

## Miracle Story

My name is Sharon Thomas. I'd like to share with you my miracle story that happened in 1995. I was a teacher and one day I received a letter inviting me to be part of the Citizen's Ambassador Program to join 25 other teachers to make a trip to Vietnam as a peace endeavor to help with education. I was intrigued, but when I read that it cost \$5,000.00 to go, I deposited the letter in my circular file known as the trash can. Several days later I felt a nudge to get the letter out of the trash and think of how I might round up that much money. My parents said they could maybe help a little. It was the end of October and I was making these little angel earrings for my friends for Christmas presents. So I decided to see how many I could make and sell before I would need the money. I had 3 months. My husband Bill said, "Just how many of these earrings do you think you could make and how many people do you think would buy them?" I didn't know, but I decided to try!

So began my ritual of teaching all day and then making angel earrings until midnight. I started wearing them all the time, carrying some of them in my purse. Sometimes people would stop me and say, "I love your earrings." Then I would explain about my trip and ask if they would like to buy a pair for \$5.00. I sold them to my friends and then I started to send them to friends in other states and they were selling them for me. Two parents of my students asked their businesses for donations which amounted to \$1,000.00. The week before I was to leave on my trip I had the \$5,000.00 plus \$1,000.00 for spending money!

I met up with 25 other teachers, each from a different state, and we were on our way to Viet Nam. We each were supposed to bring teaching supplies to leave at the schools as it was a mission of peace. I decided to take my little Finnigans which were finger puppets that I had created to help young children learn to read. So I made 100 of them. We visited teacher colleges and schools. In Viet Nam, Education was given much respect. The king was most important, followed by the father of the house and then the teacher. I was very surprised when we were greeted with flowers and bowing when we entered classrooms.

When we were getting on the plane in Vietnam to return to the states, there was a bomb threat. After the plane was checked and we were told it was safe to board, one of the teachers was hysterical and refused to get on the plane. I told her she needed to get on the plane because she wouldn't want to be left there by herself. She was still not willing to get on until I mentioned that I had a purse full of Angel earrings and they would protect us. I thrust a pair into her hand and she got on the plane!

The experience of this trip is one I will never forget and has greatly influenced my life. I now understand what it is like to be the different one. When I was eating in a restaurant in Viet Nam, the only way I could communicate what I wanted to eat was through drawing a picture. As soon as I returned to my classroom, I was given a new student who was from

Africa and she didn't speak English. Pictures were how I communicated with her and eventually was able to teach her, a new teaching strategy I had learned from my trip.

I went to Vietnam thinking that there was so much they didn't have, but I found that it was a beautiful country with a very relaxed, peaceful atmosphere compared to our rush, rush life in the United States. I discovered that it is good to slow down and smell the roses. I had a miraculous time!

I believe that miracles surround us every day. I also believe that often, we don't recognize them. I challenge each of you to recognize the miracles in your life and share one with us on a future weekend.

By the way, When I returned from Viet Nam, I continued to wear my angel earrings. Not one person ever commented about them after my trip!

God really is Awesome!