



## TO GO TO CHURCH OR NOT?

*This case study was presented in the February 2007 Vision magazine. It highlights the need to think carefully about how to nurture people's faith, and to do so in ways that empower them to develop ways of following Jesus that are based in their own context and culture.*

### **The story:**

Paul is over the moon! Two of his friends who are being educated at a Buddhist institution have come to faith in Christ. In an interesting venture, Paul took these new believers to a Christmas service at a local church. Trainee monks are not allowed to sing, but one of the young men said to him later, "I found it so hard not to jump up and sing praises to the Lord. The harmony was in my heart and I knew for sure that Jesus is indeed Immanuel, God with us."

The story of Paul's two friends is inspiring!

### **The questions:**

Here are some questions to ponder:

- Had you been in Paul's shoes when the two told him of their new faith, how would you have felt?
- Your goal is to empower people to develop their own distinctive ways of following Jesus. Given that the church they attended is probably westernised rather than strongly local in culture, would you have taken these new believers there? What would be the advantages and disadvantages?
- Note a few factors: a. Buddhist schools provide high quality educational opportunities. b. These two young men are the only believers in the Buddhist institution. c. In their home villages there would be no other believers. How might you advise them about their ongoing education?





**GLOBAL | INTERACTION**

- The Buddhist temple is far more than a religious centre. It is the hub of social, business and community life. Would you go there? Would you encourage new believers to go there?
- You want to see a new faith community grow around these new believers. What steps would you take to nurture these believers and encourage them to share their faith with others without burdening them with your cultural ways?
- When praying, Buddhists hold their hands together in front of their faces. Would this be appropriate for believers?

