

# EVERGREEN UPDATE

NEWSLETTER OF EVERGREEN FAMILY FRIENDSHIP SERVICE

Issue 25

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## A CHRISTMAS PRAYER

Delivered By Pastor Qi Hongguang on Christmas Eve 2003  
at the Taiyuan Protestant Church



*Dear Lord Jesus Christ,  
We thank You and praise You. You came to the world from heaven in the image of the Son of Man, in order to bear the sins of the world.  
Dear Lord, when we come to You today, please let us remember the Lord who left the highest heaven and was born into this world to suffer for us. Let us constantly look towards Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith.*



*Gracious Lord Jesus Christ, from Your very beginnings in Bethlehem, You continually experienced every kind of oppression and suffering, until You were nailed to the face of the cross at Golgotha.*



*Lord, when we come to You this Christmas Eve, we come not as the people of the world—looking for revelry or happiness, hoping to pass a pleasant, comfortable night; rather, tonight we come to hide the peace You have bestowed on us in our hearts. May every one of us be able to share from You this most precious peace that You give—peace that can never be taken away.*



*Lord, have mercy on us. Be with all the churches throughout the world as they gather together tonight in Your name. Lord, You have been born in our hearts; help us to always be prepared to welcome You to dwell within us. Gracious Lord Jesus Christ, we bring before You all of tonight's programs and activities: may they please You, may You bless them. Work through tonight's programs and preaching to bring more people into Your grace and blessings. Our unworthy prayers, praises, hope, and trust are all offered in the name*



*of our gracious Lord,  
Jesus the Christ.  
Amen!*



# I WANT TO BE A SHEEP OF CHRIST

BY ZHOU BING

TRANSLATED BY WEI YINGFENG



married. In 1966 during the Cultural Revolution, my wife's family was sent back to their hometown village from Taiyuan because they were Christians and I was scared of knowing or talking about Jesus.

Despite not being a Christian at the time of the Cultural Revolution, calamity still visited me. In March, 1972, I was jailed in a political class of my factory because I had a brother who lived in Taiwan. Jailed in the factory, we could not go home or have contact with other people (who actually were worried about having a relationship with us). At that time, I wasn't scared for my political problem but for my marriage, because I knew some men's wives divorced them. I had only been married about a year, and to be frank, the emotion between my wife and me was not deep enough, so how could I not worry about it? But my wife, being a very virtuous, considerate lady, instead of divorcing me, took care of me. At that time, the quantity of food, oil and meat were limited and people needed certificates to buy food and meat. My wife always took the certificates to me, and ate only corn or porridge at home. She often visited me as well, so I did not worry about divorce any more. After 18 months, I was freed for I had no political problems at all. I greatly appreciated my wife's help, but I did not know that it was Christ's love through my wife to me.

I worked for my factory as a driver from 1974 to 1995. During my driving career, I went to many provinces journeying over a million miles, without any accident. I encountered some very dangerous situations in the journey, but I did not know why I escaped every time. I remember a dark, snowy winter day, when I had to drive a truck to Changchun City. The road was bad and very

slippery. Suddenly, 30 meters ahead at most, two trucks crashed and burned. My mind went blank and I could not think how to react, but strangely my truck overtook the burning truck from the left side and I was able to pass safely by. Another time, the temperature was about 20 degrees below zero Celsius with a heavy snow. Since my truck could not climb the mountain because the road was too slippery, I had to stay at the foot of the mountain for the night, but I did not have enough fuel to keep my engine running for the whole night. The engine would freeze if it stopped and I needed the heat from it in order to survive the night. I really didn't know what I should do. At that urgent time, another truck pulled up behind me. Even though the driver was a stranger, he gave me some fuel that he was carrying in an extra tank and did not charge me for it. I immediately felt a peace come over me.

In the beginning, I thought I always had good luck because I was an excellent driver, but later, my wife told me that she prayed that God would bless and take care of me every time I went to work. I believed God heard my wife's prayers and protected me. Later, I found, "... whatever you ask of the Father in my name, He may give to you." John 15:16b The facts have proved that this is true: God is faithful.

In 1995, I met Mr. Finn Torjesen and worked for him for a period of time. As I observed him, his wife Sandy and his parents, my heart was greatly moved by their words and their activities. They were always thinking of others instead of themselves. They treated me as a friend, instead of just their driver. So, my fear and doubt about these foreigners disappeared and I felt we were close. But I still did not understand why they treated a common Chinese person whom they had known for such a short time so well. So I took courage and asked them this question. They answered that they are Christians, that a Christian should love his neighbor as himself, as Jesus commanded. Their answer moved me again and it reminded me of years ago during my imprisonment when my wife treated me so well and of my lucky escapes from dangers as a driver. Why had it happened? I was sure it was not just luck but I believed there was a true God who loved me, even if I did not know Him yet.

Later, I met Mark Strand, Alice Chen, David Leung, Curt Elliott, Edie Eager and others, all

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*"As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts."*

Isaiah 55:9

Peter and Valborg Torjesen (Norwegians with China Inland Mission in Hequ, Shanxi Province) read Isaiah 55:9 on December 14, 1939. That same day, Peter was killed when Japanese bombed their home and church where at times up to 1,000 refugees and wounded were sheltered. In her grief, Valborg heard God say: *"You do not realize now what I am doing, but later you will understand."* John 13:7

Little did Peter's four children guess that 50 years later in 1990, they would attend the dedication of a monument honoring their beloved Far and be invited by Chinese officials to return to Shanxi to work in the spirit of Peter Torjesen.

