

OPENING DOORS

Lives Transformed Through
the Power of God's Word

ENDORSEMENTS

“Any time Ada Lum writes, it is worth reading. Her experience and wisdom always enhances my life.”

Rev. Dr. Dan Chun
Senior Pastor
First Presbyterian Church at Koʻolau
Co-founder
Hawaiian Islands Ministries

“Ada Lum has profound experience and great passion in teaching the Bible. I believe her book *Opening Doors* will open doors to reach more lives for Christ.”

Rev. Simon Lee
Senior Pastor
Chinese Lutheran Church of Honolulu

“Ada’s insightful interviews are inspirational. They testify to God’s loving power to encourage hearts and to transform lives through the study of His Word. Each person’s testimony demonstrates Bible Institute of Hawaii’s mission and commitment over the decades to partner with and to work alongside all churches, personally equipping the saints through the faithful teaching of the Scriptures.”

Rev. Eric Ebisu
Senior Pastor
Pearl City Community Church

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Ada Lum



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AUTHOR'S NOTE

The purpose of this book is to demonstrate how people have been transformed through the study of God's Word and to exemplify how doors of opportunity and growth have been opened for them. Such is the potential for anyone who will seriously study the Bible.

We present the content of the book in three basic formats: journalistic article, interview and first person story. Contributors were selected from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures; each with the common passion for studying God's Word which has resulted in positive change.

Thank you to Kimberly Miyazawa Frank whom the Lord used to introduce this project and help me to facilitate the interview process from which this book has been written.

PREFACE

This is not the first book of interviews. In the New Testament, Dr. Luke's was among the first (Luke 1:3). He undoubtedly interviewed elderly Mary, the mother of Jesus, in her retirement, and dozens of other unique Gospel characters with great success. We might add a young man by the name of Mark. Much information for his record of Jesus' life is attributed to "interviews" of his senior mission partner, Simon Peter (and to his own eyewitness, as subtly noted in Mark 14:51-52).

And now we welcome Ada Lum, interviewer par excellence to the august company of memorable interviewers. Her incisive powers of observation and witty skills in asking questions (sit in on her Mark course and find out for yourself) glow through the material you are on the brink of enjoying. It's almost as if you know the very brother or sister she's interviewing and writing about.

I congratulate Ada, on twenty-five hardworking years of teaching at the Bible Institute of Hawaii. BIH was founded in 1972 and in 1984 we welcomed you into the fold. We experienced a sense of fulfillment with your association. I readily see capable women teaching the Bible under the pastoral aegis of men.

All of the local interviewees in these pages were at one time students at Bible Institute of Hawaii, a fact that fills my chest with pride and with gratitude to God for having been a small part of BIH for its first seventeen years.

So, welcome, dear reader, to this beautiful little treasury of biographical snapshots. My prayer is that God, the Holy Spirit, will bless and prosper a wide distribution of this volume and draw many to deeper studies of the Bible.

In Johann Sebastian Bach's words, *solī deo Gloria*; to God alone be the glory!

Pastor Don Baron
Founder and Director (1972-1989)
Bible Institute of Hawaii
Honolulu, 2009

FOREWORD

“Behold, I stand at the door and knock; if anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and will dine with him, and he with Me.” (Revelation 3:20, NASB)

Opening a door is the apostle John’s picture of access to and fellowship with God. No better picture describes the history of Bible Institute of Hawaii over the last thirty-seven years: Christ-centered, life-changing biblical teaching and learning that have opened doors for Hawaii’s people. Teachers and students have together opened and walked through doors in the Bible.

This book is a testimony to God’s impact on people from all walks of life as they opened up their Bibles and were taught by Holy Spirit-led teachers in church classrooms across the islands.

Bible Institute of Hawaii grew out of the concern and prayers of a group of Lutheran church members in Honolulu in early 1972. Lutheran Bible Institute of Seattle responded by sending Pastor Don Baron, who eventually became BIH’s founder and first Executive Director. Pastor Baron built a firm foundation, establishing the Bible training school on the biblical principle that Christians grow and mature best in the context of the local church.

By 1983, BIH had grown beyond its early Lutheran roots and became independent. It is now fully interdenominational in scope, a “school without walls.” It serves about 200 lay people through ten to twelve classes or seminars per term in various locations on Oahu and the neighbor islands of Kauai, Maui and the Big Island.

As you read these pages and inspiring testimonies of former and continuing students, you will see how BIH has contributed to the revitalization of congregational inner life and outreach, never competing with the church, but always serving as a partner.

We look forward to future years, loving, learning, and leading all the while opening doors.

Clive M. Cowell
Executive Director
Bible Institute of Hawaii
Honolulu, 2009

INTRODUCTION: TRANSFORMED LIVES

Meet twenty-one men and women transformed as they opened doors into the Bible, discovered and explored new worlds.

