

Kiel, Germany report by Dr. Silke

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- My key verse is Ecclesiastes 8.16+17. This verse describes very much, what I often felt while studying and enjoying God's creation:
- When I applied my mind to know wisdom and to observe man's labor on earth-his eyes not seeing sleep day or night-then I saw all that God has done. No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun. Despite all his efforts to search it out, man cannot discover its meaning. Even if a wise man claims he knows, he cannot really comprehend it. (Ecclesiastes 8.16+17)
- **Part I: How Jesus wrote my PhD!**

Since I was a child, I dreamed to become a biologist - a marine biologist, and I always wanted to study at Kiel University. But I never was someone, who was really running for a goal. I didn't realize how important it is to have a goal and go for it. I didn't have enough confidence in myself. But I was also very opportunistic, telling myself "at least you can start studying, if you don't pass, you can quit." It was an attitude like: "Taking part is everything!" But inside, I kept thinking, the others are better than me, and so I was sometimes envious when I saw, how open-minded, curious and interested others were and how straightforward they lived. I myself was often mute like a fish. The same attitude made me go for a PhD project in 1998 and I left Germany for a one-year field-sampling trip in the Arctic. But after the funding of my project was cut in 1999, I wanted to give up and quit. I started Bible study in February 1998 with Msn. Hanna Oh. After I came back to Germany my life was a mess, since I didn't have a clue how to go on. I continued to study the Bible, and, amazingly I felt happier as ever before. During that time, God was working gracefully in my life, although I didn't really realize it. Jesus had moved into my heart. Through John 14:23 I met him personally. I decided to look for a job to support myself. Before I studied biology, I was educated as a technical assistant in medicine. By coincidence I found a job in the university hospital in Kiel. So I started to work in the hospital, but soon realized, that I just couldn't give up my plankton. So I began to work on my samples in my institute, after I had finished my daily work in the hospital. Gently, Jesus encouraged me to think about continuing with my PhD. Maybe for the first time in my life, I felt freedom to follow a deep wish in my heart without thinking what others were doing. So far I had rather thought: doing something just because you like doing it so much is not a good enough reason to do it. But Jesus more and more convinced me to do it. I don't really know why, but I found freedom in doing it. Although it absolutely wasn't my habit to be busy the whole day long, I didn't feel burdened but was full of energy and joy about my science. I didn't know, that it would take me eight years to succeed. But through all these years, Jesus taught me many, many things. Most importantly, he taught me not to give up. In my former life, I used to give up easily. If I didn't succeed in something, I took it as proof that I was not able enough and all others were simply better and more intelligent. I never saw, how others had to fight. It was a hard fight for me sometimes, because things didn't just fall into my lap. Sometimes I didn't

understand, why Jesus made it so difficult for me. Sometimes, I seemed to have almost reached the goal, but then it was running away from me again. But Jesus always helped me to overcome all my self-pity and weakness and gave me a great vision to be victorious in my PhD and glorify Him. Without Him, I would never ever have continued and finished my PhD. He strengthened my heart, he taught me to fight for something, and I experienced, that Jesus would never forsake me. He always lifted me up when I was discouraged. He restored my inner being and gave me self-confidence. In fact, He did the whole thing! Two weeks ago he blessed me to bring him victory through my PhD. Praise Jesus, for without Him, I would have given up because too many things in my heart disabled me to be successful. Altogether, I must say: after eight years of studying I'm not much the wiser but I gained faith!

- **Part II: God's work in Kiel**

Kiel is situated in the northern part of Germany at the Baltic Sea about 100 km south of the Danish border. I like Kiel very much: there is the sea, and lots of green from many trees and flowers growing in the city. It has about 240000 inhabitants, a very comfortable size, and it is easy to get around by bike. Through the humble and faithful work of Msn. Peter and Hanna Oh God established a small ministry in Kiel in the beginning of the Nineties. They came from Cologne with their two children Joel and Jochebed. Jochebed is only 15 but she already studies the Bible with her friend from school. We are two German shepherds, Shp. Harm Markus and myself. In 2003 God blessed Shp. Harm Markus and established a house church together with Msn. Maria from Korea. This year in September they got their second son. Last autumn, God sent Johanna Hong from Heidelberg ministry to study at Kiel University and since then she joined our small ministry. Msn. Peter studies the Bible with Hui, a Chinese guy. He thinks about the word of God very deeply and grows continually in the love of God. May God bless him to become a good shepherd for Chinese people. There are about 6 or 8 other Bible students in Kiel. At the Sunday Worship service we are usually between 8 and 12 attendants. Msn. Peter Oh, who is very eager to do the work of God, also pioneers Hamburg University, which is about 100 km south of Kiel. I'm not quite sure, but I think he has between 4 and 6 sheep there. M. Peter is really a man of faith and we all find a good example in him. He is always smiling and always looks for possibilities instead of thinking of impossibilities. Until now, we meet at Hanna's and Peter's place. But we pray for a center and 20 attendants at the Sunday service. We also pray for the pioneering work in Hamburg. I personally pray to find a German student to study the Bible and make her a disciple of Jesus. Germans are very skeptical and self-righteous; they are far more open for all sorts of other spiritual things than for the Bible. I also pray for my dear friend Marja in Finland. I study the Bible with her via phone. She is my really dear friend, but she is very busy and it is very hard for her to find time for Bible study but she has a deep desire for the word of God. I pray that Jesus may help her change her life and give her new life. Amen.

- One word: No one can comprehend what goes on under the sun!