

# 17 – Executive Board Candidate – Victor Chen

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**Garrett Inouye:** Hey everyone, welcome to episode 18. My name's Garrett Inouye and this is another special episode. Today, Pastor Rocky and I interview our remaining executive board candidate, Pastor Victor Chen. Again, the goal for this episode is for you to get to know Pastor Victor and through that, get a conviction to join the executive board in praying over and for all the candidates.

Now, some quick business. According to Evergreen Baptist Church's bylaws, the next month will be spent giving the church a chance to get to know the candidates and send questions or feedback to the current executive board members. After that one month period is complete on June 19th. The executive board will convene and complete its final selection of the new executive board members.

The results will then be announced to the church at the end of June. Again, we hope that you will reach out to get to know the executive board candidates, and also that you would talk to the current board members with your encouragements or suggestions. questions and feedback. Okay, that's it for business.

Let's get into the episode. I hope you enjoy it.

This is Pursuing Discipleship, a podcast of Evergreen Baptist Church of San Gabriel Valley, where we are committed to forming intentional relationships that build Christ likeness. In this podcast, our hope and prayer is to encourage one another's discipleship to Jesus Christ, grow our love for his word, and and explore our response to his command to go and make disciples.

We're so excited to have you join us. And so let's get into today's conversation, Victor. Yes. Thank you for joining us for episode two of our special executive board candidate brother.

**Victor Chen:** Happy to be here.

**Garrett Inouye:** Yeah. Um, do you have, before we start, I do have to apologize. We've podcast two times already and me and Rocky kind of made a goal that we ask all the.

Uh, podcast candidates, their testimony, but for some reason we missed you for both of those podcast episodes. But you know, I think it was Lord's providence because this whole episode is essentially going to be dedicated to us being encouraged and edified by hearing your testimony, hearing how the Lord's been growing you.

So, uh, we're making it up to you by giving you a whole episode. That's right. That's right.

**Rocky Seto:** And so, uh, pastors have testimonies too, right? They do. They don't just pop up. They're just not born a Christian. Maybe, maybe

**Victor Chen:** you recorded it, but it just got edited out.

**Rocky Seto:** I

**Victor Chen:** wouldn't do that. Um, did

**Rocky Seto:** it make the cutting board?

Chopping block.

**Garrett Inouye:** Snip snap. Um, well, let's start before we get into your testimony. We've done this for everyone else. And for sure, a lot of people know you, but just in case someone doesn't, or they're new to our church, can you just give us context to who you are, what you do here at Evergreen? Uh, and, uh, do you have a family, children, things like that?

**Victor Chen:** Yeah. So I'm an associate pastor here and have a variety of responsibilities, but primarily family ministries. So that's children, Um, moms, women, as well as college now, so, and I'm married and we will be celebrating 15 years and in just a little bit and we have a 14 year old daughter, Zoe and 11 year old son, Noah and nine year old son, Zach.

**Garrett Inouye:** And what's your wife's name?

**Victor Chen:** Kelly.

**Garrett Inouye:** Hey Kelly. Good job. Um, cool. Thanks. Thanks for that. Um, Okay, let's get into the first question. Um, Victor, how did you come to follow Christ?

**Victor Chen:** Yeah, so I have a, my mom would bring us to church. And so my parents were immigrants to this country, but my mom would bring us to church.

And I remember her driving us, um, You know, I was really young and so kind of grew up in church and I remembered praying a prayer of confession at the age of six. And so that was very vivid. I'm praying to accept Jesus. As my Lord and savior and go to heaven and not hell after that, I, you know, which is very typical of a lot of testimonies for children who grew up in the church, you make a profession, but it wasn't until and dot, dot, dot, you fill in the blank.

And for me, we stopped going to church in junior high and most of high school. And it wasn't until the summer before my senior year in high school that. I had two friends who were seeking the faith, and they were seekers, and they wanted to go to church, and we had a friend who went to Evergreen, and so I would join my two friends as a show of support, but really, I was searching as well at that point, and so we came to Evergreen, and at that point, we were at Rio Hondo Community College.

There are two services, so we would come at 8 a. m., the first service, and you know, for whatever reason, we really enjoyed it. And so we would, we just started inviting a lot of friends, we'd carpool every Sunday. And so I remember some of the pastors remembering us as being those high school kids who would just roll in and sit right in the front.

Rio Hondo campus in and not fall asleep. That was a comment I heard from John Horry at the time. You are the guys who come early and you sit in the front and you don't fall asleep. So at that point, um, my two friends, I made professions of faith. I dedicate, we dedicate my life to Christ and we, we all get baptized about a month before we graduate.

