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OFJ MAGAZINE

GROWING UP BUDDHIST

8 CHARACTERISTICS
OF WHOLENESS

PRACTICAL GUIDE TO
5-FOLD MINISTRY

SEU OHIO MOVES
TO HEARTLAND

Ohio for Jesus Magazine

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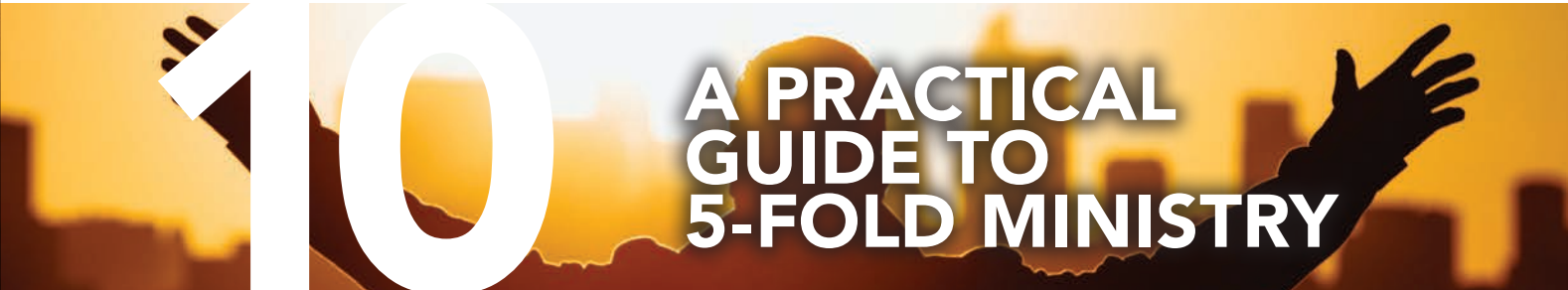
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“...if the Son sets you free,
you will be free indeed.”

John 8:36

8 CHARACTERISTICS OF WHOLENESS!

PART 1

It's More Than "Wellness"

by Robert Crosby, PhD.

Christ's plan for our lives goes well beyond "wellness." From the moment we encounter him in our lives as his followers, he leads us on the journey to *wholeness*. Through brokenness and prayer that process grows and leads to our being made whole at the completion of time. (Phil. 1:6) While engaging in the practices of wellness may be all well and good, as Christ-followers we do something much more ... we follow the "Prince of Peace." In The Message translation of Isaiah's prophecy, Eugene Peterson translates the Prince of Peace as "The Prince of Wholeness" (Is. 9:6-7 THE MESSAGE) and promises "there'll be no limits to the wholeness he brings."

Climbing up on a mountain one day and addressing his disciples, Jesus stated what he expected would characterize this life of wholeness. More likely eager to hear Jesus unveil a militant battle-plan for overthrowing the oppressors of Israel, his disciples possibly missed the fact that he was setting his sights on something much more. Instead of confronting the armies that surrounded them, he would rather overthrow the demons and distractions which were drowning them. At the very onset of his familiar discourse called the Sermon on the Mount Jesus described what the person with a soul set free looks like – in 8 powerful Kingdom characteristics. Let's consider the first two not as prescriptions, but rather descriptions of wholeness.

The Emergence of Passion

With great passion Jesus defined what such a heart and life of wholeness looks and sounds like as he announced a list of characteristics better known as the Beatitudes in Matthew 5:1-10. The late Dr. George Wood's paraphrases of these qualities/attitudes shared with me over twenty years ago still help me get a handle on what they mean in our lives as today.

In this list, Jesus was saying, in essence, "You'll be blessed if you do this!" "This is the right road to be on." "Not only will you be happy if you walk this way, but you can be assured that God approves!"

Characteristics of a Whole Soul

Characteristic #1: A SOUL THAT CAN SAY: "I NEED HELP!"

THE BEATITUDE: *"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

(Matt. 5:3)

We often struggle to admit "I need help." Our souls are often bombarded with cultural clichés we have been fed: "Keep a stiff upper lip!" "Never let them see you sweat!" "Big boys don't cry!" "Be a self-made man or woman!" "If you want a job done right you have to do it yourself!"

