

July 2018

COMPLIMENTARY

# NASHVILLE

CHRISTIAN FAMILY<sup>®</sup>



**Dr. Ming Wang:**

***From Darkness to Sight***

***Finding Peace***

***Money Matters***





# Dr. Ming Wang:

## Focusing on Science Through the Lens of Faith

He's a Christian, long-time Nashvillian, philanthropist and world-renowned surgeon--but Dr. Ming Wang well remembers life as an atheist, subsisting on a family income of \$15 a month and immigrating to the United States. He remembers what it's like to suffer and have no hope.

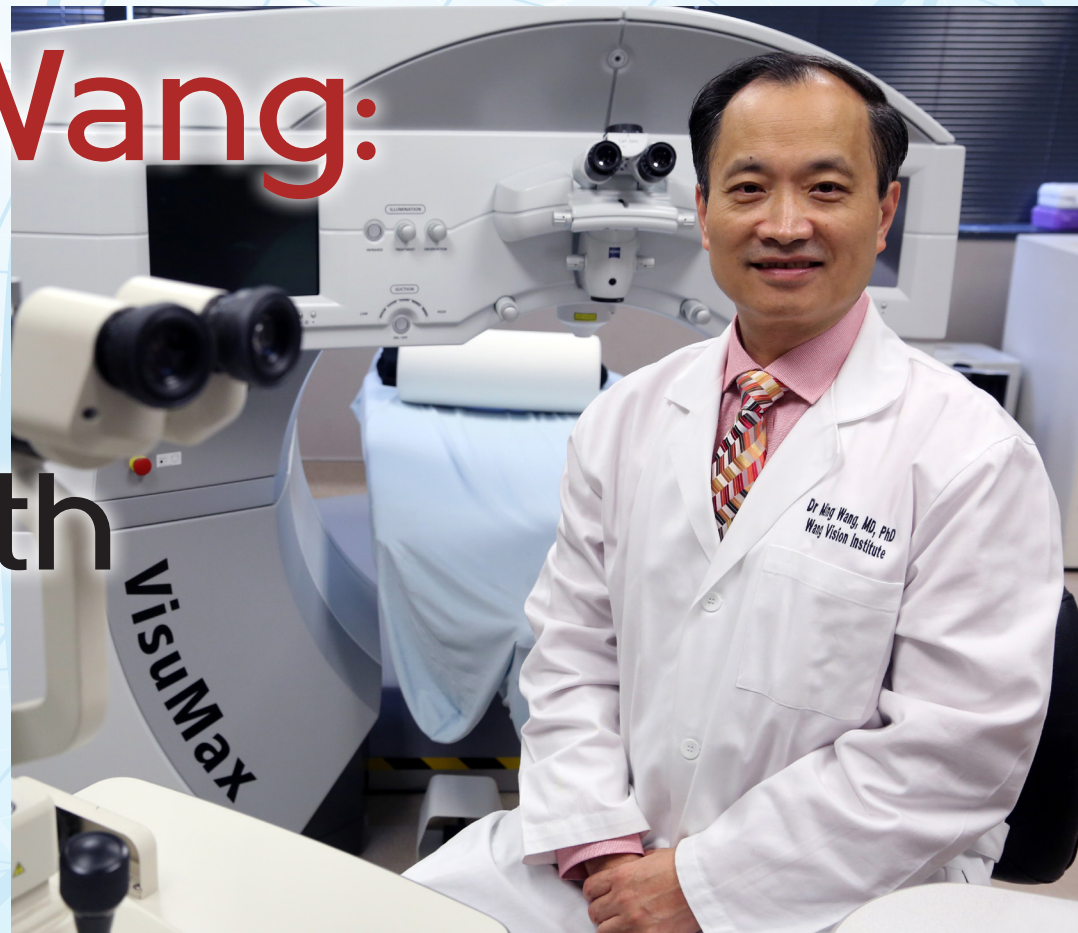
In 1982, as a 21 year old, Wang stepped off a plane in Washington D.C. with only a student visa, \$50 and a Chinese dictionary. He earned his doctorate in laser physics from the University of Maryland, completed postdoctoral training at MIT and graduated magna cum laude from Harvard Medical School and MIT, earning first place with his Harvard graduation thesis.

Wang came to Nashville in 1997 as founding director of Vanderbilt's Laser Eye Center, began his own practice in 2002 and today serves as director of Wang Vision 3D Cataract & LASIK Center and CEO of Aier-USA, which brings in investment from China and creates jobs in America. He's a pioneer in less invasive treatments, performing the world's first laser artificial cornea implantation, and is the only surgeon in Tennessee offering 3D SMILE & 3D LASIK (18+), 3D KAMRA (45+), 3D Forever Young Lens (50+) and 3DLaser Cataract Surgery (60+). This spring, he performed the first laser floater removal.

