

# Faith In Action

A new series profiling members and friends of SMCC

## Rev. Dr. Tom Bousman

Many of us know Tom Bousman as San Marino Community Church's parish associate from 2004 to 2009, and fondly recall his quick sense of humor, colorful coats, and children's sermons where he captivated his young audience with sign-language. Today, after life-long service in the Church, Tom is retired and living at Monte Vista Grove Homes in Pasadena. He attends SMCC worship services whenever possible.



Despite being raised in a family filled with missionaries and preachers on both sides, Tom never seriously considered going into either of those professions when he was young. And his parents did not exhort him to do so. His parents, who met while his dad was attending Yale, were career missionaries. Starting out in China and then moving to the Philippines prior to World War II they were raising three children, of whom Tom was the oldest, when the war broke out. The entire family along with many other mission workers were forcibly interned in Manila by the Japanese. These were the toughest years of his life. Facing near-starvation and in constant fear for their lives, Tom learned the importance of faith and spiritual fortitude. He also credits his family's sense of humor for keeping them grounded throughout those years.

The day the family and over 2,000 others were dramatically liberated from their confinement by American troops, Tom's mother, overcome with relief and joy announced that while all they had in the world was each other, she had never felt richer. That day Tom felt the call to become a minister; he was certain that his life was spared because he had a destiny to fulfill in the ministry.

Tom attended McCormick Seminary and went on to pastor the Santa Paula Presbyterian Church for 41 years until his retirement in 1994. He describes his ministry style as "pastoral", meaning very collegial. He credits his team-oriented style with his long tenure and success at Santa Paula. Upon his retirement his congregation designated him "Pastor Emeritus".

Dr. Bousman is a heartwarming example of how tragedy can be turned around to glorify God. Like Job, Tom and his family never turned away from God during their ordeal. Rather, they recognized that God was watching over them and would deliver them. Tom was in detention camps facing near-starvation for 3 years; his ministry of spiritually feeding his flock has lasted over 55. Tom's charm, positive outlook, compassion, and delight in everyday life have been a great blessing to others. God works in surprising ways.