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2022 has been a year of growth. While the effects of the pandemic still linger, we have found ways to adjust and even thrive. Many of us have gone back to in-person services, reconnected with old friends, and found new jobs. And even if it seems like our circumstances haven’t changed much, we can look forward to the new calendar year to give us the tiny push we need to try something new.

Looking back on 2022, SOLA Network has grown as well. We started to experiment with video content, having authors read their articles aloud. We also conducted more interviews than ever before, which meant we heard from many authors and participants of the first Asian American Leadership Conference.

We’re also proud of the content we’ve made this year. SOLA Network published powerful articles on parenting to equip mothers and fathers. We continued to cover current events from an Asian American Christian perspective, from the Olympics to the Laguna Woods shooting. And of course, we published articles on the state of the church and encouragements for pastors.

So in our 2022 SOLA Network Magazine, we present 10 essays and articles that show the breadth of our work. And for the first time, we also add two lists of book recommendations for further reading from Asian American Christian authors. We also include a recap of the AALC and highlights of some of our best SOLA Network interviews.

I want to thank all of the people who submitted their writing to us or were guests in our interviews. I’m also grateful to our incredible editorial board and volunteers who helped keep the website running—from pitching stories to editing drafts to hitting publish on all our platforms.

As you read our magazine, we hope you will reflect on how you have changed this year. Perhaps the growth was expansive and fruitful. Or perhaps it involved painful pruning and a lot of fertilizer. But I hope that we will all see that God is with us, whether we feel stuck where we are or as though the possibilities are endless. Wherever we are, I pray the blood of Jesus Christ continues to sanctify us and prepare us to do good works. Here’s to 2023.

**Hannah Chao**  
Editor at the SOLA Network



# The Generational Healing of “Turning Red”: An AAPI Christian Perspective

by Moses Y. Lee

My wife and I have been fans of Domee Shi’s work ever since we first saw her short film, *Bao*, before the premiere of *Incredibles 2*. To this day, my wife has no recollection of the first half of *Incredibles 2* because of the impact *Bao* had on her that evening. When we heard Shi was directing her first feature film, *Turning Red*, we knew we were in for a treat. Little did we know just how profound of an impact her story would have on our own stories, the depth to which we would reflect on our own coming of age experiences, and the generational trauma that we would revisit as fellow East Asian immigrants.

On my part, I discovered upon watching *Turning Red* how similar my childhood was with Shi’s. We were both born in East Asia during the late-1980’s, had parents born in post-war (and post-Confucian) societies, immigrated to

North America as young children, and grew up in diverse neighborhoods—Shi in Toronto and myself in Los Angeles. In retrospect, it’s not surprising how relatable Meilin (the protagonist of *Turning Red*) was to me, a Korean American Christian man, and equally not surprising how some White Christian reviewers may have missed the complex cultural layers undergirding some of the more disagreeable parts of the movie.

## The Red Panda and the Strength of Immigrant Women

Shi’s red panda is a metaphor for all the messiness, awkwardness, emotions, and excitement surrounding puberty. More specifically, Shi wanted to help “[girls and women feel seen](#)” and help girls not feel so alone through it all. The juxtaposing shame culture that Meilin inherits from her

family and the individualistic culture she navigates at school intensifies the silence, the loneliness, and the emotions.

We’re told by Ming, Meilin’s mother, that the red panda was a gift to the women of their family until their “family chose to come to a new world and what was a blessing became an inconvenience.” This is the familial baggage, or the generational trauma, that the red panda must be seen through. We can’t understand the red panda apart from the generational trauma that Meilin, Ming, and the other immigrant women in their family all bear in order to not be seen as perpetual foreigners in the West. It’s not surprising then that Ming, as a first-generation immigrant child, had the largest red panda of them all.

## The Red Panda and Diagonalization

The red panda’s redeemable qualities really shine when considering the family’s historical context. As their matriarchal ancestor, Sun Yee, first demonstrated, the red panda can become a source of great power to save their loved ones from ruin. For Sun Yee, to embrace the red panda meant harnessing her raw emotional strength to shatter patriarchal assumptions about the helplessness of women. A proper appreciation of the red panda resulted in life and salvation for her family, not death and chaos.

And this is where Meilin reflects more of Sun Yee than her mother, Ming, who banished her own red panda for the sake of social conformity. Meilin finds herself in a tension between her mother’s encouragement to conform and her friends’ encouragement to rebel. Much of the story is her wrestling with these Eastern and Western voices but neither produce lasting happiness.

From the Eastern perspective, the damaging impact of conformity becomes more apparent for Ming, Meilin’s own mother. In a heartbreaking scene near the end of the movie, we see a teenage Ming bearing alone the immense pressure to conform and the underlying generational trauma that accompanies it. From the Western perspective, we see how listening to her friends and following her selfish desires almost destroys Meilin and her family.

But the truth lies not in the middle but in a “*diagonalized*” reality that bridges the simplistic binaries of individualism and collectivism. Diagonalizing allows Meilin to break free from the false binaries forced on her by the competing ideologies of the East and the West, resulting in her rejecting errors and embracing truths from both sides.

## The Red Panda and Generational Healing

Embracing the red panda (her individuality) and accepting her mother’s brokenness (her family history) results in a healthier balance of honoring one’s parents and individual freedom. The movie concludes with Meilin not having to choose between her family or her friends but reaping the benefits of having both. We’re given the impression that perhaps her family’s generational trauma has finally turned a corner and that, through Meilin’s diagonalizing, healing has finally begun in her family.

In many ways, Meilin’s story is my story. I grew up as an immigrant child with immense pressure from my dad’s side of the family to become a doctor like my paternal grandfather and with immense pressure from my mom’s side of the family to become a lawyer like my maternal grandfather. But when I was 14-years-old, I came back from a youth retreat with a desire to explore pastoral ministry as a calling. After telling my parents, however, I was brushed off for being “emotional,” which drove a wedge in our relationship.

Yet, throughout high school and college, this conviction only grew stronger. It wasn’t until my former senior pastor intervened during my senior year of college that my parents let go of their desires for me to conform to their will so I could instead honor them by honoring the Lord first. If I hadn’t embraced my “red panda” in order to properly honor my parents, Rosebrook Presbyterian Church wouldn’t exist.

In short, *Turning Red* isn’t encouraging the pursuit of our hedonistic desires; it’s about rightly framing our individuality while appropriately bringing honor to our parents, our traditions, and perhaps even our faith.



# Spiritual Abuse: Why the Church Needs to Talk About This Problem

by Thomas Hwang

*Editor's Note: This is one of two essays by Thomas Hwang, SOLA Editorial Board member, on spiritual abuse.*

This past year has been a tough one for church leaders. Apart from the pandemic that forced churches to shut down, there have been what felt like countless new stories of church leaders falling to sexual misconduct. From Bill Hybels to Carl Lentz to Ravi Zacharias—cases of sexual abuse are being uncovered in every Christian tribe. It has been disheartening to read, but it began a needed reckoning—and it all started through the stories told by their victims of sexual abuse.

There are still stories of abuse being posted by Christians, but it's a little different now. Instagram accounts like [DoBetterChurch](#) and [Letters From Rahab](#) are filled with personal stories recounting stories of emotional and sexual abuse. But some posts focus on an unfamiliar, lesser-known type of abusive behavior that often takes place in the church.

*Spiritual abuse.*

It's unbelievable how often spiritual abuse takes place within the church and Christian organizations. But since

it's not often talked about—especially in Asian Christian circles—people don't recognize it or even see it as a problem. For this reason, I hope to write a couple of posts addressing why spiritual abuse takes place in the church and its unique struggle in Asian Christian contexts.

But before going there, let's try to understand what spiritual abuse is and why it matters.

## Understanding Spiritual Abuse

What exactly is spiritual abuse? [I like how author Michael Krueger's defines it when he writes,](#)

Spiritual abuse... is when a spiritual leader—such as a pastor, elder, or head of a Christian organization—wields his position of spiritual authority in such a way that he manipulates, domineers, bullies, and intimidates those under him, as a means of accomplishing what he takes to be a biblical and/or spiritual goal.

Spiritual abuse takes place when spiritual leaders use their authority to harm people under the guise of spiritual goals. This may happen in a staff meeting when a pastor berates his staff or in a private counseling session when a leader plays the God card (“*God told me you can't leave our church*”). Maybe those words mean nothing. But sometimes, something feels off and even harmful in those moments, but you

can't say anything because of the power dynamics. That's when spiritual abuse may be taking place.

Now it's important to know that it's difficult for people to realize that what they're experiencing is spiritual abuse. [According to Dr. Diana Langberg](#), the leaders who commit spiritual abuse are often gifted and well-respected by the congregation. Like a father, you naturally expect your spiritual leaders to protect you, not harm you. And it doesn't help that spiritual abuse is often hidden under spiritual terms like *"obedience"* and *"submission."* While obedience and submission are biblical, they can also be used for manipulation.

So when is spiritual abuse actually taking place? What counts as "spiritual abuse"? If a lead pastor loses his temper once during a staff meeting, is he being "spiritually abusive"? Or did he just forget to drink his morning coffee? Is he being manipulative and domineering, or is he just going through a rough season? It's hard to know if you're misreading things or if there's something wrong taking place.

I think this where it's helpful to see spiritual abuse not as a moment but as a pattern of abusive behavior. In other words, you can suspect spiritual abuse is taking place when there are multiple people who also experience a leader's authority in a manipulating or domineering way. This doesn't discount the individual abusive moments, but it brings clarity on whether or not to categorize those moments as "bad days" or "abusive behavior."

### The Consequences of Spiritual Abuse

Why is it important for churches to address spiritual abuse? Well, there's a couple of reasons.

First, people who experience spiritual abuse will likely not have the ability to voice their abuse. That's what makes it "abuse" as opposed to just "conflict." When a peer hurts you, you have the power to say something about it. That's conflict. But when a leader hurts you, you don't have the same amount of power to say anything. That's what

makes it abuse. Therefore spiritual abuse will often take place between a pastor and church member or a lead pastor and staff member because the power dynamics make it difficult for a person to say anything.

Second, spiritual abuse carries unique spiritual consequences. Just as sexual abuse will often cause people to struggle with their sexual lives moving forward, spiritual abuse will often cause Christians to struggle with their spiritual lives moving forward. Just as sexual assault victims often struggle to ever see sex as a beautiful, unifying act, Christians who experience spiritual abuse often struggle to ever see the church as a beautiful, loving community. That's why so many people who experience spiritual abuse don't necessarily fall away from the faith—they fall away from the church.

Lastly, spiritual abuse goes against everything that the church is supposed to represent. I'm sure some people might read stories of abuse in the church and think, *"What's the big deal? I go through the same stuff at work."* But that's exactly the point! While the world is fallen and broken by sin, the church is supposed to be a city on a hill where the broken and heavy-laden can find rest. [As one account put it](#), this is why it's heartbreaking to know that these stories of abuse come *"not out of any secular institution or business, but out of the very place God has instituted safety, healing, and security."*

### What Should Churches Do With Spiritual Abuse?

So what can people do if there's spiritual abuse taking place in their church? I'm not sure because every situation is different. However, if I were to make some general suggestions, here are some thoughts on how churches can approach spiritual abuse:

#### 1. Believe the Victim's Stories

One thing that I think needs to change is allowing the benefit of the doubt to go both ways. Naturally when people hear a charge of abuse against their pastor, they

will give their pastor the benefit of the doubt. *"No way he'd do that...I know him...there's two sides to every story."*

But why can't the benefit of the doubt also be given to the victim? [Just as sexual assault cases are rarely fabricated](#), I can't help but think abuse cases are rarely unfounded. In fact, quite the opposite. There's often so much shame from being a victim of abuse that stories are likely underreported. This doesn't mean there shouldn't be due process; this doesn't mean there's no chance of false accusations.

