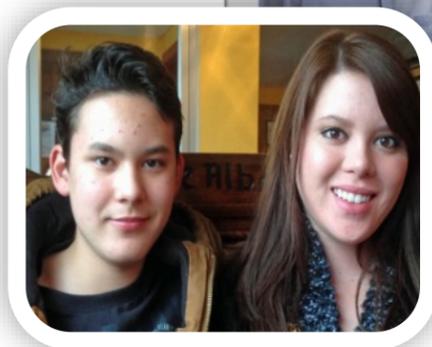
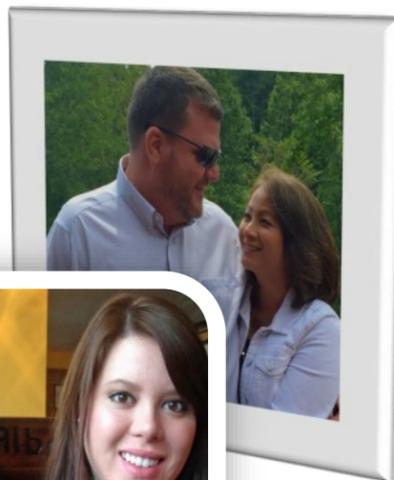


that any should perish but all should come to repentance.” His grace and goodness extends in all our lives. Remember: God has a plan for you too. ∞



Beverly and Jack have two children: Christopher and Amanda

About Buddhism

(Note: TTCOC believes Buddhism to be a false religion and is providing the following for educational purposes only)

What is Buddhism?

Buddhism is considered a religion to about 300 million people around the world. The word comes from 'budhi', 'to awaken'. It has its origins about 2,500 years ago when Siddhartha Gotama, known as the Buddha, was himself supposedly awakened (enlightened) at the age of 35.

Is Buddhism a Religion?

To many, Buddhism is both a religion and also a philosophy or 'way of life'. It is a philosophy because philosophy 'means love of wisdom' and the Buddhist path can be summed up as:

- (1) to lead a moral life,
- (2) to be mindful and aware of one's thoughts and actions, and
- (3) to develop wisdom and understanding.

Is the Buddha Considered to be a God?

He was not, nor did he claim to be. He was a man who taught a path to enlightenment from his own experience.

Do Buddhists Worship Idols?

Buddhists sometimes pay respect to images of the Buddha, but not in worship nor to ask for favors.

Are There Different Types of Buddhism?

There are many different types of Buddhism, because the emphasis changes from country to country due to customs and culture. What does not vary is the essence of the teaching — the Dhamma or truth.

What did the Buddha Teach?

The basic concepts in Buddhism can be summed up by the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

What is the First Noble Truth?

The first truth is that life involves suffering. Life includes pain, getting old, disease, and ultimately death. We also endure psychological suffering like loneliness, frustration, fear, embarrassment, disappointment and anger. This is an irrefutable fact that cannot be denied. Buddhism explains how suffering can be avoided and how we can be truly happy.

What is the Second Noble Truth?

The second truth is that suffering is caused by excessive desires and expectations. Rather than constantly struggling to get what we want, we must try to manage our wanting. Wanting deprives us of contentment and happiness.

What is the Third Noble Truth?

The third truth is that suffering can be overcome and happiness can be attained; that true happiness and contentment are possible. If we give up useless craving and learn to live each day at a time (not dwelling in the past or the imagined future) then we can become happy and free. We then have more time and energy to help others. This is Nirvana.

What is the Fourth Noble Truth?

The fourth truth is that the Noble 8-fold Path is the path which leads to the end of suffering.

What is the Noble 8-Fold Path?

In summary, the Noble 8-fold Path is being moral (through what we say, do and our livelihood), focusing the mind on being fully aware of our thoughts, motives and actions, and developing wisdom by understanding the Four Noble Truths and by developing compassion for others.

What are the 5 Precepts?

The moral code within Buddhism is the precepts, of which the main five are: not to take the life of anything living, not to take anything not freely given, to abstain from sexual misconduct and sensual overindulgence, to refrain from untrue speech, and to avoid intoxication, that is, losing mindfulness.

What is Karma?

Karma is the law that every cause has an effect, i.e., our actions have results. This simple law explains a number of things: inequality in the world, why some are born handicapped and some gifted, why some live only a short life. Karma underlines the importance of all individuals being responsible for their past and present actions.

What is Wisdom?

Buddhism teaches that wisdom should be developed in conjunction with compassion. At one extreme, you could be a good hearted fool and at the other extreme, you could attain knowledge without any emotion. Buddhism uses the middle path to develop both.

What is Compassion?

Compassion includes qualities of sharing, readiness to give comfort, sympathy, concern, caring. Buddhism teaches we can really understand others, when we can really understand ourselves, through wisdom.



Spiritual thoughts from women of the Temple Terrace Church of Christ



In loving memory of our sister, Joella Pickup.

