

Assignment Title: Autobiography

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How I see myself in all areas of life

Before attending the PPTFM class, I was told by many classmates that this class is an excellent class for all ATS students. How good it is, many of them cannot tell me concretely. Then I wonder what good it is. After attending the class, I now appreciate that this class helps me to understand the theology of calling and ministry so that I can now evaluate my calling and ministry in the following aspects:

1. Socially: My father was a small school teacher. Because of the noisiness of the school environment, he demanded all kids to keep absolute silence whenever he was home. His way to keep us silent was ordering all five kids sitting on the floor without moving and talking. Also, my father required all children cannot talk back to parents. As a result of these restrictions from my childhood, I have poor communication and social skills. Moreover, I am an “achievers who rarely risk actually getting close enough to people to expose serious flaws.”¹ Therefore, people always complain that I don’t know how to communicate with people, and I take projects precedence over people. Nevertheless, God changed me with His love. Steadily, through building up a relationship with God, I start to establish closer relations with friends and church people. I know I am still imperfect. I am praying for the Holy Spirit to strengthen me to rebuild relationships with people.

2. Physically: Although I am not young anymore, God gives me this chance to participate in His kingdom’s work. Physically, due to my age, I have some alignment problems, but I am still active. Therefore, I wish I can give the rest of my life to proclaim my Lord’s gospel wherever he sent me to.

3. Cognitively: Due to poverty and domestic violence problems, I felt insecure and fearful of abandonment. Consequently, I determine to work very hard to be the best at

¹ Sandra D. Wilson, *Into Abba’s Arms*, (Tyndale House Publishers, 1998), 111.

everything; hopefully, “if I earn enough approval, which will magically become love from my parents. But since love is a gift we received, not a reward we earn, that never really works.”²

Although I did not earn approval from my parents, I gained a stable income to support myself as well as going back to school. With God’s grace, I have the privilege to learn God’s ministry at the ATS. I wish I can make use of what I learned from the ATS and the “Empower” program for my future ministry.

4. Emotionally: When I was young, my parents always quarreled and even fighting. I was sad and fear of abandonment. Therefore, I longed for a loving relationship. Without fully understood my boyfriend’s personality and family history, I eagerly accepted his proposal after dating him for a short time. Then, we immigrated to New York. I have neither relatives nor friends in the United States. I felt lonely, abandoned, and unsecured. Meanwhile, my husband started to habitually down-graded me to compensate for his frustration at work. I numbed my unpleasant feelings and pretended that we are an adorable couple. “Use food or other substances to numb legitimate human emotions like anger or sadness because we were taught that good Christians never have those unpleasant feelings.”³ Fortunately, God never gives me up, “I let them with cords of human kindness, with ties of love; I lifted the yoke from their neck and bent down to feed them.” (Hosea 11:4)⁴ Now, although I still have to deal with the abuse and tantrum of my husband, knowing Godfather will protect me and take care of my needs, I can face all problems with love and courage. “In God’s sacred school of submission and brokenness, why are there so few students? Because all students in this school must suffer much pain.”⁵ In my future

² Wilson, *Into Abba’s Arms*, 129.

³ Wilson, *Into Abba’s Arms*, 79.

⁴ Unless otherwise noted, all biblical passages referenced employed the New International Version.

⁵ Gene Edward, *A Tale of Three Kings: A Study in Brokenness* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), 15.

ministry, I hope to follow King David's teaching, "David taught me losing, not winning. Giving, not taking."⁶ I humbly submit myself to the Lord for his use.

5. Spiritually: I grew up in an orthodox church in Hong Kong. Although my church's sacrament looks like a catholic church; it's teaching is mainly Protestantism. However, my childhood church had no biblical study and Sunday school for adults besides the pastor's sermon. After I moved to New York, my understanding of the functions of the church changed drastically. My church in New York has both bible study and Sunday school, in which I can learn God's Word deeply. Nevertheless, after attending the PPTFM class, I realized that something is also missing from my current church "God speaks not just through his Word but also speaks personally, directly, and lovingly into people's life."⁷ Under this teaching, I need not only to understand the Word but also to build a love relationship with God. Deep inside my heart, I know that "I lack a passion for Him and not encountering Him personally. Obedience was no longer enough. I thirst for relationship and passion."⁸ Therefore, I pray earnestly that the Holy Spirit will enable me to build a closer relationship with God and empower me with passion and love for my future ministry work.

My personal goals

My first church assignment was to lead the praise team for a mission conference. I have to arrange the pianist, praise team members, and music in both English and Chinese within two weeks. With no guidance and support from the mission committee, I was frustrated and disappointed during the whole process. From PPTFM, I learned the SMART matrix for team building. Specifically, I have to plan ahead of time, establish measurable goals and expectations

⁶ Gene Edward, *A Tale of Three Kings: A Study in Brokenness* (Tyndale House Publishers, 1992), 50.

