

PAGE 1: I was born in Virginia, in November of 1955, but lived most of my childhood in Indiana, where I first lived on a farm outside of Huntington until age 11, and then lived in the suburbs of West Lafayette until I went off to college at Ball State University in Muncie. My father was a gentleman farmer, whose main job was farm management for a nearby company, so hired hands planted and harvested our crops, and took care of the sheep, cows, and horses. My job on the farm was to build forts in the haylofts with bales of hay, build cities in my sandbox for my matchbook cars, climb the fruit trees to snack on apples and cherries, and explore the forests and riverbanks with our collie named Lindy.

By nature, I was a very quiet, introverted boy, who loved building blocks, building sets, and every other kind of building toy until I started school and became equally interested in reading books, drawing pictures, and playing the piano. I was a smart kid, who did very well in the rural schools, until we moved to a university town at the beginning of 6th grade, where I was suddenly immersed in a culture that was nearly as foreign as a foreign country. My classmates were much smarter, read more books, spoke English and Spanish (and sometimes additional languages), had lived or traveled abroad, and had parents with PhDs, MDs, JDs, or DDSs. My only advantage over them was that I was a bit taller, ran faster, and was probably in better physical shape since I was used to an active country life of climbing trees, walking long distances, swimming in lakes and stone quarries, and riding my bicycle several miles to town whenever I wanted to visit a friend, take piano lessons, or attend Cub Scout meetings.

During 7th and 8th grade (junior high school), I went through what most Americans experience during their early teens: less interest in studying, more interest in new temptations, and lots of anxiety about who I was and what I was supposed to be doing with my life. If these circumstances had continued into my high school years and beyond, I surely would have become a very miserable person with a very troubled life.

Fortunately, at the start of 9th grade (my freshman year in high school), I encountered a classmate and her family who had recently become “born again” Christians, after they had attended a large evangelistic event in California. This was in 1970, when a “Jesus Revolution” began spreading across America to transform spiritually dead people into spiritually driven believers and spiritually dead churches into centers for enthusiastic praise, worship, and Bible study. At first, I thought my friend was crazy. Her preaching about me being a sinner in need of Jesus’ forgiveness and care was a bit too weird for me to take seriously. Eventually, however, the Holy Spirit began working in my heart to persuade me that her assessment of my life was accurate, and that I needed to repent of my stubborn independence in order to begin a completely different God-centered existence. So one evening, on a country road outside of West Lafayette, Indiana, my friend and I prayed that I would trust and follow God the Father, God the Son (Jesus), and God the Spirit, and thus begin my transformation into a new creation.

Quite surprising to me, this transformation began at once. I soon developed a great new hunger to know God, to know the world, and to know people. I began reading the Bible since I now found it to be interesting and easier to understand, I began studying harder in school, and I boldly began seeking out mature adults who could teach me more about their work, their values, and their perspectives. Living close to Purdue University and having many classmates whose parents were professors gave me especially excellent opportunities to meet very smart adults who could inspire and mentor me, some of whom planted seeds of interest within me to become a university professor, which eventually I did.

In college, I majored in architecture, but then later negotiated a blend of architecture and art through a five-year double major in environmental design (from the College of Architecture) and visual communication (from the School of Art). Upon graduation, however, I decided that I would rather work in a career that improved human beings rather than one that improved human habitats and

PAGE 2: visual experiences. Clearly, God had been working in my heart during college to increase my interest in people. So after praying about what I should do, an invitation suddenly arrived, inviting me to do some summer volunteer work in Japan with a non-denominational missionary organization that helped introduce university students to the Bible and then trained them to live more successfully via its good advice. That summer experience was life changing for me because I felt very much at home in Japan and began thinking that it would be fun to live and pursue a career there.

My newly discovered interest in Japan eventually led me back to graduate school three times for a Master's in English, a Master's in Teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL), and a PhD in English Composition, where I focused my dissertation research on written discourse in the STEM disciplines (science, technology, engineering, and math)—particularly the fields of computer science and engineering. After my first master's, I got a job teaching English for Japan's famous Sundai Group (a large education conglomerate, headquartered in Tokyo), where I taught English to language-school students during the day, young bankers in the evenings, and elite 12-year-olds and university students in separate courses on Saturdays.

