

Kingdom Moments – It Takes Only One



It Takes Only One
Amy Sugawa
September 10, 2023

LOST AND DECEIVED

In 1973 my husband Gary and I returned to Hawaii after spending several years finishing college and Gary fulfilled his two-year military obligation on the mainland. My first job was at a private school as a registered occupational therapist. My director and the teachers convinced me to attend **Erhard Seminars Training, EST** for short, since they had attended and they wanted **all the staff to be aligned in thinking and philosophy**. Gary also attended with me since they said it is good that we also be on the same page at home.

Years later as we processed the training, we realized we had been **brainwashed into thinking that there is no God other than the god within ourselves**. We had the **power to create our own universe**. We had been trained **in mind control and we were taught whatever we felt was right, was right**. There was **no standard of truth or morality**. If anyone, like our spouse, **disagreed with us; they were wrong and interfering with our space**. With that *me-first* and *it's-all-about-me* kind of thinking, **many couples got divorced and families were torn apart**.

I then got into **Siddha Yoga** when one of my friends at work opened her home to be an ashram. We would gather weekly, sit on the floor, **burn incense, chant our chants** in front of a huge, wall-sized picture of **Baba Muktananda, a Siddha Yoga guru, and worship him**. **Werner Erhard, the founder of EST, studied under Baba Muktananda**.

From this group, I visited a **New Age church** once. The reverend announced that one of his colleagues was going to teach a **new class**. I decided to sign up. In the class we were being taught to **read auras around people, levitate things, and throw our bodies in space, what they call astral projection**. About the third class, a new friend shared with me that she was having an **affair with the reverend**. As messed up as my mind was, I knew that was wrong. I also got concerned **he was exerting some kind of ungodly power and control over her**, and I quit the class.

ROY'S DREAM

During this time, **Gary's older brother Roy, wife Joan** and son Robert were living comfortably in Cincinnati, Ohio. They had good jobs, a big, beautiful house, and solidly planted in a true church. They were the **only Christians in the family**.

One night Roy had a **dream**. In this dream he was at his **father's funeral**. As he was standing in front of the **open casket, his father suddenly sat up and said to Roy: "Roy, why didn't you ever tell me about your Jesus?"** As you can imagine, Roy and Joan **started to pray** and seek the Lord. They knew it would be a financial challenge to move and live in Hawaii. **Two days after the dream, Roy got an unexpected, unsolicited call out of nowhere from a company that offered him a job in Hawaii with everything they asked the Lord for**.

At first, of course, we were happy they were home, but soon our **faiths began to collide**. Not only **Gary and I, but also their two sisters were in New Age thinking, and both parents were longtime Buddhists**. Roy and Joan lovingly and patiently would share about Jesus and that **He was the only way to heaven and eternal life**. They **continued to be gracious and steady even when the rest of us would respond with unkind words and manner**.

STRANGE ENCOUNTERS

Strange things started to happen to me. Like one day I am at a work conference and decide to have lunch with **two therapy friends**. As we began to have lunch, they said, **"Amy, you are such a nice person, can we tell you about Jesus?"** Inside, I thought **'not again'!** But they said I was a nice person, so I said, **"Sure."** Before lunch was over, they led me in a prayer to receive Christ.

Unfortunately, **my heart was hard and dry**. My heart was like the **soil in the parable of the sower in Matthew 13**. It was **full of rocks and thorns and the Word did not stick**.

Kingdom Moments – It Takes Only One (2)

A couple of months later, I decided to have my **hair cut at a new place**. As I sat in the chair, my **friendly new hairdresser** introduced herself. **When she saw my necklace, her whole tone changed**. My necklace was a beaded one much like what the hippies wore, and **attached to it was a picture of Baba Muktananda**.

With a raised and tense voice, she asked, **“Who’s that?”** as she pointed to the picture.

I answered, **“Oh, that is Baba Muktananda.”** She stuttered and even louder this time said, **“Baba, Baba...what!”**

I replied, **“Baba Muktananda. He is a Siddha Yoga guru.”**

She lost it and really yelling this time, pointed her finger at his picture and shouted, **“You don’t need that! You need this!”** as she pointed to a Bible scripture on her counter.

Before I knew it, I was surrounded by all the hairdressers as she led me in a prayer to receive Christ. Unfortunately, my heart was still full of rocks and thorns, and it didn’t stick. I didn’t want to tell Roy and Joan about these encounters, but I did start to visit a couple of churches.

CHURCH VISITS

I first visited **Mililani Baptist Church** which was near our home. I liked the service and when the pastor announced he was having a **Bible study** after service and all were welcome, I decided to join them. As I sat in this small group of about 10-12 people, I started getting some strange stares. I felt so uncomfortable, I never went back.