And so for me, You know, even though I consider myself Christian, there are so many other things that took priority in my life, whether it was friends or school or trying to be popular. And so God really was a distant third, fourth. And so my testimony to a lot of the youth is that, you know, where you hear testimonies of God saving you from being, from being bad, uh, I really do think that God saved me from being good.

I was the model kid, right? All about school straight A's in every club, trying to get into the best colleges, president of as many clubs as I could be in. I was trying to achieve the success that was really pushed for Asian Americans. And. At the end of it, it felt very empty. You know, I felt very alone and empty, and it wasn't fulfilling, and that's really when I turned to the Lord, and, and I just, I said, I don't, I don't want this anymore.

So. So that's really my message, especially for the youth, is You know, God has to save us from being good and having our own good works because that's not enough.

**Garrett Inouye:** Hey, Victor. Um, can I go back and ask, you know, when you were coming with your friends to Evergreen and John was noticing that you weren't falling asleep, what made you guys interested at that point in your life, right?

To pay attention to the service, to the sermon, to make sure that you're, yeah, sitting in the front row, really focusing on what's going on. Yeah.

**Victor Chen:** Yeah. At the time we didn't realize how unique that was, but now being at Evergreen for, you know, 25 years now and having never seen anything like that again, I don't, I, I, I'm not really sure what to make of it, you know, there was a hunger in all of us for, for God, for the word and for Christ.

And it seemed like we were just feeding each other, you know, maybe one of us didn't really feel like going. We were like, we'd be outside the house honking the horn, like we're going to go, you know? And so I think that. It was the Lord's grace. That's all I can attest to it because I realize it's so unique.

We weren't coming because of parents. Um, we had a friend at church, but You know, it was really us feeding each other. And to this day, as a great praise, I mean, we still do that, you know, we still pray for one another. We still encourage one another. We still spur one another on and the same three.

**Garrett Inouye:** Who were those three?

**Victor Chen:** So one is Ian Nagata, who is one of our missionaries, former pastor here. And another is Kenji Igawa. Who is currently in Japan serving with the Navy. So

**Garrett Inouye:** they left you behind.

**Victor Chen:** Yeah. So I like to say that my best friends are thousands of miles away. Yeah. Oh, that's,

**Garrett Inouye:** that's so cool. Um, and then for you, you know, after you, I guess, recommitted yourself to following God, how did you see change?

Right. You, you were the good, you were, you said you were saved from being the quote unquote. Good kid. Yeah. What did that look like? Moving forward?

**Victor Chen:** You know, it's a process, right? Sanctification being coming more like Christ is a process. I would say in high school, um, I was still wrestling. I think all throughout college still wrestling, like what are the values, what are the priorities?

I think in college it started to shift a little bit where ministry and God took a priority over school, which was huge, right? And so, but I. You know, I would attest to a lot of it had to do with people pouring into me and discipleship. You know, I was fortunate that I had somebody discipling me all throughout college.

So just guiding me through the ups and downs of the Christian life early on. And that person was Kyle Shimazaki, who is now a church plant. Not yet. Our church plant sees of life the current pastor So I just remember him driving up from Torrance to meet with me. I had 8 a. m. Class We'd meet at 7 a. m. At UCLA Hardly anybody there at the Student Union just custodians and trails.

Yes. Yeah. Yep Yep, and he would come on his motorcycle or come on his His car, right? And what I took away from that for discipleship was, um, just that commitment, you know, just always being there, always asking. And for me that, you know, discipleship is something like once you've tasted it, you just want to, you want to pass that on.

And that's the, the beauty of it. And so I would just start discipling, um, students at UCLA and. Yeah. I just, I just know that the Christian life, you can't grow apart from somebody else pouring into you. That's how the Lord intended.

**Garrett Inouye:** So, you know, um, it, it sounds like you had, even with your friend, like, uh, Ian and Kenji, right.

Your small group in high school, and then, um, with, uh, Kyle, you know, an older dude, discipling you on his motorcycle. Yeah. Um, different forms, right? Different ways that this happened, different levels of intentionality, different

relationships. How would have been like the different ways that you've experienced discipleship or you've discipled others throughout the years?

**Victor Chen:** Yeah. I think, um, So an experience happened in college. So as you know, we were really close to three of us. We had another friend who invited us, um, was Corey Hata, the Hata family here. And once we graduated and went to college, we went all over the place. And so all of a sudden now I'm coming to Evergreen where we were rolling with four or five guys and now it's just me.