Despite the natural tendencies in many to push their way to "the top" or look out for "number 1," Jesus painted the picture of a different type of manner. He affirmed:

"the poor in spirit..."

The word "poor" used in this particular passage describes someone who is destitute, a person who needs help and knows it; someone who cannot make it on their own. Such are the "poor in spirit." Spiritual poverty occurs in the person who recognizes their own limitations and their incredible need for the help of God. This soul says freely, "I need you, Jesus!"... "Lord, I can't do anything without you!" "Left to myself, I just don't have what it takes."

God can only fill people who recognize how truly empty they are without Him. He chooses to only strengthen those who realize their own weaknesses. He has sovereignly elected to achieve his greatest successes through those who recognize their repeated failures and say like the struggling King Jehoshaphat, "... We don't know what to do, but our eyes are upon you." (2 Chron. 20:12)

The characteristic Jesus exalts in this passage smacks of desperation. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," said Jesus. One commentary translates that "Blessed are the desperate." With nowhere else to turn, the desperate just may turn to Jesus, the only one who can offer the deliverance they long for. Jesus really believed that a person who

is poor in spirit, or mourning, or persecuted, or hungry and thirsty for righteousness has a peculiar “advantage” over the rest of us. Maybe, just maybe, the desperate person will cry out to God for help. If so, that person is truly blessed.

Twelve-step programs throughout the world have as their first tenet of recovery the admission of powerlessness. Before support groups made it Step #1 of twelve, however, Christ made it his own Characteristic of Wholeness – #1 of eight.

SOUL'S ENEMY THIS OVERCOMES: PRIDE

One thing and one thing alone keeps us from embracing spiritual poverty as a perpetual attitude is EGO! One person has insightfully offered that the letters which comprise that word stand for Edging God Out. How blessed is the soul that finds grace enough within to admit to themself, to their spouse and peers: “I need help!” Humility opens the door in our hearts to Wholeness.

THE WHOLE SOUL IS...

Characteristic #2: A SOUL THAT CAN SAY: “I AM SENSITIVE! I FEEL!”

THE BEATITUDE: *“Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.”*

(Matt. 5:4)

One of the most oft-quoted verses in the entire Bible is also its shortest and perhaps most intriguing: “Jesus wept.” (John 11:35) In the face of Christ on the pages of the New Testament we see a broad assortment of emotions which he felt. Passion poured out of his soul in many different ways: he *wept* with Mary of Bethany over her brother's death, he *burned with anger* and turned over tables in the temple in the face of those who had corrupted it with their high-priced merchandising (John 2:13-25), he was *overwhelmed with anxiety* to the point of blood, sweat and tears in the Garden of Gethsemane (Luke 22:39-46) as he anticipated his crucifixion and he was *joyously astonished* at the great faith of a Roman centurion. (Matt. 8:5-13) In short, Jesus was emotional. He freely exhibited emotion without ever compromising or jeopardizing his role as a leader.

Some of us tend to ignore the problems in our lives and opt to stuff emotions hoping that they will “just go away.” We are taught to deny our emotions and to live by logic alone. When a person makes a commitment to Jesus Christ, however, a transformation begins deep within their heart and soul affecting the emotional side of their life as well as every other one.

It is important to remember that emotions are a gift from God and serve several important functions, including:

Emotions...help us monitor our needs.

Emotions...can make us aware of good and evil.

Emotions...provide motivation in life.

Emotions...provide energy for growth and change.

Emotions...enhance our sensitivities to other people.

Emotions...color our expressions of worship to God.

Emotions...enrich our relationships, our marriages and families.

When Jesus opens a soul, he does more than pour in forgiveness and the assurance of an eternity in God's presence; he begins to paint emotions, drives and desires for his Kingdom purposes within that heart. It is a glorious thing to behold and more powerful still to experience. God's grace goes to work to draw upon a fountain of feelings and "fuelings" which begin to pour out from deep within (ie: joy, peace, compassion, etc.).

