

March 15, 2007

Dear Praying Friends,

Thank you for continuing to uphold our family and ministry in prayer. We praise God that over the last three months He has allowed us to watch Him do His work of building Cornerstone Baptist Church in Kaohsiung, Taiwan.

The Lord has worked in the lives of Dr. and Mrs. J. (for whom we requested prayer in our last letter). Marla and I have held a home Bible Study with them weekly for nearly a year. Their background in both a cultic charismatic group as well as (more recently) in mainline charismatic groups meant that they had much to unlearn before they could accept some Biblical teachings. In January, Dr. J. expressed his willingness to be baptized biblically (his wife was baptized after her conversion as a child). As a result of his baptism, they have now joined the church and have begun to build relationships with other members of the congregation. We finished up our home Bible Study with them a few weeks ago, and Dr. J. attended our mid-week prayer meeting for the first time the following week. By the way, attendance at our mid-week prayer service has been steadily increasing over the last few months, for which we thank the Lord.

Another major answer to prayer we have experienced recently is God's provision of a temporary replacement for us at Cornerstone Baptist Church during the year of our furlough. In fact, because of your prayers God has provided two different families who will be present here simultaneously during our absence! In December we were introduced to a young couple who are heading toward ministry to the Chinese people. Tad and Hannah Wychopen are finishing up some graduate work at Northland Baptist Bible College and desire to gain some practical experience with Chinese language and culture before beginning Tad's seminary training. They have now applied with Baptist Mid-Missions for short-term ministry and plan to arrive here in June.

During this same period, Pat and Mary Delaney were continuing to prayerfully consider the possibility of helping us as furlough replacements, since we had approached them with the idea last spring. The Delaneys have served as church planters with Baptist World Mission in Singapore and Malaysia for 17 years. They then contacted us in January and expressed their conviction that God was directing them to pursue the opportunity we had made known to them. After quickly arranging for a week-long visit with us, they arrived at the end of January to see the work first-hand. As a result they, too, will be present for much of the year while we are gone (they plan to arrive in September). After our return, they plan to remain and make Taiwan their new field of service.

We are convinced that by providing two families, God is actually answering a second prayer concern of ours: the need for more workers in the harvest of Taiwan. Having two families here at the same time will really work to the advantage of both. Both families have a desire to study Mandarin Chinese. The Delaney's have experience working with Chinese people, but their previous ministry was conducted in English. The Wychopens will be exposed to Chinese language and culture for the first time. By sharing ministry responsibilities at the church, they both will be able to commit sufficient time and energy to the demanding task of language study.

However, there still remain many issues requiring fervent prayer. Since neither of these

families are capable of communicating in Chinese, most of the public ministry will need to be conducted through interpreters. We have several very capable individuals, both men and women, who have expressed their willingness to carry this burden of responsibility. Please pray that God would continue to make His Word effective-- even through the medium of interpretation. Pray for the Wychopens as they minister alone from June till September. Pray for the visa application process for both couples. New regulations have created a great deal of uncertainty about new requirements which have been announced. Pray that the visas are issued in a timely fashion. Pray for the financial support needs of both couples. The Wychopens will need to raise some short-term support for living expenses as well as language study. Time is short for them to do so. The Delaney's are currently on furlough. They sold all of their household items in Singapore when they left, and need to ensure that they have sufficient funds to set up house in Taiwan after their arrival. Language study is also very costly and will require them to raise some funds to pay for it. Finally, please pray that God would prepare our people to take responsibility during our absence. An increase in responsibilities demands an increase in commitment and in faithfulness.

Attendance at Cornerstone Baptist Church has continued to slowly increase over the last few months. We changed the seating slightly in a way that enabled us to squeeze one more row of chairs (about 8 more seats) into our sanctuary. We are consistently running about 50 in attendance in our worship service. Our children's Sunday School has also grown, requiring that we split into two separate classes. Marla and I have continued to hold home Bible studies with several couples and have seen positive results in nearly every case. Please pray that the men (in particular) in these studies would grow spiritually and begin to take leadership in their families and in the church. Marla has also been giving piano lessons to a few and children in the church for more than a year. She is preparing them to help with the responsibilities of playing for congregational singing and Sunday School. Pray for these individuals to grow in confidence and ability as they regularly practice.

Please pray for a special 9-week "Marriage Class" that we will be conducting on Friday evenings over the next two months. Marriage is the foundation of the family, and the family is the foundation of the church. We have been greatly burdened by the unbiblical ideas, patterns, and actions we have observed in the marriages and families of our people. We hope that the teaching presented in this class will be both proactive and preventative so as to strengthen marriages and avoid some of the pitfalls into which so many marriages here have fallen.

Our student-in-training, Sheldon Lin, continues to grow in his knowledge of the Word, in his consistency of life, and in his experience with different church ministries. In July he is planning to go to Saipan where he will participate in a year-long training program under the direction of Dr. Christian Wei. Pray for the Lord to provide for his expenses in this program (including a plane ticket and a year of room, board, and tuition). Our church will be helping to sponsor his studies by supplementing the funds he has been saving for this purpose.

Our children's home education continues to move forward. We are thankful for Marsha Gamber's work of teaching and supervising our children, and her quiet ministry to our family and to the church behind the scenes. Despite being unable to communicate in Chinese, she busily helps in ways that she is able. She watches the infant nursery every Sunday morning, allowing the church mothers to stay in the service and benefit from the preaching. It is usual for her on a given Sunday to have two or three infants under one year of age.

Our upcoming furlough is set to begin in June of this year. We are busy planning our schedule and arranging meetings with new and supporting churches to report on our ministry and to raise support. Recruiting will be a major emphasis of our furlough ministry as we seek to enlist new workers for the harvest field of Taiwan. In preparation for this, a Baptist Mid-Missions film team will be coming to Taiwan in April/May to film a promotional DVD for our field. Please pray for us during the busy months between now and the time we leave for furlough as we plan, pack, and prepare for our departure, as well as prepare for the arrival of the two other families, while carrying on with our regular responsibilities. The task appears daunting, but "Our sufficiency is of God."

In Christ,

the Hannas

Matt, Marla, Luke, Rose, and Beth