And maybe I try to get another guy to come with me. And that was a challenge because all of a sudden now it's like your friend group is gone. All right, or you can still follow the Lord. And I remember at UCLA, in particular, I had a friend there and, um, you know, we were just, we wanted to, this was the first semester, so fall quarter, and we were saying that, all right, in, in winter quarter, we're going to start a Bible study in the dorms, and we're going to just try to share the gospel and save, save people, right?

And then I remember right before that, he just tells me he's not Christian anymore. And that completely rocked my world, right? And a young Christian didn't know, how can a person not be Christian? A person I actually looked up to. And at that point, that set in me a fire to make sure that, What happened to my friend wouldn't happen to anybody from evergreen.

And so at that point, I made a commitment to the Lord that if anybody from evergreen would go to UCLA, I would take it upon myself to make sure that. I'm reaching out to them, pouring into them. Um, and so that, that's what it looked like initially for discipleship. It was literally me trying to make sure nobody falls away, right, from the faith.

And gradually it was one, then two, then people transferred in, and then we started actually a satellite group at UCLA. And we would get rides to, to church on Sunday mornings. And so discipleship, I think it looks different in every stage of life, you know? And as a young adult, I was paired up with a college student to disciple all throughout college and also had a group of, you know, Of two brothers, and we would meet one hour a week, once a week, and we would just share and pray for one another.

I think discipleship, um, again, looks different in every stage of life. I think the needs are different. Right? But I realize that it's more than just grabbing coffee and catching up with somebody, but it has to be grounded in the word, has to be intentional, and it has to be relational, too. So I think initially I just thought you

just go through the Bible with somebody, but I realized I didn't have relationship with those.

I disciplined. And so then I skewed more towards the relational side, and there was little word. And so now I'm trying to find a balance in between. But as an encouragement to all of our our members, you know, you you If the Lord's blessed you or given you something, then you can pass that on to somebody else.

That's really all discipleship. It is. You don't have to be like a master or guru, right? You just have to have the heart to help somebody along, you know, because you've been there before.

**Garrett Inouye:** Well, I totally see that in your life. Um, You know, Victor, you've, you've disciplined me, uh, you know, coming back from college, uh, coming back to evergreen, um, you know, coming in hot.

Hey, Victor. Yeah. I'm going to buy a one way ticket to Japan. Yeah. And I think, um, You know, I remember, you know, you were just very patient with me, always asking questions. Uh, but your patience was in a direction, right? For, for me, um, understanding the word more, understanding what wisdom looks like. Um, uh, but you're never like forcing anything on me.

It was just a very much so intentional and, um, uh, patiently I'd say loving me. And so, yeah, I, I've experienced deception from you. I think what you say. You do, and you do it everywhere. I even remember, um, cause when I growing up, I think my conception of discipleship was one older man approaching me and maybe one other kid and saying, Hey, let's meet for a year and go through this book.

Yeah, definitely. That could be super valuable. And, and for those who did that with me in the past, I really grew a lot, but in my mind, that was the only way to do discipleship. So I remember a year into us meeting, I don't know if you remember this. I was like. Victor, are you discipling me? And you're like, yes, I hope you consider me discipling you.

And I was like, yeah, I think he is. Just the way he's been meeting with me and loving me as a pastor.

**Rocky Seto:** Sounds like, Victor, you had like a holistic discipleship where you had like, Guys honking at the horn, let's go to church. Just that exhortation

amongst the blind, leading the blind in some ways. And then you had like pastor Kyle coming in, teaching you the Bible, then you were able to do it to others.

And so you kind of had this overall kind of a experience at evergreen and that's pretty neat to see.

**Victor Chen:** Yeah, yeah, definitely. I think. Looking back on it, even sharing with all of you, it's just, uh, my praise God that I've never had to go about the Christian faith on my own. But I think so many of our people believe that it's all on your own, right?

But discipleship is, you know, we're helping each other, right? We're encouraging one another. And so just to give a little insight into, I don't know if I ever shared with you, Garrett, but you know, when we were meeting Garrett would say, Hey, can we meet twice a month? Yeah. And, uh, he was just, you were just wrestling with a call to Japan.

Right. And what does that look like? And I remember just in that, that sanctuary, right. And every time you would come, I would just be waiting on the top. And I'd just be praying, God, I don't know what I'm doing with Garrett. Please guide and lead me. I'm glad you were blessed by it because I didn't really know what I was doing.

