

## Our May 15th Graduation – with our college’s founder

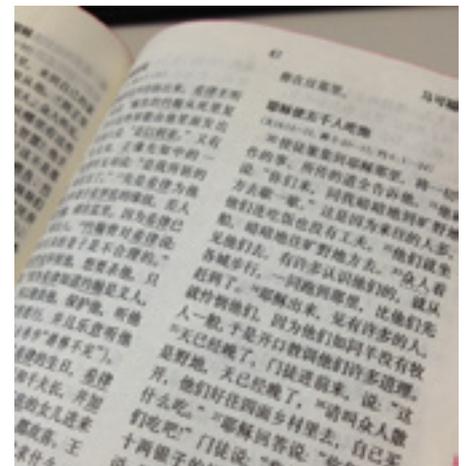
A recent milestone is that we graduated from our 2nd year of Charis Bible College, which gives us two certificates:

- 1) Associate’s Degree in Bible studies
- 2) Ministerial License issued by the State of Colorado

We had a beautiful graduation banquet and graduation ceremony. The school really did a good job on both, and we felt honored and showered with the Lord’s love, and His encouragement to keep going for God and continue in our call to serve Him



The view from our classroom, just before our Graduation from 2nd year of Bible College on May 14th, 2021. Winters here are long!



Dear friend,

How are you? God bless you! We earnestly pray for you daily, that things are going very well with you, your family and your work, and for your protection, good health, prosperity, fulfillment, and beautiful times with the Lord and His Word.

We want to thank you so much again for your friendship, prayer and support for us, You are such a blessing to us, especially during this time, where because of our having to leave China and go to the US, our lives have changed in so many ways.

# CONTINUING ON TO 3RD-YEAR MINISTRY SCHOOL AT CHARIS

We also committed to continue on in our studies for the 3rd year Ministry School, where we will receive further training in pastoring and pastoral care ministry, leadership, evangelism, teaching, youth ministry, children's ministry, and helps ministry, as well as in-depth training in counseling others and helping others become committed Christian disciples, which are two areas that we love ministering in and would like more training in, in order to do a better job in both areas.

The Lord showed us to pursue this 3rd year of studies so that we can be more effective and fruitful in our service for Him, in the next place of ministry that He has for us. "In this is My Father glorified, that you bear much fruit; so shall you be My disciples." (John 15:8) We plan to do the 3rd year of specialization in the field of Ministry here at Charis, starting at the end of this August, 2021.

## Online classes to our friends in China continue

We continue giving online classes to our friends in China, and as we mentioned before, the underground church that some of our Bible students have been attending has been closed now officially. It is a sad situation because of the pastors' moral failures in different areas of their lives. Our friends were quite discouraged and we did a special Bible study with them about keeping our eyes on Jesus and not on man.

We try to address our friends' needs through our Bible studies, and since some of them have been going through some challenging situations in their relationships, we have started a new study on the topic of forgiveness, and after each class have a time for questions and prayer. They are so very sincere, honest and humble about their problems, and it really draws us all close together to the Lord and each other.

There is a clear tightening of religious activities in China, so we ask that you can continue to pray for our friends, and also for us to be able to continue minister freely and securely to our friends, thank you very much!

## Polly's Green Card application sent and accepted

Another highlight of the month was working on Polly's Green Card application. We needed to apply for a Green Card for Polly, so that she can remain in the US for our next year of studies, because we had to cancel our plans to renew her International Student visa in Brazil, due to travel difficulties caused by a new variant of Covid in Brazil.

Doing the Green Card application was a very intense period for us of more than three weeks, consisting of a lot of research online, filling in eight different forms of a total of 80 pages, sending over 100 pages of supporting documents, and going over



the 135 pages of instructions for the forms. Plus there was a trip to a neighboring city for a one-hour consultation with an immigration lawyer, and an official medical exam for Polly. Finally we were able to send in Polly's application for a Green Card, on April 26th, the day before we started our mission trip! It was a very tiring time, with no breaks or rest days, but well worth it! We praise and thank the Lord that He was able to help us complete the application! (Three weeks later we received the good news that Polly's application was accepted, thank God! There will still be a waiting period of 6-10 months, and the Green Card interview to be passed, before Leny will get her Green Card, so we would be thankful for your continued prayers for the rest of the process to go smoothly and well, thank you!).

