



# **HOPE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH**

## **TESTIMONIES OF CANDIDATES FOR BAPTISM, CONFIRMATION OF FAITH AND TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

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# **BAPTISM**

## ZHANG ZHEN ZHEN CHERVIN

I grew up in a staunch Buddhist family. Therefore, since young, I was exposed to different kinds of deities, burnt and food offerings that I believed would bring health and prosperity to my family. Therefore, I felt that as long as I obediently took part in these rituals of idol worship, the deities will look after my family. There was no real connection between the deities and me, other than praying and hoping that they will look after my family and fulfil my wish lists. This went on until I entered secondary school.

I entered into Presbyterian high school without even knowing it was a Christian school. I only went there because my friend and I wanted to be in the same school. It was the place where I was first exposed to who Christ is, through the daily devotion before class and weekly chapel service conducted by the school. That was also the first time I heard a Christian song and found the lyrics very meaningful and it made me feel very peaceful.

Even though I like the loving nature of Christ that the chapel service preached about and how the songs touched my heart, I still feel that maybe this God is not for me because it is not right for me to believe and find comfort and peace from a non-Asian God. Even though I really like the idea of a loving God who is willing to die for us without having to do anything in return to gain his love and affection, my knowledge of Christ was very surface and shallow at that time. I was too young to understand and take faith seriously. However, I believe there must be a reason why God placed me in Presbyterian high school for five years even though my friend and I didn't end up studying in the same school. He probably had a plan to plant a seed in me and make me more receptive to Christ

when I was introduced to Christ again in the Alpha course. My experience of Christ's journey ended when I left secondary school and only started again after knowing Jeremy and his family.

I truly came to know Christ after attending the Alpha course in our church. It widened my knowledge of who Christ is, his purposes, meaning of salvation and eternal life. I am also very thankful to Evelyn Lok, whom God has placed in my life to teach me His Word. Evelyn was so willing to share her knowledge and did one-to-one bible study session with me on the book of Exodus and the gospel of Mark. It has been really helpful as a new believer to understand the true meaning of Christ and living as a Christian in this modern day and age. Jeremy and his family have also played a big part in my Christian journey. They helped me see and experience how a Christ-centred family functions, which really motivated me to build a Christ-centred family of my own in the future. My CG also had a big part to play in my Christian walk all these years, fuelling me with knowledge and accountability.

Although I'm still struggling with sin and my Christian walk is filled with ups and downs, I'm thankful for all these people that God has placed in my life to help me experience the great love of God. I'm thankful that God has chosen me to be part of his big family and I also believe that He is the Lord and Saviour. Therefore, I'm not afraid to tell the world that I'm a Christian and would want to share the great news with the people around me.

# **CONFIRMATION OF FAITH**

## **LIM WEN XUAN CHELSEA**

I was baptized as an infant and brought up in a Christian family. Although I went to Sunday school weekly, my attendance had little effect on my life out of church the other six days of the week. I took pride in excelling in school and sports, which gave me a greater sense of identity than being a Christian. This continued until I was in JC, which was when I started questioning my Christian upbringing - how was I to know that this was the one true God when I hadn't had the chance to explore all the other religions; what if theirs was the one true God? This was when I started pulling away from the Christian faith.

I became more worldly, planning years ahead into my future on how to lead a wealthy and successful life in the eyes of the world. There was no space for God in my life. Then I was diagnosed with cancer and all my plans fell apart. I should have felt angry with God but I felt like it was an act of mercy. He steered me back onto the right course following Him when I was just about to break away for good by chasing all the wrong gods and accolades. He set my eyes on greater things He had in store in heaven, by showing me that life on earth was tainted with sin and pain. This was an act of divine mercy from God, and I knew I could not escape the palm of His hand, for I had been wonderfully and lovingly chosen by Him. Hence, I decided to take the step to be confirmed so as to hold myself accountable to my promise to make God the center of my life.

I had hesitated to be confirmed in the past as I struggled to reconcile how baptized Christians in my midst acted so sinfully the other six days of the week. However, I've come to realize that being confirmed or baptized is not an

immediate break from our sinful selves, as we will be tied to our sins as long as we are living on this earth. It is instead to show our intention of leading a renewed life in Christ, although we are still sinful. I am thankful that Jesus Christ has died for my sins so I can look forward to eternal life with Him in heaven, a life with no sin, pain and suffering.

## **TAY YUAN XIONG JEREMY**

Being born into a Christian family, I was brought up as a Christian all my life. My parents brought me to church and taught me Christian values. Whenever people asked about my beliefs, I always identified myself as a Christian. However, I never really knew what it meant to be a Christian. In the past, I just knew that a man came to earth and died on the cross and, for that, we are saved. But I never truly understood the significance of who that man was and what being saved meant.

