

Couple Seizes Golden Opportunity to Minister

When Steve* was diagnosed with prostate cancer just before he and his wife, Lisa,* were planning to move to China, some friends took it as a sign.

“People [said], ‘I guess you are not supposed to be going overseas,’” Steve recalled. “I said, ‘No, I think I am just getting a tune-up here.’” Treatment for the illness caused a year’s delay in their plans, but it didn’t deter the middle-aged couple.

At a time when most of their generation is deciding where to settle for their golden years, Steve and Lisa saw these years as a golden opportunity. During an earlier visit with friends who work in another part of China, Steve and Lisa opened their hearts to the idea of sharing Jesus Christ in China as well.

“Every day we just saw the Lord doing things. So halfway through the trip we said we ought to check this out,” Steve said. It was a longer road to the field than they expected. Before they landed in Beijing, Steve completed a seminary degree as well as his cancer treatment.

“We can see that that whole year was all part of the plan,” Steve said. “We were in a whole different place when that year was over.”

God has used them from the very start, bringing a variety of young people into their lives before they even acquired language skills. They led several to the Lord, and by the time they’d been in Beijing a year, they were discipling a number of young adults. All had come from other provinces in search of employment.

While these relationships fuel Steve and Lisa’s enthusiasm,

there also are plenty of challenges in their life, perhaps the most daunting being language learning.

“Language at our age is really hard,” Lisa said. “I took Latin in high school because I wouldn’t have to speak it. I didn’t take [a language] in college.”

They invest the time to learn Chinese knowing God will open even more doors for them to be His heart, hands and voice when they can communicate in the heart language of those around them.

“The encouraging thing is that I [study so much] and feel like I am just struggling and not doing well. But, you know what? However I butcher this language, God is using us. And He is bringing people to us,” Lisa said. “So having these relationships has made the struggle of language worth it.”

It’s interesting that the Lord has brought young people into their lives rather than people of their own generation. Lisa points out that these are young people precisely the ages of their own children in the U.S., from whom they are so far away.

“It’s not us,” Lisa said. “God is preparing people and putting them in our path. And it’s just amazing. It’s just amazing.”

Pray for divine appointments for Steve and Lisa, as well as acquisition of the Mandarin language.

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