

Kingdom Living Today Addenda



Kingdom Living Today Addenda are the saga of two ordinary people who have loved, obeyed and served our Lord Jesus as children of our heavenly Father. Foremost, each Addendum reveals our Lord's divine involvement in our lives - revealing His life lessons for us and our character transformations as well as His Spirit's use of us to be His blessing to others. May our saga encourage your confidence to live Lordship-committed.



Mi casa es tu casa

"Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it" (Hebrews 13:2).



Indicates our recognition of a divine stitch.

Sue mentioned previously that our friend Bert, who'd been teaching conversational English to international graduate students and wives, had asked her to take over the class as he and his family were emigrating to Israel. Bert was an experienced college-level English instructor, and his more academic approach had appealed to the men in the class. However, most of the women in the class were not students themselves but rather the wives of students. While the grad students were required to pass an English exam before being accepted into the university, the wives who accompanied them had no such prerequisite. Many found themselves floundering in even the most basic tasks like grocery shopping or making appointments or helping their children with their schoolwork.



Sue had no background at all in teaching English. But she had a genuine loving concern for these very needy women, realizing how frustrated and alone she'd feel if she were in their place. (She'd previously traveled in five other countries and knew it could be overwhelming.) When the male students realized that Bert was no longer going to be their instructor, they immediately stopped attending. This actually made it much easier for Sue to go back to the basics of pronunciation and learning simple sentences using illustrations. She also developed a specific "class question" each week which, over time, led to some wonderfully personal sharing.



Sue knew that most ESL teachers require their students to speak only English in class. That approach may work for some, but it was hard for the ladies who struggled to grasp what was being said. So Sue let the women who understood translate for those near them using their native language. As word got around, more and more wives from Mainland China in particular started coming to the weekly class.



Although the classes were officially held at the campus International Center, Sue encouraged the women to get together themselves during the week to practice speaking English in all sorts of settings. She also visited the women in their homes. One of her high points was seeing three of her students — all from different countries — walking down the sidewalk together talking with each other. She knew they had to be speaking English since that's the only language they had in common! *Glory to God alone!*





Some of the “class questions” Sue developed were Holy Spirit-inspired — they evoked deep emotional responses from the women. For example, she once asked, “What is the most frightening thing that ever happened to you?” As each woman carefully formed her thoughts into words, “Ping” blurted out about her imprisonment in a labor camp by the Communist Chinese authorities. She was educated, and Mao Zedong’s policy was to humble the “upper classes” through forced labor. Ping had been assigned to work in a coal mine from dawn to dusk, backbreaking work that was fraught with danger. Her voice broke as she recounted a particular evening as the slave laborers were finishing their day’s work. A loud rumble filled the mine with violent shaking. Running as fast as she could, Ping exited the mine just as the entryway collapsed, crushing those who’d been behind her. As she sobbed, the other women came around the table to hold her and console her. We were all sharing far more than English language skills during these narratives!



Another week Sue asked, “Name an event in your life that showed your deep love for someone.” Several women spoke of happy times with their husband or parents or siblings. Then the accounts turned more serious. “Shaodong” was in tears even before she began speaking. The other ladies reached over to encourage her to speak. In halting phrases Shaodong told the group that she too had suffered forced labor in a rural province in the frigid far north. (Her husband had been sentenced to a different camp.) Her parents had managed to sneak her infant son out of her city before her capture, and they were caring for him in a village not far from the prison camp. An icy stream separated them, but whenever she could, Shaodong would sneak out of the camp, cross the river and see her son. Some nights it was so cold that she feared she’d catch pneumonia and never see her baby again. She survived her labor sentence and was finally reunited with her child and her parents and ultimately her husband.

You can tell that hearts were being melted together as friendships bloomed to deeper levels among the different cultures. Everyone understands joy and pain and love! As the women became more and more comfortable with using their English with each other and around town, frequent get-togethers began to take place. We celebrated birthdays in tiny off-campus apartments, and enjoyed weekend afternoons at the retreat center with their husbands and children playing outdoor games. Sometimes we even went hiking!



Over the course of her 6 years of teaching, Sue developed some deep relationships. One that stands out was with a highly educated Chinese wife who was a staunch Buddhist. “Shawen” and Sue got together often outside class to explore each other’s history and family life. They also had many conversations about Jesus as the God Who loves and sacrificed Himself for humanity, a concept far different than Shawen’s Buddhist principles and beliefs.

After a year or so of discussion times Shawen faced a crisis in her life. She was 4 months pregnant and a number of growths had appeared on many of her internal organs. Sue prayed in the name and authority of Jesus to spare Shawen's unborn child and to heal Shawen as a testimony of His love for her. At her physician's advice Shawen and Sue drove together down to Yale Medical Center so Shawen could have exploratory surgery for what was suspected to be widespread cancer. When the surgery was finished, the doctor told Shawen that they could find NO TRACE OF CANCER at all in her — and her unborn child had not been harmed during the surgery! Knowing that Jesus had brought this about, Sue rejoiced in His mercy to the relieved woman. Shawen's relief, though, didn't result in her recognizing her own need to repent and come to Father God through Jesus. But Father wasn't done.