Known the world over for his scientific breakthroughs and success as a leading eye surgeon, and called "the doctor's doctor" because more than 4,000 physicians have trusted him for their care, Wang is also passionate about another type of vision—helping others see the importance of science and faith and why they must be considered together.

To understand his fervency, one must first understand how freedom to study science opened Wang's eyes to the existence of God and how Jesus Christ captivated his heart. His story began more than 7,500 miles away, in Hangzhou, China.

Wang's parents didn't believe in God. They did believe in education and taught him that it was the key to a secure, happy life. Wang put his hope in learning and worked hard and made top grades, but Mao Zedong, chairman of the communist party, put an end to Wang's education. Mao's Cultural Revolution resulted in the closing of most universities across the country. As a child, Wang saw with his own eyes the horror of the Red Guard taking over the medical college where his mother and father taught and witnessed soldiers beating teachers with iron clubs until their skulls



cracked open. His mother was beaten, but miraculously survived, only to be sent away from her family for two years for attempting to save the college's laboratory.

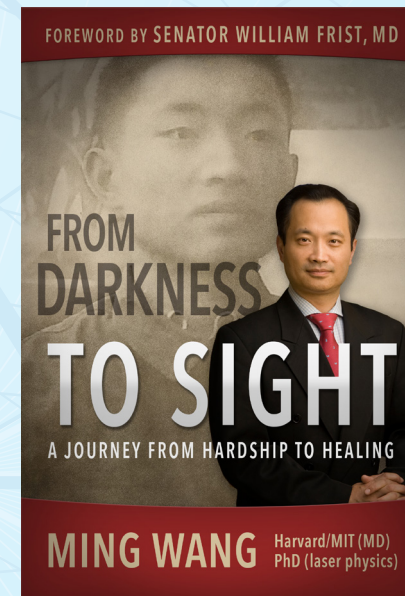
The communist Chinese government began deporting the country's youth to labor camps in rural areas. Families with more than one child were allowed to select one child to remain at home. Wang's parents chose him, hoping the atrocities would end before his younger brother was old enough to be taken. But even as "the chosen one," Wang had to drop out of school and find a job to avoid deportation.

In 1974, at the age of 14, Wang left school as a 9th grader with no hope for his future. Attempting to get a job in the city with a communist propaganda troop to avoid deportation, Wang learned to play the erhu, a Chinese violin, and practiced dancing. Then, on September 9, 1976, Mao Zedong died and the government began to reopen universities.



**June 6, 1991, Dr. Wang received his MD (magna cum laude) from Harvard & MIT and the first-place award in MD graduation thesis.**

To enter a university, Wang had to graduate from high school. His parents warned him universities could close again at any time and only 12th graders would have a chance at the openings. They urged him to skip grades and re-enter high school as a senior. They secured old tests for him to study and, too poor to print copies of the tests, copied them by hand onto old scraps of paper. Wang studied 15 to 20 hours a day to master the material he would've covered in 10th and 11th grade, returned to school a senior, graduated, passed the university entrance exam in the top 0.01 percent and was admitted to the prestigious Chinese University of Science and Technology. By age 21, he wanted nothing to do with communist dictators. A visiting American professor, impressed by Wang, helped him secure a teaching assistantship at the University of Maryland.



**From Darkness to Sight chronicles the remarkable life journey of Dr. Ming Wang, a world-renowned laser eye surgeon, Kiwanis Nashvillian of the Year and philanthropist.**

It was as he was studying the human eye during medical school that God showed Wang the reality of His existence. Wang was confused. He struggled to understand how evolution with random events could create such a complex structure over such a short amount of time, and he asked a professor about it.

"Ming, what do you see across the street?" the professor asked. "A car," Wang answered. "What is the difference between a car and a human brain?" "The human brain is a lot more complicated," answered Wang. "Okay," said the professor, "Can you imagine a pile of random metal assembling itself into a car?" "No way," Wang relied. "Then how about the human brain?" the professor asked.



"The professor opened a window in my mind that opened my heart," Wang says. "I became a Christian and started my walk with Jesus Christ."

At this point Wang began to recognize that science and faith are not contradictory--we must consider them together. "The scientific community is largely atheist," says Wang. "I have to tell my scientific friends, 'Don't be presumptuous. We did not create ourselves. There is a Creator!'"

