

BRIDGES

Crossing Cultures to Share God's Word » Summer 2010



Changes and Growth

— Bessie Fick, ISM Coordinator

This is a time of transition on campus. Students are moving home for the summer, graduating and looking for jobs. It will also be a time of transition for my family and for the Memorial Lutheran family. My husband Jeff has accepted the call to serve as principal in Elm Grove, Wisconsin. He will be moving in July. I will be staying here until our home sells. I am so thankful that God's saving word of salvation remains the same "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." John 3:16. Please pray for the congregation as they evaluate the ministry and decide who will serve as Coordinator here.

Thank you for the wonderful support you have given to this ministry and I pray you will continue to partner with us in sharing the Gospel to the internationals here in Ames. We are busy preparing for the summer activities here. We will have 14 teachers from four area congregations helping with the English classes this summer. We will also have two internationals who have been English teachers in their home countries assisting us. God has richly blessed the contacts we have made in English classes. We have had 34 attending the Bible studies this spring semester and 57 attended worship services. Patricio and I have worked together for five years so I was so pleased when he expressed an interest on being confirmed upon his return from Chile in August. Please pray for Patricio as his mother has cancer. We have put him in contact with the new Lutheran mission in Santiago, Chile, while he visits his parents this summer.

Shuqiang is a young mother who is helping us in the nursery with child care for the mothers who came to English classes. This winter she asked if I could have a home Bible study with her. We met and she asked if she could invite some friends. The next week she had invited her Sudanese neighbor and a Chinese friend. Last week we had to change the meeting place to the church as she had invited 4 other friends she has met through the nursery and English classes and her small apartment was not big enough. It is so awesome to see her excitement in hearing the Bible stories and her eagerness to share them with her friends. Please pray that she will continue to grow, and pray that we may continue to feed her with the wonderful news of salvation in Jesus Christ.

ISM Activities

Below: Shuqiang helps us in our nursery. We are so glad she has invited so many to Bible study. Xiao Yuen also helps in the nursery and was invited by Shuqiang to attend the Bible studies. Sara Huedepohl leads the Pre-school children in Bible story activities along with Kathy Brown.



Above: Here are some of the internationals that God has brought to us for English classes. We are so blessed that 11 of these women have attended Bible studies this past semester. Pictured are students from Mexico, China, Korea, Peru, Poland, Sudan, and Egypt

His Grace **Is Enough For Me**

— Song

Song has returned to China with her daughter, she spent one year here in Ames and during that year she and her daughter studied the Bible with me every Tuesday evening. She had many questions about living the Christian life and growing in faith. She hopes to teach Sunday school classes in the future. Below she shares her journey to faith in Christ:

I'm glad to share my story of my journey with God. I'm a Christian now. But actually I knew little about God and Christianity until I left China for Hawaii in 2002. Before that, I never felt I needed a God. That is probably because my study and career were all right.

When I arrived in Hawaii, that evening a friend brought me to a Chinese Fellowship. My first motivation to go to the fellowship was to see my instructor and discuss my project with him as soon as possible. This did not happen, because my instructor told me to get used to the new environment. However, I started to know about Christianity (at that time I only knew the Fellowship, but then I knew there was also Sunday worship in the church). It was the first time that I heard the beautiful Chinese Christian songs, the first time I saw and opened the Bible and read the Bible stories, the first time I met a group of Chinese who lived a different type of life from me. I liked the fellowship, and I decided to come every week. But I still had no idea what is the relationship between God and me. I acknowledged it is good to be a Christian, but I did not think it is necessary for me to become a Christian. Moreover, I felt I did not reach the moral standards to be a Christian. However, I appreciated the promise in the Bible that believers can have eternal life. I considered that might be useful for my parents who were already very old. Therefore I decided to learn more about Christianity for them. But I realized later that I was wrong, life is always unpredictable and death is actually not far away from anyone.

Also, for the first time I suffered a lot from the separation from my 1-year-old daughter. One year later, my husband planned to come to see me. I expected that he would bring our daughter with him, and she already had the visa. However, because of several reasons, my husband decided to come alone and leave our daughter at home. It was hard for me to

understand and accept such a decision. We started to quarrel with each other. My heart was full of anger, complaint and grief. I was crying all the time. My friends' comfort was not helpful, and even made my feelings worse. I tried to control my negative feelings, but it did not work at all. For the first time I realized I was so tiny and helpless. One day one of my Christian friends came to comfort me again. She suggested that we pray together. I agreed. Then I started to pray. I felt my heart was opened suddenly, and all the anger, complaint and grief disappeared immediately—I never had such a wonderful experience before! After the prayer, the first thing I thought was to comfort my husband. Then I wrote him an email in which I agreed with him to leave our daughter at home. On the last Sunday of that month, I made the decision to accept Jesus as my Savior. However, in my heart I still hoped that God could change my husband's mind and let him to bring our daughter to me. But that did not come true. My husband came alone happily and we experienced the life of being only two again. We spent most of our spare time in the church and at parties with friends. Eventually, my husband got used to the new environment and felt less stress. After one month, just a few days before the expiring date of my daughter's visa, my husband himself decided to fly back to China and bring our daughter to Hawaii. Finally we three came together and we spent a wonderful year in Hawaii. This is really not what I expected. But I believe this is God's plan, which is different from our will, but is better than our will.

