

November 2, 2007

Responding to God's Voice

God's ministry was not a priority in my life but that all changed one day in September 1997. I was at my chicken coop doing my own thing when I heard a voice from above saying to me "Let go of what you are doing and come follow me." At first, I thought someone outside the coop was calling me but when I came out there was no one there. I looked around the coop but found no one. I went back to the coop to take care of my chickens. I cared for the chickens more than my family.

While inside the chicken coop, a thought came into my mind, "Could that be God's voice calling me?" I decided to ask God. I talked to God like I was talking to someone beside me. If anyone had walked by the coop and heard me, he probably would have thought that I was crazy. I said, "Lord I am here, and if you want to use me then please help me so that I can let go of my chickens."

A couple of months later, I went and ask Dr. Nhia Vang Vang (our pastor at the time) to let me teach the Youth. His reply was, "Yes, I have already given up helping them." At that moment, I volunteered to help the Youth even though I had little Bible knowledge. I went to bed some nights with tears in my eyes thinking about how I was going to help the youth to grow spiritually mature in Christ with love and forgiveness in their hearts.

At that time my family and I were on welfare because I had quit my supervisor/manager job years earlier because I wasn't getting paid enough by my boss. I was paid minimum wage for supervising/managing the company production laboratory. Hoping that going to school will help benefit my future job prospects, I went to Hancock College majoring in Electronic Technology.

During that time, the youth at our church was divided into many groups. The girls had their own little groups and so did the boys. There were quarrels and fights among the girls so parents would have to force them to come for church. For a time they were physically there but their mind was somewhere else. They all seemed like a bunch of little kids not the young men and women that they are. The majority of them did not listen to me. They would talk when I was talking so most of the time I had to demand that they be quiet. Others did not even like me because they say that I was too harsh on them. There were times when I wanted to give up on them. I felt like there was no point in trying to help them but I loved them too much to lose them to the world.

I came to the decision that I had to leave school and help the youth full time. My wife disagreed but I ended up spending more time with the Bible and the youth. We have been struggling financially for many years while I was serving the youth at our local church. We suffered through so many unmet needs and wants because of my desire to help the youth. Sometimes my wife and I would argue over financial issues and life in general to the point where she told me many times, "You have to choose either the youth

or your family.ö My response to her was, ðI do it because I love those kids and I am doing it for the two of us.ö We went to bed with tears in our eyes.

During my family's struggles, God did not leave us. Dr. Stephen T. Xiong (Txawj Riam Xyooj), who was one of the church elders back then, told me that there was an open position in his department at the company he works at and if I wanted a job then he may be able to help me. I turned in my resume and was hired in April 1999. With his help and through the love of God, we slowly gained confidence in life and moved towards financial independence.

Now, the youth that I had served for many years have all grown spiritually matured in Christ. They love the LORD. Some got married, some moved to other state, while some are still here serving the LORD in our local Church. I could have never done it without God on my side: strengthening me, encouraging me, and helping me when I needed Him the most.

God has not promise you and I a perfect life when we became Christians, but He will be there when we need Him the most. If you hear his voice, remember to say, ðI am here.ö He will guide you through thick or thin and He will always be by your side.

Thanks to Dr. Nhia Vang Vang for giving me a chance to minister to the youth, Dr. Stephen T. Xiong for the job opportunity at his company, and my wife and family for willingness to suffer and sacrifice with me. Even though they had no choice, I want to thank them for their patience and love. Lastly, thank God for choosing a lowly person like myself to serve Him.

Khu N. Xiong (Ntxoov Khwb Xyooj)