

Article for English Corner Discussion

1. Article 12-3: A Great Christmas Reunion

A brand new (全新) pastor (牧师) and his wife newly assigned (分配) to their first ministry (牧区), to reopen a church in suburban (郊外) Brooklyn, NY. Arrived in early October and excited (兴奋) about their opportunities (机会). When they saw their church, it was very run down (年久失修) and needed much work. They set a goal to have everything done in time to have their first service (崇拜) on Christmas Eve (圣诞夜). They worked hard, repairing pews (教堂长椅), plastering walls (打石膏墙), painting (油漆) etc and on December 18 there were ahead of schedule and just about finished. On December 19 a terrible driving rainstorm (暴风雨) - hit the area and lasted for two days. On the 21st, the pastor went over the church. His heart sank (下沈) when he saw that the roof (屋顶) had leaked (漏承), causing a large area of plaster about 20 feet by 8 feet to fall off the front wall of the sanctuary (圣殿) just behind the pulpit (讲台). The pastor cleaned up the mess on the floor, and not knowing what else to do (怎么办) but postpone (延期) the Christmas Eve service. Headed home, on the way he noticed that a local business was having a flea market (非正式市场) type sale for charity (慈善) so he stopped in. One of the items was a beautiful, handmade, ivory colored, crocheted (用钩针编织) table cloth with exquisite (精美) work, fine colors with a Cross (十字架) embroidered (刺绣) right in the center (正中央). It was just the right size to cover up the hole in the front wall. He bought it and headed back to the church.

By this time it had started to snow. He saw elderly woman running trying to catch a bus. She missed it. The pastor invited her to wait in the warm church for the next bus. For 45 minutes she sat in a pew and paid no attention to the pastor while he got a ladder, hangers, etc., to put up the tablecloth as a wall tapestry (墙毯). The pastor could hardly believe how beautiful it looked and it covered up the entire problem area. Then he noticed the woman walking down the center aisle. Her face was white as a sheet. "Pastor" she asked, "where did you get that tablecloth?" The pastor explained. The woman asked him to check the lower right corner to see if the

initials EBG were crocheted into it there. They were. These were the initials of the woman who had made this tablecloth 35 years ago. The woman explained that before the World War II she and her husband were well-to-do (富有) people in Austria. When the Nazis (纳粹党) came, she was forced to leave. Her husband was captured and was sent to prison. She never saw her husband or her home again. The pastor wanted to give her the tablecloth, but she made the pastor keep it for the church. The pastor insisted on (坚持) driving her home that was the least he could do. She was doing house cleaning job for a living.

What a wonderful service they had on Christmas Eve. The church was almost full. The music and the spirit were great. At the end of the service, the pastor and his wife greeted everyone at the door and many said that they would return. One older man, whom the pastor recognized from the neighborhood continued to sit in one of the pews and stared (注视), and the pastor wondered why he wasn't leaving. The man asked him where he got the tablecloth on the front wall because it was identical to one that his wife had made years ago when they lived in Austria before the war and how could there be two tablecloths so much alike. The pastor asked him if he would allow him to take him for a little ride. The pastor drove to the same house where he had taken the woman three days earlier. He helped the man climb the three flights of stairs to the woman's apartment, knocked on the door and he saw the greatest Christmas reunion he could ever imagine (想像). This is a true Story submitted by Pastor Rob Reid, in Brooklyn, NY.

Who says God does not work miracles (神迹) in mysterious ways? I asked the Lord to bless you as I prayed for you today, to guide you and protect you as you go along your way. His love is always with you, His promises are true, and he will see us through. So when the road you're traveling on seems difficult at best. Just remember I'm here praying and God will do the rest. When there is nothing left but God that is when you find out that God is all you need. Take 30 seconds, all you do is simply say the following prayer for the person you care: "Dear Father God, bless my friend XXX and his family whatever they may be needing this day! May their life be full of your peace and joy as he/she seeks to have a closer relationship with you. Amen! "