To his fellow Christians he urges, "Work harder to bring science and faith together. Science should be guided by faith. Don't shut your mind

to science and technology. They are here to stay and they have transformed the way we live and vastly improved the quality of our lives. Science will only have an increasing role in the future.

"Christians need to be part of the debates," he adds. "We must educate ourselves about what science proposes and what the Bible says—and pray that God gives us light to discern His Will, so we can speak from a position of knowledge."

Wang believes conflict between science and faith is one of the greatest challenges we face today because medical science has ushered in a wide range of new possibilities. "We can manipulate stem cells and cure illness in unprecedented fashion. We can extend human lives. But invariably, when science is breaking new ground, it brings along moral and ethical faith questions," says Wang.

Wang found himself at the center of a science-faith conflict as a student researching ways to reduce corneal scarring. He learned adult eyes heal slowly with scars that cause blindness, children's eyes heal faster, but a fetus heals

fastest--without scarring. He wanted to understand how a fetus heals to improve outcomes for children and adults. He prayed for wisdom and felt God led him to James 1:4—persevere. He persisted, did not give up, and continued to study and research, looking for a way to apply the healing power of fetal tissue without harming a life. After years of searching, he found it. "I retrieved a bloody placenta from the hospital, brought it into the laboratory, started experimenting and behold--an amazing thing happened."

Wang discovered that a unique piece of tissue—the amniotic membrane that surrounds the fetus--has the same wound-healing properties as the fetus. This membrane is typically discarded along with the placenta. Wang began collecting donated amniotic membranes and transplanting them into injured eyes. The eyes regenerated without scarring. This led to the invention of the amniotic membrane contact lens and today one donated placenta has the power to restore sight for 100 adults. To Wang, this medical breakthrough is an answered prayer.

"Science must be guided by faith. Can we have the strength to believe Him and trust that He will show us in His way at His time?" asks Wang. "There are times when the solution is not obvious, but what I've learned as a Christian is, don't give up, be patient, persist."

Wang has been published in the world-renowned journal, *Nature*, and holds several U.S. patents for his invention of new biotechnology to restore sight. He has published nine textbooks and more than 100 scientific papers. He's been named NPR's Philanthropist of the Year and has received the Honor Award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology, the Lifetime Achievement Award from the Association of Chinese American Physicians and an honorary doctorate degree from Trevecca Nazarene University.

Wang says that his years of hopelessness and darkness have enabled him to emotionally connect with his patients and understand the loss of opportunity and control their declining vision causes them. Today, much of Wang's hardship has been turned to joy. He has been able to honor his parents by taking them into his home to enjoy their sunset years. The musical instrument he mastered to avoid deportation, he now plays to express his appreciation for God's blessings. His dancing is now a hobby and he won the national championship for ballroom dance for his age group in April. He's combined the music and the dance he loves into a fundraiser, aptly named The Eye Ball, which raises funds for the Wang Foundation for Sight Restoration. The nonprofit has provided vision-correcting surgeries, free of charge, to indigent patients from 55 countries and 40 states who no one else could help. Wang also has a heart for the people of China, where 95 percent of the country's 1.4 billion souls are atheist. His Wang Foundation for Christian Outreach to China distributes Bibles there and pairs recipients with Christian pen pals.

You can read more about Wang's fascinating story, accomplishments and insights in "From Darkness to Sight," an autobiography he released in 2016. All proceeds from the book go to the Wang Foundation for Sight. For more information, go to [www.FromDarknessToSight.com](http://www.FromDarknessToSight.com).

— Julie Kincaid Ward is a PR specialist with Mitchell Communications Group, a freelance public relations consultant and an award-winning writer. She also matches high school exchange students with host families in Middle Tennessee as a local coordinator for International Cultural Exchange Services (ICES). She and her husband, Jim, live in Nashville.

You can reach her at [Julie@JulieWardPR.com](mailto:Julie@JulieWardPR.com).

For more information about Dr. Wang, download these PDF files:  
[www.wangcataractlasik.com/forms/Dr.Wang\\_music\\_medicine\\_201108.pdf](http://www.wangcataractlasik.com/forms/Dr.Wang_music_medicine_201108.pdf)  
[www.wangcataractlasik.com/forms/neatnashville\\_mar2016.pdf](http://www.wangcataractlasik.com/forms/neatnashville_mar2016.pdf)  
[www.wangcataractlasik.com/forms/drwang\\_medium\\_20180412.pdf](http://www.wangcataractlasik.com/forms/drwang_medium_20180412.pdf)  
[www.wangcataractlasik.com/forms/connect\\_20170526.pdf](http://www.wangcataractlasik.com/forms/connect_20170526.pdf)