But when it comes to spiritual abuse, we are just seeing the tip of the iceberg. And the only way we'll see the full picture is if we make it safe for people to share their stories.

#### 2. Local Church Pastors Need to Speak Out

One thing that I'm convinced needs to happen more is not letting churches fend for themselves. Instead, pastors in other local churches need to get involved and speak up against spiritual abuse. As mentioned above, victims often don't have a voice to speak. Many of them are stuck in a "system" where their abuser is powerful and they're powerless. But this is where I think one way to challenge this system is if those who have capital (pastors) use that capital to empower those who feel powerless.

Back in 2014, when terrible stories were leaking about Mars Hill Church and its leadership, it seemed like a "he said/she said" situation. But what changed everything was [when Paul Tripp and the Acts 29 board wrote a public statement that spoke out against Pastor Mark Driscoll's behavior](#). It almost gave a sense of legitimacy to those speaking against the abusive culture of Mars Hill Church. While it's tricky for outside voices to speak into a church, I think this is something local church pastors need to do in situations where the "system" is broken.

#### 3. Don't Give Up On the Church

I know this can come off as super-insensitive for anybody who's experienced spiritual abuse in the church. Why stay or return to an institution that caused you so much harm? As someone who has personally witnessed and experienced spiritual abuse, I completely get it. But despite the pain, I'd hope victims of spiritual abuse would not give up on the church yet.

Imagine if someone experienced an abusive marriage. By all means, that person should leave that marriage. But should he/she give up on marriage altogether? While this may be an understandable conclusion, I'd hope that person could receive healing, meet someone later, and marry again so they could experience what a true marriage is supposed to look like.

Similarly, I completely understand why those who were abused by their church would leave their churches, but I also hope they wouldn't give up on the Church. Instead, I hope they could receive healing, find a healthy church and experience what God's church is supposed to look like. Even more so, I'd hope they can even be the means God uses to help spiritual abuse victims find their voice.

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### Recommended Resources

["What is Spiritual Abuse?" by Michael Kruger](#)

["Signs of Spiritual Abuse" by Diana Langberg and Britney Moses](#)

[A Church Called Tov by Scot McKnight and Laura Barringer](#)

[When Narcissism Comes to Church by Chuck DeGroat](#)

*Editor's Note: This essay was originally published on [Tom Talks on May 27, 2021](#). It has been republished here with light editing with permission from the author. You can read [part 2 of this series here](#).*

# How Olympians Nathan Chen and Zhu Yi Remind Me of My True Hope

by Daniel K. Eng



As an American national who is ethnically Chinese, following the Olympic Games always brings me mixed emotions. With billions of eyes watching worldwide, I am emphatically reminded of my liminal experience straddling two worlds.

## Asian Americans in Our Own Society

I rejoice when I see American athletes like Nathan Chen, Chloe Kim, and Suni Lee reach the top of their sports. Yes, they represent the United States of America. But in a profound way, they also represent Asian Americans. When an Asian American receives public accolades, it means a lot to us. It comes with the hope that, just perhaps, an American with an Asian face can be viewed as normative. In short, we feel seen.

Nathan Chen said as much during an interview after his gold-medal winning free skate performance. “Growing up in Salt Lake City and having a face like Michelle Kwan is very inspirational,” he said. “Having an athlete that looks like you gives you the hope you can do the same. Michelle Kwan is certainly that for me. That goes back to the power of representation.”

After all, for many Americans with Asian roots, we experience being “other.” At the margins of society, we are often left without a seat at the table. Even with two centuries of history (for example, I have roots in America going back to the Transcontinental Railroad), Asian Americans are often viewed and treated as *perpetual foreigners*.

Many of us have lamented and lived in fear with the increased violence against Asians during the COVID-19 pandemic. It was only several decades ago that thousands

of Americans of Japanese descent were incarcerated, suspected of disloyalty to our country. We often feel the stigma of not being accepted as American when we hear jeers like “Go back to China!”

## Asian Americans with Our Ancestral Cultures

At the same time, we recently saw an Asian American athlete do just that—*go to China*. To be sure, figure skater Zhu Yi, born Beverly Zhu, didn’t go *back*—she was born and raised in California. Renouncing her American citizenship, she now represents China in competition.

But Zhu hasn’t been accepted by many in her adopted nation. On top of the humiliation of a poor showing at the recent Winter Olympics, she received much criticism from the Chinese public. She was disparaged for being American-born, disgraced for not speaking the language fluently, and reproached for showing emotion. The cumulative message from the Chinese people? *Zhu Yi isn’t one of us*.

Watching Zhu Yi’s reception is a painful reminder for many Asian Americans that, among people of our ancestral lands, we often don’t belong. We are frequently seen as foreigners when we visit Asia. We are often, like Zhu, chided for not speaking the language well. Being unfamiliar with or misunderstanding the culture of our immigrant relatives, we are sometimes labeled as disrespectful. We are derisively called “Twinkie” or “banana.”

## Nowhere to Belong

Some call this whole experience *liminality*. Asian Americans often straddle two worlds—but we are not at home in either of them. We are not fully received as Americans. At the same time, we are not fully received by those in our ancestral culture. In short, we have nowhere to belong.

For many with this two-worlds, liminal, and hyphenated experience, we have a deep longing. We have pain and stigma, never having the experience of being at home somewhere. We struggle and strive, desiring to belong.

## A Call to Belong

With the constant experience of not belonging, I am reminded that my hope is not in American society. I am reminded that my hope is not in my ancestral culture either. In fact, my hope is not in this world at all.

When Jesus calls people to follow him, it comes with a renouncing of loyalty. In his first spoken words in the Gospel of Mark, he calls for a turnaround: “The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel. (Mark 1:15)” The word translated as gospel is *euangelion*, a word that was prominently used to announce the presence of a ruler—it was considered good news that this figure was in charge (see Isaiah 52:7). Jesus was calling people to turn from their ways, join the Kingdom of God, and submit to him as the King.

Jesus’s call to discipleship is a call to *transfer allegiance*. A repeated theme throughout the teachings of Jesus and his apostles is that there is no middle ground; one must choose. We receive the message that one cannot serve both God and money (Luke 16:13). To follow Christ means denying ourselves (Matt 15:24) and it feels like death (Luke 9:24–25). We are called to choose obedience to the Spirit’s desires over the desires of the flesh (Galatians 5:17). We cannot have both friendship with the world and friendship with God (James 4:4). For Asian Americans, with our loyalty questioned in both America and our ancestral culture, we are called to have a single allegiance to Christ.

Here’s the great news: with this new allegiance comes hope. *We belong*. For those who do the will of the Father, Jesus calls them “my brother, and sister, and mother” (Matthew 12:47-50). Because of the death and resurrection of Christ, we have the hope of eternal life, which is knowing God (John 17:3). We can be called children of God (1 John 3:1). For Asian Americans, in the midst of experiences of not belonging, in Christ, we can have hope of eternal belonging.

Being disciples of Jesus means that we have *citizenship*. We are fully received as members of the kingdom of God. As we seek first the kingdom of God to which we belong (Matthew 6:33), we remember that we have been delivered from darkness into this kingdom (Colossians 1:13). This is a value that my wife’s grandfather repeatedly reminded her about, and we are instilling in our own children. As Asian Americans who follow Christ, our hope is not in America nor our ancestral homeland. Ultimately, we belong elsewhere:

**But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Savior from there, the Lord Jesus Christ, who, by the power that enables him to bring everything under his control, will transform our lowly bodies so that they will be like his glorious body.**

*Philippians 3:20-21*

I constantly experience the tension of being of two worlds but not at home in either. But through this, I am reminded that my belonging is with the kingdom of God. My citizenship is in heaven. My hope is in my eternal home—where there will be no more pain, no more tears, and no more liminality.



# What to Remember While Praying for Ukraine

by Heidi Wong

*This article was accurate at the time it was published. The situation in Ukraine is still in flux, and we continue to pray for justice and peace.*

The invasion of Ukraine came just days after the Beijing Olympics closing ceremony. Whatever joys that had been experienced by athletes and viewers have since evaporated. The idea that the Olympics is a unifying event seems closer to farce than it does to fact. Why is it that one 22 year old wins gold for a dazzling figure skating performance, while another 22 year old volunteers to take up arms and defend his country?

As much as Americans may think they are shielded by the ocean between, the repercussions of the attack on Ukraine will be acutely felt in tremors over the coming weeks. Beyond threats of further inflation or economic repercussions, the looming existential dilemma is bound to confront us once again.

## **“In the end, everything will be okay”**

Has anyone ever said this to you? Perhaps it was said with the best of intentions. Thinking critically about this one-liner, however, should lead to more questions especially in light of the non-trivial challenges we’ve witnessed in the last several days. *What proof is there for that? What does “okay” even mean?*

The answers to these questions are far more satisfying when they address the existential angst in our souls instead of rationalizing to achieve some concrete end. It’s easy to look a child with a bruised knee in the eye and tell them that “it’s going to be okay,” but almost no one could confidently say the same thing to a mother who has just lost her child in the military crossfire. It would be wildly inappropriate.

The recent invasion of Ukraine reveals the weakness of any optimistic truism. Despite the complicated geo-political tensions that won’t be addressed in this article, it is worth noting that no country is willing to look Ukraine in the eye and confidently say, “Don’t worry, everything will be okay.”

In our darkest hours, we don’t want empty hope. We want tangible presence. Countries are imposing sanctions and sending aid to Ukraine, but the effect of such measures are categorically different than a country sending reinforcements in the form of personnel. I am not lobbying for or against any country to send this kind of military aid. I am highlighting the cognitive dissonance that exists when I desperately need a hand to save me from drowning but am met with a plan to drain water from the pool. This is a tension we now face, and there are no straightforward explanations.

As you pray for Ukraine, be wise and do not simply accept optimistic quips just because “all wars eventually come to an end.” Instead, take stock of what you believe based on who God has revealed himself to be. Remember that God’s power, which has been displayed throughout all ages, cannot be overwhelmed by anything in this world ([John 16:33](#)). Remember that God’s wisdom deemed it good to send Jesus, his son, to atone for our sins ([2 Cor. 5:21](#)) and give us everlasting life.

Boldly request that God’s presence be tangibly felt by your brothers and sisters huddling underground or fleeing their homes. Plead that they would be comforted and emboldened to proclaim the good news of the gospel wherever they are. Ask that they would remember God’s promise to be with them to the very end of the age ([Matt. 28:20](#))—even when no one else is.

*Editor’s Note: With the ongoing hostilities in Ukraine, we encourage all of our readers to pray for Ukraine and the state of our world. We also encourage you to find ways to help by donating your resources. Different media organizations have created lists of nonprofit organizations. You can also ask your church or denominational missions coordinator if they know of ways you can help.*



# The Light of the World: How Jesus is Reaching International Students

by Karisa You

*Editor's Note: This article is part of a four-part series focused on connecting international students with the gospel of Jesus Christ. Read the article below or listen to author Karisa You read her words on [YouTube](#) or via our [Podcast](#).*

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“Karisa, this is Daisy. She just arrived from China and has been wanting to visit a church here. Maybe she can go with you?”