A few weeks later Shawen brought a Chinese friend over to the retreat center to talk with Sue. She'd told her friend that "Sue's Jesus" had healed her of cancer, and that her friend needed to hear about this Jesus! Sue was delighted to share with both Shawen and her friend, but saddened at the resistance Shawen was putting up against Him in her own life. Finally, Sue challenged Shawen, "Why don't you humble yourself to ask Jesus if He is the true and only Son of God?" Shawen agreed to ask. Sue went over to see her a few days later. Shawen reported that Jesus had indeed come to her in a dream and held out His arms to her to turn from her sin and become one of His own. But Shawen told Sue, "I refused to do that. I expected Jesus to demand that I come to Him. But since He didn't force me, I turned away from Him." Sue was crushed in spirit, but knew that only Father could bring anyone to the point in their life in which they see their need to be reconciled with Him through Jesus.



A completely different experience came from our relationship with "Xenia". This dear woman from Mainland China had left behind her little daughter in order to accompany her husband to the US for his doctoral studies. She and we soon became close friends, and we were delighted when she was able to send for her little girl to come to Connecticut to live with them. Six-year-old Lulu spoke no English at all when she arrived, and it was hard for her to make so many life changes so fast. But she loved coming over to play with our Weimaraner, Ollie, a gentle giant who let her roll all over him and play chase. Being so young she was able to soon learn English at school and made friends with other children who also lived on campus.

Xenia heard so many of our accounts of the loving power of Jesus that she soon asked us for a Chinese Bible. She found others on campus who shared her eagerness to encounter Him, and became part of a group composed of both English speakers and Chinese. But when her heart and soul cried out to identify with the death and resurrection of Jesus by immersion baptism, she asked us if we would immerse her. (It was winter so Mike suggested we use the hot tub we'd been given by the man to whom Mike ministered after his daughter had committed suicide.) Despite the blanket of snow all around us, Mike and Xenia entered the tub and she arose from the water rejoicing!



(We left the retreat center a year or so later, and she too moved to another part of the country. But our relationship has continued over the years, and we've prayed daily for one another and even visited together — and all this initially began because Xenia wanted to improve her English!)



There's more to our "hot-tub immersions". The college-age brother of one of Sue's Taiwanese students came to the States for a several-month visit. His sister introduced "Zhao" to a number of American students who followed Jesus. We knew several of these young men and women who were serious about their relationship with their Lord and spent time studying the Bible with Zhao and praying with him. Just before he returned to Taiwan, Zhao asked if Mike would baptize him. His immersion took place on the same icy day as Xenia's, and we all rejoiced together in this step of commitment they had both made to follow Jesus as Lord of their lives.



Yet another loving relationship developed between Sue and "Yiwen" from Mainland China. Yiwen recognized that the personal values and perspectives which Sue shared in class as a follower of Jesus were far different from what she observed among students on campus and on TV. It wasn't long before she asked Sue if they could get together weekly and discuss this "Jesus" whom she knew Sue treasured. Their weekly get-togethers in Yiwen's little apartment were punctuated with serious questions and lots of loving laughter. Yiwen's husband "Xi" was also very curious about Jesus, and very interested in the Chinese Bible that Sue had given Yiwen.



The relationship blossomed even more when Yiwen's in-laws arrived from China for an extended visit. They too were interested in this Jesus who had so touched the hearts of their son and his wife. A highlight of our time spent with Xi's parents was their visit with us to Mike's Mom's house about 15 miles from campus. It's amazing how much joy and love can be shared even when conversations have to be translated!



We are among many followers of Jesus for whom God has opened doors for relationships with people from other nations. One American couple we know had gotten involved in a coffee shop business because their young daughter had such a heart for Chinese people to meet Jesus! Their coffee shop business led them to China, and ultimately to taking ESL classes back in the States. Employed by a Chinese university to teach students English, little did the authorities know that inside their tiny apartment, students hungry to know Jesus were filling every inch — even wrapping themselves in blankets on their bed during the freezing winter months!

Another couple felt a leading to go to Lebanon to bring the Good News of Jesus as Lord to the Lebanese. They carefully prepared themselves by taking ESL courses at a Christian university, and practiced their language skills at a Lebanese restaurant/coffee shop not far from their campus apartment. When health issues ultimately prevented them from actually getting to Lebanon, their skill set in that language was put to good use when they moved back home to be closer to their relatives.

We hope you can understand that when you are attuned to the Holy Spirit and able see others through the loving and compassionate eyes of Jesus, Father will open up to you unexpected opportunities with people you might have otherwise never met. Are you willing to ask Him to bring to you someone who needs to experience Lord Jesus as the Living God in a way that transcends just talking about Him? More in our next Saga...