It was during this second time in Tokyo that I experienced another life-changing event: I met a godly Japanese woman at a local Japanese church who would become my wife and best friend just eight months later. Our marriage was in August of 1986, with very large numbers of friends and students attending our church wedding. Then roughly 16 months after that, my wife gave birth to a son in Tokyo, and then to a daughter about 30 months after that, while I was working on my PhD in Indiana from 1988-1993.

In 1992, a member of the founding committee, for a unique new Japanese university under construction, contacted me to see if I would join their efforts in helping them establish their English language research and training program. The university would specialize in math, computer science, and computer engineering, so they were particularly interested in recruiting people like me, since this fit my background and doctoral studies perfectly. Their vision for the university was very attractive, so I accepted their offer and began helping them from my location in Indiana until I eventually moved to Fukushima with my family in March of 1993.

Working at the University of Aizu, first as an Associate Professor, then a Professor, and later as a Director, proved to be God's perfect plan for my career and the perfect location to raise my children from kindergarten through high school. God gave us wonderful relationships with many extraordinarily talented professors and ambitious students, and allowed us to enjoy the best family life possible in the beautiful Aizu region, which is famous for its national parks, lakes, and waterfalls; ski resorts and hot spring baths; and its rich culture of art, agriculture, and historic samurai traditions. We made thousands of wonderful friendships there, hundreds of which still remain beautifully intact today.

My wife and I had planned to remain there until retirement at age 65, but God had other plans. After a considerable amount of thought and prayer, we strongly felt led to move back to Indiana in 2012 in order for me to focus on expanding my global consulting work, which had been growing in parallel to my regular work and studies since 1981. Since our children had moved to the United States for their university studies at Taylor University and then decided to stay permanently in the States after finding excellent jobs in Indianapolis, we moved to the nearby suburb of Carmel, which was well-known for its highly educated population of professionals from around the world, 9% of which were Asian.

During our first four years in Carmel, we hosted many overnight visitors and dinner guests from Japan and elsewhere as part of my wife and my joint life mission to help people mature personally and professionally. We also established richly satisfying relationships with Christian brothers and sisters at two different churches. We would have continued this work in our Carmel home if God had not

PAGE 3: again chosen to bless us with new challenges to significantly strengthen our faith and improve the focus of our work.

In the spring of 2014, a twisted ankle started to yield a strange bump on the side of my foot that was diagnosed later as a stage 4 chondrosarcoma, which required the amputation of my right foot in the wee morning hours of October 31. That was followed by a serious heart attack in August of 2015, which required the medical technicians to revive me in the ambulance with a defibrillator while enroute to the hospital. Then after that, a CT scan of my chest in late October of 2015 prompted two specialists to inform me that my sarcoma had returned to show up in my lungs and possibly other organs, and that I would probably die within a year. They also said that the best medical treatment currently available would at best extend my life by only a few months at great financial cost.

Since Romans 8:28 has always been our family's favorite Bible verse — *"We know that God causes everything to work together for the good of those who love God and are called according to his purpose for them"* — we were not shaken by any of these circumstances. This verse had proven to be true for us every time in the past, and thus we had no reason to believe that God would not continue to keep it true.

So after my terminal cancer diagnosis, my wife and I welcomed our last series of international guests in 2015, sold our home, downsized our possessions, and moved to a one-bedroom apartment within walking distance of several essential stores, since my wife doesn't drive and might need to live on her own if God decided to welcome me to Heaven early.

After that, many amazing things began to happen. First, God sent us many friends and former students from Japan, loaded down with boxes and suitcases full of healthy Asian foods, he showered us with lots of excellent wisdom about healthy cancer-fighting diets and lifestyles, and he raised up more than 10,000 godly Christian prayer warriors, along with praying friends from nearly every other religion, in order to bring about some miraculous healing that continues on through today.

Because of some mold and air-quality problems in our one-bedroom Indianapolis apartment that were interfering with my recovery, we have now moved back to Carmel to a two-bedroom apartment, since we are gaining confidence that I will become healthy enough to start welcoming our international friends again. I have also refocused my consulting work on professional development with a much stronger Biblical focus, and retired myself from all forms of English teaching so that I can devote my time to helping people with the most essential aspects that are required for success.

What God has planned for us next is not yet known, but we are sure that all that comes our way will be as beautiful and perfect for our growth and happiness as all of our previous challenges and adventures have been.