

Martial-arts seminar at Baptist school leads kung-fu master to Christ

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BLUEFIELD, Va. (ABP) — Taiwanese kung-fu master Liu Chang probably didn't think a routine seminar he led at Virginia Baptist-affiliated [Bluefield College](#) would lead to him converting to Christianity. But that's just what happened.

Liu, a widely-respected karate expert, was one of two visiting instructors at a martial-arts seminar hosted by Doug Minnix, Bluefield's assistant professor of exercise and sport science and faculty advisor for the school's Karate Club. Liu was joined by Kimo Wall, an American karate expert who conducts seminars around the world.

Kung-fu master
Liu Chang.
(PHOTO/Bluefield
College)

“Master Liu is no typical kung-fu master,” Minnix said. “He is a 12th-generation direct descendant of the White Crane system.”

The White Crane system is a southern Chinese martial art widely practiced around the world. It is characterized by deep-rooted stances, intricate hand techniques and fighting mostly at close range. There are different levels of the White Crane system; the Feeding Crane level, at which Liu excels, is the most combative.

“[Liu's] technique reminds me of the legendary methods that are only read about and no longer to be found,” said Minnix. “How such a remarkable

individual ended up on tour with Kimo Wall and in the small town of Bluefield, I believe was orchestrated by God.”

Before making his own profession of Christian faith, Minnix, who was a student at Bluefield College in the late 1980s, practiced the principles of Zen Buddhism and traveled to China to research the particular style of karate to which he was devoted.

But, “In the midst of a culture dominated by Zen, I had a God moment,” Minnix recalled about his trip to China. “While walking down the streets, a young man witnessed to me about Jesus and handed me a gospel tract. This seed stayed in my heart and would remain, yet undeveloped, until I returned to Bluefield College.”

Scott Bryan, who chairs Bluefield’s exercise-and-sports-science department, mentored Minnix during his days as a student at Bluefield and shared more about Christianity with him. During his senior year, Minnix answered the call of Christ and subsequently gave up his study of martial arts.

“But, in my devotional time, I kept running across Scriptures that seemed to run harmoniously with karate principles,” Minnix said. “It was during that time that God gave me a vision for a martial-arts ministry.”

That same karate ministry, which involves Scripture memorization and Bible study, is what brought Liu and Wall to Bluefield last summer. Wall, a former Zen Buddhist who also converted to Christianity and who is a longtime sensei (a Japanese title used to address teachers in martial arts) to Minnix, brought Liu to Bluefield to present the Feeding Crane system to karate students from the college and community.



Kung Fu master Liu Chang (center) offers a demonstration during a Bluefield College martial arts seminar. (PHOTO/Bluefield College)

But, the karate students were not the only individuals to leave the martial-arts seminar changed by the experience. During an after-hours dinner, Liu shared the details of a series of events that led him to find both lost relatives and martial-arts techniques. The circumstances, he believes, were magic, because they were too well orchestrated to be coincidence. Wall boldly responded, “Not magic, but a miracle, the power of God.”

Later during the seminar, Liu received word from Taiwan that his home had been damaged by a typhoon. Concerned about his family, Liu found encouragement from people within the college and local church community. They offered Liu support and prayer. Sensing God’s direction in the entire experience, Minnix gave Liu a Chinese/English Bible.

“Following some encouragement by Kimo sensei, I finally presented Mr. Liu with the gospel,” Minnix said. “He opened the book, and with tears in his eyes and a humble disposition, said, ‘All my life I hear about this book, but today [is] the first day I see it.’”

Minnix shared later that he, along with Wall, were amazed at how a man of

such stature, position and power could be so quickly touched by God.

Minnix recalled, "He said to me, 'Now you first time from now on study Feeding Crane; now I first time from now on study the book.' I can't explain how I felt that night. God truly intervened and crossed cultural lines to connect us in a very special way."

Liu would end his trip to Bluefield with a visit to Minnix's church, and said afterwards, "This is [the] first time I go to church. I feel very special power [that I have] not felt before."

Liu communicated later with Minnix and others his desire to learn more about Jesus. He also said his Bluefield experience is one he plans to share with students all over the world.

"I will never forget Bluefield," Liu said. "Bluefield is [the] place where I first talk to God. I go home and tell people here, and they cannot believe. 'You talk to God?' Amazed."

-Crystal Kieloch writes for Bluefield College.