Bottom-line, a few important things to remember about *emotions* are:

- Everyone experiences them.
- They are neither good or bad, healthy or unhealthy. All emotions are gifts of God.
- They have a physical, intellectual and spiritual effect upon us.
- Most of our responses to them are learned ones.
- If we don't understand and learn to control them, they may control us.
- If we don't display them to our families in a healthy manner, our children's view of God will become distorted.

All in all, the life of Christ at work within a heart can cause it to feel on a deeper level than ever before. Increased sensitivity to our spouses, our children and our peers is a sure sign of the Spirit of Christ at work in our life.

SOUL'S ENEMY THIS OVERCOMES: ANGER

Anger can power up in our hearts quicker than a microwave oven. Whether it ignites over a sharp word from your spouse, a tense moment with a customer or a driver who cuts in front of you at 85 mph on the freeway, it doesn't take much for us to fantasize Star Trek-like phasers in our hands pointed at people and set on "STUN", and that's when we're in a *good* mood. Blessed is the person who tastes the grace of God in the emotional side of their life, drinks deeply of it and learns to put it to work daily.

These first two of the famed Beatitudes of Jesus provide us with some more than good morals or good values to embrace. These are the signposts of God's spirit at work in the life of a person helping them grow in the wholeness that only Christ can bring.

Note: The next issue of OFJ Mag will include Part 2 of this article. You can find out more about Emerge or schedule a counseling appointment at www.emerge.org ♦

Robert Crosby, PhD serves as the President of Emerge Counseling Ministries.

Opportunities to Discover Wholeness



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OHIO MINISTRY NETWORK
CHURCH HEALTH

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO THE 5-Fold Ministry

by Carolyn Tennant



Over the past few years, I've had the privilege to be with the Ohio Ministry Network several times, sharing information about APEST. At the recent Seek the Spirit meetings this November, I presented an outcomes-based model for each of the 5-fold ministry currents.

The brief descriptions in the next section focus on exactly what outcomes leaders should be able to observe in their churches when the currents are functioning to the max. A final sentence or two in each summary provides insight as to who in the congregation might be functioning in that particular APEST current.

You might like to study each description and consider which functions are missing or weakened. Then rate your own situation from 1-10 on the present effectiveness of each current. For the APEST areas with lower scores, what can you do to open up the floodgates so that particular ministry stream can flow more fully and freely? Try writing down 1-5 God-given actions (in other words pray about this) which you could implement to improve the flow.

WHEN THE FIVE CURRENTS ARE STRONG

Here are outcomes you should be able to observe for each current:

The Powerful Wooing Current – Evangelism: When the evangelism current is strong, we will constantly have people

coming to Christ because the church is always sharing about Jesus, loving, reaching out, welcoming all kinds of people, and wooing others to Him. Those working in this current have been empowered by God through the baptism in the Holy Spirit to testify boldly and effectively about what God has done for them. They say exactly what He wants them to say so that souls can be reached, right where they are, with the Good News.

The Radical Forming Current – Teaching/Discipleship: When the teaching current is flowing, all new believers become disciples and followers of Jesus who learn to hear and obey His voice, growing and maturing into being more like Him. They produce the fruit of the Spirit and build a close relationship with each member of the Trinity. Those working in this current are strong spiritual models for those they are forming. They are able to communicate and apply the Scriptures accurately and to lead people in the spiritual disciplines.

The Synchronized Choreography Current – Pastoring: When the pastoral current is working properly, the church is healthy, being cared for, and guarded. People are functioning together well as a body of believers and are used in the gifts of the Spirit on a regular basis. They prefer one another in love, give space to others to be themselves, and take their place in the body of Christ to serve as God designed and instructs. Those working in this

movement are no respecter of persons; they care for everyone. They know people by name, are aware of what is happening to them, minister to their needs, and go after them when they wander off.

The Housecleaning Directional Current – Prophetic: When the prophetic current is active, the church is secure, confident in God, and holy. It is being guided by the Father and corrected as needed, and people are receiving confirmation, exhortation, and edification. God is given time to speak and reveal His plans in the midst of business, assembly, and daily life. Those working in this movement are prayer warriors and intercessors, spending time to hear from the Lord. They function in both formal and informal ways and carry around a large toolbox for handling various prophetic situations. They are in tune with God, His heart, His tone, His timing, and His approach, and strongly manifest the fruit of the Spirit.