⁷ Doug Banister, *The Word & Power Church* (Grand Rapids, Michigan, Zondervan), 97-99.

⁸ Banister, *The Word & Power Church*, 28.

of each program, and provide ongoing supervision and assistance to the team. I have to regularly meet with the team to evaluate the progress and provide suitable training to equip members for set goals. Once the program has completed, applaud their achievements publicly and provide constructive feedback to each of the team members privately to encourage accountability and improvement. Most importantly, I have to remember a working team is better than any gifted individual, and delegation benefits everyone. As Dr. Walborn stated, “you don’t use people to get the job done. You use the job to get people done.” Delegation is equipping and developing team members’ potential and confidence in God’s ministry. The essence of a good team is sharing a vision and enjoy working together to fulfill God’s ministry. Also, the secret of time management is knowing how to spend one’s time wisely and efficiently by eliminating time-wasters, such as texting or watching television. Time is our most precious resource. Setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals (SMART matrix) will clarify my ideas, focus my efforts, and using time and resources productively. Overall, I believe the SMART matrix will be a useful tool for developing action plans and building effective teams for my personal and ministerial use.

My current church focuses on the gifts of serving, teaching, encouraging, contributing to the needs of others, leadership, and showing mercy only. My pastor neither talked about the gifts of prophesying, healing, and speaking in tongues, nor I have witnessed any spiritual gifts that were discussed in my PPTFM class. From the Bible, I learned that we all have different spiritual gifts according to the grace given to each of us (Romans 12:6-8). Also, from books, I was told, “spiritual gifts are empowerments that the Holy Spirit gives to a believer to minister”...” for building up the church and extending the Kingdom of God.”⁹ Also, Paul suggests that “spiritual gifts can have a witnessing function to non-believers.” (1 Corinthians 14:24-25). Finally, Doug

⁹ *Expectation Without Agenda*, The CMA Statement on Spiritual Gifts, 1.

Banister had built a thriving “Word and Power Church” by “embracing the strengths brought by both traditions.”¹⁰ Enlightened by this teaching, I was introduced to a brand new area, which I tried to avoid or ignore before. “Every believer can expect the Holy Spirit to minister through him or her with spiritual gifts...for the common good. (I Corinthians 12:7) Hopefully, with faith and obedience in Jesus Christ, I can discover my spiritual gift(s) from the Holy Spirit, and build up the church and extend the Kingdom of God.

How to reach my goals to serve God?

I have no specific calling for God’s ministry at this moment. I am planning to graduate next year and completing the 2020/2021 “Empower” program for women at the same time. To be a soldier of God’s kingdom, I have to equip myself so that I can be a good steward of God’s church and people in the future. My work at church now is focusing on bible study and Sunday school. For the next three years, with God’s permission, I wish I can continue to teach Sunday school and bible study. I trust God will welcome and guide me to be one of His soldiers after I graduated from ATS.

I understand “everything comes from God” (I Chronicle 29:14), and “our lives and everything we have is not ours to give. We cannot “give” God ownership of our material goods. He already owns it all. We can only recognize and submit to His ownership.”¹¹ God expects us to bear fruits in His Kingdom by adequately using our entrusted stewardship. Since all things on earth belong to its creator, I am only entrusted with God’s resources to care for as a part of kingdom discipleship until the second coming of Jesus Christ. Therefore, I must not serve my

¹⁰ Banister, *The Word & Power Church*, 58.

¹¹ Ronald Walborn and Frank Chen, *Stewardship and the Kingdom of God* (The Christian and Missionary Alliance, 2001), 13-14.

own purposes. As God's soldier, I may encounter hardship, such as spiritual warfare, natural disaster, money, and sickness. I pray that I can overcome all these hardships through faith in Jesus Christ and the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

As the disciples of Jesus Christ, I pray to understand what my spiritual gifts are and how to use these gifts to proclaim the gospel of our Lord to the unbelievers and edify believers. Most importantly, I am not using the spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophesying, healing and speaking in tongues, to "exalt the individual or to feed an immature desire for attention."¹² For "if they are not used in love, they will be abused and cause trouble in the body, rather than blessings." (I Corinthians 13:1-3) I have to remember that "love, when used with spiritual gifts, is like oil in a machine. It makes all the parts work well together."¹³

Lastly, I have to remember that I will be held accountable for my stewardship. "Each of us will give an account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12b). "The kingdom of heaven is near." (Matthew 3:2b) Accordingly, I wish I can use the rest of my life to "be a wise and faithful steward who is responsible and accountable for handling life, money, spiritual gifts, and the gospel message according to God's purposes."¹⁴ Faithfully, wisely and diligently using my Spiritual gifts and earthly resources to carry out Jesus's Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20).

¹² Expectation Without Agenda, 3.

¹³ Ibid, 3.

¹⁴ Walborn and Chen, Stewardship and the Kingdom of God, 41.

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