

I ONCE WAS LOST, BUT NOW I'M FOUND!

JUDY TANG/IFC DIRECTOR
INTERNATIONAL FRIENDSHIP CENTER/UNIVERSITY OF WI-MADISON

The International Friendship Center (IFC) continues to influence, inspire and impact the international students, scholars and their families through the 16-18 English classes and Bible studies each week, along with the 2-3 cultural events each month. Each semester (including the summer semester) 100-150 international students are involved at the IFC ministry... **connecting internationals to life in the U.S. and life in Jesus Christ!** What a blessing to serve the campus community with the love of Jesus!



The Holy Spirit worked faith into the heart of a Chinese friend recently! Praise God! She shares her faith journey through these words:

I spent nearly a year in the United States, during which I came to know about Christianity. Although it was a short time, the impact of Christianity on me and my family was huge. My family or origin was quite complicated. My parents' personality was a little eccentric, which led to my out-of-ordinary parental cultivating style to some degree. It was very difficult for

me to trust others because I couldn't help thinking that people around would hurt me. I involuntarily felt anxious, fearful, angry. I hurt my family members, especially the person closest to me (my husband), then I was so guilty and regretful about what I had done, thus I pierced myself with much pain and remorse. But after spending time reading the Bible, it's better. So I do believe the Bible has influenced and transformed my life step by step.

I was a Buddhist before coming to the U.S. I was interested in the philosophical wisdom

TESTIMONY

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of the Buddhist scripture and tried to explore and follow it because I deeply longed for purity and peace of mind. But sometimes I could not get it clearly and vividly. To my surprise, last year when I stepped into church to worship for the first time, I was totally shocked by the mysterious atmosphere at that moment. As I sang hymns with the Christians, every pore of my body opened and I was deeply touched and choked up. I enjoyed the pastor's preaching of the gospel, which led me to experience the fresh journey of significant life. I cannot help being attracted and inspired by the Bible.

One day, when I was at Memorial Library, I fell asleep in my chair and suddenly woke up, saying "God loves everyone." At that very moment, I was totally shocked by that, and after a few seconds, I realized what that was—The Holy Spirit visited me! I was so overjoyed that I needn't have to struggle with my past anymore. So I resolutely stepped into church to worship again, and I was eager to share my holy experience with the pastor.

I thank God for loving me and protecting me from the beginning of my life; thanks to Gus; thanks to the IFC for providing wonderful free English classes and Bible study. Not only has my English improved a lot, but the most important thing is that I can have an in-depth understanding of the Bible. Thanks to church



and the wonderful services which provided opportunities to know God's Word, let me be aware of my sin, help me to follow God's footstep and transform my personality gradually. Just as the song goes, "Once I was lost, but now I am found."

I had to go back to China again for my job at the end of March this year. I solved the problem of my job thoroughly. I got a new job. What touched me during that time was that I found my parents had changed a lot in many aspects, such as the way and attitude of getting along with others and even the relationship with me. Thanks to God! In the end, I want to say to myself: "Do not take yourself seriously, but take God seriously;" "put the interest in others, not selfish ambitions;" "with a super humble heart, never lacking zeal for God."

Through baptism, my sin is forgiven and with the resurrection of Jesus my new life will take root, sprout and be thriving inside me bit by bit. I can forgive my parents. I can love them much more than ever before. Our family will be more peaceful. I hope to be slow to anger. I will put more faith in our Almighty God! Follow His instructions! Obey His words! For ever and ever! Amen.



FROM DODGEBALL TO BAPTISM

MARCIA MITTWEDE, ISM DIRECTOR
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS-AUSTIN

When Junko was a young girl, she went to her neighbor's house to see if she could come out and play. The girl's mother replied that her daughter wasn't home but had gone to the church to play dodge ball. Junko wondered why her friend would go to a church, since churches were not a common sight in Japan, and certainly not the place for a young girl to go and play.

However, soon Junko's friend invited her to go with her to play dodgeball with the nuns at the Catholic church. Junko gladly accepted and not only played dodgeball at the church but also heard about Jesus.

Years passed and Junko was given the opportunity to sing in a gospel choir, which was led by an American missionary to Japan. Junko and the other young people really enjoyed singing the gospel songs, which also spoke of this Jesus.

More years passed, and Junko was married and living in Austin, Texas, where she attended Bible classes and met Pastor Richard and Marcia Mittwede and other volunteer teachers in the ISM program there. When Junko began studying the Bible, she recognized the stories of Jesus whom she had heard about as a little girl, and had sung about in the Gospel songs.

Little by little, the Holy Spirit had worked in Junko's heart, until on November 23, 2019, she was baptized by Pastor Richard.



We are reminded of Paul's words in 1Corinthians 3:6-7 - "I planted, and Apollos watered, but God made it grow. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is important because only God makes it grow."

Thank God for the Holy Spirit's work in Junko's life, which began on the dodgeball court, led to baptism and continues today through His Word and Sacraments!

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1 Corinthians 3:6-7



THE SPIRIT OF VOLUNTEERISM AT THE FRIENDSHIP HOUSE-MSU

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE/ MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY
RICH BEARUP/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Throughout the year, Friendship House relies on not only more than 60 American volunteers to teach English and Bible study, but dozens of Internationals who willingly pitch in to help our program thrive.

More recently, we had two dozen Internationals from Brazil, China, Colombia, Cuba, Egypt, India, Italy, Ivory Coast, Lebanon, Mexico, Nepal, Spain and Turkey do a final raking and garden clean up before the first snow. We also hold an annual Christmas Party which is being planned by Internationals from Brazil, China, Colombia, India, Italy, Jordan, Mexico and Venezuela.

As many International Student Ministries have also experienced, newly-arriving Internationals often ask, after the first few weeks, "Why do you have so many people volunteering to help us?" Our answer is often

Why do you have so many people volunteering to help us?" Our answer is often along the lines of, "Let me tell you about what Jesus did for me."

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The spirit of vibrant volunteerism, made possible by Jesus' love which we are privileged to reflect, is infectious to our students. Whether helping keep up the property, helping others or pitching in to add value to our program, our Internationals are increasingly on the front line of service, in addition to receiving instruction and support.

At this time of year, we're especially reminded of the Word's assurance in John 13:35: "They will know us by our love." May God richly bless all of our partner International Student Ministries in the new year to come as new opportunities to share in the Great Commission abound.



SERVICE

UPDATE

PASTOR JOHN JJ VOELKER
LUTHERAN CAMPUS MINISTRY OF KENT STATE

In the Oct/Nov 2019 Doorstep we shared with you the testimony of a Muslim student at Kent State University. We are overjoyed to report that this student was baptized on September 15, 2019. Praise God from whom all blessing flow.

"God put this wonderful man (JJ Voelker) into my life to be my guide, friend, father and brother. He means more to me than any other person on earth. Most importantly he introduced me to Jesus, whom I love above all.

As I write this, I am close to peace at last. I've found my way off the religious roller coaster that I've been riding for years. I look forward to studying into this great church and attend the workshops of international student ministry, which I hope to make my home for years to come."



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