The Miraculous Sending Current – Apostolic: When the sending movement is strong, the church is able to look outside of itself, take back territory that Satan has previously held, work in signs and wonders to establish God's might, build connections and networks, function and coordinate with other leaders, and maintain sound doctrine and purity within the body of Christ. Those

who work in this current are anointed as God's representatives and are sent from Him to various countries, cultural groups, and problem areas. They are innovators, entrepreneurs, church extenders and planters, missionaries, risk-takers, and guards of the core truths of the Church. They move on to take new territory or tasks on a consistent basis because they are called to keep pushing outside of the present boundaries as God directs and sends.

RENEWAL HELPS THE CURRENTS FLOW

As renewal and fresh wind from the Spirit comes into the churches, God helps all of these currents to flow and raises up strong leaders for each one of them. This is the *kairos* moment to get ready with a full array of the 5-fold giftings which Jesus Himself set in place (Ephesians 4: 11).

After you evaluate your own church regarding the strength of the APEST gifts, pray that God would do a new work. He will lead you because these currents are His heart.

As I have mentioned in the Seek the Spirit meetings, God has adventure for us. He does not want us to be stagnant ponds, and He also desires to provide the power, the means, and the guidance for our God-assigned work as a Church. ✦

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SEU OHIO

MOVES TO HEARTLAND

In August of 2023 SEU Ohio took a big step and moved the entire campus to the grounds of Heartland Conference Retreat Center. It has been incredible to see how the students and faculty have connected with the staff of Heartland, and to feel the energy at Heartland on a daily basis. We had the opportunity to talk with Dan Lund, Assistant Network Superintendent, Josh Willaford, Leader Development Director, and Will Davis, Heartland Executive Director of Operations about the move. They were pivotal team members in the decision to move the campus and the process of making that decision a reality.

OFJ Magazine: Was moving SEU Ohio to HCRC always the plan?

Dan Lund: The initial discussion for a possible transition began in the Fall of 2022. At that time, we were just discussing the viability and if it was even a possibility. That discussion was then expanded to a committee involving leadership from the Executive Leadership Team, SEU Ohio, and Heartland.

OFJ Magazine: How long did it take to move SEU Ohio to HCRC?

Dan Lund: Just under a year from first conversation to full implementation. Once a decision was ready to be proposed, it was brought to the Executive Presbytery in the Spring, and upon their approval, it was confirmed by the full Presbytery. The committee then expanded to a Transitional Team which guided the remainder of the move, and the transition was completed for the launch of our SEU Fall semester in August 2023.

OFJ Magazine: How did you physically move the campus? That had to take a lot of people.

Dan Lund: As we all know, many hands make light the work, and this never would have happened without a great team. The Transitional Team met weekly on Tuesday mornings and included 7 people. Then, there were at least a dozen more people from both SEU Ohio and HCRC who were consistently involved hands-on in preparing for the move. We also had additional help from church teams, RV volunteers, some outside professionals who helped with things like electrical, as well as Daniel & Elisha Robertson from Church Mobilization. Then, on the actual move day, the entire Network Resource Center staff as well as the staff from SEU Ohio and HCRC joined together with volunteers from Network churches to load and unload multiple moving trucks, and Krupp Movers took the things that needed to be stored offsite.

OFJ Magazine: Josh, can you tell us about the growth of SEU Ohio this year? How many students are enrolled?

Josh Willaford: SEU Ohio has over one hundred students taking courses for credit. While residential students come to mind who are taking seated class on campus at Heartland, we also have students taking courses as commuters, as well as online students. Additionally, we have students taking courses in one of our twenty-five associates, bachelors, and graduate degree programs.

One of the largest areas of growth for our campus has been amongst high school students who have enrolled in SEU Ohio's dual enrollment program. Because of College Credit Plus funds in Ohio, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth graders can take courses for college credit at no cost because the state underwrites the cost. It's quite incredible to have dozens of high school students who are receiving college credit at no cost and being taught by faculty who are devoted followers of Christ.

OFJ Magazine: What is their living arrangement and where are classes held?