Months later I realized what had happened. In my rush to get to church on time, I grabbed the first *bible* I saw. It had a green cover and was given to me by a kindly couple who had come to our door to tell us about their Jehovah Witness faith. I think I distinguished myself that day. I must be the **only one in all church history who ever joined a Baptist Bible study with a Jehovah Witness bible**.

I then attended another church in Nuuanu. I call it the **church of good works, because they believed you got to heaven through good works**.

Meanwhile things were getting increasingly tense at family gatherings. Roy and Joan continued to calmly share their faith and did not take offense at our offensive comments. Their parents wanted them to go with the rest of the family to their **Buddhist temple and they said ‘no’**.

On the third Sunday as I was driving to the church of good works, I was so angry and frustrated at what was said at the latest family gathering, I cried out, **“God, whoever you are, I don’t care whether I am right or wrong! I just want the truth! Show me your truth!”**

Suddenly, a powerful presence of love and peace flooded the car. I felt a warmth start from the top of my head and ooze down to my feet. I began to weep. I had never experienced such a feeling of love and peace before. I knew that I knew that God, whoever He was, was going to show me the truth.

I continued on to the church of good works. After the service I stopped by their bookstore and bought a few books written by the founder of the church and went home.

THE TRUTH

The very next Saturday there was a knock at our door at our Mililani home. As I opened the door, I saw a kind-looking, elderly Japanese woman. She introduced herself and said, **“Amy?”**

I said, **“Yes.”**

She continued, **“We were so happy you came to visit us at Mililani Baptist church, but we noticed you have not been back, and we wanted to make sure you are okay, and all is well with you.”**

I thought how nice and said, **“Thank you, but all is well. I found a church I am more comfortable in.”**

She nodded and started to leave, then quickly turned back and said, **“Amy, can I tell you one more thing?”** I said, **“Sure.”**

She responded, **“Make sure it is a Bible-believing, Bible-teaching church.”**

I thanked her and she went on her merry way.

Kingdom Moments – It Takes Only One (3)

As I closed the door, it was like the scales fell from my eyes. A Bible-believing, Bible-teaching church! Yes! I realized that was what I needed!

I then saw the books I had just bought from the church of good works and my first thought was that I need to go back there and get my money back. My next thought was I didn't want anyone to be deceived like I had been, and I tore up the pages and threw the books away.

SALVATION

I still didn't want Roy and Joan to know that I finally found the truth. Also that they were right and I was dead wrong. But that Christmas in 1977, they invited us to their church Christmas dinner. As Pastor Roy G. Sapp of First Assembly of God gave the altar call, my hand quickly shot up and I received Christ, this time for good.

Gary received the Lord two weeks later and we started attending First Assembly and were solidly planted there for eighteen years before the Lord moved us. Before the Lord called Roy and Joan back to the mainland, Gary and I, their two sisters, their mom and dad received the Lord.

My message is: **IT ONLY TAKES ONE** in a family for all to receive Christ.

My Family

With my family, my father died when I was eight-years-old. I grieve at the thought he did not make it to heaven and ended up in Hades, a place of eternal fire, agony, and torment. But one thing I do know is that wherever he is, he would want as many people as possible to know the truth, to be told about Jesus, receive Jesus, and be with Him in heaven for eternity where there is only love and peace, and no more sorrow or pain.

I know that from the parable of the rich man and beggar Lazarus in Luke 16. Briefly both die and Lazarus goes to heaven and the rich man

ends in Hades. The rich man quickly finds out he is there permanently for eternity. He and no one where he is can go to where Lazarus is. No one in heaven where Lazarus is can go to Hades.

The Word says there is a great divide, a chasm that separates the two eternities. The rich man cries out, "Father, send someone to my home to tell my brothers the truth, to have them receive Christ so they don't end up where I am.

I had the privilege of leading my mother in a prayer to rededicate her life to Christ. She told me that her teacher in 7th or 8th grade led her to Christ. Life happened and she fell away and now rededicated herself to the Lord. Some years later when she was in hospice care at home, she wanted to be water baptized. At that time, we were planted at New Hope Oahu and we were there for 25 years. I was able to arrange Pastor Wayne Cordeiro to come to her home to water baptize her.

Six years later after my mom graduated to heaven, my sister got ill, and I led her in the prayer to receive Christ. As she lay in the hospital about to be transferred to a hospice facility, she asked me to water baptize her.

My older brother is the only other person in my family. He is stubborn like I am. I believe he has received Christ but does not want to tell me. If not yet, he is close, and I believe because of 2 Peter 3:9 and 1 John 5:14-15 my brother's name will be written in the book of life.

2 Peter 3:9 tells us it is God's will for none to perish and all to come to repentance and receive eternal life. I have been praying for him and 1 John 5:14-15 tells me that when we pray according to God's will, He hears us, and we will receive what we ask for.

My message again is **IT TAKES ONLY ONE** for a whole family to come to Christ. **WILL YOU BE THE ONE FOR YOUR FAMILY!**