So,

**Garrett Inouye:** well, I mean, I came in with a lot of hot

**Victor Chen:** questions,

**Garrett Inouye:** big ideas.

**Rocky Seto:** Ask pastor Victor session, huh? Exactly. Yeah. That's neat. It seems like, uh, not sure when you're regenerated or born again, but it seems like that's kind of like the experience that you had. This is what. Christians do we meet up, we encourage each other, we talk about Christ, we exhort each other.

We point each other towards holiness. We, I would imagine those three or four friends, you guys talked about sin and temptation too, right? I mean, that's just, you knew nothing else. That's how you do it. Yeah.

**Garrett Inouye:** That's neat. Yeah. Um, I kind of want to ask another question. You mentioned already early on, uh, you had a conviction to love evergreen and

to try and to the best of your ability, um, Make sure that you're doing everything you can so that, you know, someone else won't, uh, fall from the faith or, or, um, walk away from the Lord.

So it sounds like you started with a lot of love for the church for evergreen from that time. How has your love for evergreen transformed, grown, um, even challenge been challenged, you know, and how have you navigated that?

**Victor Chen:** Yeah, I, I realized now that I, I sit in a very unique position, you know, coming to evergreen as a high schooler, um, rededicating my faith, or maybe even for first time, professing my faith, getting baptized, being in a discipleship in the college ministry, interning, and then becoming, uh, Assistant pastor and now associate pastor, so I realize it's very unique, but it was always driven by a love for the church.

I just felt like so welcomed when we came, the three of us, and we had people reaching out to us like Gavin Kajikawa, he's now a pastor at Lighthouse. There were, there were so many, right, who reached out. And so for me, it was all about giving back, right. And I always felt like, wow, everyone's been so gracious to me, kind of nurtured, fed me, helped me grow.

Why wouldn't I do that to somebody else? And why wouldn't I love the church? Right. I mean, I, so has it been difficult if, you know, with, with all the changes, transitions, people coming in and out. Yeah, certainly that's been difficult, right? Um, has that diminished my love for the church? Um, I don't know, in some ways it's kind of grown it, you know?

Just understanding how much people who have stuck around have been through. I'm just so grateful, right? And, so, I, I feel like all, all the things that we've been through has only grown my love. Right for the church and been really not taking anything for granted at this point. Yeah. So I

**Rocky Seto:** want to ask you about your other discipleship relationship, your main risk discipleship relationship.

We just got done talking about, uh, husbands and our, uh, our care for our wives. Tell us about Kelly. How did you meet her? And any details you'd like to share publicly with us right now?

**Victor Chen:** Yeah. So again, probably the reason why I love evergreen is that's how I met my wife. You know, I was the young adult, um, shepherd and intern at that time.

She came to visit with a mutual friend and as any, um, good young adult leader would do, I, I welcomed our new newcomer and greeted her. And. So that's how, that's how it all started. And, and I think what blesses me the most is seeing her grow at the church and grow her love for the church and be blessed by the church as well.

And so, yeah, we were the first ones to get married, to have a reception in the NPR, you know, we were technically the second wedding here when we, when we got here, just so many roots and connections and, and really grateful. I think recently, ever since the pandemic and the shutdown, I've just seen her just really step up and, and blossom, you know, she serves in children's ministry, not because I asked her to, because she wants to, well, I guess I did ask her because we had a need, but she is very willing to do so.

Um, the Friday morning women's group, she's now one of the leaders and, um, she's very blessed by that ministry as well. So I know Rocky and Garrett, both of you, you can attest. There's nothing. More fulfilling than to see your wives and your family blessed by the ministry of the church that you pour yourself into to see as a result, your family growing and thriving and flourishing is, I think it's just a blessing from the Lord.

**Rocky Seto:** And she clearly undergirds your work here as well. Yeah,

**Victor Chen:** it's pretty obvious. Yeah, absolutely. She's a great encouragement. I definitely couldn't do this without her. Her support, her encouragement, and um, I think she's the, the best listener that I know. I've, I've learned a lot about listening from her and just reflecting and listening to a person's heart.

And so there's certainly so much I've gained from her.

**Rocky Seto:** No wonder you love Evergreen. Like you said, baptized here, baptized here in the swimming pool, right? Yeah, you

**Victor Chen:** were too.

**Rocky Seto:** That's You met your bride here, got married here, got married here, got three children out of this union. So a lot of great things, a lot of great discipleship relationships.

So that's wonderful.

**Garrett Inouye:** I'm actually interested, uh, would you be willing to share what you learned from Kelly about, uh, Listening and loving people. Well,

**Victor Chen:** yeah, I think, um, well, certainly Kelly is more relational than I is. I, she, I am. She's definitely more relationally gifted. Um, just very attentive in listening.