# OUR MISSION TRIP

Another highlight of this month was our 6-day mission trip, together with 14 other students from our class, from April 27th through May 2nd. It was a very worthwhile time, with lots of opportunities to witness and share God's love with others.

On our mission trip we went to two different cities in Colorado. The trip consisted of a day of outreach to the homeless (including giving each one a package of food), plus an outreach day at a large mall (since that day was snowing), also we put together a very successful Children's Festival (one day of preparation and an all-day festival) and on Sunday our group students did the church service, and the prayer ministry after the service, for a church in the mountains of Colorado.

On our outreach to the homeless, Mike and I had a very interesting experience with a homeless man from Norway, who actually turned out to be quite an intellectual, and not a typical homeless, as he wasn't on drugs, or dirty, but a real searcher for the truth. We talked with him for over an hour, and he readily let us pray for him, though he wasn't yet ready to pray with us to receive the Lord.

On our witnessing day at the mall, where we split into two-person teams, Mike and I led a young Mexican man to the Lord, and were able to pray for and encourage about a dozen people.

Another highlight was the Children's Festival which was held in a small town, where 70% of the people live below the poverty level, and the main income of this town is from mining and casinos. Because there are very few activities for children in



this town, the local pastor came up with the idea of our group doing a children's festival, and it was quite a success!

We spent most of Friday setting up and decorating for the festival, and flyers were passed out and also given to the local school. The next day, Saturday, more than 50 children (plus their parents) came to the Festival. The children had a blast and enjoyed a very full late morning and all afternoon with games, prizes, three different skits, a puppet theater presentation, face painting, balloon animals, (Polly



did the face painting and Mike made the balloon animals, as we used to do this in Romania 24 years ago!), and free hot dogs and drinks, but most importantly, all of the children and parents had the opportunity to receive Jesus as their Lord and Savior.

At the local church where we held the children's



festival, our little group of students did the whole Sunday church service, and Polly gave a 10-minute teaching on healing, where she shared her healing testimony of being healed of Chronic Fatigue.



# PRAYER IN ACTION

Polly doing prayer ministry after the service

During the prayer ministry after the service, a mother and daughter came to Polly and Mike for prayer, as the 16-year-old daughter had had something very traumatic happen to her a few years ago. The mother wanted to ask God to help her forgive the person involved. Both mother and daughter were very touched by the Lord's love and Spirit. They had been away from God for 6 years, they told us. By God's grace this is the beginning of healing in their lives. We saw how the Lord came through His Spirit to touch people's lives during our mission trip, and many came to the Lord through our team's activities, others rededicated their lives to Him, received prayer for healing and for the baptism of the Holy Spirit.



*Thoughts and reflections on our beloved field of China – Part 1*

It has been almost 10 months since we have had to leave our mission field of China (due to a sudden change in visa policy, and moved here to the US to study at our Bible college. To be honest, we never imagined ourselves living in the USA before this, as we have spent the great majority of our lives since coming to know the Lord, on foreign mission fields.

After we were married in 1995 (we met and married in Brazil), we were missionaries to Romania from 1996 until 2000, and then from 2000 until September of 2020 we lived in China (2½ years of this was in Taiwan – in early 2004 in China, we received a phone call from the police at 9:30 PM and were separated and “interviewed” for 2 hours at the police station, and warned against sharing our Christian faith in China. We moved to Taiwan for a while, until we were able to return to a different part of China).

Sometimes when people find out that we lived nearly 20 years in China, they wince, and ask us if it was hard for us living and being missionaries in China. We reply that our life in China was a beautiful and rewarding experience, as the Chinese people that we met and ministered to were in general so receptive to the Gospel, and so polite and kind to us as foreigners in their midst. So what was hard for us was having to leave the precious people of China, quite suddenly and unexpectedly.

Of course, life has its own hardships and difficulties no matter where you live, with health challenges, financial difficulties, etc. And during our time of living in China, we did have obstacles to overcome: religion persecution problems, visa difficulties, language challenges and frustrations, health challenges, cultural adaptations, etc., but honestly when we think of all those years in China, our hearts are so very thankful that the Lord gave us the honor to serve Him in such a special mission field. We think it was worth every minute of it and if we were able to, we would go back. as we just love the people and especially all our friends there. Thank God, we still can minister to them via our weekly Bible classes via the internet, praise God for that. We miss our friends very much!