Josh Willaford: Students on campus at Heartland live in the Sycamore Lodge. Each dorm room houses four students in bunk beds. Each student has access to their own wardrobe, dresser drawers, and desk. In the common space of the dorm, there are seating areas where students can spend time together with their friends or watch TV. Additionally, students have access to a small convenience store area where they can purchase snacks, drinks, household items, and meals.

Classes are held in the newly built Buckeye Ministry Center. Classes are equipped with the types of learning technologies that enables remote students to join in an immersive way that helps facilitate their academic experience.

OFJ Magazine: While this is an exciting move for SEU Ohio, how has having SEU Ohio onsite impacted the business of Heartland? Are you still able to host outside events with SEU Ohio on the campus throughout the year?

Will Davis: It works well. We are able to host multiple events simultaneously here at Heartland. The addition of SEU Ohio works in a similar fashion as having two retreats or events booked at the same time. When it comes to various areas on the grounds, such as the rec area, say pickleball or volleyball, groups, including SEU Ohio, can reserve those spaces. When we don't have other groups here, SEU Ohio is able to use those areas freely. We only have a couple of instances, during the school year, where groups require the use of SEU Ohio's designated classroom spaces at the same time as classes. In those cases Heartland communicates the details to SEU Ohio staff, and up to this point they have been able to move classes either offsite, or online. Other than that, SEU Ohio has been able to co-exist with all other groups that might be here on the grounds, and they've been a welcome addition.

OFJ Magazine: What opportunities does this move provide for SEU Ohio?

Josh Willaford: The move to Heartland has offered blessings to SEU Ohio in so many incredible ways, benefitting our campus family. Our residential students are enjoying the benefits of brand-new dorm furniture, a meal plan through the cafeteria at Heartland, the comfort of the new Buckeye Ministry Center for chapel and academic spaces, and the many amenities at Heartland for having fun activities like disc golf, pickleball, sand volleyball courts, and miles of hiking trails.





OFJ Magazine: What are you most thankful for in this move?

Dan Lund: The move of SEU Ohio was critical because it eliminates some of the financial variables such as the cost of outside rentals for housing, and of course, it gives us the ability to have more of a safe and controllable campus atmosphere for the students. But, the thing that excites me the most is the unity it brought between our teams. It's been wonderful to see our Heartland staff welcome our SEU Ohio staff and students, and to see them so excited to be a part of the vision to raise up leaders. I feel this move has brought us one step closer to alignment in a unified mission to "Develop leaders to multiply disciples of Jesus by the Spirit's power," and to see our state forgiven, healed and whole, as we reach Ohio for Jesus!

OFJ Magazine: Thank you all for taking time to share with us what is happening at Heartland with the addition of SEU Ohio. It is incredible to see how far SEU Ohio has come in such a short time. From the first year with just 8 students, to more than 100 is amazing. It is exciting to see SEU Ohio already fulfilling Ohio for Jesus, as leaders are Identified and Trained right here at Heartland.

If you are interested in learning more about SEU Ohio or Heartland Conference Retreat Center you can visit their websites at SEUohio.com and Heartlandretreat.com.



