

The Baptist Tabernacle of Los Angeles

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Dr. R. L. Hymers, Jr.
Senior Pastor

Dr. Christopher L. Cagan
Associate Pastor

Dr. Kreighton L. Chan
Assistant Pastor

December, 2013

Dear Friend:

Several unusual events happened this year. First, our son Robert Leslie Hymers III was married to Jin Kim on August 4 in our church. Leslie decorated the church so beautifully that it was hardly recognizable! Scores of people who know Jin and Leslie attended the service. I told a few “corny” jokes, Mr. Griffith sang a solo, Dr. Chan preached a sermon, and I performed the ceremony. Afterwards we had a catered Korean meal and the couple went for an extended honeymoon in Hawaii, Tahiti and Bora Bora! You can watch a video of their wedding, which appears on the front page of our website at www.realconversion.com. Leslie and Jin now live in a beautiful condominium in downtown Los Angeles, only two blocks from our church. They attend all the services, and Leslie works with Mr. Reynaldo Ceron recording and enhancing the sound on the videos of my sermons, which I preach in English, with sentence-by-sentence translations into Chinese by Mr. Winston Song, and into Spanish by Mr. Manuel Antonio Mencia, Jr. Thousands of people watch these videos, and read the manuscripts of the sermons in 28 languages, in 178 different countries around the world. Yes, we now give the sermon manuscripts in 28 languages. This year we added Farsi (the language of Iran), Italian and Portuguese. I am especially thrilled that hundreds of people in Iran are now reading my Gospel sermons! The Internet goes everywhere! Dr. Dan Davidson said, “God is working through your leadership in a powerful way in Los Angeles...in a place and in situations that would have defeated most men of God many years ago – and by God’s grace you and the church have prevailed to be a great inspiration to all of us who serve in the ministry, no matter where we are...through your digital ministry [on the Internet and YouTube] you are having a world-wide impact for the Gospel of Christ that is far beyond what most...churches would ever expect to accomplish.” We can only say, “To God be the glory, great things He has done.”

In June my wife Ileana and our son Leslie went to the funeral of Dr. James O. Combs in Springfield, Missouri. I was not able to attend, but I wrote a brief eulogy for Leslie to read at the funeral. Dr. Combs was one of the founders of the Baptist Bible Fellowship. He was the editor of the Baptist Bible Tribune for many years. He helped us amend our constitution and become an independent fundamental Baptist church. Dr. Combs often spoke in our church and was a frequent guest in our home. He and his wife Jeri were almost like part of our extended family.

Robert Timothy Ngann was born to Jack and Sheila Ngann on July 6. He was named for me (Robert) and my long-time pastor, Dr. Timothy Lin, of the First Chinese Baptist Church of Los Angeles, where I was a member for 23 years.

On Labor Day weekend our church ordained Dr. Kreighton L. Chan to the Gospel ministry, and Mr. Winston Song as a deacon. Dr. Chan is now the assistant pastor of our church. We also ordained our missionary to Indonesia, Dr. Edi Purwanto, to the Gospel ministry. Dr. Robert L. Sumner and Dr. Neal Weaver, president of Louisiana Baptist University, preached inspiring messages during these services. We celebrated Dr. Sumner’s 91st birthday at this event as well. Also preaching were Dr. Arthur B. Houk, Dr. Wilfred Chung, Rev. D. Michael Riley, and Rev. Roger Hoffman. The last two men helped me plant a Southern Baptist church in Marin County, north of San Francisco, forty-one years ago.

In September we once again celebrated the Chinese Mid-Autumn (Moon Cake) festival. In October Aaron Yancy and Soriya Samouth were married in a big, formal wedding at our church. They spent their honeymoon visiting his grandparents in England, in Bedford, the home of John Bunyan. You can watch a video of the wedding of these wonderful young people on our website. Scroll down the front page until you see where it appears. Their banquet meal was prepared by Mr. Kenneth Chan, Dr. Chan's brother, who is a gourmet chef.

My wife, Ileana, was the wedding coordinator at this event, as well as Leslie and Jin's wedding. I am constantly amazed at her ability to do all these things, along with her many regular duties in the church. For instance, she prepared a huge Thanksgiving meal at our home for thirty people, who had nowhere else to go. Dr. Bill Hathaway, a veteran missionary to the Japanese, and his wife Margaret, were with us at our house all week, and spent Thanksgiving Day with us. I am very thankful to God for a wife like Ileana. She loves Christ and works tirelessly in His service. Her father, Rafael Cuellar, came up from Guatemala and spent several days with us in late July and August. We were delighted that he could be with us for Leslie and Jin's wedding.

On Saturday, November 23, we held our annual meeting, and I baptized John Samuel Cagan, Emi Zabalaga, and Kathy Mencia. On Sunday the 24th Dr. David Innes and Dr. Daniel Pacheco preached in our morning service. That evening we ordained Dr. Christopher L. Cagan to the Gospel ministry, and Mr. Manuel Antonio Mencia, Jr. as a deacon. Mr. Mencia is our Spanish translator, and Dr. Cagan is now the associate pastor of our church. In April I will be 73 years old. I plan to stay with our church for the rest of my life, but it gives me great comfort to know that Dr. Cagan and Dr. Chan are now ordained and can continue to lead the church when the Lord calls me home to Heaven! I am in perfect health, but we felt it was wise to make this preparation for the future. The men who made up this second ordination committee were Dr. David Innes, Dr. Bill Hathaway, Dr. Dan Davidson, Rev. Rob Watkins, Rev. Tim Sneed, Dr. Daniel Pacheco, and Rev. Bhagat Malek.

