

## “Courageous Spirit”

This is the first FWCC/AWPS Essay made possible by an anonymous donation. The conditions were to explore aspects of Quakerism within an Asian context.

Written by John Cartwright an Australian who has travelled extensively in Asia and it was while visiting Kuala Lumpur that he was introduced to Tzu Chi, engaged Buddhism and so began his journey to four countries, beautiful temples, monasteries and countless hours of dialogue with Buddhists and Christians all seeking to engage with the modern world.

There is a deep growing appreciation of the sense of community between religions through their individual members, giving rise to openness, mutual trust, respect, joy and enthusiasm, not separation, mistrust, hostility and conflict.

Both Quaker and Buddhist traditions demonstrate powerful, practical implications for profound social change if they become “engaged” with society, characterised by caring and service, social and environmental protest, non-violence as a creative way of overcoming conflict and demanding a socially just and sustainable society.

John Cartwright goes on to talk about “A Spiritual Hunger” and “The Stillness Movement”, “be still and know that I am God”

In Asia, countries, including China, are experiencing a religious boom, numbers reflecting a spiritual yearning, a seeking, contact with and expression of God in their lives. Buddhists, like Quakers, are realising that they do not need teachers, but guides being led by the power (Light) within.

He also talks about “A New Buddhism” an engaged Buddhism, distinctions between monk and layperson are almost done away with, and more women are becoming full participants, bringing fresh perspectives. The foundation of the Tzu Chi Foundation by a single monastic nun with five followers now has 10-million members.

The essay continues listing “The Engaging Aspects of Quakers and Buddhists” and giving “Examples of engaged Buddhism and how they speak to the Quaker condition in Asia” - Fo Guang Shan and the Blue Ocean Strategy of Value Innovation, Tzu Chi and the bamboo moneybox and the Jing-Si Cafes – Essence of Books, Aroma of Tea, Spiritual Enlightenment.

If you wish to read the essay in full, copies can be found in all Meeting House libraries, contact the MM Clerk or you will be given a copy at the Section Gathering in Manila.