I think God created women to listen better than men. So it's something we have to work on. And so often we want to jump in and early in our marriage, we want to, I want to jump in and fix things. Right. Um, and I learned quickly that when Kelly would share, it's not so that she's sharing something for me to fix, but she's sharing her heart for me to understand and listen.

So that's certainly guided me in a lot of counseling situations. And there was a period recently where majority of my ministries were with women, and I felt like those 5 to 10 years of marriage really helped me interact and guide and shepherd the women of our church. If it was young me, That wouldn't have been the case.

So that only came from years of marriage and learning and failing and coming back up and gaining a lot.

**Garrett Inouye:** That's really good. I got to work on that too. Sorry, Shannon. Um, maybe, uh, I can go to the next question, which is similar, I guess, to What we just talked about, um, has the, the, has the Lord been moving or challenging you in your life in any way recently?

Yeah, I think,

**Victor Chen:** uh, just reflecting on my journey here at Evergreen, you know, I used to be the young guy, especially on staff as an intern. So I was just, Wait, listen, observe. And then before you know it, I'm the old guy or the middle aged guy, right? And twenty eight's not that old. Is he twenty eight? Sixteen is real. He But, you know, when you grow older, you, you tend to have more opinions and I certainly do.

And I think what I've learned, what the Lord challenged me in is to really pray about when to speak, right. To be quick to listen, right. Slow to speak. And so for me, it's just really being careful now, knowing that I, I'm not Having been here for a while, I do have a certain voice and wanting to steward that well.

Um, trying not to insist on my own way or how I would like things to be. I really learned to trust that the Lord will have his way. This is his church. So to pray for that and pray, okay God, what are you doing? And what do you want me to do rather than just pushing, um, a certain way or a certain agenda or a certain way, I think things should be done.

**Garrett Inouye:** Have you seen any fruit from that shift in mentality?

**Victor Chen:** Yes, certainly. If, if we pray and wait expectantly, the Lord will move. In ways that we wouldn't be able to see if we pushed our own way. That's what I've learned, you know, especially as it relates to people and their hearts, we can't change hearts. Um, you know, we could get frustrated.

We could try to impose, but at the end of the day, the Lord has to do that work. So really. Valuing, praying for, for people and praying in situations, uh, where you're just entrusting it to the Lord and waiting and seeing

**Garrett Inouye:** next question I wanted to ask was, do you see God doing anything at evergreen SUV or maybe a better way?

What do you see the Lord doing here at evergreen SUV?

**Victor Chen:** Yeah, so I think what's also unique, I, I think it's given my experiences and the areas that I've served in. So I was young adult ministry. Actually, I first started off as an intern for worship, then young adult ministry, and then short term missions, missions and outreach.

So, for me, change is exciting, right? Transition is welcomed. And maybe it's also because of the stage of life as I was going through that. You know, newly married, young kids. Every day is a transition. You know, they're in diapers, they're not in diapers, they're walking, they're crawling, they're, they're in school, they're in junior high, Zoe's going to be in high school, you know, there's always going to be transitions and change.

And if anything, you kind of expect it and you're kind of excited for it. Also, another thing is. Spending so much time with church planters, our own church planters, you know, John Horry, Kyle Shimazaki, even Kim Kira back at Lighthouse when I first was in college and seeing the journey that they went on, just praying, praying, praying and seeing things blossom and grow and how they establish their mission and core and their, their elders right off the bat, I was excited, you know, it's, it's definitely, Definitely.

a difficult journey to church plant, but there's, I think they can see God move in ways that are very unique.

**Rocky Seto:** Was it hard seeing your comrades go? I mean, I know you're excited for them excited for what the Lord is doing, but that must've been tough too. You losing some good teammates, not forever, but day to day.

**Victor Chen:** Yeah, I think it, it was, it was hard, but I developed that anticipation to, you know, for the kingdom multiplying, uh, I came in as an intern expecting to church plant because that was a track record of interns. You know, you came in, you interned for a couple of years. Uh, maybe you do a young adult ministry.

You take that young adult group and you church plant. So that was certainly expectation. Um, so I thought it was exciting. You know, and then talking to our missionaries and realizing the groundwork needed to build relationships and even to even church plant. That was exciting too. So, for me that was always something Going on a plane, seeing what our missionaries and partners were doing overseas, coming back and praying and asking God, I want to see that here too at Evergreen.

