

THE SHIPMAN FAMILY

GERMANY



February 2018

Dear Pastor and Praying Friends:

Since the first of the year, our church family has been holding steady. Steady in attendance and participation. It is such a joy to see our new converts deepening their relationship with the Savior through hearing the word preached and through their personal devotional efforts. We have tried to provide good teaching through discipleship on how to develop an intimate and passionate relationship with God. The members have taken that training and applied it diligently and the fruit of their devotion is evident. They are excited and eager to learn about the God that they heard about but never personally knew until they accepted Christ as their personal savior. During church services it is exciting to see members pull out their Bible highlighters and pens and start marking, noting and underlining words and passages. Everyone has learned to bring their Bibles and "tools" to church! After church, it thrills us to see our church family fellowshipping and friendships being formed. Everyone is concerned about their fellow brothers and sisters in Christ and hold each other up in prayer throughout the week. Praise the Lord, S, who was saved last May, came for tract distribution last week! That is a huge milestone. She experienced some who graciously accepted and then one who was very rude. Even though it was an uncomfortable moment, it is good training ground for any Christian as we teach our church to carry out the great commission. Learning to have courage because of Christ will be an invaluable Christian character trait to develop.

I have been asked to perform my first wedding ceremony and I am honored to be a part of the start of this Christian home. There was, however, one glitch, I would not be able to participate in a wedding where alcohol would be served. With our American Christian heritage it is hard for us to imagine that this would even be in question but we are in Germany and alcoholic beverage is more commonly consumed than soda. I met with the young couple and explained that although they were babes in their Christian walk and allowances could be made regarding some areas of separation, I would have to draw the line in this area. I told them that I was honored they would ask me to marry them and that I am committed to supporting them as they begin their life together but that I knew God would not allow me to participate if there would be alcohol served. They asked some very good questions, I shared what the Bible has to say regarding alcohol, we prayed together and they said they would get back with me. The very next service, D and S said that they respect me as their pastor and that they would submit to my authority in this matter! Praise the Lord for working ANOTHER miracle. As a result of their decision, S has experienced some of the most intense scrutiny and even full out persecution from family and friends. There have been those who have declined their wedding invitation due to the lack of alcohol. This has stirred up a hornets nest and yet through it all, D and S have stood firm. I know some of the reactions have been very hurtful and disappointing but they are trusting God. We have seen God help them and they are learning to fully lean on Him. Please pray for them and their upcoming wedding in May.

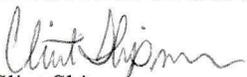
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