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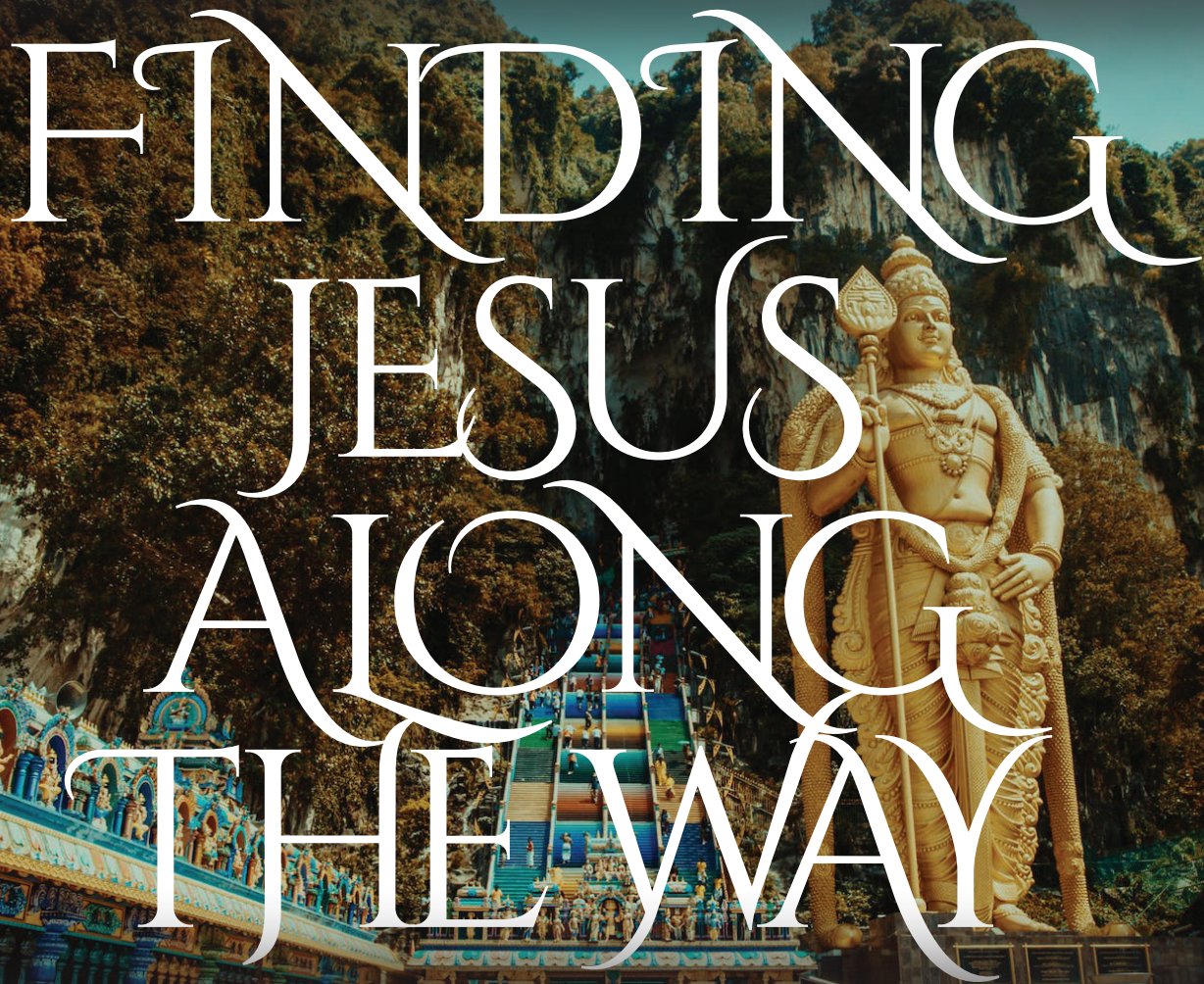
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GROWING UP BUDDHIST



FINDING JESUS ALONG THE WAY

by Dale Cuckow | Shanghai, China

When I was first asked, “Would I like to write an article with a focus on Buddhism” I knew that I would but needed the right approach. It is true that I do live in Asia, the region of the world where Buddhism has a dominant influence, but I wanted to approach it in a way that would be personal to me, especially connected to the work that I do as a lead pastor in an international church in Asia. It didn’t take long for me to discover that right before my eyes were the stories of the many people I have known who grew up in Buddhist families in Asia and their journey to faith in Jesus.

What follows are four stories from people who shared their journey to faith with me:

Cherry

Cherry's grandmother was a devout Buddhist having been influenced by her sister. In turn, Cherry's mother would adopt the Buddhism of her mother and her aunt. Buddhism is strongly connected within the context of family relations. Cherry grew up Buddhist, going to the temple with the family but even as a child Cherry says, "I didn't feel right about it. I wanted to be respectful, but I felt afraid."

Cherry's journey toward Jesus was greatly influenced by an international church in her city. Cherry says, "When I heard at the church that when you become a Christian you get a new life, I thought they did not say, "a better life", that is different from a new life. I wanted to know more about this new life. Every time I heard the word, "new" I felt like that was a sign from God."