I looked up from my dinner as Cheri, the Bridges International\* student ministry director, introduced me to the sweet-looking girl with black hair and glasses.

“Sure, Daisy!” I shook her hand. “I have one extra spot in my car this Sunday.”

Daisy came with us to church that week and the next. After her second Sunday, my friend Claire and I offered her a Bible, which she eagerly accepted, as she had been wanting one. Since she'd never read one before, we invited her over after church to read it together.

Instead, we ended up giving a two-hour overview from Genesis to Revelation. After we finished, Daisy looked at us in amazement.

“How do I have this relationship with God?” she asked earnestly.

That afternoon at my kitchen table, Daisy prayed, “God, I have lived in China for many years, and I always wanted to know you but felt you were distant. I knew you were bringing me to the U.S. to learn about you, and now I feel you are close. And I am so appreciative. Thank you for Claire and Karisa who showed me how to know you. I want to live the rest of my life for you. I want to live with you.”

It was March 4, which Daisy called the perfect “new birthday,” as she loved the number four. That next year, Daisy nearly finished the New Testament and bravely shared the Gospel with her family and professors in America.

One evening, we were reading how Jesus is the light of the world when Daisy looked up and said, “I used to think the whole world was dark before I came here. Now I know there is a Light.”

That night, I had her write out all her sins on a piece of paper. Afterward, we wrote “TETELESTAI” across her sins in big letters and ripped the paper into tiny shreds. In ancient Rome, criminals would have parchment describing all their sins nailed to their jail doors so people could walk by and point, saying, “See? This person deserves



jail!” If someone was willing to bail the criminal out, the government would write “TETELESTAI” (“it is finished” or “paid in full”) across the parchment and rip it up before releasing the criminal. There was no longer any legal record standing against this person to condemn them.

When Jesus died on the cross, He proclaimed, “TETELESTAI,” before breathing His last (John 19:28-30). Our sins were paid in full by a God who loves us dearly. Daisy later told me that it felt like magic to witness us rip that paper and tell her that her sins were forever forgiven—that she was a new person. How could it be that all her sins were washed away and forgiven by God forever?

Or as Daisy remarked, “How could my miserable soul receive such freedom all of a sudden?”

Months later, Daisy shared with me, “I want to grow as fast as I can in the kingdom of God.”

God heard her prayer—I’d never seen a believer grow so quickly. Years later, I continued to hear of the amazing

things God was doing through Daisy. Living in a building full of international students, Daisy started an apartment Bible study so other students could learn about God’s love. She invited me to give the same overview I’d given to her that first day in my kitchen to all the international students in her building. The room could not have been more packed as students from all over the world marveled at the God who loves us enough to give His own Son.

Daisy prayed for a sister in her building, and it wasn’t long before God brought a fellow believer to partner in sharing the Gospel and bringing students to church (which Daisy attends three times a week). Daisy fasts and prays to grow closer to God and has since taught us much about trusting Jesus with our whole lives.

Feeling intense pain after realizing how much of her hometown lives without knowledge of Truth, Daisy decided to become a missionary to her own country to share about the God whose love changed her world. Growing up, Daisy had a painful relationship with distant father. After being loved by the most perfect Father, Daisy not

only forgave but loves her earthly father again. Though she was hurt by friends, she’s realized she desired a perfect friend who wasn’t human and can forgive others in response. She searched for the perfect boyfriend until she met the one who calls her His royal bride (Psalm 45). She thought a Buddhist professor was the smartest until she learned from the Good Shepherd, the wisest in the universe. She clung to Buddhism before discovering that its unattainable search for nothingness left her empty—Jesus set her free and gave her eternal life and forgiveness.

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I love reading Daisy’s heartfelt testimony. After being a Christian for many years, I get caught up in religiosity and perfectionism, but it isn’t about that—it’s about this amazing, kind God who loves us and paid for our sins personally because He wanted us that much. It’s knowing Him as deeply as we can and spending time with Him in organic relationships where He’s not intimidated by our mess and wants to hear it all. He’s not merely a theoretical solution but available to satisfy us now.

God is changing lives like Daisy’s across campuses today. People are yearning for Truth, and if we are willing to open our eyes and mouths, God will gladly point us to them. We don’t always get to see the work that He’s doing, but we trust that there’s always more going on under the surface, and we don’t have to cross oceans to see lives transformed by the Gospel—just our neighborhood streets, apartment hallways, and college campuses.

\*Bridges International is a branch of Cru (formerly Campus Crusade for Christ) focused on reaching international students with God’s love. The club is run by volunteers who desire to see the nations transformed by the Gospel, as an overwhelming majority of international students in the U.S. are from closed nations with less than 1% Christianity. Although many of these students will become world leaders and are extremely open to the Gospel during their travels in the U.S., 80% are never invited to an American home and 60% never make close friends.

# 10 Important Personal Lessons I Learned From Adopting a Child with Special Needs

by Vera Christian

*Author's Note: For the 10th anniversary of our adoption, I thought I'd expand on a [previous post](#) I wrote about our adoption journey.*

**And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.**

**Romans 8:28**

I tell people that it was against my better judgment to say “yes” to the adoption of our special needs daughter, Anah. Unlike the many kind-hearted and compassionate people who adopt for godly reasons, I adopted to alleviate my guilt and fear. You can do the right things with completely sinful motives, and I say that to make sure you don't give me more credit than I am due.

But despite my shameful admission, I can also say that the past 10 years with Anah have put me on the fast track

to learning some important lessons that I missed earlier on. These lessons are key to what I do today, and I am so thankful that the Lord chose this kind and gentle way to teach me. I hope you'll learn these too—without going about it the hard way as I did.

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## 1. **God is gracious.**

I bought into the lie that because I had entered into this adoption with self-centered motives, God was punishing me when I encountered the inevitable hardships that came with the adoption. I believed that because of my small-heartedness, I didn't deserve to experience joy ever again.

But that is not the way our God operates. If I am in Christ, He doesn't punish us for our sins any longer. That would negate the work of the cross.

Instead, I am (still) learning that the hard times, the suffering—they are actually a gift. They keep me turning to Him, trusting Him. He protected me from myself. And for that, I am most grateful.

## 2. **I'm a child with special needs too.**

My disability? Sin.

Until Anah arrived, I prided myself on being a [good girl](#). I was completely blind to the pervasiveness of my sin.

But the good news is this: seeing the depth of my sin has also increased my appreciation for the [Gospel](#). It is not merely a ticket to heaven but the power for a new life.

More specifically, the love Christ models for us is an unfair love. His kind of love is sacrificial, so if I truly want to become like Jesus, I need to accept that I will give more than I receive.

## 3. **Love is unfair.**

That is the way He loved me. And a [servant is not greater than her master \(John 13:16\)](#). Though I have a long way to go, Anah is giving me a chance to learn this kind of love.

## 4. **I need help.**

Our adoption pressures were God's loving tool to bring my special needs to the surface so I could recognize and begin dealing with them. Wounds. A small heart. Blindness. Grief.

Through [three concentrated seasons of counseling](#)—personally and in our marriage—God met me in unseen places through the help of other believers. This intensive discipleship helped me to see my struggles as God's redemptive opportunities, not things to escape or avoid.





**5. I need community.**

Counseling revealed my prideful independence, not only from God but others too.

I learned not to pretend I had it together when I didn't. Seeing my limits forced me to ask for help. That is also humbling but letting others in to my areas of weakness and need and letting them serve me helped bring healing to a misshapen part of my heart.

**6. Trust God for today.**

One of my biggest temptations is to worry about tomorrow based on what I saw today. I tend to forecast far in advance about Anah's future and wonder how we'll get her through this struggle or that obstacle.

Jesus tells us not to worry about tomorrow ([Matt. 6:34](#)), and I think I'm learning why. My human perspective is limited. His is not. He sees resources at that future time that I am completely unaware of today. My job is to trust Him for today, knowing that what I'll need then will show up at the right time.

**7. Create restful rhythms.**

For the first few years, I was on duty 24/7. I was never fully present, and sleep was never restful. Not surprisingly, health problems arose that forced me to reconsider my ways.

What I realized is that I was trying to be God—always awake, always at work. No human can live this way. God intended rest to be restorative and nourishing—sleep, Sabbath, festivals, and the Jubilee.

We need [rhythms of rest](#). Putting a good night's sleep and a weekly Sabbath into my life has been instrumental in stabilizing my days, and they make caring for Anah sustainable.

**8. Serve others.**

Besides Anah, I have three other children. With a reduced bandwidth, they (unfortunately) got less of me. I was exhausted and any spare energy I had left, I hoarded for myself. It made sense. But this selfishness also backfired. When we look inward, we actually grow smaller.

I was in danger of becoming ingrown with Anah; serving others helped me to enlarge my heart again. As I looked outward and upward to God for strength, He stretched me beyond my limits and expanded my heart to others again.

**9. Welcome friends to challenge you.**

At the lowest part during these past 10 years, I had friends who truly loved and cared for me. They did not allow me to wallow in my pity party.

Sure, they sympathized, but they were also willing to ask hard questions and challenge me. Self-pity is ugly and crippling. And honestly, there were times I liked it. However, as I nursed my feelings of victimhood, I only became smaller. In fact, it made my world cave in. I functioned as an atheist, without hope.

So though I didn't always appreciate it then, I realize now what a gift those friends have been. Their love and care were just what I needed—even if it hurt—because like the paralytic man's four friends ([Mark 2:3-4](#)), they helped bring me back to the truest Friend of all: Jesus.

**10. Let your pain bless others.**

Adopting Anah allowed me to taste the sweetness of God's comfort firsthand. Because it is no longer theoretical, I am able to speak to minister to others in ways I never did before ([2 Cor. 1:3-4](#)). This story has even blessed those who are in entirely different situations.

Any blessings we receive through our pain are meant to be a testimony and a gift to others. Like Paul, I sometimes still feel this adoption is a "thorn" in my flesh. But also, like Paul, I can say this too: "Therefore I will boast all the more gladly of my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ may rest upon me." ([2 Cor. 12:9b](#)) I am learning how to be content in my circumstances, but I can say, "For when I am weak, then I am strong."

God never wastes our suffering. This is what gives me hope as I look into a lot of changes coming up for us as Anah approaches her 18th birthday next year. He has been faithful for 10 years. I know He will be faithful the rest of the way. Praise be to our God!



# No, I'm Not a Pro: How to Parent our Children's Souls

by Faith Chang

In the third trimester of my fourth full-term pregnancy, my doctor joked about how I was a “pro.” But the truth was I didn’t feel much more prepared for the baby than I had felt seven years earlier and pregnant with my first. If anything, three kids deep, I felt less sufficient for the task. Weeks away from meeting our fourth, I didn’t feel as capable as I might have expected to feel by then.

It wasn’t just the number of kids, really. (Though when I was pregnant with our first I couldn’t imagine how people made it past one.) I remembered being discharged from the hospital with our firstborn and thinking, “That’s it? They’re just going to let us take her?” That we were allowed to be parents at all is still as shocking to me.

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As a mom of now four, the enormity of the task of motherhood continues to dawn on me daily in new ways as does my inability to carry it out as I ought.