I began taking my faith a bit more seriously when I first met my girlfriend, Chervin. As she was a non-believer then, I decided to bring her to the Alpha course. Alpha was very useful for both of us as, during the course, we were placed in groups and non-believers got to ask big questions such as 'Who is Jesus?' or 'Why am I a sinner?' This allowed me to understand more about my faith. Unfortunately, understanding is only knowledge in the head, but true believe can be seen in our actions, not only when we are in church, but when we are alone or with our non-Christian friends. I would say that throughout my years in national service, I did not live like someone who was identified as a Christian.

After national service, Ben Tan asked me if I wanted to start doing one-to-one bible study sessions with him. Thankfully I agreed, because it was during that period that I truly felt closer to God and genuinely wanted to take my faith more seriously. The first book we read was the Gospel of John. In the book, we see who Jesus is, we understand more about his nature and see the many miracles he performed. The next book we read was Acts. This book talks about the life of the apostles after Jesus had gone back to heaven, and the things they did now that they have been saved.

Reflecting back, I can see that God has been working in mysterious ways to bring me closer to him, because through reading these two books with Ben, I have been able to understand the significance of who Jesus is and why he died for us, and what it means to be saved. But of course, being human, we are still imperfect and though I understand more of what it means to be saved, my journey is still not complete. I want to thank my parents, my CG and Ben for being the salt and light and having contributed to my walk with God.

# **TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP**

## **KOH HWEE KIAN EVELYN**

### **(i) My life before I knew Christ**

I grew up in a Taoist family. Knowing Christ and becoming a Christian never crossed my mind. I believed that good things in life were achieved solely based on hard work. I thought I could be in control of my life and success was dependent on my own hard work. I would be anxious and restless when circumstances were beyond my control. I felt upset and despondent whenever things did not turn out the way I had wanted them to. I strived for my best in all that I set my heart to achieve, particularly my studies, sports and relationships. I realised it was the satisfaction of being in control of everything, and receiving affirmation and praises from my parents, siblings, teachers and friends that were my source of happiness. But I felt empty as it seemed to be an endless pursuit of happiness that was short-lived and meaningless.

### **(ii) How I came to know Christ**

I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Lord and Saviour when I was in my second year of university 32 years ago. It was my junior college classmate who led me through the sinner's prayer. I thank God for this sister-in-Christ who did not give up on me but prayed and continued sharing with me about God's love.

### **(iii) My life after I knew Christ**

As I reflect on my 32 years of walking with Jesus, Psalm 139:16-18 have been most precious to me. I have learnt that God is in control of every aspect of my life, revealing His sovereignty, presence and love. This does not mean that since becoming a Christian, my life has been smooth and easy. In fact, it got more challenging as I sought to align my will to God's. Over the years, regularly feeding on

His Word through Bible Study Fellowship (BSF), daily devotion, bible study in cell group and sermons has fuelled me to trust in God's promises and commit all things to Him in prayer. One instance was in 2015 when a dengue infection led to several complications. Throughout the journey, with much prayers and encouragement from family and friends and the assurance of God's promises, I truly experienced His sovereign voice and grace that brought me out of that dire state. Each day I am learning to rest in God's purposes for me and trust in His faithfulness. It is through difficult times that God clearly demonstrates His sovereignty and love, and takes away my pride and self-sufficiency.

I am thankful for the people God has placed in my life, particularly my loving husband and two wonderful children. I pray that we will continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. I thank God for the warm and wise fellowship of believers in HPC; it has become part of my big family. I praise God for leading me to this community of believers where I can serve and be served. I pray that coming together we can be stronger as we encourage one another and build each other up in the Lord Jesus Christ.

With so much to be thankful for, my utmost prayer is that by God's grace I will strive to live a holy and transformed life that glorifies His name. Indeed, *"God is most glorified in us when we are the most satisfied in Him."* To God be all glory.

## LOH KIUN CHZE LAWRENCE

(i) My life before I knew Christ

It was a long time. I could not imagine what is life without Christ.

It has been 43 years since coming to know the Lord. It will not be easy to recall how life was before I knew Christ then, and even if I can, the context and circumstances would have been very different from today. This is especially so when my coming to faith was not a spectacular, dramatic conversion experience. It was a gradual, gentle progression of learning, trusting, relating and experiencing that caused my faith to grow from day to day.

Re-collecting my journey in life and walking with Christ, I know that I have come through many cross-roads, and if not for Christ's guidance and the clear spiritual principles taught in His Word, I may have made choices that I would regret.