## EVERGREEN WELCOMES NEW MEMBERS

At the end of September, Evergreen welcomed new members Cesar and Sharon Velasquez. Cesar was born in San Diego, California and grew up in Los Angeles. He received a BA in history from the University of California Santa Cruz and his teaching credential in elementary education from Point Loma Nazarene University. Sharon was born in Chicago, Illinois and grew up in Deerfield. She received a BS in human biology from Stanford University and an MD from the University of California San Diego Medical School. She completed a residency in Family Practice at the Ventura County Medical Center. Cesar and Sharon were married in July of 1996. They completed two years of Chinese language study in Tianjin, China before joining Evergreen and are now living in Yuci with their two children, Ana age five and Benjamin age three.



In November, Evergreen welcomed new member Beth Ockers. Beth was born in Jos, Nigeria where her parents served with Sudan Interior Mission. She graduated from Taylor University with a degree in French and Secondary Education and went on to obtain a Master's degree in General Theological Studies from Columbia International University and a TEFL certificate from Wheaton College's Institute for Cross-Cultural Training. She taught French for two years at Black Forest Academy in Germany and has most recently resided in Columbia, South Carolina. Beth will begin learning Mandarin Chinese in Taiyuan.

*(Continued from page 2)*

of whom treated common people so well and put their whole hearts into God's work in Shanxi. Their actions inspired me to want to know God. After I became a part of Evergreen's staff, I discovered this was a big family of Christ, people from different countries encouraging one another and loving one another. All of them love the Lord with all their hearts and souls. Then I began to read the Bible and discovered I was a sinner and needed Jesus Christ to save me. After admitting my sin and praying to receive Christ, I joined a Bible study at church, and learned more about the Bible. In 1998, I was baptized. Dr. David Leung helped me to grow spiritually by studying the Bible with

me. I want to consecrate myself to God as Dr. Leung does. Though the road is long and hard and I still am a sinner with lots of weaknesses, the Holy Spirit keeps me and I am strengthened by reading the Bible and praying unceasingly.

*Mr. Zhou and wife Wang Shuxiang live in Taiyuan. Mr. Zhou is a driver for Evergreen and also cooks for the Shanxi Evergreen International School in Yangqu. His wife works in the Taiyuan Church bookstore and keeps the Taiyuan Office clean.*

*The Evergreen Purpose is:*

*To assist Shanxi and other Chinese Provinces by:*

- *Developing public benefit services for the common people,*
- *Continuing the good works of Ye Yongqing (Leaf Evergreen, i.e. Peter Torjesen),*
- *Acknowledging God's gracious calling in our lives and*
- *Reflecting the credibility of Christ.*

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Tax deductible contributions can be made in Australia, Canada and the USA.

Congratulations to **Mark Strand** who successfully defended his PhD dissertation, *Determinants of Nutrition-Related Rickets in Chinese Children and Associated Health Outcomes*, in October. Mark will receive a PhD in Public Health from the University of Colorado Denver. Well done!

Evergreen hosted twenty young Chinese staff for Community Development Training in October. **Raewyn Chinside**, of Jian Hua Foundation, led the week-long participatory training.

In September and October, the field was delighted to welcome leaders and guests from four different organizations that second workers to Evergreen. Without these valuable partnerships, Evergreen could not begin to recruit and support the diverse international community of members that serve in Shanxi.

**Paul Fung**, an Australian medical student, arrived in Yuci in November to begin work on the Hypertension Survey.

**Joel and Diana Davidse** finished their agricultural internship and returned to Holland in mid-October to resume their studies at the university.

Special note cards are now available from the Papercut Cards project. This project provides much needed income to dozens of struggling families. For ordering information, please see [www.evergreencard.com](http://www.evergreencard.com) or e-mail: [USorder@evergreencard.com](mailto:USorder@evergreencard.com) in the U.S.

**Margaret Lankford** of the U.S. office spent three weeks in November with the team in Shanxi. Margaret recently received a Meritorious Service award from McConkey Johnston International for her hard work for Evergreen.

The Yangqu Community Center is comfortably settled in their new and larger facility. The five-story center is located on the main street through town and has already attracted new visitors.

### A New Taiyuan Training Center !



For several years now, Evergreen's International Headquarters in Taiyuan has been looking for larger facilities. We currently have insufficient room for meetings or training and yet requests for training keep pouring in. Marriage and parenting seminars, elder care training, English classes, pastors' meetings and many other requests have been put on hold due to a lack of space. After years of searching, we were delighted to find a suitable office suite in the building pictured at left. Since three to five years' worth of rent is equal to the purchase price for offices in town, we have decided to take a step of faith and purchase this office which is three times the size of our current office. This will enable us to unite all of the International Headquarters' operations and Taiyuan programs under one roof while allowing us to greatly expand the services we can offer to those in need in our city. Will you please pray with us for God's provision for this new location and for His blessing on all whom we hope to serve through it?

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