There is much more mystery in parenting than I had anticipated. I never expected to always have the right answers, to know what to do at all times, but I don’t think I ever realized how incredible it would be to be firsthand witness to a child’s life. As parents, there’s no one else who knows your children as well as you do, and it’s easy to start feeling like you’ve got them figured out. At the same time, there is so much we are still learning about our children, so much hidden in the depths of who they are that we are only beginning to see.

It’s not just that each child has a unique combination of personality and preference, strengths and weaknesses. It’s

been fun to watch these aspects of their personhood be revealed, to learn who’s good at what, to be able to anticipate their different responses to circumstances, and to know how to help them differently. But there is a deeper reality that has become more apparent to me these days. That is, the fact that my children are daily interacting with the world—and with me—as embodied *souls*.

It’s not that I didn’t know this before—that my children have souls—but the reality of it is becoming increasingly evident to me. I see it as we talk and they give me insight on how they interpret the world. I see it as they struggle to do good, as they grapple with their fears. I see it as they become aware of the brokenness in and around them.

I see it when one of them calls from the bed, “Mom, I have a question—it’s a Bible question!” It turns out she doesn’t just want to know some facts from Scripture but wanted to know what to do with her knowledge of falling short of God’s standard. We sit and talk through how difficult it is to be sorry and how hard it is to forgive.

The whole day, I have interacted with her primarily as caretaker and in-charge momma, and now we speak as fellow struggling sinner-saints. We talk about how Paul wrote about the waging war inside us, of not doing the good he wanted to do, of doing the evil he didn’t want. I struggle too, I tell her, and we will continue to until we see Jesus. But he forgives us. He can change us. “I think I get it now,” she says sweetly. We hug and say goodnight. This is more than a chance to hear her thoughts and feelings, I have been gifted a glimpse of the inner workings of her soul.

My children are immortal beings with eternal souls. I

would say this takes my breath away, but I don’t want to give the wrong impression. It feels less like witnessing a pretty sunset at the beach and more like standing at the precipice of a mountain. The view is incredible but my sense of helplessness at the top of sheer rock is almost overwhelming. To be entrusted with the care of souls is beautiful and terrifying at the same time. It is a holy task.

When I spoke to my daughter, we weren’t just interacting as thinkers. I couldn’t just operate out of my knowledge of religious truth, philosophy, or child psychology. Parenting is soul work. As she tried to make sense of what she knows and feels to be right, her own experience of being unable to carry it out, and her fears about the implications of her failure, her heart was making sense of truths with eternal consequences. My children are daily learning to live their lives before the face of God, of the reality of sinful nature, and hopefully, learning the wonder of the gospel.

I am not a pro. I could never wear any motivational mom gear because I am not #momstrong or a #bossmom by any measure. I don’t say this just because I know I should, but because I feel my own insufficiency deeply and the weighty task of caring for these souls to be increasingly heavy. Yet I think there may be one thing I dare say I have grown in since not-so-baby-anymore #1, and that is turning to the one who is sufficient.

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Many years ago, I may have crumbled into discouragement and fear at this growing sense of the enormity of motherhood, but by grace, I am learning to lean on grace. I have grown a bit, I hope, in running more quickly to my eternal refuge and help, to the one who welcomes weak moms and those who feel like they don’t know what they’re doing. I am recognizing more quickly that as I start feeling like panicking from the heights that this is a call to trust. It is a call not to dwell on my lack but on his willingness to give grace, to finish my declaration of weakness with [James 4:6’s](#) *but he gives more grace*.

I have found there are one of two great temptations we are faced with when standing before tasks too great for us. First, the world would encourage us to turn inward at this point, to self-help and positive hashtags. But many of us have fallen enough times into the foolish self-confidence of

Peter, who after declaring that he was different than all the other disciples, that he’d *never* deny Christ, found himself weeping at the end of the night. We have had enough of our own declarations of strength and subsequent failures.

The second temptation though, when we find ourselves trembling, is to try to pass off our unbelief as humility. Just as soon-to-be-king Saul hid among the luggage even after God made clear his calling, we may walk in something that looks like humility, but actually is an unwillingness to trust in his grace.

We, however, are called to a third way. To declare as Paul did, that though we are weak, our God is strong. As Christians, we are freed not only to admit but boast in our weaknesses and hear our God declare the sufficiency of his grace over us. His power is made perfect in our lack, so we stand confident in the strength he promises to give us to face the tasks he calls us to. Whatever your particular temptation in the face of God’s calling, know this—God gives more grace. He delights to show himself merciful to the humble and needy, and when you turn to him in your weakness, he receives glory by showing the sufficiency of his grace.

I don’t know what you are being called to these days, whether it’s parenting or something else, but I do know that our sense of inadequacy and insufficiency often serves to remind us that God calls us to holy tasks too great for us. Maybe the reason why your particular task seems so huge is simply because it *is* huge. To live in obedience to God, to love as he loves, to trust and obey, to persevere through suffering—these are no small things whatever the context.

Whether in church, work, friendship, or family, we need not be strong on our own. We need not cower because of our inability. Though we may stand trembling at the precipices of God’s tremendous calling for our lives, we can trust. Fully aware of the beauty and enormity of the tasks he has granted us, we look to him. Truly, our tasks are great and we really are insufficient for them, but even so, he gives more grace.

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*Editor’s Note: This essay was originally published on [Keeping Heart](#). It has been republished here with permission from the author.*

# Fathers, Lead the Way: Reflections for Father's Day and Beyond

by Ton Sugimura

**Train up a child in the way he should go; even when he is old he will not depart from it.**

**Proverbs 22:6**

One day, I came home and asked my boys what they did all day.

They replied, “We were making money.”

Proud of their entrepreneurial spirit, I asked, “Did you start a business? Were you selling something?”

“No,” they corrected me, “We were *making* money.” Apparently, there was a small counterfeit operation going on in my house.

So I told them, “You realize your currency is worth nothing if there’s no bank to back it.” They weren’t too concerned by this new information as they returned to their forgery.

In life, however, the stakes are much higher. Yet like counterfeit money, our children’s faith is worthless unless the bank of God’s Word backs it. For this reason, fathers, we direct our children to live according to God’s way in all of their habitual choices. Picture them trudging back and forth through a grass field until they have carved a well-worn path. They must habitually walk in the way of the Lord until it becomes a road much traveled.

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## Godly Example

The first way to instruct your children is by your godly example. Tread the path of wisdom and righteousness

instead of folly and sin. Walk in the Lord’s way, and then train your children to follow after you. Instruction occurs not only when your children are in trouble but also at the breakfast table, on the way to school, and during bedtime prayers. Continually shepherd their hearts in the way of God’s wisdom, for the child “who walks with the wise grows wise” (13:20a).

This witness of a well-lived life is more effective than a lecture and more powerful than a thousand books. Your righteous character will bless your children as they learn from you to love God’s Word (20:7). So consider: How is your prayer life? How is your devotional habit and your own walk with the Lord? Choose to cultivate your relationship with God, and the benefits will overflow to your children.

## Creative Instruction

Instruct by example, and then also with creativity like Jesus who said, “Look at the birds of the air,” and, “Consider the lilies of the field” (Matthew 6:25-34). In Proverbs, the ant instructs the jobless sluggard (6:6-11), and the loaf of bread instructs the young man hooked on porn (v. 26). The gold ring in the pig’s snout instructs the teen who wears her theology on TikTok hauls (11:22). So also, dads, emulate your Creator as you teach his Word. Creativity brings biblical truth to life so that your children will remember.

## Church Community

Instruct your children in community with the help of your church family. A good church will help your children pray, memorize Bible verses, sing praise songs, learn about Jesus, and engage in discipleship. Certainly, God places the ultimate responsibility on parents, but the church can offer much assistance.



So join a church with gospel-centered ministries for children and youth. Take advantage of resources like counseling and mentorship, which support your role as parents. Don’t let academics, athletics, social engagements, or laziness keep you from the loving fellowship of the local church.

## Gospel Truth

Finally, instruct your children not only in the whole counsel of Scripture but specifically in the gospel truth. Teach them that God is the loving Ruler and Creator of the world (Proverbs 3:19). Direct them to observe the beauty and the power of God’s creation (Psalm 19:1-6).

Illustrate for them that God is holy as you explain rules like speed limits and bedtime curfews. Remind them that “the eyes of the LORD are in every place, keeping watch on the evil and the good” (Proverbs 15:3). Weep over the sin of man as you point out the consequences of sin and death around us.

Fallenness, for example, can be revealed in the impatience of a traffic jam or the trauma of a playground fistfight. Death is in the newspaper, at grandpa’s funeral, and a goldfish swirling down the toilet bowl. It is the story of Adam and Eve and every story after. Warn your children about the consequences of their own personal sin, for a fool’s disobedience brings “sorrow to his mother” (10:1b; 15:20b; 17:21, 25) and “a foolish son is ruin to his father” (19:13a; 28:7b). The guaranteed consequence of your children’s sin is spiritual death apart from God (Romans 6:23a).

Most importantly, reveal the truth to your children that

Christ is Savior. Tell them the story of the cross in a thousand different ways until it seeps into how they understand the world and themselves. Point out evidences of grace in their life and in the lives of others who are drawing them to Jesus. Help them to see how their own miniature story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation finds its place in God’s bigger story. Then teach them to repent of sin and believe in Christ.

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Fathers, you will have no greater joy than leading your children to Jesus and bringing them up as his disciples. This is successful parenting: To dedicate your children to the Lord, then teaching, training, and guiding them on the path that they must walk. Even if he becomes a famous doctor or a wealthy businessman—even if she wins the Nobel Prize or the Pulitzer, all of that is simply icing on the cake. So may we claim with the apostle John: “I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth” (3 John 4).

*PRAYER: Dear Heavenly Father, I pray for strength to instruct my children on how to walk in the truth. Remind me to instill in them a love for the gospel and a love for Christ, their Savior. Help me point out evidences of your grace that direct their hearts to you. In your precious Son’s name, Amen.*

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*Editor’s Note: This article is an excerpt from Hope for New Dads: 40 Days in the Book of Proverbs.*

# More Powerful Than the Hate That Divides: A Response to the Laguna Woods Shooting on May 15, 2022

by KC Liu



## The Laguna Woods Shooting

Text messages went off on my phone rapidly on Sunday afternoon. News of the Laguna Woods shooting spread like wildfire. My initial thought was, “How sad! This kind of violence has come to our backyard. But these types of news have been all too common in recent years. I don’t have the energy to engage with the news. I am going to go on with my day.”

But out of curiosity, I googled the shooting. To my shock, it happened at the Irvine Taiwanese Presbyterian Church (ITPC). These are my Taiwanese people in my city!

Since the Taiwanese community is a small community, I was afraid that the victims would be people we knew. And sure enough, our church has many relatives who attend that church. You can imagine the shockwave this news sent through our Taiwanese communities in the U.S. as well as overseas.

Who would do such a thing? What kind of motive could the shooter possibly have by targeting Taiwanese elderly men and women? The shooter himself was a man in his 60s who was born in Taiwan. It made no sense. Then authorities revealed that it was a politically-motivated attack. The shooter was a pro-China activist, and he hated Taiwanese people who advocates for Taiwan’s independence.