Rev. Malek, who translates my sermons into Arabic, said, "You are a leader, anointed by the Holy Spirit to inspire others. You explore, dream, and tirelessly lead your people. You are courageous to take risks and are committed to a Godly vision to do His work. You inspire those you lead and treat them as intellectual equals...Your church is fabulous. It was a joy to talk to the people and feel the warmth of their hearts. Mrs. Hymers is God's gift to you and the church. I was pleasantly surprised by the amazing ethnic diversity in your congregation. It is just like Heaven will be! I was happy to see the great ratio of young people in your church, which I have never seen in any church in the U.S., since I left Egypt forty years ago. This is the best insurance for a church to have a bright future. I was delighted to see your \$2.5 million mortgage burned. What an accomplishment for a church in downtown Los Angeles! This tells volumes about God's mighty hand that is with those who obey and follow Him!"

During this ordination service we burned the mortgage note on our church building. We honored Mr. Virgel Nickell and his wife Beverly, the couple who loaned most of the money to purchase our building. We also honored "the 39," the faithful members of our church who gave 2 1/2 million dollars to pay the mortgage, the interest, and to earthquake the building. Our church had experienced a devastating "split," in which 320 members left us after they were beguiled by a "former leader" of our congregation (see Romans 16:17-18; Colossians 2:4). "The 39" raised \$18,000 every month, for 23 years, to keep us from losing the building. Although there are a few more than 39 of them, we have always referred to these faithful members as "the 39." They saved our church building, which is now paid in full. I can say to "the 39" what Winston Churchill said to that small band of men in the Royal Air Force, who stood against overwhelming odds to fight Hitler and his Nazi hordes in the "Battle of Britain." When Nazi bombs were falling on London night after night, they were repelled by that little group of men in the Royal Air Force. And Churchill said of them, "Never in the field of human conflict was so much owed by so many to so few." To those heroes of our church, "the 39" – and to those who join them – I say, "Thank you and God bless you all." You will see a photo of "the 39" at the end of this letter, with me torching the note on the building.

But the battle is not over. We are fighting to evangelize our city and we are fighting to bring many more young people into our church. After the British had won their first victory of World War II, in the battle of El Alamein, Churchill said, "This is not the end. It is not even the beginning of the

end. But it is, perhaps, the end of the beginning.” I constantly challenge our young people to follow the example of “the 39” – and work with all their might to bring the lost into our church, and do everything in their power to make them feel at home!

Please pray for us as we “fight the good fight of faith” (I Timothy 6:12) winning souls and proclaiming the Gospel on the Internet in 28 languages, as well as preaching in 3 languages through videos on our website, and on YouTube. God bless you! And Merry Christmas to you all!



Dr. Neal Weaver, Mrs. Hymers, Mrs. Jeri Combs and Leslie at the funeral of our friend and mentor, Dr. James O. Combs.

Yours in Jesus' Name,

R. L. Hymers, Jr.,
D.Min., Th.D., Litt.D.
Philippians 4:13

OUR WEBSITE OFFERS HUNDREDS OF WORD-FOR-WORD SERMONS IN ENGLISH AND 27 OTHER LANGUAGES AT WWW.REALCONVERSION.COM.



Leslie and Jin with me during their wedding ceremony.



Aaron and Soriya Yancy with me during their wedding ceremony.



Mr. and Mrs. Kim, Jin, Leslie, Mrs. Hymers and me at the wedding.



Emi Zabalaga and I laughing joyfully after I baptized her.

OUR WEBSITE OFFERS HUNDREDS OF WORD-FOR-WORD SERMONS IN TWENTY-EIGHT LANGUAGES AT WWW.REALCONVERSION.COM.



Dr. Chan and Mr. Song's ordination council – me, Rev. Mike Riley, Dr. Sumner, Dr. Weaver, Dr. Houk, Dr. Wilfred Chung, and Rev. Roger Hoffman, with Ben Griffith.



Dr. Robert L. Sumner celebrating his 91st birthday with a bunch of our young people. I am sitting where I belong – at Dr. Sumner's feet!



The council laying hands on Dr. Kreighton L. Chan, the assistant pastor of our church.



Dr. Cagan and Mr. Manuel Antonio Mencia's ordination council – me, Rev. Malek, Dr. Innes, Dr. Hathaway, Rev. Watkins, Dr. Pacheco, Rev. Sneed, and Dr. Chan, with Ben Griffith.



Our deacons, Mr. Benjamin Kincaid Griffith and Dr. Christopher L. Cagan, and me – laying hands on our new deacon, Mr. Winston Song, who translates my sermons into Chinese from the pulpit.



Here I am, burning the 2 1/2 million dollar mortgage note on our church building. "The 39" – heroes of our church – are behind me. Yes, that's a blowtorch! No half-measures for such a momentous and miraculous event!

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IN TWENTY-EIGHT LANGUAGES AT WWW.REALCONVERSION.COM.***