ASK!
LifeQuest Community
*A Place for Honest Questions, Discovery, and Disciple-Making*

Issue No. 2 | January, 2023 | Published Quarterly

# How do you find people who want to study the Bible?

*In our first newsletter from October 2022, I addressed the questions of how and why the LifeQuest Community organization was formed in State College, Pennsylvania. In this newsletter, I will respond to another question we are often asked.*

Soon after our family moved to State College in 2014, we began looking for people we could befriend and study the Bible with. Some months later, we got a knock on our door. It was Russ and Wendy Boyd. They had studied at Penn years earlier and were celebrating their 20th anniversary in our area. Russ and Wendy (who are now Anabaptists) had just taken a stroll through the State college campus. They noticed students walking the same sidewalks they had walked as students 20 years earlier. As the Boyd's walked, they were discussing, "How many of these students are seeking truth, much like we were at their age? How many of them do not know anyone who can assist them in their spiritual journey?"

These questions have inspired hundreds or even thousands of prayers in the years since that visit with Russ and Wendy. "Lord, please fill us with your Spirit. Please lead us to the people who are seeking and to those who want to study the Bible."

Life Quest Community

So how do we find these seekers? We pray—and pray often. But we don't just pray. We look for people who are watching us and then walk up to them and introduce ourselves. We invite them into our homes. We hand out Christian literature and invite people to Bible studies. We staff a Bible and literature display at the main student hub and talk to people who walk by our table. We post flyers on bulletin boards in college campus buildings (over 300 of them). We post flyers at grocery stores, restaurants, and community buildings. We offer free English classes for immigrants and other internationals. We conduct religious surveys with students on campus and add them to our email list. We go on walks with people and introduce newcomers to the scenic areas in our region. We serve meals during the winter holidays and host picnics in nice weather…

Of every 100 people we invite to a Bible presentation, perhaps one will attend at least once. And for every 100 people who attend a Bible presentation, perhaps one will begin attending Bible studies. And as we have learned from observation and from others, some seed that is sown may lie dormant for 10, 20, 30, or more years until it finally sprouts and grows. We have many contacts who receive a quote from the Bible from us each week. We may not hear from these people for a few years. And then out of the blue, we will get a knock at our door, or a message thanking us for the Bible verses. Sometimes they have a spiritual or religious question. The Holy Spirit is at work!

We do not find this discouraging, but rather encouraging! There are people who have returned to their home countries who are still interested in spiritual things. There are people who want to follow Jesus, right here in North America!

We live in a nation that, in many ways, is walking away from God. Many Christians view America as a difficult mission field, and in many ways, it is. Because of this, many have given up trying to reach people with the Gospel. And some never try. But in spite of the rapid secularization that is happening in our country, there are seekers who **do** want to learn to know God. There are seekers who **do** want to learn from Jesus' followers. And if we, who endeavor to obey the teachings of Jesus, are not available to disciple them, seekers will look elsewhere. They may look to other religions, or they may find people who are glad to speak about spiritual things, but are not yet embracing the hard teachings of Jesus. People often ask us, "So how are you different from other Christians? Do you have different beliefs?" Answering this question is a great opportunity to introduce people to Jesus' teachings and to a worldview that runs counter to nearly everything our society stands for.

Jesus tells us that relatively few people will be saved. This information was not meant to discourage us, but rather to motivate us! There **are** a few! Not only will few be saved, but the laborers are also few. But there **are** a few! This is encouraging and motivates us to pray for more laborers. We are looking for more laborers here in State College, but we also want to see an increase of laborers around the world. Will you join us in praying to the Lord of the harvest that he would send more laborers?

*- Ernest Eby | Director*

**Thank you for joining us in prayer!**

***Please pray that…***

- Those studying the Bible with us will learn to know their Creator and Savior and commit their lives to Him.
- God will provide a volunteer to teach internationals to speak and read English.
- God will provide volunteers to conduct religious surveys on campus.
- God will provide a house for us to use for staff lodging, Bible studies, and office space.

***Snippets of life with college students***

*The PowerPoint was on "Weather". Mai and Lama have never seen snow before. Mai is working as a delivery driver, and he's pretty nervous about driving in the snow. He said he was sure he was safe because of our prayers.*

*This morning was busy with planning for our Christmas party for our international friends. We plan to have homemade soup, homemade cornbread muffins, fruit and a variety of cookies. We plan to do a simple gift exchange. During the week leading up to Christmas I'll share the PowerPoint on the Christmas story. I wrestle with how much to emphasize the real meaning of Christmas without excluding how most Americans celebrate it. Perhaps it's good if they see the contrast.*

*I was telling some of the Chinese ladies how American children "dig a hole to China." I asked them if Chinese children ever "dig to America." Yee never missed a beat. She said, "No, it's probably illegal!"*

# A Peek into My Work…

*Tara Foster | English teacher*

"Miss Tara, may I have a Bible?"

"I would like a Bible, Teacher."

"Why does God allow evil? Why did He let Satan come to earth?"

"Do you have to pray in a certain position? Do you always pray before you have a meal?"

"Thank you for praying for me."

"Why does God use such inefficient methods?" (This was a question posed by a student after I told him the whole story of Joseph.)

"My grandparents are Christians. My dad's brothers and sisters are Christians, but my dad is not. Maybe I should study the Bible."

"I'm so lucky to have met you."

"Thank you for teaching me. You are a good teacher."

"How can Jesus be the 'Son of David'? Is *David* God?"

"Some people who read this story will be sad." (My student was referring to the story of Lot in Sodom that she read in the CAM Bible storybook.)

"It's Jesus!" (We were reading about the 4th Man in the fiery furnace.)

"Thank you for praying for my friend! May I take your picture so I can send it to my friend so she can see who prayed for her?" (I had prayed out loud for her friend who was dealing with major depression on the other side of the world.)

"Can we study the Bible next time instead?"

"You are more than my teacher; you are my best friend."

These are real comments and questions I have received from my students. I have worked with people from ages 18-67. They come from exotic and tropical countries in South America, the Middle East, southern parts of Asia, as well as from all over China.

No matter where these dear souls were born, each of them have a hunger in their souls for truth. Some of them are desperate to know, some a little skeptical, and others are passively interested. None have been hostile or completely indifferent.

I greatly value this privilege that's been entrusted to me. I have often joked over my many years as a teacher of one kind or another that I "get paid to talk." Honestly, the sacred part of being a teacher is getting to *listen*. I get to hear the heart cries of young adult university students as well as middle-aged married people. I listen to their sighs, see the worried eyes as they tell me of their loved one's thousands of miles away, and hear the sadness over how many more months or years it will be until they will see each other again.

There are joys too. They tell me about their up-coming job interviews. We celebrate birthdays, eat special meals together, and take walks at the park. We share friendship, and because of that, I have opportunity to share about the Bible and my personal walk with Jesus in the natural course of conversation. Their hearts are open, and God uses me to present His gift of Life.

LifeQuest Community is a *501 c3* non-profit organization that provides community, teaching, mentoring, and resources for people who are curious about or interested in the Christian faith – especially those with little exposure to the concepts of the Gospel.

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*Please mail* _____ *newsletters each quarter.*
*Please send us* _____ *prayer bookmarks for us to distribute at our church.*
*(Some bookmarks will picture adults and others will picture children.)*

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☐ *Please contact us about doing a LifeQuest presentation in our community.*
☐ *Please email prayer requests once or twice a month to this email address:* _____

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