And so, I know a lot of the changes have been difficult for our people, and I know that the transition has been difficult. I know the pandemic has shut down a lot of things, because it has for many churches, but There probably wasn't a more exciting period of time for me than when we were outdoors doing the outdoor worship and we were having to start from the ground up on so many things.

And evergreen felt like a small church and it was being rebirthed. That was exciting to me. It was like, we were able to go through a church plant experience without having the church plant, you know, and I just felt like there is something, something changed at that point for me, you know,

**Rocky Seto:** now for the 20 people or so that are out there, we kind of remember.

Yeah. Paint the picture. You're a good storyteller. Paint the picture so that our listeners can understand what that outdoor experience was like.

**Victor Chen:** Yeah. So here, here's what I remember. We were in the hospitality room and we were Zooming with you because you were about to get the Hall of Fame for the California Junior College.

Remember that? Yeah. Yeah. You were on Zoom and all of a sudden we're like, okay, everything's shutting down. What do we do? And we decided we're going to shut down the live stream, right? And so then began a journey. And I remember Garrett, you telling us as families to, uh, take pictures while we were doing the live stream at home.

And so we can share those. And then all of a sudden, We're able to go back in with restrictions limited to 100 and you have to be distanced. Right. And then we were half in the NPR, half in the sanctuary. And then I remember I had my family, we're all huddled in my office and then we would go down. Right.

And then all of a sudden we get shut down again. And then I remember you Rocky saying, all right, we're going to go, we're going to do the live stream, but we're going to also go outdoors. And I think we were all on zoom at that point for staff meetings. And I just said, Hey, I, if you need somebody to help with the music, I'd love to do that.

And so we were out there first Sunday, probably at 28, 30 people, no amplification, no lyrics. Um, but that was such a sweet time because I think we just missed being Together and singing together. It was very sweet. Um, I think you were fired up, of course, preaching out there. Yeah. Those were really exciting times, you

**Rocky Seto:** know, I mean, just picture this, the grass area between the two buildings, the back of the sanctuary towards the D building and.

First of all, I'm grateful that you volunteered to do the music. During that time was such a confusing time. We didn't know what everyone believed or what convictions we had, but for you to offer that up, that was great because. I'm not leading any music, God willing, I could say a message, but I can't lead music.

So that was like, man, praise God. And then everyone brought these little lawn chairs, this type of lawn chairs that you take to your kids or your grandkids soccer game, those little pop up deals. And, and then that's what it was. And right. Some people had blankets and then like a picnics, uh, sitting down on the grass and I get to pretend I was Jesus preaching from the, you know, uh, to the, on the hill side, you know, That was a really neat and special time.

And slowly one or two, just people kept trickling back in and it was pretty neat. Yeah, it

**Victor Chen:** was neat. Yeah. I think that gave us an opportunity to really discover what was church and what was really important and yeah, just seeing that group grow. And seeing the fellowship that would happen afterwards and, you know, kids running around and just so happy to be there.

Um, I think your nephews were on bikes, you know, and it was special, you know, it was special.

**Rocky Seto:** Balanced bikes at the time, actual bikes, the balance, but they

**Garrett Inouye:** did upgrade eventually. I think even

**Victor Chen:** your, your son was in one of those saucers and

**Garrett Inouye:** they definitely enjoyed it. Uh, love that for sure. Um, I definitely think, you know, our church is blessed to have you, Victor.

I think every. Church needs some people, not everyone, but some people who are, who love to build and who are willing to step into transition or change, not for change's sake, but because they are dedicated to being obedient to where they see the Lord moving and going. And so definitely see that in you. Um, over the last few years, is there any other places where you've seen the Lord build something at evergreen that you're, Happy to see that you're grateful to see,

**Victor Chen:** yeah, I'm, you know, I really saw the need for not just children's ministry, but family ministries and building up families.

I remember just when we had a young family. And similar to UCLA, where I was, the Lord's kind of lit a fire in me to make sure no college students from our church would fall away as a young, um, young father, young husband, you know, I was really wrestling with what does it look like to, to follow Jesus in this stage of life.

And that was. I felt like there wasn't a lot for young families at that time, and so we just identified several young families, started a branch, and did life together, and that was really sweet. And so what I see happening at Evergreen is I really am blessed to see fathers leading their homes in family worship.

Being intentional on feeding their children and their wives with the word, singing to the Lord, you know, and being very intentional on that. And I think that that has just endless repercussions generationally that we'll see in years to

come. But I, I just, I'm just so pleased by that. And yeah, so everything that we do now from Sunday school to children's ministry to youth.