## The Dark History

I know this type of political conflict all too well. I heard the rhetoric of “deep blue” pro-China party<sup>1</sup> versus the “deep green” pro-independence party<sup>2</sup> all the time. I grew

up in a “deep green” family. I was born in Taiwan. I immigrated to Orange County at the age of 8. I was taught from a child that I am “Taiwanese” and not “Chinese”—we are NOT the same.

Why did my parents and grandparents dislike the mainlanders so much? I didn’t understand until they told me their stories of suffering and oppression under the KMT reign in Taiwan in the early days. My paternal grandfather was almost captured and killed<sup>3</sup> as a young man for being an intellectual. My pregnant grandmother (with my mom inside her stomach) was shot by a KMT soldier. As a result, my mom had to be delivered prematurely at 2 lbs. The doctors didn’t expect her to live. Fortunately for me, my mom survived. In addition, much of my maternal grandfather’s land was confiscated<sup>4</sup> by the KMT in the name of patriotism.

From their point of view, my family has every reason to dislike mainlanders. They described the Chinese Civil War between the communists and KMT as “thug versus thug”—one dictator fighting another dictator. My family was attacked and taken advantage of. Thus began a never-ending cycle of political hatred: “Green” versus “Blue”.

Since I immigrated to the US at the age of 8, I didn’t really care too much about the distinction between Chinese and Taiwanese, but I was aware of my family’s stance and had to respect it. That was my identity: a Taiwanese son. “*Don’t forget your roots. Don’t forget who you are and where you’re from. We don’t speak Mandarin at home, we speak only Taiwanese.*”

1 Kuomintang (KMT), Chinese National Party

2 Democratic Progressive Party

3 228 Massacre

4 Land distribution reform



### A New Identity

In 1996, at the age of 16, I surrendered my life to Christ. I started regularly attending a Taiwanese church<sup>5</sup>. From that point on, I learned about the Word of God and the love of God. I grew to know about the sacrifice of Jesus for my sins and the sins of mankind. I studied God’s forgiveness toward us, and how He commands us to also forgive others. I read that Jesus forgave the soldiers who nailed him to the cross because “they know not what they do”(Luke 23:34)

Around the year 2000, there was a huge wave of immigration from mainland China to the United States. That was the first time I’ve ever met Mainlanders. I thought they talked with a funny Chinese accent. They probably thought I talked like a Chinese hillbilly. By that time, I didn’t know what to think of “them.” I didn’t dislike them. They were very normal people. But I didn’t see us as one and the same either. In fact, I was irritated to see young mainlanders driving luxury cars with their parent’s money—spoiled brats!

A few years later, I watched a powerful documentary called “The Cross—Jesus in China”<sup>6</sup>. It told the story of God powerfully at work in China, as he used Chinese believers who literally sacrificed their lives for the sake of the Gospel. Many believers were imprisoned and killed

5 Evangelical Formosan Church  
6 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vd18EjsWPoU>

for their faith, but they never stopped preaching the Gospel. These Chinese believers went from village to village to share the love of Jesus Christ despite persecution. As a result, a great spiritual awakening spread all over China.

As I watched their stories, tears poured down my face, and something broke in my heart. I realized that, first and foremost, these are my brothers and sisters in Christ. They are God’s beloved children, loved by God, used by God, and many have gone to glory to be with the Lord. And I have no doubt that Jesus said to them, “Welcome home, my good and faithful servants.” I realized that as believers in Christ, the same blood of Christ flows through our veins. We are one in the family of God, no matter our race and politics. When we surrender our lives to Christ, we received a new identity. We received a new kind of citizenship.

**“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” (2 Corinthians 5:17)**

**“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body that it may be conformed to His glorious body...” (Philippians 3:20-21)**

My primary identity is no longer just a “Taiwanese Son.” My new identity is “a child of the Living God” and a “citizen of heaven.” And my allegiance is ultimately to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, not any political party. The Blue and Green parties are not my saviors. The Democrat and Republican parties are not my Lord. My life on this earth is temporary. When I go to be with Jesus there will be no political affiliations in heaven. The only “politics” we will find in heaven is “*at the name of Jesus, every knee shall bow and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord*” (Philippians 2:10).

Ever since God broke my heart for the believers in China, I have been to China eight times for short-term mission trips, bringing teams to share the love of Christ. I can now honestly say that I love my brothers and sisters in China. They are some of the most humble and loving people I have ever met. The times I spent with them in those summer camps was like having fellowship in heaven. We all wished the camps would just go on forever.

### What Now?

What do we do now? In the aftermath of the shooting, the news and media are telling the story and motive of the shooter from every angle. Certain channels are adding fuel to the fire and creating more hatred and division between the Taiwanese and Chinese. As people watch more news, they become angrier and even want revenge. They are now even more adamant with the rhetoric, “We are NOT the same”.

As God’s children, we must find a better way. Now, more than ever, let the Taiwanese and Chinese believers come together, hand in hand, standing together under the banner of Christ. Even though we will have different political stances, even though we disagree on many things, we can come together in love and unity because the blood of Christ runs through our veins.

We must stand together against hate and violence. We must show the world that there is a better way. Let us organize gatherings together. Let us fellowship with one another. Let us break bread together. Let us pray together. Let us share our pulpits with each other. Let our children play together. Let us be children of light in this dark world.

Let this be our declaration: The love of God and the blood of Jesus are more powerful than the hate that divides.

# Preaching on the Verge of Quitting

by Harold Kim



In 2020, I felt dead-end weariness. It scared me. I couldn't shake it. For the first time in 20 years of pastoral ministry, I considered walking away.

I know I'm not alone. But the Scriptures give us help. In [Psalm 42](#), we find potential causes for spiritual depression and several practical prescriptions for recovery.

## Reasons Pastors Walk Away

I see at least three reasons pastors are walking away from ministry.

### 1. Physical Condition

Why are you pressed down with depression, anxiety, and melancholy? In [Spiritual Depression](#), Martyn Lloyd-Jones began with these questions:

Does anyone hold the view that as long as you are a Christian, it doesn't matter what the condition of your body is? You'll soon be disillusioned if you believe that. . . . [But if] you recognize that the physical may be partly responsible for the spiritual condition and make allowances for this, you'll be better able to deal with the spiritual issues.

Some people are, biologically, prone to depression. It's not merely a spiritual matter but a matter of temperament. Your recovery begins with undoing a simplistic, over-spiritualized, guilt-tripping, and shame-inducing approach that pays no attention to your physical condition.

In verse 3, the psalmist, one of the sons of Korah, says his diet consisted of tears. There's no mention of adequate sleep while he laments day and night. If you never sleep, you won't feel awesome, because you can't sever your body from the soul. Remember, Satan tempted Jesus when he was physically at his weakest.

### 2. Spiritual COVID

The psalmist hasn't lost faith in God, but he has lost his [spiritual taste and smell](#)—his sensory experience of God. Like a panting deer, he aches to see, taste, and enjoy God again. The roaring waves he describes in verse 7 are an apt image of the spiritual depression he's experiencing. It's like drowning, and it's all-consuming. He's mourning the palpable absence of communion with God.

Sometimes in the Bible, in [Psalm 32](#) for example, miseries erupt as the direct result of sin. [Isaiah 30:15](#) offers the only relief from this miserable guilt: "For thus said the Lord GOD, the Holy One of Israel, 'In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and in trust shall be your strength.'" But no sin is described in [Psalm 42](#). Like with COVID-19, the psalmist has lost his spiritual senses. He's experiencing fog and lingering fatigue without any moral failure.

### 3. Loss

I've lost count of the pastors who said they feel like they lost more during the pandemic than all previous years combined. As criticism, unprecedented challenges, divisions, and conflicts spiked, pastors bore all kinds of hurt. It hurts to lose your idols. It hurts most to lose the people you love.

## Practical Prescriptions

[Psalm 42](#) also gives four practical prescriptions for preachers on the verge of quitting.

### 1. Patience

In [The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry](#), John Mark Comer writes,

We hear the refrain "I'm great, just busy" so often we assume pathological busyness is okay. After all,

everybody else is busy too. But what if busyness isn't healthy? What if it's an airborne contagion, wreaking havoc on our collective soul?

Maybe one of the blessings of the pandemic is that it has slowed us all down. Notice the psalmist's repeated cries in verses 5 and 11: "Why are you cast down, O my soul, and why are you in turmoil within me? Hope in God; for I shall again praise him, my salvation and my God." The psalmist repeats himself because he's taking time with God and with himself.

Do you expect people to get better right away? Does your golf swing improve after a single hole? If you're impatient with people, you won't pastor for long. If you're impatient with yourself, you won't pastor long. Love is patient ([1 Cor. 13:4](#)). God is patient with you and your church. Are you?

### 2. Pacing

Most pastors work without or beyond limitations. And lest you think the solution is a periodic sabbatical, Carey Nieuwhof has [observed](#), "No matter how many vacations you take, [your health is related to] the nature of the job you return to."

What's your usual pace? Do you regularly work to the point of utter exhaustion? Do you schedule and allow for margin? Do you prioritize and enjoy time with your family?

Often our pace reveals we're making ourselves into God instead of submitting to his repeated command to "remember the Sabbath" (e.g., [Ex. 20:8](#)).

### 3. Plurality

The psalmist had once worshiped with people in southern Israel. But for whatever reason, he's separated and isolated up north (vv. 4, 6). He longs for company and the chorus of worshippers.

Similarly, the great prophet Elijah went from a literal mountain-top high to a crash so hard that he no longer wanted to live ([1 Kings 19](#)). What did God do for him? Elijah was provided food and the company of angels. We need a company, too—a community around us.

### 4. Preaching

In many ways, the most influential preacher for your soul is you. If you were to manuscript what you think, feel, and

say to yourself on a regular basis, would you be comfortable posting it online? Would it pass ordination standards?

The greatest life-giving practice I've gained from [Psalm 42](#) is this: instead of listening to yourself, preach to yourself. Instead of playing the usual lifelong soundtrack, grab hold of yourself to play what is true, lovely, and worthy from God's Word.

Everyone is a preacher. How are you preaching to you? Do you preach to the roots, all the way to the most traumatic thing you've experienced (see vv. 9–10)?

Do you preach with the depth and honesty of the psalmists? Because the One who is greater than the psalmists has arrived, can you preach him to yourself? Jesus Christ drowned under the lethal wrath of God to bring hope to you.

## Who Is Hopeful?

How does hope come down in Jesus? Charles Spurgeon is famous for his preaching and his melancholy. In "[Sweet Stimulants for the Fainting Soul](#)," he wrote, "To be cast down is often the best thing that can happen to us." How so? Some of the benefits of being cast down include shedding pretense, pride, and trite views of maturity. Times of being cast down can deepen our intimacy with God and teach us courage and empathy.

Zack Eswine [reports](#) how Spurgeon cherished an engraved picture from *Pilgrim's Progress* in which the character named Christian panics while being swallowed by the depths of a river. The portrait shows Christian's companion, Hopeful, pushing him upward with his arm around Christian while shouting, "Fear not! Brother, I feel the bottom!"

Who is hopeful? No matter how deep and treacherous the waters may be, Jesus hit rock bottom for you. No matter where you are or where you're going, there is nowhere Jesus hasn't already been. Jesus meets you there. From the bottom, he holds you up. He will never let go. He doesn't quit. And because he arose from death, we shall rise with him.

