PEPPERDINE: is a Christian university where all are welcomed and encouraged to challenge each other in the pursuit of truth. Students, faculty, and staff members from all backgrounds participate in conversations of faith inside and outside of the classroom. Considering that Pepperdine is a Christian university, why are you interested in attending and how would you contribute to conversations of faith on campus?\*

It was a night in with my classmates and I thought of how similar we were in snarfing our homemade lasagnas after an intense round of truth-or-dare. The difference, on the contrary, laid seconds before we ate: Jessica laced her hands together. Oliver pointed his hands upwards, monk-like. Valen didn’t bother waiting. Me? I mimicked my parents – a dot in my forehead and three across my chest.

All my life, I’ve been tossed around with what to believe and where to go. I served as an altar-girl at St. Andreas Catholic Church. I’ve always wondered what it’d be like to sit on the opposite side of the mass; to absorb the lessons taught and not think of church as ‘duty.’ My primary motive to go to church was for my parents instead of for God.

However, it was high school that introduced me to a new perception of faith. With zero background in Christianity, the student council accepted me into their Ministry Committee. I asked Emma, our leader, what separates me from the other applicants. She said, as if faith was habitual: “I prayed and heard your name.” Only then was I aware of the centrality faith has in religion.

During Pepperdine’s Bible Lecture on *YouTube*, Jeff Walling dared me to spend a week in Pepperdine, to simply sit in the chapel on Thursday night. My visit to Malibu with my sister took the family vacation beyond chilling in its palm-lined beaches and revisiting *Zoey 101*. I knew Pepperdine takes their values seriously when he exhorted the students to not ignore the cross when entering the school.

Months after hosting worship events and leading group devotion as part of the committee, I finally understood that religion is no mere label. The true form of the church lies in communities and not mere four-walled buildings. This realization quickly became a crucial factor in deciding where to pursue my degree, where I can find solace in the close-knit community. A place where academic excellence and the opportunity for spiritual growth coexist and thrive together.

My passion for both marketing and communication studies drew me into Pepperdine’s unique advertising major. Be it in promoting a commercial product to potential consumers or in communicating an idea across mass media, I hope to be able to transcend my learning to a spiritual level. For instance, I look forward to joining the SEAVER 200 course as I build trust and connect with the student body to help me navigate through life in and outside the classroom.

At the end of the day, I expect the conversations to only be more heated as everyone would commune over dinner. An ardent cook myself, I will bring forth my library of spices reminiscent of my savory hometown dish in Indonesia. Whether it be my rendition of *rendang* beef stewor the world-famous *Indomie*, I look forward to sharing my story while hearing about my fellow classmates’ respective, distinctive journeys of faith under one, big intercultural umbrella.