

SEN & JUNE

BIOGRAPHY



Sen Wong & Family

Biography of Pastor and Mrs. Sen Wong

Sen Wong was born in Guangzhou, China, in November 1929, the youngest of three sons. His grandmother raised him after his mother died. He vividly remembered regularly visiting the village temples and participating in ancestral worship by burning incense, bringing food offerings, and praying to the idols. His father eventually remarried and immigrated to the United States. When Sen was 5 years old, his father brought the family over from China to farm in Parma, Idaho. With eight more half-siblings, the family was growing in numbers and size – the Wong Farms became one of the largest farms in the area, mostly growing sugar beets, potatoes and onions.

Just across the road from their farm was the First Baptist Church of Roswell, where he started attending at the invitation of a neighbor. While Sen was in high school, the truth finally dawned on him during an evening service that he needed not church and religion, but a personal relationship with the Lord Jesus Christ. It became clear to him that Christ, God's only Son, died on the cross for his sins, was buried, then on the third day arose from the dead, victorious over sin and death. That night, Sen went home, knelt by his bed, and received Christ into his life as his personal Savior.

When he was a high school senior, a visiting missionary's message moved him to surrender his life to vocational Christian ministry. For him, that meant working among the Chinese. When he told his father that he

wanted to prepare for the ministry by attending a Bible college, his father strongly objected. He thought Sen was crazy and wouldn't earn a decent living. But, when the US Armed Forces ordered Sen to report to military duty, his father changed his mind. He'd already lost one son in World War II, and didn't want to lose another. So, he found an exemption – if Sen attended a Bible college he wouldn't have to go on active duty. Not only did Sen's father give him permission, he wished him well and paid his way to go to Multnomah School of the Bible in Portland, Oregon.

While there, his pastor at Roswell First Baptist, Daniel Hager, sent him \$30 with instructions to use it to evangelize his kinsmen. So, in 1952, Sen established Chinese Bible Evangel (later known as Chinese Bible Mission). Together with Bible college friends, he scoured phone directories for Chinese names and addresses in several cities, including Portland, Seattle, San Francisco, and Vancouver. They mailed thousands of gospel brochures and response cards printed in both Chinese and English. Upon receiving replies, volunteers corresponded with the new believers and, if possible, visited them. What became clear was the lack of Gospel-preaching Chinese American churches for new believers.

Meanwhile, June Wong (yes, her maiden name is Wong) was born in Nogales, Arizona in 1932, the middle child of 5 siblings. She was born in the back of her father's neighborhood grocery store; the largest independently owned grocery store in Nogales. When she was 12 years old, they moved to California where her father managed another grocery store. At Oakland High School, she met some Christians who invited her to their youth club at Chinese Independent Baptist Church. After learning about Jesus Christ, she accepted Him as her Savior from sin. After graduating from high school, she went to Merritt Nursing School thinking that she would serve God with her hands because

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*Trust in the LORD with all your heart
And do not lean on your own understanding.
In all your ways acknowledge Him,
And He will make your paths straight. Prov.3:5-6*

she could not speak well in front of people. But, God had other plans for her. She learned about Multnomah School of the Bible through a formal roommate and, desiring to deepen her knowledge of the Bible, quit the nursing school after one semester and enrolled in Multnomah where she met Sen.

After he graduated from Multnomah and was ordained as a pastor, Sen pastored briefly at the Chinese Baptist Church in Portland. After June's graduation and their wedding in 1955, the Lord led them to move from Portland, Oregon to Oakland, California. As a pastor's wife, June was expected to speak and teach. It was very difficult at first, but she persevered and God taught her that with His help, she could speak and teach others. With no financial supporters, Sen worked as a postman to support his family. God blessed the vibrant husband and wife team and Chinese Bible Church was started in their one-bedroom apartment. They reached out to the children and young people in the neighborhood by knocking from door to door. Of the 24 that came to that first Vacation Bible School, all received Christ as their Savior. The church quickly outgrew their apartment, and their subsequent home on Wakefield Avenue, and was moved into a church building they built on E. 29th Street. During this time, they had their three children, Grace, Timothy and Titus.

Over the next five decades, they planted or established nine churches. As the churches grew, Sen's vision was to train future leaders and pastors from within the church. Many young men in these churches were challenged to serve God full time as pastors. To encourage, edify and equip the new believers and future leaders, he started CBM's auxiliary ministries to provide opportunities for Bible teaching, fellowship and outreach. They were California Bible College (1976-1985), youth summer camps (started in 1957 and still vibrant today, with 450 students each summer) and literature evangelism (e.g. Chinese New Year Gospel Tracts, the Genesis booklet, etc.).

After over fifty years of wearing two hats as the CBM director and pastor, Sen retired in June 2007, sold their

home, and fulfilled their dream of RV-ing full time. They traveled north to Alaska and across the United States as far as Minnesota, fishing, and enjoying God's beautiful creation. After Sen suffered a stroke and various health issues, they settled down in an independent senior community in Fremont in 2010. God continued to use them to share Christ with the residents there and many saw what it meant to be truly children of God through their examples. To better care for Sen's frail health, they moved to a Christian retirement home in Hayward in mid-2013 where Sen received 24-hour care in the skilled nursing wing and June, in the independent living cottage near by. June started playing the piano again which Sen and the other residents immensely enjoyed. God continued to use them to minister to the residents there through their prayer and wise counsel. Early Saturday morning on December 6, 2014, God took Sen home to Heaven. Those who remain with us are his wife, June, their three children—Grace, Timothy & Titus, their spouses—Herbert, Peggy and Tiffany, and their grandchildren—Kaitlyn & Johanna, Sarah, Jonathan & Christopher, Tia & Tayla.

In February 2015, the Lord graciously opened the door for June to move back to the independent senior community in Fremont where she and Sen once resided. There, she encourages both residents and visitors, and shares the Gospel with all she comes in contact with. God continues to show His love and care for her in answering her prayers and sustaining her needs.

Churches started/established:

- 1956 – Chinese Bible Church, Oakland
- 1962 – Chinese Bible Church, Stockton
- 1964 – San Francisco Bible Church, San Francisco
- 1968 – Chinese Grace Bible Church, Sacramento
- 1976 – Fellowship Bible Church, Belmont
- 1989 – Chinese Faith Bible Church, Fremont
- 1997 – Chinese Bible Fellowship Church, San Ramon
- 2002 – Maranatha Bible Church, San Ramon
- 2008 – Hope Bible Church, Visitation Valley, SF