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*This article was adapted from a sermon delivered at the Asian American Leadership Conference and was published in partnership with the [The Gospel Coalition](#).*







# The Best Christian Books by Asian American Authors in 2022

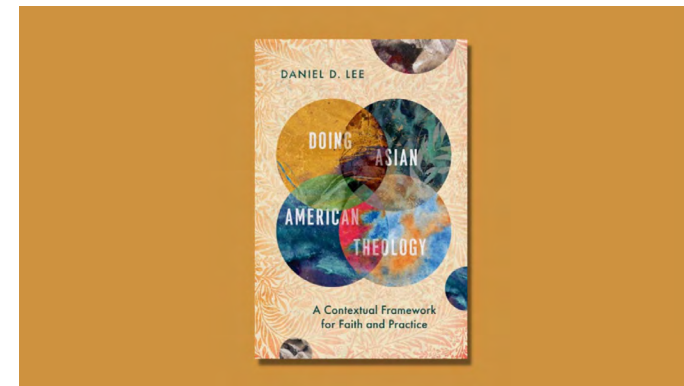
SOLA Network is proud to present our list of the best Christian books by Asian American authors that were published in 2022. We are encouraged that Asian American voices are being added to Christian bookshelves and libraries all over the world. Our list was curated by our SOLA Editorial Board and staff. This year, we are proud to present seven books, and we hope to have longer lists in the future.

This article contains theological books, children’s books, and devotionals—meaning there’s something for everyone. We hope you will be encouraged by our Asian American brothers and sisters as they share their stories for the entire body of Christ.

You can also check out the web version of our article. It has the full book descriptions, links to purchase the books, and links to our reviews and interviews with the authors!

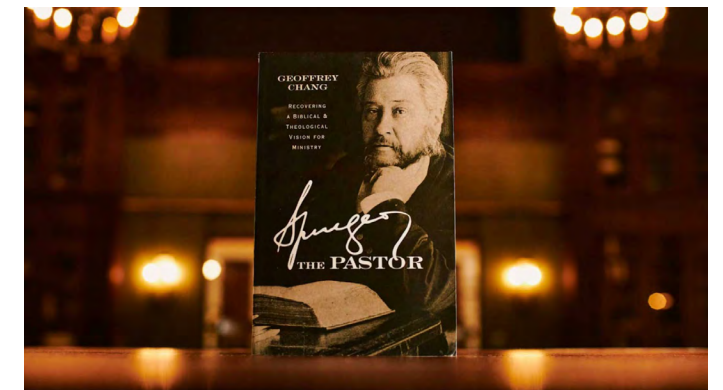
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## The Best Books on Theology



*Doing Asian American Theology: A Contextual Framework for Faith and Practice* by Daniel D. Lee

**“Asian American theology is about God revealed in Jesus Christ in covenantal relationship with Asian Americans qua Asian Americans.** Thus, Asian American theology is about Asian Americans as well, as human covenant partners alongside of God.” — Daniel D. Lee



*Spurgeon the Pastor: Recovering a Biblical and Theological Vision for Ministry* by Geoff Chang

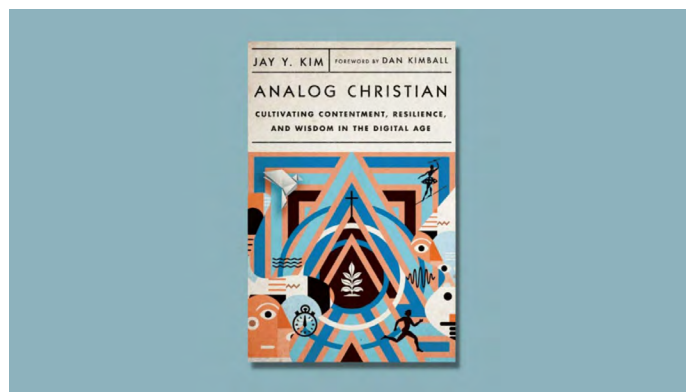
“Charles Spurgeon, the Prince of Preachers, was a pastor to well over 5,000 people in a day long before “mega-churches” were the norm. But you might be surprised to know that Spurgeon’s vision for ministry was not pragmatic. He did not borrow best practices from the business leaders in his day. Rather, his ministry was decidedly, staunchly biblical and theological in nature—and it was a ministry vision we ought to adopt more than a century later.” — B&H Books

## The Best Books on Christian Living



*Faith in the Wilderness: Words of Exhortation from the Chinese Church, edited by Hannah Nation and Simon Liu*

“If we want revival in our communities, then let us learn from those being revived.’ In *Faith in the Wilderness*, editors Hannah Nation and Simon Liu pull together the insights of the Chinese church for the West. These sermonic letters from Chinese Christians pull back the curtain on the pastoral heart and the hope behind the house church’s remarkable faithfulness, awakening readers to the reality of the gospel—the ground of our hope—in the midst of darkness. Readers will be convicted, encouraged, and edified by the testimony of these Chinese Christians.” — Lexham Press



*Analog Christian: Cultivating Contentment, Resilience, and Wisdom in the Digital Age by Jay Y. Kim*

“Jay Kim’s *Analog Church* explored the ways the digital age and its values affect the life of the church. In *Analog Christian*, he asks the same question of Christian discipleship. As the digital age inclines us to discontentment,

fragility, and foolishness, how are followers of Jesus to respond? What is the theological basis for living in creative resistance to the forces of our day? How can Christians cultivate the contentment, resilience, and wisdom to not only survive but to thrive as we navigate the specific challenges of our age?” — Intersarsity Press



*Shame: Being Known and Loved by Esther Liu*

“Many of us experience shame on a regular basis. We compare ourselves to others and feel deficient. We look at our pasts and hope no one will find out what we’ve done—or what was done to us. We doubt and isolate ourselves in light of previous rejection or failure. Our shame is unpleasant, even paralyzing. But there is hope for shame-filled souls! Our Savior willingly sacrificed everything—even died—so that shame would not have the final say in your life. Now he empowers you to change. Writing both as a biblical counselor and fellow struggler, Esther Liu takes us on a 31-day journey to discover lasting comfort.” — CCEF

## The Best Books on Christian Living continued



*Emmanuel: An Invitation to Prepare Him Room at Christmas and Always by Ruth Chou Simons*

“From the bestselling author and artist behind *GraceLaced* and *Beholding and Becoming* comes this gorgeously illustrated Advent exploration of what it means to intimately experience God’s presence in our daily lives. Ruth Chou Simons welcomes you and your family to partake in a season of surrender as you discover the true miracle behind Christmas: that while we journey to grow in our relationships with Jesus, He has already come so He can be with us forever.” — Harvest House Publishers

## The Best Children’s Book



*Taste and See: All about God’s Goodness, written by Irene Sun and illustrated by Hannah Y. Lu*

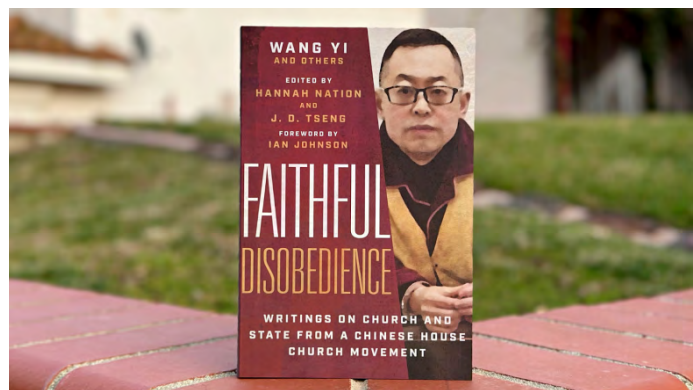
“In *Taste and See*, author Irene Sun and illustrator Hannah Y. Lu provide a bird’s eye view of the Bible using the idea of hunger and feasting to tell the story of redemption in a narrative poem set to the tune of “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” Children ages 4-7 will discover that everything their hearts hunger for can be found in Jesus—the one whose broken body and shed blood is made visible in the bread and wine we eat together to celebrate Christ’s death and resurrection. Each meal we share until Jesus comes is a time to remember God’s love for all his children.” — New Growth Press



# My Favorite Asian American Christian Books I Read in 2022

by Aaron Lee

This year I began moving my reading habits to focus on Asian American authors. From children’s books to expositional commentaries, there was a broad range to cover! Overall, I was blessed to see the work that God is doing through books. Here at SOLA Network, we are happy to support Asian American authors and their ministry of words.



## Faithful Disobedience: Writings on Church and State from a Chinese House Church Movement

Wang Yi, Edited by Hannah Nation and J. D. Tseng (IVP Academic), November 29, 2022

[From the publisher:](#)

In this volume, key writings from the house church have been compiled, translated, and made accessible to English speakers. Featured here is a manifesto by well-known

Pastor Wang Yi and his church, Early Rain Covenant Church in Chengdu, to clarify their theological stance on the house church and its relationship to the Chinese government. There are also works by prominent voices such as Jin Tianming, Jin Mingri, and Sun Yi. The editors have provided introductions, notes, and a glossary to give context to each selection.

[From my review of Faithful Disobedience:](#)

Edited by Hannah Nation and J. D. Tseng, this book is a precious treasure. The ability to read first-hand accounts of our persecuted brothers and sisters is a modern miracle, and one that we should not take for granted. It is now a historical book that will prove to be prophetic guiding as Jesus draws near.

Related: [Learning About The Center for House Church Theology: An Interview with Clara Kim](#)



## Shame: Being Known and Loved

Esther Liu (P&R Publishers), October 5, 2022

[From the publisher:](#)

Your Savior willingly sacrificed everything—even died—so that shame would not have the final say in your life. Writing as a biblical counselor and fellow struggler, Esther Liu takes you on a thirty-one-day journey to discover lasting comfort. As you explore the depths of God’s grace for you, use this book’s practical action points, reflection questions, and devotional insights to reshape your instinctive responses to God, others, and yourself.

[From my review of Shame:](#)

Asian Americans will find much to relate to in this book—from feeling like we need to climb ladders of success to feeling invisible. Liu takes us to the story of Abraham and how God sees his servant Hagar. When we feel small, insignificant, and unnoticed, we can remember that God sees us and we matter.

Related: [Writing About Shame: An Interview with “Shame” Author Esther Liu](#)



## Emmanuel: An Invitation to Prepare Him Room at Christmas and Always

Ruth Chou Simons (Harvest House Publishers), September 13, 2022

[From the publisher:](#)

Christmas Day is not the end of our celebrations, but the beginning! Emmanuel is an invitation to rejoice in the everlasting fellowship and hope God extended to us on the day of His Son’s birth, guiding us to realize that having God with us all year long is Christmas’s most incredible gift.

[From my review of Emmanuel:](#)

From the start, I was surprised at how this book tackles real emotions. Worry, loneliness, stress, and jealousy are relatable experiences—and Simons shares how God can shape our hearts in those moments. While the devotional content is at the center of this book, Simons shares select scripture and quotes throughout—framed by her beautiful art.

