

CONVERGE

INTERNATIONAL FELLOWSHIP

DARMSTADT, GERMANY



Bob & Carol Marsh

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“Why We Do What We Do...”

In this newsletter, we’d like to tell you the story about a young man from China, named Xiannan Meng. He comes from northeast China near the Russian border. Xiannan walked into one of our “Preview Services” back in September of 2012. The church wasn’t officially open yet, and was doing a series of worship services in preparation for public launch. Some flyers and posters had been hung around the city center and university campus to invite people to come and check it out.



Carol teaching Xiannan to bake a cake.

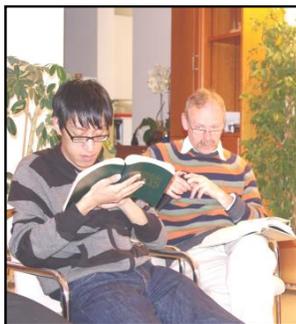
Xiannan had arrived two days earlier from China. It was his first time outside his homeland. He was enrolled in *Technische Universität Darmstadt* as a PhD student in Mechanical Sciences – specifically Fluid Dynamics. Though he was a student from China, studying for a PhD in Germany, all of his classes were to be conducted in English. He had studied English in his studies in China, but it was apparent as soon as he arrived on campus that his speaking abilities were not up to par. His supervisor told him on the very first day that he was going to have to improve his English, or he would be dismissed from the program.

Later that day, Xiannan saw a flyer in the student center. The top read, “Speak English?” and included information about a meeting two days later. When he walked through the doors that Sunday, it was the first time he had been in a church. He was warmly welcomed and introduced to other graduate students from India, Korea, Lebanon, Germany and Kenya. Xiannan explained to them that he was there to have an opportunity to hear and speak English, and improve his skill so that he could remain in his program.

As it happened, a group from the church was going to attend an English-language movie in the city that night, and Xiannan joined them. He latched on solidly to his new friends. He began attending a small group in the pastor’s flat, and sometimes a second weekly group at the home of another church family. By the time the new church had been opened 6 months, Xiannan was among the most faithful in attendance – hardly ever missing a service or bible study, and often coming to Bob and Carol’s flat for a meal and to practice his English pronunciation (like the difference between “great,” “green,” and “grain”). He was given an English-language Bible for Christmas that year, and he treasured the book with the gold-gilded pages, and showed evidence that he was reading it. But after those first months, when giving him a ride home from a meeting, Bob asked him, “What do you think of what we talk about – God’s love and Jesus’ death and resurrection?” Xiannan smiled broadly and said, “Ah, It all seems a bit absurd to me! It doesn’t make sense!” But he kept coming.



Bob helps Xiannan with an English article for publication.



Xiannan reading Scripture at a LIFE Group.

Soon Xiannan began to show signs of change. He began to pray in the groups, beginning his heart-felt prayers with “Father, thank you...”, and lifting up his own needs as well as those of others in the group. He asked questions and made observations from various passages of Scripture. One evening, as Bob dropped him off, he asked again, “Xiannan, what do you think now of Jesus?” He responded, “Yes, now I believe that Jesus died for me, and I am going to heaven!” In the weeks following, he demonstrated a new confidence from trusting in God – he no longer worried about his success or failure – because, he said, “my life is in God’s hands.” In a recent Bible study of *Jesus on Leadership*, the teacher asked the group what they felt their mission was. As people around the room responded “children,” “music,” or “teaching,” Xiannan said, “I believe my mission is to return to China and tell people about Jesus!

Thank you for your prayerful support that makes our mission possible!

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