

Jorge and Emily – Faith Journey and Calling

Hello my name is Jorge. My wife Emily and I have recently been appointed Church Planting Missionaries by the LPD. I am glad to have the opportunity to introduce myself and share how I came to Christ and how God led us to our call to church planting.

Let's start with an FAQ. When people first meet me, I often get asked this question: "How did an Asian looking person get a Spanish name like Jorge?" The answer is: I was born in Argentina, and both my parents are from Taiwan. I lived in Argentina until I was about 16 years old before immigrating to Canada, and I have now lived in Canada most of my life. As for my wife Emily, she was born and raised in Taiwan, and came to Canada around the same time I did.

I didn't grow up in a Christian home. Unlike Emily's family, my family was Buddhist and I grew up listening to Buddhist teachers from a very young age. I almost became a monk, at the age of twelve, after attending a Buddhist Camp. It took some convincing by my parents to postpone my decision until I was older, but from that moment on my belief in Buddhism was deeply rooted. For years, many have shared the gospel with me, and I loved the challenge of debating against Christians who often didn't know how to express their faith very well. It was not until the age of 25, that I became a Christian through a mathematical calculation that confirmed I was hearing God answer my prayers. What was this mathematical calculation?

I received an invitation almost every week for nine years to attend a friend's Christian fellowship group. This invitation came from a persistent friend I met in high school here in Canada, but I never accepted this invitation. When the calls finally stopped for about a year, and I had completely forgotten about his invitations, one morning I woke up feeling something missing in my life and I had to join something new. I could not explain it at the time, and I didn't know what the sense of emptiness was because I thought I knew everything I needed to know in life and, when I retired I was going to become a Buddhist monk. That morning as I carpooled with this same friend to UBC, where I was studying statistics, we came to a red light stop. I looked at my friend and said: "I am coming to your fellowship". He turned and looked at me in disbelief, but did not say anything. I thought to myself, he is probably thinking that I am crazy, or at least that is what I thought of myself when I heard myself saying that out loud. And so, I responded by nodding once, accepting how crazy it must have been to say that. We continued to UBC without saying a word as if this never happened. That same Friday, I showed up to his church's fellowship group.

Everything about the church fellowship was great until the very end. I enjoyed chatting with people, we had fun sharing stories and getting to know one another, but they ended with prayers. As everyone bow their heads, it was an awkward moment for me, and I thought to myself: "What is wrong with these people? Don't they know there is no God?". Because they were very nice, the following week I attended fellowship again. And, again at the end of the gathering they started praying. I didn't know what to do while I waited, so I decided that I would challenge this God they believe in. In my mind I told God: "God, if you exist, answer me this question." (For now, let's call this question: "question A".) That week, I was invited to attend Sunday service for the first time, and the pastor was preaching... "the answer to my question". I thought like anyone would think: "Coincidence".

The following week, I went to the fellowship again, and this time again, they ended with prayers. Remembering the "coincidence" I just experienced, I decided to challenge God again and asked: "God if you truly exist answer me this other question" – "question B." That week I was invited to a bible study and the leader was teaching... "the answer to my question". I thought like anyone would think "Nah, another coincidence." I went to the fellowship again, determined to prove that God was not answering my questions and during prayer time I challenged God with 2 questions – "question C and question D". That week I was introduced to Praise 1065 radio station. Back in the day, they used to have sermons back to back. Sometime midweek I turned on the radio and I heard a pastor preaching "the answer to the first of the two questions – question C". In shock, I turned off the radio, but later when I turned on the radio again, and there was another sermon, and it was "the answer to the second of the two questions – question D". This time it didn't seem like coincidence. It caught my attention. So, I kept asking questions until I asked a total of 10 questions and each time God answered me... Could God really exist?

The night after God answered my 10th question, I sat down to calculate the probability of this happening. As I mentioned earlier, I was studying statistics at UBC. A point of reference I often use is the Lotto 649. Do you know what is the probability of winning the lotto 649? To win the big prize, one would have to pick 6 numbers out of 49 numbers, and if all the 6 numbers match the lotto numbers it is a grand prize win. The probability of correctly picking the winning 6 numbers is "1 in approximately almost 14 million." Please remember this. Now, what is the probability that God was speaking to me? Or the mathematically, what is the probability the 10 messages I heard were the answers of the 10 questions I asked, given that there are more than 100 possible sermon topics? Also remember, I did not listen to, say, 20 messages to find my 10 answers, but I asked 10 questions and listen to exactly 10 sermons. Even more amazingly, they were answered in the exact same order that I asked. That is, God answered A, B, C, then D... God didn't answer, A, C, D, then B. This is important because to win the lotto's grand prize, the order of the 6 numbers picked does not matter as long as all 6 numbers are there. But order did matter when God answered my questions. Mathematically, with the additional conditions, the probability of this happening is even smaller. Much smaller. I am not even sure there is a word for it, but probability is 1 in "6 followed by 20 zeros" (that is a billion x a trillion?). To give you a picture, the probability is the same as winning the lotto 649 a trillion times. The probability is so small that it is impossible, but I learned in one of the messages that nothing is impossible with God. This meant there is only one conclusion: That God was speaking to me.

As I sat at my desk, pencil in one hand, eraser in the other, I looked down at the numbers in my calculator screen and right then and there, I knew that God exists. And if He exists, what was He saying to me? For hours, I sat at my desk, and I went through what God was saying in those 10 messages. (If you would like to know what I asked God and how He answered please contact me. I would love to connect with you and share this part of the story). It was so clear in my mind and I knew that from that moment on, the purpose of my life is to share the gospel.

One thing that stood out to me as I reflected back all these years, is that people have shared the gospel with me in many different languages throughout my life. Some shared in Spanish, others in English, Mandarin and Taiwanese, and although I understood, I did not listen. But God spoke my language – mathematics. A language I understood well. I language I cannot refute. The language of my heart. It has been a reminder that I was

given the gift of speaking these languages so I could share the gospel to people in their heart language - whether cultural or spoken.

Fast forward 10 years later, while I was the English Ministry pastor of an Asian Church, God was growing a call in Emily and in my heart to reach the lost of all nations and to proclaim to them what we have seen and heard. We are called to do so by speaking the language of the lost, both cultural language and spoken language if needed. At one point, we thought the call was to go to other countries since we had invitations to pastor in Taiwan, Colombia, Peru and Mexico. But as we prayed, we heard God say: "why are you thinking about going to other nations when I brought all the nations here?". Indeed, we live in one of the most diverse cities made up of all nations. It has been clear for us that our call is to be missionaries to our city, and to start something new here to reach the next generation which is made up of all nations. I shared this with my mentor and good friend Randy Wolff who introduced me to Rob Stewart and Steve Sharpe. And after a few months of meeting and praying with them, Emily and I took a step of obedience and underwent the church planter assessment. Through this, they affirmed our calling to church planting. June 1st, 2018, we started our residency at new Westminster EFC, under the guidance of LPD Missionary of Church Planting Development, Steve Sharpe. We know that God has called us to start something new to reach all nations, and we heard that New West EFC also has the call to start something new and has the heart to reach all nations. For the next six months we will be praying to hear from God if we are called to this new together.

Emily and I are looking forward to God what is going to do by reaching the lost of all nations in our community. We have answered the call to be sent to make disciples of all nations and equip them to do the same. And as we continue to hear God, we will obey. Please remember us in your prayers. Blessings!