

January 2005, *Equipping*

A Moment for Celebration:

We invite you to share the following story with your congregation. It should take no more than 2 minutes to read aloud. You might also wish to include the story in your church newsletter.

Celebration Story: “After the class”

What is the impact of placing Christian English teachers at Chinese Universities?



I got a glimpse of the impact when I joined Phil Bender, Mennonite Church Canada WITNESS worker, in one of his conversation classes at Chongqing University of Medical Sciences. Most of the dozen students were young professional doctors. Phil had told the class that they would have a visitor representing a group of Mennonite churches in Canada, and would have a chance to interview him.

I was surprised with the type of questions that the young doctors asked. Although Phil invited them to ask any type of question, at least half of the questions to me had to do with trying to understand the idea of “church.” One of the questions was “Would you please tell me about some rituals in your church?” Briefly I shared about the ritual of congregational singing, and various forms of prayer in our worship services. Other questions were “What is the difference between Catholics and Christians?; “Please tell me about the ceremony of dedicating children.”

Later on, Phil talked with enthusiasm about the conversations that continued after the class. Several students came to his office to continue the discussion. Phil finds that English teaching is a very meaningful way to interact with Chinese students who would otherwise have little chance to talk with a Christian about their faith. In a country where proselytism and church planting is illegal, Phil and Julie Bender find it meaningful to minister in this way with Chinese people.

—Gordon Janzen, *Witness Program Facilitator for Asia & Middle East*
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