with her mother-in-law, that wherever I will go, she will go. Our lives, which now include the children, have been a working partnership where both of us are growing into the roles that the Lord has called us to — *in family and ministry while constantly pointing to the glory of God as our greatest motivation.*

Securing the call ❖ The final hurdle was my family. After we returned from WCC, I proceeded to have conversations with my pastor and Regina's family about this turn of events and they were both unequivocally supportive.

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Finally, I made a lunch appointment with my parents to share with them and the response was surreal and surprising. My dad, as always, was very even-keeled and shared from his experience the difficulties that pastors face and gave me several pieces of advice, which I remember to this day. Of all the advice that my dad gave me that afternoon, here are the ones that have stuck with me: **1) Work hard** – *Being a pastor is not easy. You have to give your best 110% of the time;* **2) Love people** – *The congregation wants to know that their pastor cares for them. Reach out, call, visit, do what you need to do so that they experience that love and* **3) Don't forget your wife** (and by extension, my kids). *It's easy to leave your family behind because of the nature and demands of ministry. Make sure she is with you every step of the way and get her involved so that you're serving as a family.*" I still try to live up to these wise exhortations to this day.

My mom, also a believer, on the other hand, went ballistic and started crying in the middle of Mimi's Café during the hustle and bustle of the lunch crowd. Her concerns were these: my family will suffer; I will be unappreciated; and my ministry will be financially unstable. Historically, my mom and I had a mode of communication in which an argument often escalated with volatility. That day, however, I saw right through the disapproval

and into the heart of a committed mother. The Holy Spirit gave me peace that we were not really fighting each other, but that she had to let go of some of her dreams for me — at God's altar. I did not raise my voice at her that afternoon but instead asked her humbly to allow me to go to seminary and permit the passage of time in ministry to validate my calling.



Terrence and his family with a recent convert. (just kidding)

I believe that God confirms one's pastoral call internally and externally. Certainly, He has grown my passion for ministry, love for people, and skills useful for disciple-making in the last 10 years so that I cannot deny the calling internally. Ever since that talk, she has been my greatest supporter and I am grateful for how God works to bring reconciliation to His people.

Confirming the call ❖ In light of the context concerning my mom, I'll list two external confirmations that have been instrumental. The first occurred in the summer of 2006 when I sensed that the Lord was calling me out of the church that I had been a part of for the last 14 years — where I had met my wife, married and started a family with — to a spectacular unknown. Ministry was going smoothly, there was no greener pasture. And I was not feeling restless or discontent. However, it was the first time since WCC 2002 when I sensed such a strong change of direction from the Lord. I ended up giving a one-year notice to my pastor, worked hard to transition out, and the following summer accepted a call from a small Chinese church in the Westside of LA to be its English Pastor.

This was a part-time job and I was the only pastor for the congregation. The Chinese culture was very dominant so the call involved shepherding faithfully as well as creating an identity from the ground up to preach the Gospel to English speakers. My mom gave me a really hard time about accepting that position because she saw the numerous external challenges and it looked to be a one-sided loss. However, as the

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On a short term mission to an Indian reservation in Arizona

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months went by, God used that time to differentiate my call to ministry from my connection to a home church and ignited a fire in my heart to preach, teach, serve, and listen to people. I served there for three years and they were the most formative years of my ministerial career. Plus it was during that season that my parents started seeing me as *a pastor who is their son, rather than their son who is doing ministry.*

The second external confirmation began a year or so into my time on the Westside. I was coming to the end of my seminary education and two details had become engrained into my philosophy of ministry: 1) faithfulness was more powerful than any other “skill” and 2) it is important to live locally to the church so that I can shepherd as a community pastor instead of a commuter pastor. We had

been living in the San Gabriel Valley the whole time while serving on the Westside so the crossroad was clear: either move out to West LA and settle down or look for a church closer to home to do the same. We decided to serve closer to home which meant that we were back to square one when it came to familiarity, stability, and direction.

Long story short, I discovered there was an opening at my home church and after 9 months of candidating, an extraordinarily lengthy process that I insisted upon so that God’s calling could be undeniably clear considering our historic relationship, the church called my family back to serve in a new capacity and we have been here ever since. Even though pastoral ministry can be complicated among many people that you grew up with, God has been faithful and I am convicted to bloom where I am planted.

Living out the call ✦ Since WCC 2002, I have involved myself in missions as a sender and a goer. With our network of churches God’s given me the privilege of leading short-term teams to East Asia (3) and Native American Reservations (4). I’ve also trained these missionaries annually and grown in my appreciation of the local church’s role in fulfilling the Great Commission. Finally, I was greatly impacted by taking the Perspectives course and am praying to host the class at our church with likeminded individuals and Lord willing, will be trained to coordinate a workshop.

Since WCC is about missions, why is this pastor — who only attended one conference nearly 10 years ago — sharing his testimony now? I am doing so because the stated purpose of WCC is to integrate a World Christian vision into the life of the Body of Christ. As many of you in this community are convicted and mobilized by God to make disciples in unique ways, you may become entangled with life circumstances and relationships that may divert your eyes off of Christ and focus them on your limitations. I know this, because I have been there. May my story be an encouraging reminder of the faithfulness and grace of God who does not call the qualified, but qualifies the called. 卐

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

Dear World Christian Community:

As I read this month's testimony by Terrence S., I found that we had several things in common:

- 1) *The year of 2002: big changes ahead.* Terrence heeded a call into the pastorate. I answered the call into teaching.
- 2) *Parents' reactions:* While Terrence's dad encouraged him with sound advice, my father showed support in making special soups such as a ginseng tonic so that I would have enough energy for the classroom.