(ii) How I came to know Christ

"God, if you are real, please show me."

I was led to faith at a School Christian Fellowship Meeting. A well-meaning classmate took the effort to explain the Gospel with the "Bridge Illustration". As he went through the process, there was the nudging question within me: "What if the God he spoke about is real?". This caused me to utter quietly my first prayer: "God, if you are real, please show me." When the time came for my classmate to invite me to say the sinner's prayer, I spontaneously agreed.

Yes, I said the sinner's prayer without fully recognising that I am a perpetual sinner, without understanding why and how Christ came to redeem me from my sins. I did not fully understand God's love for me and his salvation for the world. However, I wanted to explore to know if this Christian God is real.

Nevertheless, I felt good that day, because my friend said my sins were all forgiven. He also said that my name was written in the Book of Life in Heaven. Though I did not know what it all fully meant, it was still worth feeling happy about.

That was the start of my faith journey. The Lord has been faithful over all these decades. He gradually, progressively revealed to me His love, mercy and grace, and continually showing me that he is indeed REAL.

Looking back, I may have repeated the sinner's prayer (or something to the effect of a sinner's prayer), perhaps umpteen times, when I felt convicted that I am a sinner and I need Christ's forgiveness.

### (iii) My life after I knew Christ God is Faithful

My parents were atheist. When they heard about my involvement with a Christian group at school, they were naturally very concerned. They objected strongly and disallowed me to attend a church. However, *God is faithful* and has allowed me to see my parents coming to faith some 20 years later.

A switch in my educational track, from Pre-University to Polytechnic, has also disrupted the Bible studies and Christian fellowship. These were essential for growth in

my new-found faith. But *God is faithful*. He has placed the Polytechnic Christian Fellowship (PCF) and the Navigators on campus and it was through these ministries that I learned His Word and grew in faith.

Looking back 43 years, I had my fair share of 'storms in life' - financial difficulties as a student in university, unemployment at mid-career and spiritual drought in church life. Each time His grace abounded and drew me closer to Him. I have been humbled by each experience of our Almighty God, and I am constantly reminded that *God is faithful*.

To God be all glory and honour. His faithfulness endures forever.

## **TAN PENG PENG**

Before I knew Christ at the age of 17, I took much pride in my academic achievements and accolade for they are real, visible and tangible! All the way through my 'O' levels, I felt that my efforts could always yield positive results, so that was what I strived to do. Nevertheless, I started to realize that countless things in life are beyond anyone's control. Many people were diagnosed with all kinds of medical condition, some even at birth. Anyone can be knocked down by an irresponsible driver on the road. Natural calamities can take away thousands of lives overnight. Whether I acknowledge it or not, life **IS** fragile and vulnerable. As a teenager, I knew deep down that there has to be a God who is sovereign over this world and my life. I started to grow a desire to want to know this God who has power over the lives and deaths of everyone in the world.

Even though I attended a Christian secondary school (AHS), I wasn't sure that the Christian God was the God I desired to know. I did not become a Christian until after JC1, when a friend shared with me about the Christian faith personally. I realized that since God is a personal God who desires to have a relationship with each of His children, before He could reveal Himself to me, I had to first allow Him to come into my life. I said the sinner's prayer with a faith smaller than a mustard seed. Through the years, God has caused my faith to grow by leaps and bounds! The most memorable time of my Christian growth was during my varsity days in NTU, when I joined Campus Crusade for Christ. It was there that I knew more about the fundamental beliefs of Christianity, and came into close contact with peers who were and still are very serious in their walk with God. Since then, there is no turning back. I have made it my lifelong ambition to ground myself in God's Word and involve myself in His work.

I remember the times in NTU when I had to raise funds to go for mission trips. Each time, God strengthened my faith by providing for me over and above what I needed. I recall the many years when my husband and I were hosting Cell Group at our house week after week. God provided for us, sustained us and granted us unspeakable joy when we extended hospitality to His people. There were also uncountable times when I seemed to face a storm in my life. God never failed to show me how real and personal He is by delivering me again and again from various challenging circumstances. I am convinced that if I intentionally choose to look to Him, I will experience more of His faithfulness, goodness and loving kindness. In response, I can only offer my life to Him as a willing sacrifice. It is my desire to learn what it means to surrender to Him more each day.

For the past one year in HPC, we have met so many like-minded people who give sacrificially to the Lord's work! Having made wonderful friends who have shown love and concern towards us in so many ways, my family and I count it a privilege and blessing to be part of this great community! We hold dear to our hearts the constant encouragement and support we have received from different ones of you. As we journey together in serving our Lord here in HPC, may He find us faithful to our calling.