Sixteen of them are local to Hawaii. Five of them are overseas colleagues. Each has a unique story. What brings them together here is that they are all avid students of the Bible. What is fresh is how vigorously each testifies to the incredible power of God's Word.

One of the twenty-one, Tawan Tabad of Sudan, expresses the transforming impact that consistent Bible study has had on him. "The first time I read and understood a passage of the Bible, I felt like I was opening a door into a new world. Then when I used the Bible study tools my mentors gave us, I began opening more and more doors into life. Now it seems like life is a series of opening doors into eternity."

For these men and women in various life circumstances, God's Word has been—

- a **light** for my path of life (Psalm 119:105);
- **bread** to be eaten to survive (Deuteronomy 8:3, Matthew 4:4);

- the foundation **rock** of life (Matthew 7:24);
- sharper than any **double-edged sword** in discernment (Hebrews 4:12);
- like a **burning fire** in my bones so I must obey (Jeremiah 20:9);
- sweeter than **honey** out of the comb (Psalm 19:10);
- like a **hammer** that breaks a rock in pieces (Jeremiah 23:29).

Additional Value

A reviewer of this book said that she was not only inspired by these personal accounts. She also picked up ideas on how to study the Bible. Another said he got a quick mission survey in reading the testimonies of brothers and sisters in Christ, as well as those who have served overseas. Still another had “an evangelistic education” by observing how differently people become Christians.

Once we began compiling and writing their stories, dozens of other students came to mind. Norm’s got a different slant. Maria’s story is riveting. Sergei’s is enlightening. Every true believer has, as Susan Soken says, a “God story.”

Ada Lum
Faculty
Bible Institute of Hawaii

CHAPTER ONE:



STEVE PEICH

Restless Serb Settling In

Criss-crossing North America and the Pacific Ocean marked Steve's missionary life until the last few years, when he settled into the pastorate of Imago Deo in Aiea. He and Diane, a counselor, have two children, Charis and Caleb. They live in Aiea.

I first met Steve when he brought a sparkle to Diane's eyes. She was home for the summer from studying at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School (Deerfield, IL). She updated me with her experiences, including her engagement to Steve. In their early years of marriage, they served together at Moanalua Gardens Missionary Church. Then there was mission work in Thailand for four years, back to seminary in California, and then a return to Hawaii.

Ada: When you came on as teacher and then executive director at BIH, I was delighted to work with a thoughtful theologian and experienced missionary. We've missed you since you left to be pastor of a new church.

Steve: I came on to BIH because its aim is to support the local church especially in the area of Bible training. I've worked all my adult life with churches and para-church organizations. Like you, I've done so with the conviction that the local church is God's main agent on earth.

Readers will want to know more of your background, but I'd like to continue with your present ministry as pastor at Imago Dei, a community that dares to push the envelope in seeking to be Jesus Christ in the community. What kind of church is this?

It's hard to reduce it to a few words, but I guess I would say Imago Dei is progressive, real and reflective. This doesn't mean we dismiss yesterday's values and historical church experience. Instead of following traditional practices or adopting current trends thoughtlessly, we need to reconsider these values and experiences to see if we are on the right biblical track.

Help me by giving a metaphor.

Think of the church like rings on a tree. A tree stays alive and healthy only if new rings are being formed. The new ring doesn't "dismiss" the old rings, but grows from them. So you can say that our church seeks to embrace and integrate the tradition and history of the church and then extends it into new ways of living. "Embrace and Extend:" this is what keeps a church healthy and vibrant.

We're doing our best to live out our values of Spirituality, Community and Mission. Our great pursuit is to help people grow

toward greater intimacy with Christ, more Christ-likeness, greater wholeness in Christ, and to become a more powerful witness for Christ. If we do this, we believe we will see more of God's kingdom come and His will being done on earth, and not just in heaven.

You don't impress me as being typical of your Missionary Church denomination.

My Missionary Church denomination trusts me. Knowing I'm a bit of a maverick, they allow me all the freedom I need. But they also know I'm firmly tethered to the biblical tenets, even when my views of those tenets may be different. At the end of the day at heaven's gate, we know that some of these different views are not going to be a deal breaker with God. So, I can't make my view a deal breaker for you here. I need to be more humble than that.

I'm convinced that we must have more mature thinking in the church. I don't know how narrow thinking and maturity can be together in the same sentence. Maturity comes out of wrestling with the tension of different beliefs. That's what I appreciate about my seminary training at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School and Fuller Theological Seminary. They have stayed biblically orthodox yet there is a *spectrum* of views on the same truth.

That reminds me of growing up in our family of nine children. We often had different views on a subject that ended in frustration and fierce arguments. We had to be reminded that there are three sides to every story: my side, your side and the truth.

Yes! We are in an Acts 6 season of having people of various backgrounds join our community, and it causes stress. But that doesn't mean we narrow the field to lessen stress. Instead, we adapt and accommodate to shift the structure and forms to keep the value of embracing all Christians.