My mother, similar to Terrence's mom, went semi-ballistic and warned me of the difficulties of teaching: "Here in America, you'll just get so much grief for being a teacher. It's not like in China where you can hit (corporal punishment) or criticize the students." Taken aback by her comments, I answered, "That's right mom. I can't do that here in America because I don't want to get accused of child abuse. Those aren't the best ways to teach. I know it will be hard, but I want to do this and now is the time. Can you let me try it? And if I don't like it, then I will switch back, okay?"

3). *Confirmations, internal and external:* Over the next 9 years until today, I have traveled a long journey in becoming an educator, which I see as the next closest thing to "official" ministry. I have experienced joy, trials, and even scars from wounds, but I know that it's all worth it as I'm an educational missionary or missiological educator, depending on the context of public or private school. I share the Gospel when permitted and practice ways that Jesus taught. God, as the potter, has shaped me, the lump of clay, into a refined vessel for His use through teaching, subbing, tutoring, coordinating two Perspectives courses, and earning a teaching credential and M.A. Education (Biola University).

As you read Terrence's authentic, compelling story, I pray that your World Christian journey will be invigorated because "we have this treasure in jars of clay to show that this all-surpassing power is from God and not from us (2 Cor. 4:7)."

For His Glory and Kingdom,



Managing Editor

lillian@wcfellowship.org

PRAYER: THE FUEL OF THE MOVEMENT

Regional WORLD CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP Prayer Groups

The prayer groups listed below meet monthly. Join one or start your own!

For more information e-mail prayer@wcfellowship.org

- **Seattle (Tukwila, WA)**

Contact: Seattle-prayer@wcfellowship.org

- **L.A. (Whittier, CA)**

Contact: LA-prayer@wcfellowship.org

- **Mid-peninsula NorCal (San Mateo, CA)**

Contact: midpeninsula-prayer@wcfellowship.org

- **S.F. Monthly Missions Meeting (San Francisco, CA)**

Contact: SF-prayer@wcfellowship.org

- **East/South Bay NorCal (Fremont, CA)**

Contact: SouthBay-prayer@wcfellowship.org

- **South Bay NorCal (Mountain View, CA)**

Contact: sbay-mtview-prayer@wcfellowship.org

"Let these prayers of the saints be sweet smelling incense to Your heart." — Matt Redman



OPPORTUNITIES

Seminar Coordinators

Vision and purposes ♦ The purposes of the World Christian Fellowship (WCF) include equipping, activating, networking, and partnering with individual Asian-American World Christians and those who identify closely with the Asian-American worldview, and their churches. To this aim, WCF hopes to host more regional one-day seminars with relevant workshop content throughout the year in addition to the annual World Christian Conference (WCC).

Seminar coordinators wanted ♦ WCF is looking for a regional seminar coordinator each for the Southern California and Seattle areas. If you are looking for an opportunity to serve God through the WCF movement and have gifts and talents in the areas of event planning, marketing, and networking please contact us at info@wcfellowship.org.

Accountant and/or Grant Writer

Vision and purposes ♦ World Christian Fellowship (WCF) is committed to fiduciary standards that are above reproach and continuously strive to develop and improve the organization's financial and financial resource systems.

Accountant and/or Grant writer: help wanted ♦ If God has gifted you with experience and talent in the area of accounting and research/grant writing AND you believe in the vision of WCF of mobilizing more Asian-American Christians for God's global purposes, please consider serving in this area. If you are interested in serving as an accountant and/or grant writer for WCF, please contact info@wcfellowship.org.

WCF PURPOSES

The purposes of **World Christian Fellowship (WCF)** are to challenge and empower individual Christians and churches to:

- **Equip** committed Asian-American World Christians and World Christians who closely identify with the Asian-American worldview who are active disciples and evangelists for the nations, both in local and overseas ministry.
- **Activate** these individuals and churches to the nations through prayer, training, guidance, and support.
- **Facilitate** teamwork and networking among individuals, churches, and other organizations with a World Christian vision.
- **Partner** with other organizations and networks with complementary objectives so that we as World Christians can unite towards the goal of building up the universal body of Christ.

DONATIONS

Donations ▶ If you would like to make a charitable contribution, please send checks payable to *World Christian Fellowship* and mail to P.O. Box 256, Mountain View, CA, 94042-0256. Make sure you include a valid address so that we can send you a tax-deductible receipt.

Amazon.com affiliate link ▶ If you already do some of your shopping at **Amazon.com**, you can help WCF receive a small percentage back by **clicking through our affiliate link** at wcfellowship.org/contact.html and making a purchase during the same session.



Voices of the Movement, the monthly online publication of WCF, serves to inspire and motivate the World Christian community through articles contributed by fellow World Christians. In its fourth year of publication, Voices of the Movement is also an archive of stories that document God's work through Asian-American World Christians and those who closely identify with the Asian-American worldview in the growth of His Kingdom on earth.

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