Perhaps we can give some examples of some of our experiences:

The very first day when we arrived at the university in the Chinese city where the Lord showed us to live and study Chinese (in the year 2000), we arrived in the evening at the humble student “hotel” that served as the student dormitory, and as we were entering the door of the lobby, a young Chinese woman passed by us as she went through the same door on her way out. Five minutes later there was a knock at the door of our room, and it was this same young lady, whose first question was, “Can you teach me the Bible?” She was a university student, she received the Lord, and for more than a year until she left our city, we would meet together weekly or more as we would speak to her in our very broken Chinese using a dictionary and a Chinese-English Bible, to teach her about the Lord.

A month after we arrived in this city, it was the



Chinese National Day week-long holiday and the university where we were studying was closed. Polly started feeling very weak and faint, and we knew that something major was wrong (it turned out that Polly had had a ruptured fallopian tube pregnancy, and she was losing blood internally very fast). We called the university office but no one was there, we only knew of one Chinese person that knew some English, a Chinese woman in her 20's who we had met once on a bus. We were able to reach her by phone, and she immediately called an ambulance for us, arranged for us to arrive at the hospital, met us at the hospital, guided us through all the questions of the doctor and staff, and then donned a hospital gown and stayed with Polly until 3 AM at night, to translate for Polly and the surgeon throughout the emergency operation. We were beginning to get to know the wonderful kindness and hospitality of the Chinese people!

A month or more after this, Mike was crossing the pedestrian overpass leading out of the university, to go home (Polly was at our apartment resting, as she was still too weak to study), and there was a tap on his shoulder, it was a Chinese young lady who was a student of at the university, who asked him a familiar question, “Can you teach me the Bible?” That was C., who is still our dear friend 21 years later. We did teach her the Bible, and today she is leading her own house church and is a happy wife and mother of two beautiful children who love the Lord.

These were some of the first of dozens of Chinese students, teachers, university professors, businessmen, military doctors, school owners,



computer technicians, newspaper editors, lawyers, and other young professionals who came to our home to learn about Christ and receive Him and study the Bible with us.



# FIRST STEP

From the beginning, the Lord showed us that the first step was to learn the language, so we went to Chinese university right at the beginning. The language is one of the greatest challenges to be overcome, as there are more than 5,000 characters in common use and there are 5 tones in the spoken language so it takes hard work and patience to learn both to read and to speak. But it is very rewarding to be able to reach them in a deeper way and understand their culture, which is very interconnected with the language Mike was able to get a Bachelor's degree in Chinese language, and Polly can speak and understand quite a lot of Chinese as well.

The Chinese people are so kind and encouraging to foreigners learning the language. Even if you have just learned the most basic of greetings in Chinese and can say: "Ni hao" (Hello!), the Chinese will respond with encouraging complements of how well you speak Chinese!

One thing that really helped us to have a breakthrough in learning the language was a week-long trip to a friend's home in a nearby province during our first Chinese New Year in China. We had been learning the language for one whole semester, and yet without the ability to really communicate very much. But being immersed in a Chinese family home life, and having

to use the language all day gave us a real breakthrough in the language.

The Chinese people that the Lord led us to during our time in China were so eager to know God's truth and love, and also curious about and exceptionally welcoming of foreigners.

Unfortunately, the atmosphere now has changed, as the present government is encouraging the population to be wary of foreigners and foreign culture and is returning to some of Mao's old slogans, emphasizing loyalty to the party etc. Many of the house churches have been closed by the government, and many missionaries have been deported from China in the past 2 years, and in many parts of China there is a reward of \$1500 given to the locals for reporting a foreign missionary to the police.

We hope that you enjoyed this little glimpse into our early experiences in China, we hope to share more of them with you in the months to come.

Thank you again so much, for your friendship, prayers and support for our studies, and our continuing missionary work, done remotely from here, ha!

We are so thankful to you for your love and help and prayers!

**A BIG THANKS TO EACH OF OUR REGULAR MONTHLY AND QUARTERLY AND ANNUAL GIVERS TO THE MISSIONS. WITHOUT YOU AND YOUR PRAYERS REALLY NOTHING IS MOVING!**

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