Is to supplement the home, right? To come alongside the parents in discipling their children. And I think that's just very special.

**Garrett Inouye:** Thanks for sharing that. Um, is there anything else you want to share to the church about your experience here? Uh, your love for the Lord growing here, what you see the Lord doing, what your hopes or prayers are for evergreen.

**Victor Chen:** Um, yeah, I just, I just think I sit in a unique seat having been here before and Now, being very excited, moving forward, I think that for our church it's to, to recognize the Lord's hand and work, the amazing things, um, I'm a result of that, what happened in the past, right? And, and also just acknowledging that the Lord is moving in different ways now.

And that's very exciting too. So I think the Lord has met us at Evergreen in different seasons. I remember when we were at Rio Hondo and I would help out with the setup. Um, we'd have to set up for, you know, worship services. And we had a mentality almost like nomads, right? We didn't have a home. And. We were wandering.

And I think that forced dependency on the Lord in a very unique way. Now, once we settled here, uh, my prayer was with, was that we would never just be complacent, right? Because we have a home now for 10 years, we were wandering and always praying and, and giving and seeking. And now that we have a home, I didn't want us to just settle and just be okay with that.

And so I think that again, the Lord challenges us and meets us in different seasons now. And I, I, I'm excited as I, as I transitioned out of outreach ministries, and we're telling Kelly that the one thing, and this is not, of course, there's so many things that. Happened to not reach. Of course, I'm staring at you, Garrett.

So don't take this in the wrong way. But, but as, um, I was just so blessed when we brought on pastor Google as full time and he launched the Spanish, um, language ministry, like that for me was so significant. And, you know, My burden as outreach pastor wasn't just to serve the community, but to disciple them.

And so we wanted a church to do that, and so we partnered with Vida Church. And then we soon realized that, you know, we wanted to be the ones who could disciple the community. So we wanted to launch a church on our own, and that became the Spanish Language Ministry. And so I think that is, that just shows that, The Lord is doing something different at Evergreen, you know, Evergreen used to be a ministry to the Japanese Americans who were a minority, right, then they moved to the San Gabriel Valley, which became more of an Asian American majority, and we come to Avocado Heights and all of a sudden we don't look like our surrounding community, what are we going to do, and that was the biggest challenge, is are we going to keep Ourselves in this kind of bubble, or are we going to go out and not just go out, but are we going to invite in?

And so if, if, if the Lord used me in outreach for anything else, uh, but to help that happen, that Spanish. Language ministry. I'm blessed. You know, if, if that's the legacy of the Lord would have, would have like, I'm just in awe of that.

**Garrett Inouye:** Yeah. Praise God for the Spanish speaking ministry. So grateful for them, what the Lord's doing.

**Rocky Seto:** You've been here. 25. What did you say? 25 years? What was

**Victor Chen:** that?

**Rocky Seto:** What is when I came? Yeah, 25 years. That's the math that says 25 years. Is that right, Garrett? A quarter of a century. Give me my calculator. Yes. We believe you, Victor. Yes. A quarter of a century. So you've been able to see some things and how has the Lord been discipling Evergreen Baptist Church in more recent years?

And you could, you have that view of 25 years. Yes. Any insight to give to us, our listeners here, our church?

**Victor Chen:** Yeah, I think again, we had been praying so much for property. So once we reached property, then it was trying to, you know, make sure that we can afford the property and then we can maintain the property.

And then we soon realized that we would have to transition and. So I think the Lord is discipling us through change and transition. I think it's hard, but I think the Lord is doing something and I don't want our church to miss that, you know, and these are not things necessarily by choice. I do see the Lord's hand in it.

And the last thing I ever wanted as a pastor, even a member at Evergreen was for us to be comfortable and complacent and to sit on a 17 acre property. Certainly you can get. Comfortable and complacent. So I think the Lord is constantly challenging us. Are we reaching out? Are we inviting in, you know, how are we discipling?

How are we building? How are we growing? And certainly I see that, you know, so

**Garrett Inouye:** Victor, just, um, two more questions. Uh, first, um, it's a little more business. Uh, so if you are confirmed as an executive board member, what does that mean for your role as pastor over families? Women, uh, things like that. Are you still doing that?

Are you leaving that to do executive board things? How's that going to work?

**Victor Chen:** Yeah, I don't, I don't anticipate any of the ministries I'm involved in to change. I will share, and this goes into discipleship and leadership development. There was a season where I did everything hands on, but I did that. Not to do that forever, but to raise up others who can eventually do the hands on thing so I could oversee it.

