

This story is such an inspiring account of how God is using teachers in China that we have decided to devote this whole issue to it.

The Voice of God: His Word, a Dream, and the Church

I first met Cici and Jennie one September when I taught English to their class and they signed up for a British History course. Since then we've spent many hours together, talked over many things and shared many thoughts, concerns and dreams. Cici has given me lessons on China's Tang and Ming dynasties and on one of China's most famous novels, *The Dream of the Red Mansions*. We've celebrated birthdays and had parties in their dormitory. And they've played two great April Fools Tricks on me!

The call of God

No one can ever say when God begins to call and draw someone, but here are some of the events in that process for Cici and Jennie. Cici is a very bright student from Inner Mongolia. She thinks deeply about all kinds of things and she always had questions after class: questions about the work we'd done, questions about events in history, and questions about my life, which very soon became questions about God. Then one very hot day in June, near the end of the year, I met her on campus and she said she was reading the Bible. However, she said, there were many things she did not understand. I said to her that that was not surprising; the real meaning and the power of God and the depth of His love revealed in the Bible are impossible to understand without the Spirit of God in you. But keep reading and ask God's Holy Spirit to open your eyes.

Soon after this I was back in the UK for the summer break and I didn't see Cici again for

a few months. And in that time she had read the Bible, linked herself up with a local believer in this city, gone to church and given her life to the Lord!

In the meantime she had been telling Jennie all about it. Jennie is a sweet and gentle girl from the east coast whose family is strongly Buddhist. I'm not sure how much of it she had really taken in at that stage, but she started going to the local group with Cici.



Two students ~ not Jennie and Cici

Jennie's dream

Then one morning, they came round for their usual visit, and I asked them how they were doing. And Jennie replied that she'd had a dream. She began to describe the dream. "That day in my dream was the end of the world. It was the last day. The hills were shaking and the earth was trembling. Everyone was running. I was very afraid and I wanted to cry out for help. So I cried out "Help me, Pusa (a Buddhist idol)", but no help came. So then I thought I should cry out to God. So I cried out, "Help me, God." And he came. He was standing in front of me. And then he began to judge the earth. He said very clearly, "To all the Christians I will give a sign." And he began to give out bubbles. I got one, and Cici got one. And then you and all those who had believed for a long time suddenly turned into precious jewels – crystals and blue and green and red stones. It was all very clear... and then I woke up."

I said to her, “Jennie, how much of the Bible have you read? I mean, before this dream had you read about this?” No, before the dream she had never read any of it. So I showed her the passages about the hills melting like wax before the Lord (in Psalm 97 and in Nahum), and the words Jesus said about people fleeing in the last days (Matthew 24), and then the new Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal (Revelation 21). (I could not find any reference to any bubbles! But I did show her the sheep and the goats where people are clearly divided.)

I am in awe of the Lord that He would speak to Jennie in this way. The amazing thing was that three days before the dream she had been at a church service and the pastor had asked her if she wanted to make a commitment. She said she did, and he prayed with her, but in actual fact she really wasn't sure about a lot of things or whether she was then a Christian or not. But I believe that if she was, then God did not want her to live in doubt about it, and if she was not, then He really did want to speak to her so that she would know that He was real.

Pressing on with Jesus

They are both still going on strong. They are firmly linked in with a local group where they get very sound input. For both of them the big issue has been their parents' disapproval. From Cici's parents it is pressure to achieve and do well in society and to bring in a good salary. For Jennie's parents it's their Buddhism (their level of commitment to Buddhism is not terribly common in China). But God has brought them through the first part of this trial. Over the Spring Festival holiday both of them told their parents, without dire consequences. The issue now is to pray for their parents that they would see that this is not just a passing phase, or an 'add-on' to their existing life-style, but it's real and it has changed their lives and it will affect every decision they make from now.

They are about to graduate from university. They will face tremendous challenges in the coming months and years: the challenge to stand strong in the workplace where ungodly connections and corruptions are the norm; the challenge to hold out for a Christian husband in the face of huge social and family pressure to get married soon; and the challenge of leaving this city and the body of believers here and searching for a new group – not easy when it's underground. But God is faithful and he's the author and perfecter of their faith, and their foundations are strong.

Cici phones me each week and almost always says, “Please tell me what God has been saying to you this week.” I always pray for them, and there have been times when God has touched their hearts and prompted them to pray for situations for me. And this year on my birthday they had prepared a song to sing to me. I'll never forget them standing in my bedroom and singing with all their hearts, “Let your heart return, Let your soul fly high, Jesus loves you, He's waiting for you, He's the only treasure in your life.”

I'll finish by writing out something that Cici wrote. “Now I have seen a new life waving to me, a life given only by God. This new life is founded not on the basis of materials; love from people or ourselves, but on faith in God... If I didn't know you this deeply, I would want to suggest that you have more rest and take good care of yourself. But there is something more important. So, 'forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead I press on toward the goal for the prize of the heavenly call of God in Christ Jesus.”

HT ~ NW China

*Praise God that his word never returns empty!
Please pray for Cici and Jennie that their faith would flourish and for all our teachers as they share the love of Jesus with their students.*

To support the work and for further details and information about opportunities, please contact
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