Worthy Women's Words

March 2016—Vol. 10, No. 3

From Viet Nam to Temple Terrace Thru God's Mercy and Grace

by Beverly Hill

I want to thank Mrs. Littell for encouraging me to share my life story. My prayer is that God will be glorified. I hope my story will show how God's grace and goodness have enriched my life and saved my soul. Psalms 23:6 states, "Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

My name is Beverly Hill, and I am ready to share my life story. It is often difficult for me to think about my past, and to relive such scary and painful memories. Those



dark days truly feel like another life time.

I was born in 1968 during the Vietnam War. We lived in a village called Bien Hoa in S. Vietnam. I was only a couple of months old when war broke out in our village—the North

Vietnamese soldiers had invaded South Vietnam. As bombs exploded in every direction, my mom fled with me in her arms. Knowing she and her newborn baby could (and likely would) die at any moment, she could do nothing more than hope for survival and continue to run from her village. By God's grace, my mom found shelter; we had survived this tragedy. In later years, my mom would tell me about the horrific memories of running away from our village. She specifically remembers seeing a dog run for its life. I find this to be an interesting memory; I like to think that the dog survived.

Survival was of utmost importance to the people in South Vietnam. Their desire was to escape the bombs and the soldiers. As people would run in terror, the soldiers would often gun down men, women, and children. During this time of terror, many people died. My mom and I were fortunate; we survived. God kept my mom and me safe in His loving hands and He delivered us to safety. I can relate to Psalm 138:7 which states, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, you preserve my life; you stretch out

your hand against the wrath of my enemies; and your right hand delivered me."

There are many times that I feel guilty that I survived when so many others died. I know, however, that God spared my life for a purpose. I now have a living testimony of His grace and tender mercy. Jeremiah 1:5 states, "Before I formed you in the womb I knew you. Before you were born, I ordained you a prophet to the nations."

This verse helps me to truly understand that God knew me and had a plan for my life before I was even born.

I would like to introduce to you what it was like living on the other side of the world. I lived with my grandparents in the village while my mother worked in Saigon. She came home when she could. I know that my grandparents and mother did the best they could to shelter me from the war. I was so young and did not understand death and devastation. I want to share some memories of the war from the eyes of a five year old. I can see burial mounds, as I walked the country side. The North Vietnamese soldiers raiding villages at night and taking people from their homes. My uncle was taken away and we never saw him again. Because of what happened to my uncle, I still have a fear of staying by myself at night. Every so often, I still dream of soldiers coming into the house and taking me away. There is one final memory I want to share. While bathing in the lake, I noticed several candle-lit boats filled with trinkets and coins. As a child, I did not realize that these shrines were memorial boat shrines for people that died. It is a custom in Vietnam to make a boat shrine in memory of a loved one. Also, it is believed that the spirit of the loved ones would travel in these boats to the next life.



Next, I would like to share my family's religious background. We lived in a country filled with idol worshippers. My mother and grandparents were Buddhist. I was raised to believe that we were born as Buddhist and died as Buddhist. The Buddhist religion has been passed down for many generations in our family. They never questioned what they believed. We had a shrine in our home. It was a large sculpture of Buddha. We lit incense, bowed down, and prayed daily to Buddha. We offered sacrifices three times a day. The sacrifices consisted of fruit in the morning, a prepared lunch in the afternoon, and a large dinner plate in the evenings. These meals were left in front of the Buddha statue with burning incense. By offering these sacrifices, Buddha was able to enjoy the fragrant aromas of the prepared foods. I never understood as a child how Buddha could smell or eat the food. I can relate to the people in the Old Testament who worshipped idols and built altars to them. Vietnam is filled with many beautiful temples and shrines built in honor of Buddha.



These meals were left in front of the Buddha statue with burning incense. By offering these sacrifices, Buddha was able to enjoy the fragrant aromas of the prepared foods. I never understood as a child how Buddha could smell or eat the food. I can relate to the people in the Old Testament who worshipped idols and built altars to them. Vietnam is filled with many beautiful temples and shrines built in honor of Buddha.

However; it was getting too dangerous to live in Vietnam. The North Vietnamese soldiers had taken over most of the country.



It was time for us to leave Vietnam. We left right before the fall of Saigon. My stepfather went back to the States to organize the paper work and finances to bring us over to America. It was a long and expensive process. We were very blessed to have the financial help of the members at the Church of Christ in Jacksonville. They contributed enough money to pay for our plane tickets. My stepfather was not able to fly back to get us. The preacher at the church in Saigon helped us prepare for the trip to the U.S.

It was heart breaking and difficult for mom to take us away from our grandparents. They were not able to come with us. I didn't understand why we had to leave and did not want to go. Mom told my sister and me, "We are going on a three day trip and we would be home before we knew it". My sister did not want to go and she was not well. Mom thought forcing my sister to go would only make her worse. My sister was elated that she did not have to leave. I was the more adventuresome of the two, and loved going to different places. I was mixed with a feeling of excitement because of the adventure, but also despair because I was leaving my grandparents, whom I dearly loved. I kept telling myself it was only going to be three days. I can still see myself wearing my little polka dot outfit and holding my mom's hand. I will never forget the red taillights of the airplane as it was taking off. God gave this little girl the courage and strength to make this journey. My sister stayed in Vietnam with my grandparents. She is still living there and has never had a desire to move to the U.S. She is married and has two sons. My grandparents passed away several years ago.