Related: [Telling Her Own Story: An Interview with Ruth Chou Simons](#)



## ESV Expository Commentary: Isaiah-Ezekiel

Series edited by Iain M. Duguid, James M. Hamilton Jr., Jay Sklar, Contributions by Jonathan Gibson, Bob Fyall, Jerry Hwang (Crossway), September 6, 2022

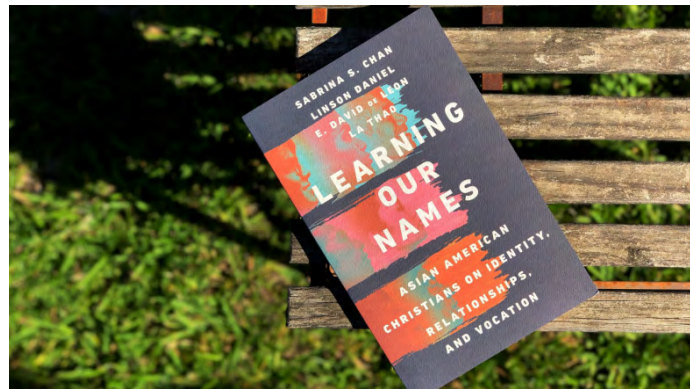
[From the publisher:](#)

Designed to strengthen the global church with a widely accessible, theologically sound, and pastorally wise resource for understanding and applying the overarching storyline of the Bible, the ESV Expository Commentary features the full text of the ESV Bible passage by passage, with crisp and theologically rich exposition and application.

[From my review of ESV Expository Commentary: Isaiah-Ezekiel:](#)

In regards to [Jeremiah 29:11](#), Hwang states that “the larger arc of exile as discipline and restoration as repentance sets the concept of God’s ‘plans for shalom’ in a whole new light.” It is an indictment to prosperity theology, and

a challenge to persevere through suffering as God wills to bless his people. This careful engagement with the text is consistent throughout this commentary.



### Learning Our Names: Asian American Christians on Identity, Relationships, and Vocation

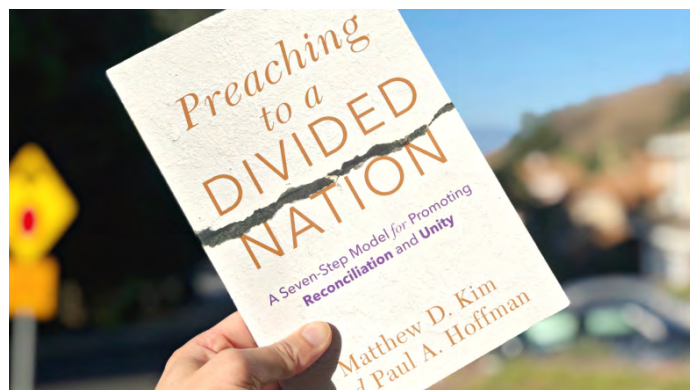
Sabrina S. Chan, Linson Daniel, E. David de Leon, and La Thao (InterVarsity Press), August 30, 2022

#### From the publisher:

Asian American Christians need to hear and own our diverse stories beyond the cultural expectations of the model minority or perpetual foreigner. A team from East Asian, Southeast Asian, and South Asian backgrounds explores what it means to learn our names and be seen by God.

#### From My Review of Learning Our Names:

You can feel the already-not-yet tension in this book. Instead of hiding or ignoring it, we are asked to lean into it. We are encouraged to address it. And we are emboldened to share our names, tell our stories, and share how God is still good. May the name of Jesus be the name above every other name.



### Preaching to a Divided Nation: A Seven-Step Model for Promoting Reconciliation and Unity

Matthew D. Kim, Paul A. Hoffman (Baker Academic), August 9, 2022

#### From the publisher:

This book issues a prophetic call to pastors to use the influence of their pulpits to promote reconciliation and unity in their churches and communities. Two scholar-practitioners who are experts in homiletics and reconciliation present a practical, 7-step model that empowers faithful leaders to bring healing and peace to their fractured churches and world.

#### From My Review of Preaching to a Divided Nation:

As an Asian American preacher, I was challenged to build deep relationships in a covenant community (live life together with and amongst the congregation) and also cultivate diverse relationships outside of my own Asian American church.

Related: [Preaching to People in Pain: An Interview with Dr. Matthew D. Kim](#)



### How to Save the World: Disciplemaking Made Simple

Alice Matagora (Tyndale House Publishers), August 9, 2022

#### From the publisher:

Drawing on cutting-edge research from The Navigators and Barna Group, Alice Matagora invites you to enter Jesus' plan to save the world wherever you are. She understands your anxieties (because she's experienced them) and helps you to break down barriers, pointing you to the joy of engaged discipleship: knowing Christ, making him known, and helping others do the same.

#### From my review of How to Save the World:

What I found most helpful was how Matagora speaks on disciple making across cultures and socioeconomic groups. She calls us to first understand our own cultural lenses, biases, and privileges and then to become students of those we are discipling. Jesus is Lord of all and is sufficient to meet all of our needs.



### Analog Christian: Cultivating Contentment, Resilience, and Wisdom in the Digital Age

Jay Y. Kim (InterVarsity Press), July 26, 2022

#### From the publisher:

As the digital age inclines us to discontentment, fragility, and foolishness, how are followers of Jesus to respond? What is the theological basis for living in creative resistance to the forces of our day? How can Christians cultivate the contentment, resilience, and wisdom to not only survive but to thrive as we navigate the specific challenges of our age?

#### From my review of Analog Christian:

This book is for those who are weary from the online world. It is a call to come back to God's Word, allowing it to shape your heart more than social media. It is a summons to spend time with Jesus more than chasing clout and influence. Pastors will find that they don't have to feel the push and pull of trending topics. Teens don't have to fall into the comparison trap. Working adults and parents alike don't have to chase after achievements and approval. Unplug from the digital domain. Plant your soul near streams of living water.

Related: [Finding Faithfulness in the Digital Era: An Interview with Jay Y. Kim](#)



### Taste and See: All About God's Goodness

Written by Irene Sun, Illustrated by Hannah Y. Lu (New Growth Press), June 27, 2022

#### From the publisher:

Irene Sun and illustrator Hannah Y. Lu provide a bird's eye view of the Bible, using the idea of hunger and feasting to tell the story of redemption in a fresh and memorable way for children and their parents. Children ages 4-7 will learn that everything their hearts hunger for can be found in Jesus—the one whose broken body and shed blood is pictured in the bread and wine we eat together to celebrate Christ's death and resurrection. Each meal we share until Jesus comes is a time to remember God's goodness and care for all his children. Families will learn how the whole Bible celebrates God's love for his hungry people.

#### From my review of Taste and See:

Parents don't have to be afraid of teaching theology to their children. A resource page at the back of the book will help give you confidence as you share with your kids. I was encouraged to speak on the marriage supper of the lamb in our Children's Worship service at my home church!

Related: [Sharing Biblical Theology With Kids: An Interview with Irene Sun](#)



### Faith in the Wilderness: Words of Exhortation from the Chinese Church

Edited by Hannah Nation and Simon Liu (Kirkdale Press), April 27, 2022

#### From the publisher:

In Faith in the Wilderness, editors Hannah Nation and Simon Liu pull together the insights of the Chinese Church for the West. These sermonic letters from Chinese Christians pull back the curtain on the pastoral heart and hope behind the house church's remarkable faithfulness, awakening readers to the reality of the gospel—the ground of our hope—in the midst of darkness. Readers will be convicted,

encouraged, and edified by the testimony of these Chinese Christians.

[From my review of Faith in the Wilderness:](#)

After reading this book, I am challenged to live a life of greater faith. I am reminded to pray for my brothers and sisters in China who are facing persecution. I found myself wanting to read more of their encouraging words. Their reward is great, and we have a great God. I am encouraged by their testimonies, stirred by their stories, and hope for the day we will walk out of the wilderness of this world. We will see the calm sea of glass. Our faith will become sight.

Related: [Learning About The Center for House Church Theology: An Interview with Clara Kim](#)



### **Even If: Trusting God when Life Disappoints, Overwhelms, or Just Doesn't Make Sense**

Mitchel Lee (Multnomah), Aug 17, 2021

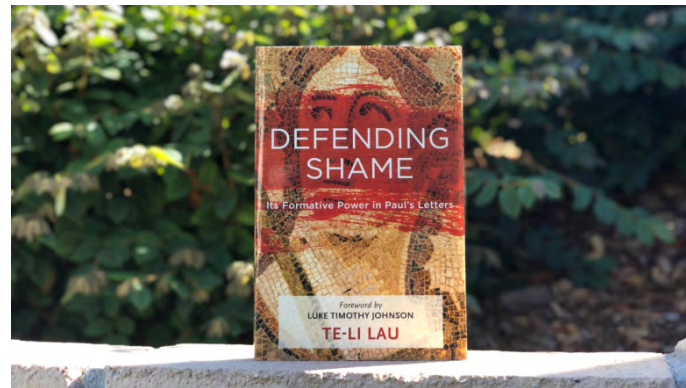
[From the publisher:](#)

In *Even If*, Mitchel Lee reminds us that while God does not promise a pain-free life, he offers something better: his presence in the pain. No matter our circumstances, God is worthy of our worship, and he can meet us even in our greatest difficulties.

[From My Review of Even If:](#)

I was most moved to see how Lee wrote about regret. “Regret over a golden past is fed by discontentment with our present circumstances compared with where we believe we once were.” When we try to live out our imposter selves, we fail to remember that God is still good to us even now.

Related: [Finding Faith in the “Even If”: An Interview with Pastor and Author Mitchel Lee](#)



### **Defending Shame: Its Formative Power in Paul's Letters**

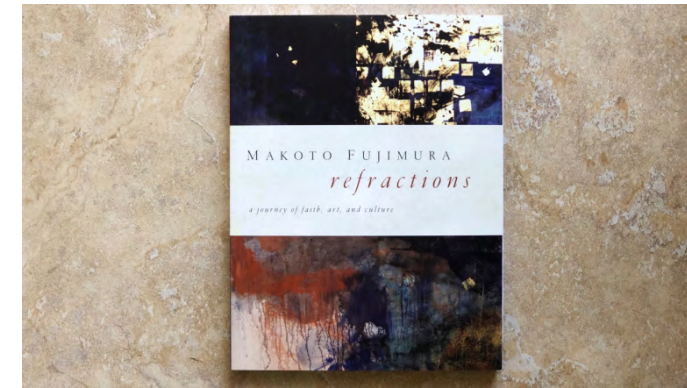
Te-Li Lau (Baker Academic), April 21, 2020

[From the publisher:](#)

Filling a lacuna in Pauline scholarship, *Defending Shame* shows how Paul uses shame to admonish and to transform the minds of his readers into the mind of Christ. The author examines Paul's use of shame for moral formation within his Jewish and Greco-Roman context, compares and contrasts Paul's use of shame with other cultural voices, and offers a corrective understanding for today's church. The book explores how Paul's moral psychology of shame can guide believers to live lives that honor not only God but also their calling as children of God. It also includes a foreword from Luke Timothy Johnson.

[From my review of Defending Shame:](#)

At over 250 pages, this book is an academic work that demands your attention. Serious students of the Bible will benefit from learning from Lau as he exegetes and explains an important theme in Paul's writings. Pastors and preachers will be better educated and prepared to speak with sensitivity to those that come from an honor-shame culture with compassion. And as shame is seen both in the church and the world, this book will give a Biblical basis for understanding and employing it with Gospel grace.



### **Refractions: A Journey of Faith, Art, and Culture**

Makoto Fujimura (NavPress), February 15, 2009

[From the publisher:](#)

A collection of essays, thoughts, and prayers from award-winning artist Makoto Fujimura, *Refractions* brings people of all backgrounds together in conversation and meditation on culture, art, and humanity.