One year later, we had another important decision to make: whether to stay in Hawaii longer or go back to China. My job allowed us to stay longer, but my husband would lose his job in China if he did not go back, which he did not like. My husband disagreed with me and we started to fight again. One evening my husband went to talk about his feelings and considerations with a Christian couple with whom we ate lunch with that day. Several hours later, the friend called me and wanted to talk about our issues again. When I received her call, I started to cry, and I suddenly realized that God wanted me to learn obedience. After understanding this, my thinking changed totally, it was no longer self-centered. The knot was untied in my heart. I believed God was working in my life at that time... A few



Song, with her daughter and with fellow Bible study member Bo.

months later, we went back to China. Before that I asked to be baptized because I realized that I was so limited. I could not even control my emotions, what else I can do if I only depend on myself. I really needed God to be the Lord of my life. More importantly, I understood that I cannot be saved through my good behavior, but only through my faith in God. I need God in my life, and He is willing to accept me. The Bible says "the one who believes and is baptized will be saved." (Mark 16:16)

After I was baptized, my mother and sister in China also started to come to the church. They were baptized. In 2007, my father also believed Jesus and was baptized. I believe that these were all God's work and He blessed my family. The Bible says "believe on the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." (Acts 16:31) This does not mean that a believer can represent his/her family to believe Jesus, but it means the family members can know the gospel through the believer, and thus they can have the opportunity to be saved and blessed.

Since January 2009, we have been in Ames for about one year. I am grateful for God's great grace with us. From my 7-year life experiences since I started to know Christianity and received Jesus, I have to say that God is amazing. His faithfulness is beyond our imagination. Everyone believing in Him will be blessed. His grace is enough for us every day. So I must share the good news with you, my friends. I hope you can experience God's grace also and you can share His grace with your family and friends. May God bless.

ISM Activities



The Phi Beta Chi and International Peer Ministers organized the Easter Egg Hunt. Here Richard Luth reads the Easter story to the children.



Tours are wonderful opportunities to build relationships. Here Pastor Mark is pictured with the students who traveled to the Botanical gardens with us. Three of the women attended Bible studies with us, but have now returned to their countries. The group includes internationals from Bulgaria, Egypt, Jordan, Sudan, and China.



We have six Bible study teachers leading 9 Bible studies with 34 attending this past semester. Here Richard Luth is pictured with his Tuesday afternoon group.



For our FISH (Friday International Student Hospitality) dinners we served food from China, India, Holland, Russia and Sudan. Here are some of the Sudanese women who prepared the April meal. We are so thankful that nine of the Sudanese families are worshipping with us on Sunday mornings.

Prayer Requests

- Pray for the work at Memorial during the transition when I leave and the new coordinator arrives.
- Pray for Patricio whose mother is ill with cancer in Chile and as he considers membership in the church.
- Pray for Jin as he prepares for baptism and as he and his wife attend the leadership training in St. Louis.
- Thank you for all the wonderful volunteers who have helped this past semester and all the volunteers who will help this summer.
- Pray that funds will be available for summer peer ministry next year and thank you for the summer peer ministers who will help this summer with the children's ministry.
- Pray that we will continue to invite students to the Bible classes and thank you for the 34 who attended classes this semester.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENT MINISTRY (ISM)

Summer Trips and Tours

May 6 – Pella Tulip Festival
May 30 – Memorial Day Celebration
June 19 – Amana Colonies
July 4 – Fourth of July Celebration
August 14 – Iowa State Fair

Summer Program English Classes

June 7 – July 28

Vacation Bible School (VBS)

June 14 – 18

Fall Semester English Classes

August 23 – December 1
Orientation Luncheon – August 20



“FISH” Friday International Student

Hospitality Dinners: A gathering for International students to make friends, practice English & enjoy food from other countries.

August 27 – American
Dinners begin at 6:00 PM. Cost is \$3.00/person or \$7.00/family

Memorial Lutheran Church and Student Center
– 2228 Lincoln Way
(Across Lynn Avenue from Campus Book Store)

Sponsored by I.S.I., NAVS, ISR, ISM, & Memorial Lutheran Church.

Christ the Eternal Lord

#829 Lutheran Service Book
Concordia Publishing House

Christ the eternal Lord,
Whose promise here we claim,
Whose gifts of grace are freely poured
On all who name Your name;
With thankfulness and praise
We stand before Your throne,
Intent to serve You all our days
And make your glory known

Christ the unchanging Word
To every passing age,
Whose timeless teachings still are heard
Set forth on Scripture's page;
Transform our thought and mind,
Enlighten all who read,
Within Your Word by faith to find
The bread of life indeed.

Christ the redeeming Son,
Who shares our human birth
And by His death salvation won
For every child of earth;
Inspire our hearts, we pray,
To tell Your love abroad,
That all may honor Christ today
And follow Him as Lord.

Christ the unfading Light
Of everlasting day,
Our Morning Star in splendor bright,
The Life, the Truth, The Way;
That light of truth you give
To servants as to friends,
Your way to walk, Your life to live,
Till earth's brief journey ends.

BRIDGES

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to the support of this ministry,
please send contribution to
the address above.*