America was incredibly different from Vietnam. I could not speak the English language, and I did not desire to eat the strange food. While other kids ate macaroni and cheese, I ate rice and soy sauce. In fact, I continued to eat nothing but rice and soy sauce during my first three months in the U.S.

The first day of school was terrifying. Not only was my knowledge of the English language limited, the other kids began to tease me. They called me "Chinese-eyed girl"

because I looked different. Thankfully, God gave me the wisdom and endurance to overcome prejudice. I ignored the comments and focused on doing well in school. The teachers were incredibly helpful and kind. I am still thankful to all teachers out there, because I know how much a caring teacher can influence the lives of their students. Truly, teachers are the cornerstone for our children's successes.

In America, church was so foreign to me. At first, I did not like attending or singing with the congregation. I especially did not understand why we took the Lord's Supper. My mom and I did our best to fit in; we did what we saw the people around us doing. For us, it was easier to bow down to a statue at home rather than attend worship services three times a week. I think mom did her best to please my stepfather by attending church, because he sincerely loved going. He did his best to serve God and raise his family as Christians. Although mom was baptized, I do not think she ever fully embraced God's word; it was easier for her to cling to her Buddhist beliefs.

My stepfather passed away when I was 15 years old. His passing changed the dynamics in our family drastically. I became the care provider for my younger brother and sister. Mom worked all the time and we attended services less and less. Eventually, my family stopped going altogether. I however, had grown to love our church family. I enjoyed attending the church services, and, luckily, my mom never stopped me from going. As I continued to attend services on my own, the Lord blessed me with a wonderful Christian friend. Betty Toohey was a teacher and a fellow churchgoer. She tutored me in math, studied the Bible with me, and made sure I always had a ride to church. In many ways, she was like my second mom. When I was 16, as a result of Betty's influence in my life, I obeyed the gospel. I am grateful to say we have maintained a lifelong friendship.

As a junior in high school, I had no plans for college. One Wednesday evening after service, the preacher's wife and another Christian woman took me aside to talk to me. They asked me if I had any desire to attend Florida College, a Christian school located in Temple Terrace. Even though I had no plans for college, the Lord thought differently. I ended up being offered a full ride scholarship. I graduated from high school a year early, and I started attending Florida College. God definitely blessed me with such an opportunity. I graduated from Florida College and left with many lifelong friends. I also married the love of my life.

Jack and I met while he was working at an insurance company in Jacksonville, Florida. We have been married for almost 27 years. We also have a daughter and son. Amanda is in her senior year of college and Chris is a sophomore in high school.

On a happy note, I went back to Vietnam in May of 2015. It has been over 40 years since I left. I can only speak a few words of Vietnamese, but I still understand it fluently. I was also able to visit my sister. It was a very tearful and happy reunion. We had a difficult time communicating. She did not speak English and I spoke very little Vietnamese. We managed, thank goodness for modern technology. I called mom and we face-timed. Mom did the translating for us. We spent time sight seeing with Than (my sister). She was our guide in Saigon. I was amazed at how much Vietnam has changed. The buildings are beautifully designed, with a French Architectural

flair. The modes of transportation are mopeds and buses. We enjoyed Vietnam. I'm so glad I was able to visit with my sister.



After all that has happened to me, I have such a love for the Lord. His grace and goodness is never ending. 2 Corinthians 12:9 states, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness." I know He spared my soul. Truly, God has been with me throughout the entirety of my life. Deuteronomy 31:8 states, "And the Lord, He is the One who goes before you. He will be with you. He will not leave you nor forsake you; do not fear or be dismayed. God's grace and goodness is never ending." I thank God every day for allowing me to live in America. I am blessed to live in a country that not only is free from war, but also allows me to worship without fear of persecution.

God brought me out of a country filled with idolatry, war, and devastation. He also blessed me with a very loving husband and two terrific children. I also have a wonderful church family. I will never be able to do enough to repay Him for everything He has done for me. He saved my soul and gave me life. Because of His grace and goodness, I am alive today to share my story. God desired for all to be saved and for none to perish. 2 Peter 3:9 states, "The Lord is not slacking concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering toward us, not willing



Who Was the Buddha? Siddhartha Gotama was born into a royal family in Lumbini, now located in Nepal, in 563 BC. At 29, he realized that wealth and luxury did not guarantee happiness, so he explored the different teachings, religions, and philosophies of the day, to find the key to human happiness. After six years of study and meditation he finally found 'the middle path' and was enlightened. After enlightenment, the Buddha spent the rest of his life teaching the principles of Buddhism — called the Dhamma, or Truth — until his death at the age of 80.

My mother married my stepfather, an American soldier in the Army. My stepfather was a member of the Church of Christ. He worshipped at a small congregation on the military base in Saigon. It was his goal for us to live in Vietnam and worship at the church he attended.