Emily

Emily's father's family had a traditional religious outlook influenced by Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Little of such religious thoughts or practices remained in the family until crisis struck. In 1982, Emily, the family's only child became deathly ill. A last-minute diagnosis saved Emily's life, and her parents decided to seek a relationship with a local Buddhist temple to pay their respects and to secure the family's future protection.

For Emily's parents, this meant going to the temple often to volunteer, to do good works which did not alleviate their fears or prevent future disasters.

Emily writes, *"My parents loved me, but their affection often came from their own fears and worries, which limited my life. Their peace was the kind that comes from avoiding storms and setbacks, while I yearned for a peace that could stand firm in the midst of storms."*

Emily's journey toward Christ started in childhood with a thought that she might become a Christian one day and was cemented by experiencing the love and friendship of foreign Christians the year she studied abroad. Upon returning to China, she was influenced by a Christian co-worker who brought her to church where she saw the true nature of peace in Christ compared to the peace her family had pursued all those years.



Victoria

As a young child Victoria was once very sick, and her parents dedicated her to Buddha and one of the goddesses in the temple. One of her childhood memories is waking up to the smell of incense and her mother chanting. Victoria said, "My mother chanted for power, for things to get done, for success in business and for protection."

"All during my childhood", Victoria shared, "I went to temple and practiced Buddhism with my family, I didn't know anything else."

When she was 15 years old, she traveled to visit a family member living in Australia who had become a Christian. Victoria was introduced to Christianity and invited into faith – she was baptized. Looking back on it, she said, "I was just following my cousins."

After returning to her home country of Malaysia, and many struggles to be a Christian on her own, she gave up. She prayed, "I don't know where you are, I don't how to find you here. If I am yours, you will find me."

In 2020 everything fell apart. Victoria says, "I never really knew what God was like, His true nature, until I was completely broken. It was God's perfect timing that saved me from me."

The Difference

Everyone I interviewed specifically focused on their experience of fear and lack of peace in their Buddhist practice. Now they all profess their Christian faith as the center of their lives. They all talked about the influence of the Christians they met along the way.

We may never truly know the difference we are making in our prayers, in our words, in our going and in the sharing of our lives ...but our heavenly Father knows. Let's keep on loving Him and loving others. ✦

Anthony

Anthony grew up in a Buddhist home in Japan. During his university years he attended a conversational English class sponsored by foreign Christians on campus. They invited him to church, and he would sometimes go, but he never became a Christian.

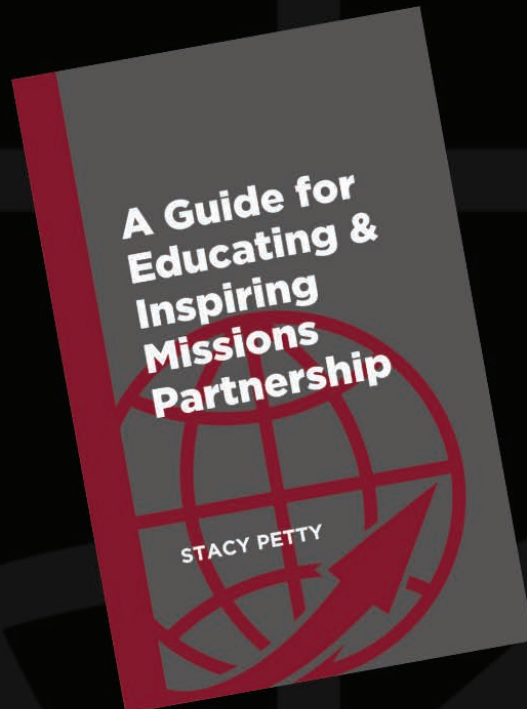
A couple of years after graduation Anthony accepted an invitation to visit friends in the U.S. While there he discovered that Christians had been praying for him during his university years. Anthony was shown the missionary newsletters that mentioned him by name, "*Please pray for Anthony, a young student who has been attending English conversation class.*"

Anthony would return to Japan, reconnect with the church, and would become a Christian, following Jesus in baptism. Looking back, Anthony said, "After being invited and resistant to Christian faith during my university years, it was something about discovering that a group of people in another country who did not know me had been praying for me that turned my heart toward Christ."



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