

Spotlight on CBM



by Ruth Anna Dana

This past year has been a period of expansion for the Canadian Baptist Ministries team in Germany as the online church united Chinese believers in four cities. The pandemic created a special longing for community in students living alone in dorm rooms, who were dealing with general confusion and trying to maintain mental health.

When she was a Chinese student abroad, Xiaodan Gang first heard the message of salvation. She later sensed God's call to ministry, and completed theological studies in 2007 and an internship with the Chinese church in Hamburg. In 2011, she committed herself to join the Canadian Baptist Ministries team. Coming from a similar background as the students she ministers to, Xiaodan has a heart to build relationships with youth to share Jesus with them.

Through discipleship, her desire is to answer their spiritual questions: "... sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always *being* ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you,

but with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15, NAS).

As a CBM global field staff member, Xiaodan has been reaching out to students in Germany since 2016. The city where she works has a very large student population. Ministry in weekly services changed format with the lockdown, and the online Chinese church began. Then, as some of the governmental regulations lessened, some outdoor activities were allowed and very small student groups met in the residences. The Bible study conversations became most profound and honest in a growing atmosphere of caring for each other.

In September of 2020, Xiaodan announced the happy news of her engagement to her German friend, Philipp Froehlich. Their wedding plans were then made for December but the ceremony was delayed several times due to the restrictions of the pandemic. The celebration took place on April 10, 2021.

While waiting, Xiaodan and Philipp served the Lord together, complementing one another's gifting. Many opportunities were used throughout the course of the year to build relationships with the students:



celebrating the September Moon Festival by sharing moon cakes, delivering Christmas cookies, and distributing Christian calendars at the Chinese New Year. Philipp launched an online German reading course of *The Purpose Driven Life* to help the students improve their German speaking skills.

Xiaodan and Philipp share a testimony of the seed of the gospel which was planted and the slow germination process in one young man's life. "In January of 2020 a student partook in our Chinese New Year's celebration. One year later he contacted us. He wanted to join our Bible study group. When he joined the group, he told us that he had only slept four hours in the last four days. He pondered the meaning of life, was very confused and troubled. He remembered the church he had visited some time ago. He wanted to get answers from the Bible to the questions he has about life."

Xiaodan and Philipp ask for prayer:

- ♦ Pray for the students as more and more are struggling with sleep deprivation and mental problems. They need God's hope and peace of mind.
- ♦ Pray that God may use the few opportunities Xiaodan and Philipp have to reach out to bring students to salvation.
- ♦ Pray for Xiaodan and Philipp to have the wisdom, strength, and love they need to be a guiding light for the students.
- ♦ May the Lord bless them in their new relationship as husband and wife.