[From My Review of Refractions:](#)

It was a joy to read about Fujimura's own Japanese culture, his creative process, and how he views his own art. To see his faith be such an integral part of his work is inspiring. Not only will you come away appreciating art itself, but you will come away focused and more in love with our Creator, who continues to paint his beautiful story of redemption for the world to see.

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### **On My Radar**

[Neo-Calvinism: A Theological Introduction](#)

N. Gray Sutanto and Cory C. Brock (Lexham Press), January 11, 2023

[Humble Confidence: A Model for Interfaith Apologetics](#)

Benno van den Toren and Kang-San Tan (IVP Academic), December 20, 2022

[Doing Asian American Theology: A Contextual Framework for Faith and Practice](#)

Daniel D. Lee (IVP Academic), November 29, 2022

[The Cross in Context: Reconsidering Biblical Metaphors for Atonement](#)

Jackson W. (IVP Academic), November 22, 2022

[Spurgeon the Pastor: Recovering a Biblical and Theological Vision for Ministry](#)

Geoffrey Chang (B&H Books), August 9, 2022

[An Explorer's Guide to John Calvin](#)

Yudha Thianto (IVP Academic), July 12, 2022

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### **For Further Reading**

You can find my book reviews on [Instagram](#), my [blog](#), and in our [SOLA Network TGIF newsletter](#).



## Resources from the Asian American Leadership Conference 2022



[Watch Recap Video](#)

On April 25-27, 2022, Asian American pastors and leaders from across the country met in Orange County, CA, for the first Asian American Leadership Conference. Hosted by The Gospel Coalition, SOLA Network, and KALI, the conference equipped attendees with Gospel-centered, contextual resources that would empower them for ministry in the local church.

The theme of the inaugural conference was “Fully Equipped.” Our speakers reflected on the Threefold

Office of Christ as it relates to ministry in the local church. Our attendees also connected with one another in rich fellowship.

During the AALC conference, we offered eight main sessions, which included keynote speakers and panel discussions. We have compiled them into a convenient [webpage](#) for you to access and learn. We hope they will continue to bless you in your ministry as we work for the kingdom together.

# 10 Top Interviews of the Year

At SOLA Network, we are honored to interview pastors and authors who help us to unpack our faith and our Asian American heritage. In 2022, we talked to many great thinkers, and we wanted to highlight some of our favorite conversations here. Scan the QR codes next to each excerpt to be linked to their full interviews via embedded video, YouTube page, or Podcast episode. You can also read a lightly-edited transcript.

We hope you'll continue to tune in to SOLA's interviews so we can be encouraged by our brothers and sisters as we run the race together.

## Two Churches, One Campus: An Interview with “Townhouse” Church Pastors



What are church models unique to the Asian American church? Learn about “townhouse churches” and hear from two lead pastors who serve at Asian American churches that share a campus with their mother churches. You'll also discover:

- How their congregations formed and their relationships with their mother churches
- Pros and cons of being on the same campus as their mother churches
- Encouragements for pastors with English-speaking congregations



[Watch Interview](#)

## Keeping Heart: An Interview with Faith Chang



Faith Chang is a beloved contributor to the SOLA Network. She blogs at *Keeping Heart*, where she often writes about being a pastor's wife and a mother to four children. In this interview, Faith shares her salvation testimony, as well as her beginnings as a writer. Learn to see God in your stories through this encouraging conversation.



[Watch Interview](#)



## Telling Her Own Story: An Interview with Ruth Chou Simons

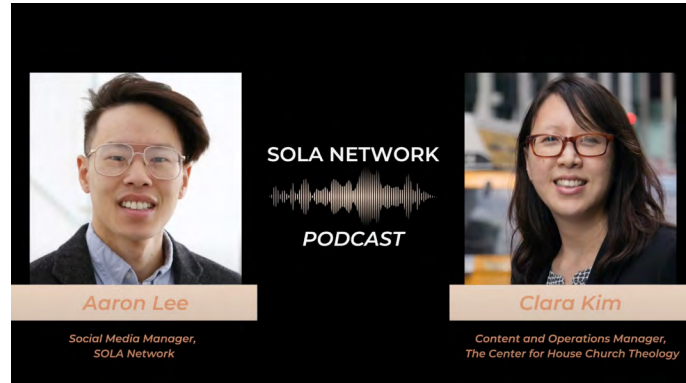


Ruth Chou Simons is a Wall Street Journal bestselling and award-winning author of several books, including *When Strivings Cease*. In this interview, she talks about her testimony as it comes to being an Asian American Christian and serving Christ through stewarding our gifts. She also shares encouragement for Asian American women authors.



[Watch Interview](#)

## Learning About The Center for House Church Theology: An Interview with Clara Kim



The Center for House Church Theology (CHCT) publishes the works of pastors and teachers in China's urban house churches. CHCT believes that dialogue between Christians in China and those from other cultural contexts will lead to mutual edification and sanctification. To talk about CHCT, SOLA interviewed Clara Kim, who manages operations and publishing projects for the center. We hope you are encouraged by CHCT and inspired by their work.



[Watch Interview](#)

## Writing About Her Faith: An Interview with Ashley Kim



Ashley Kim didn't expect her freshman year in college to include winning second place in TGC's 2022 Essay Contest for Young Adults. But her love of writing and her faith fused to create her beautiful essay "I'm a Gen Zer, and I believe the Bible is Inerrant." Learn about her journey and passion for the written word.



[Watch Interview](#)

## "Invitations to Abundance" with Alicia J. Akins



"What does it mean that God is enough when it seems like I don't have enough?" Alicia J. Akins struggled with this question during a time of great scarcity. It inspired her book, *Invitations to Abundance*, in which she studies the different feasts of the Bible and how they helped reshape her faith. She also shares about living in China, the inspiration behind her book, and the one chapter that almost didn't make it.



[Watch Interview](#)

## Writing About Shame: An Interview with “Shame” Author Esther Liu



Shame affects your identity, making you want to hide parts or even all of yourself. But the way to fight it isn't to “fix” yourself or cover up—it is to be truly known and loved. That is the message of Esther Liu's 31-day devotional, *Shame: Being Known and Loved*. In this interview, you'll discover her life story and how she came about writing the book.



[Watch Interview](#)

## Finding Faithfulness in the Digital Era: An Interview with Jay Y. Kim



What are the impacts of the Internet and social media? In *Analog Christian*, Jay Y. Kim examines the digital age and helps us to cultivate true Christian discipleship in this new era. Listen in as he talks about what led him to write *Analog Christian*, how his life in Silicon Valley impacted his faith, and how to cultivate patience in the digital age.



[Watch Interview](#)

## The Present and Future of the Immigrant Church: An Interview with John J. Oh



Asian Americans need to think about the future of the immigrant church. That's the position John J. Oh takes in this important interview. He points out that the Korean immigrant church has fundamentally changed as it is no longer the center of immigrant life but now part of the margins. So how should Asian Americans view the immigrant church, and how can we support it? Find out in this fascinating interview.



[Watch Interview](#)

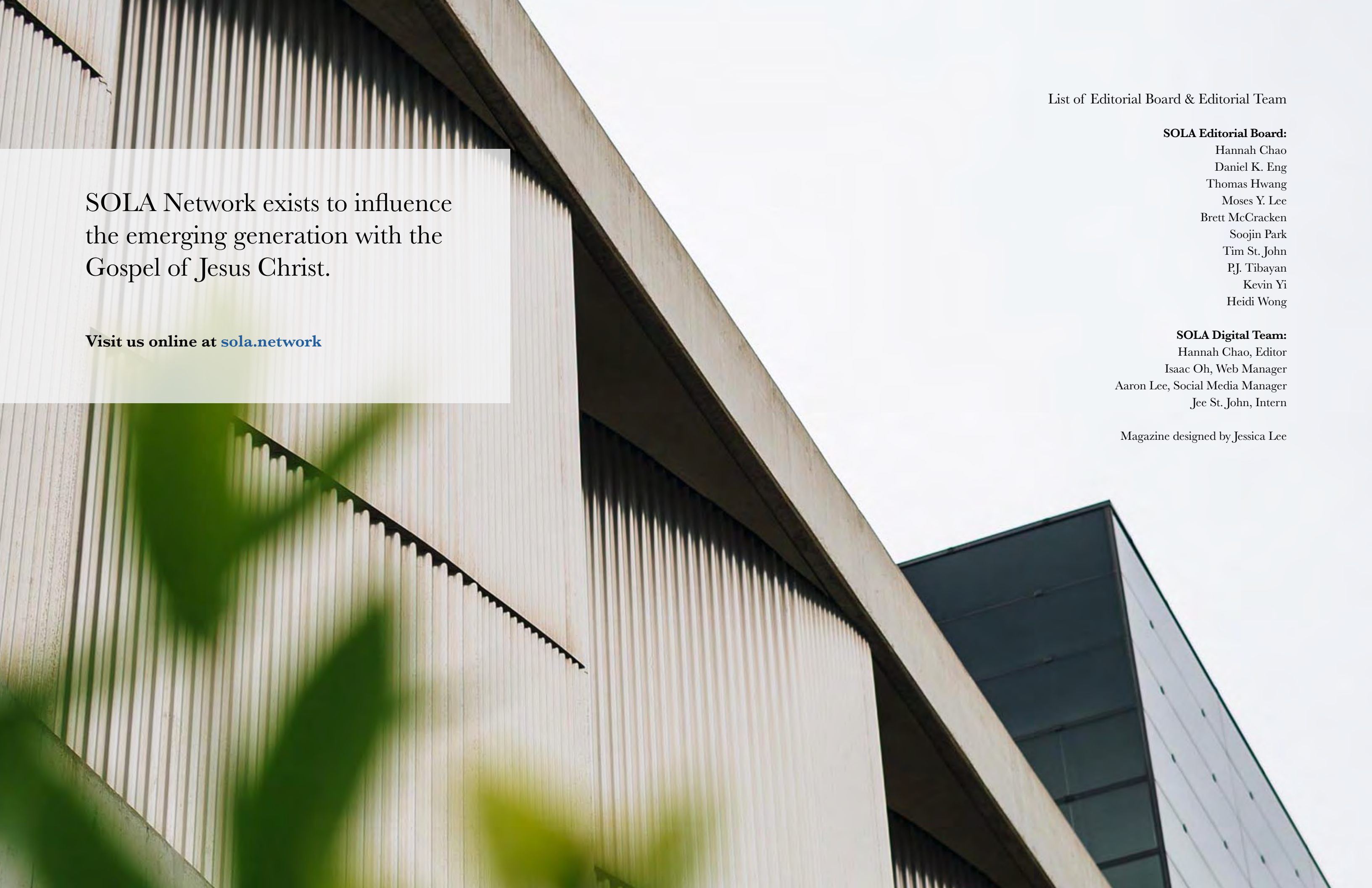
## Sharing Biblical Theology With Kids: An Interview with Irene Sun



How do we share God's truths with our children in ways that are thoughtful, beautiful, and true? In *Taste and See: All About God's Goodness*, Irene Sun shows us how to present God's goodness and love through the food he provides for his children all through the Bible. In her interview, Irene talks about her background as a missionary's kid, the process for writing her book, and how parents can go deep in theology with their young children.



[Watch Interview](#)



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the emerging generation with the  
Gospel of Jesus Christ.

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