And that's been my model of leadership development and ministry. So as if the Lord would have me enter into this position, As executive board candidate, just know that I'm always moving to, to make sure that the ministries are actually being run by lay leaders and raising leaders up to carry on that ministry.

So it's not going to be all on me.

**Rocky Seto:** Deacons, raising up deacons, uh,

**Victor Chen:** multiplying yourself. Um, one of our former pastors who was my supervising pastor said, ministry, you work yourself out of a job. And so if I'm ever in one spot too long, maybe that's part of my makeup, but I don't, I always want to move and pass that on, you know,

**Garrett Inouye:** and that's discipleship too.

Yes,

**Victor Chen:** absolutely.

**Garrett Inouye:** Um, last question. Um, and just for those who maybe didn't listen to the last episode, we asked this question because we realized, uh, you know, we've been going about 45 minutes. 40 minutes. Um, it's not enough time for you to really get to know Victor. This is an introduction to him. If you've seen him around, or maybe you've heard his name mentioned.

Um, but really it's a, a encouragement for you to find Victor. On a Sunday, Pastor Victor on a Sunday and to approach him and just say, Hey, listen, the podcast is great. Ask questions. Uh, you know, if there's things you heard, but he didn't expound on as much as you wanted to hear, ask him about that. Um, and our hope is that, you know, as, as our church gets to interact with Victor and, um, you know, with, uh, Darren and Jeff, the other executive board candidates that we really would, uh, gain a conviction to pray for And, um, hope, uh, in the Lord that the Lord would, um, use, uh, the executive board candidates, um, to glorify him, uh, for his name's sake.

And so, um, we can do that better and better, the better we know these candidates. And so, uh, Last question, a little lighter, um, Victor, where could we find you on Sunday? And what are some things you like to talk about? And again, these can be spiritual things, but also they could be non spiritual things to what, what do you like talking about?

**Victor Chen:** Yeah, you can find me, you know, we usually sit in the section, uh, upper towards the front on the left side with my family. Um, I'm usually wandering around and the children's area, making sure everything's okay, or I'm over. With the ace class or sometimes dropping in with the college students. So, hopefully you can find me or maybe I'll be at one of the exits greeting people as they go by.

In terms of things that I'm interested in, um, I'd like to hope and think that I'm just like a regular guy. I'm a dad, I'm a husband, and so, um, root for my kids for sports. Try and encourage my wife. I'm, I love books. So if you have a good book, you want to recommend to me, if you need a book, you need a book to be recommended.

And, um, I love sports, you know, now it's more observing and sharing than participating. But whenever I can, I do love playing golf, especially with our seniors. And I think it's just a great way to hear and spend time with them. Older generations.

**Garrett Inouye:** Awesome. All right. Well, you heard it. Talk to Victor. Um, Rocky, do you want to close our time in prayer?

**Rocky Seto:** I would love to. Let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you for. Providing us gifts and thank you for, uh, for providing Victor to us, Lord, as a pastor, someone who's been involved with discipleship here in variety ways. So we thank you, Lord. Thank you for the many hats you've given him many training opportunities to grow, to understand how the church works, Lord, and how, uh, from the inside out.

So father, we thank you. I, I Lord, I'm grateful that Pastor Victor is here on our pastoral team, and thank you that we are able to pray for him as a executive board candidate at this time. I thank you for Kelly and their children, Lord, lending their support as they talked and prayed about whether he should be considered, and we thank you for their commitment and their sacrifice as well.

Lord, we know that Victor has agreed to something. As he said, not comfortable. Actually, this will be more challenging for him and the family and the church, but yet we thank you for them accepting this challenge, Lord. And so father God, I pray Lord that you would bless the chance and help them to see your goodness in this.

And I pray father that. The entire church will be blessed because of Pastor Victor being an executive board member. So thank you, Father, for the opportunity to consider him as a candidate. Lord, we love you in Jesus name, Amen.

**Garrett Inouye:** Amen. Amen. Thank you guys. Well, that's it for this episode. Thanks for joining us.

Again, you could find us on the website or church app along with Apple podcasts, Spotify and tune in by searching Pursuing Discipleship. Make sure to like, follow and subscribe to get notified when new. New episodes post for those of you who listened to the podcast last season. Thanks for sticking with us.

We know it's been a while since we posted an episode. The podcast is always on the back of my mind for how we can use it to encourage and bless our church family. Please pray with me that in God's timing, we would be able to continue the podcast with more regular episodes. Anyways, that's all for today.

Thank you again for joining us and God willing, see you in a future episode. Bye.