

May 9, 2008

Dear Praying Friends,

This letter is sadly overdue. Our last general prayer letter to you was in November of last year. This lapse in communication has not been due to a want of anything newsworthy to report, but rather due to a busy furlough schedule and our failure to make communication with you, our supporters, the priority that we ought to have done. Please forgive us for this failure.

While the home fires have been kept brightly lit here in Midland, Michigan over these last six months, we have also placed new pins on our furlough travel map that mark visits to locations across the United States and around the globe. In November, Matt flew to Phoenix to speak in three of our supporting churches located there. In December, our entire family was honored by our host church in Midland, Michigan as the featured guests for their special "Missionary Christmas" presentation. In the month of January we reported to churches in Michigan, Tennessee, and Virginia and Matt attended a two-week block course on Ministry Management at Bob Jones University. During many (but not all) of these trips, Marla remained with the kids at home so that they could continue their studies at Calvary Baptist Academy.

In February, Matt made an extended overseas trip with stops in Thailand, Taiwan, and California. In Thailand, he participated in Baptist Mid-Mission's first all-Asia ministry enrichment conference for men. This conference brought together BMM missionaries from all over Asia, most of whom are scattered in isolation from one another while living in the midst of the most populous countries on earth. The conference was declared a success and future goals are to include the missionary wives in the next conference which is scheduled for two years from now. Matt also passed through Taiwan and visited with the people at Cornerstone Baptist Church in Kaohsiung. The Delaneys, Wychopens and church people are all doing well and going on in their service for the Lord. Matt also enjoyed a brief visit with his parents in Placerville, California on the return leg of his journey.

In the remainder of February and in March, we spoke in meetings and conferences in Michigan, South Carolina, North Carolina, and Pennsylvania. In South Carolina Matt, Marla, and Luke participated in the Mission Conference at Morningside Baptist Church, our sending church, while Luke visited on the campus of BJU where he plans to attend.

Over the Easter school break, we took a family vacation by visiting at the recently opened Creation Museum near Cincinnati on one day and then touring Mammoth Cave near Elizabethtown, Kentucky on the next. We received widely divergent interpretations of geologic history from each of them! After spending a few days with family in Tennessee, we drove to West Virginia to present our ministry at Cross Lanes Bible Church near Charleston.

Matt made a second overseas ministry trip in May to teach a Bible course to Mainland Chinese house church leaders. Because of his ability to speak Mandarin Chinese, he was able to teach the book of Revelation (including an overview of Biblical Eschatology) to 15 men over a two-week period. He taught for 6 hours per day on weekdays and preached an additional 10 times during Sunday services and other meetings. The expenses of the trip were underwritten by a special offering/grant given particularly for this purpose. We praise the Lord for this provision which made the trip possible. Matt was blessed by one student's testimony in particular. He is a Chinese national who has lived for two years in Pakistan as a missionary to the Muslim people and plans to return there in due time. He is performing a valuable work that few westerners would or could ever attempt to do.

We also thank the Lord for a slow but steady increase in our support level over these several months. From the 80% level we reported in our last letter, we dipped down to 77% due to a recalculation of our support estimate. But since then we have steadily increased to approximately 82% pledged support. This may not seem like much of an increase, but it reflects about \$400 per month in actual dollars. Please pray that the additional funds will be provided in God's way and time. Keep track of our current pledged support level by checking the *News & Views* page of our website.

We have made a significant change in our planned date for returning to Taiwan. After listening to the counsel of godly friends, we have decided to extend our furlough till the end of August so that we can help our son get established on campus at BJU for his freshman year. This will add about two and a half months to our schedule. Since we will be so far away in Taiwan, we feel it important to get him well settled on his own before we leave. We hope to be able to schedule meetings and speak in some new churches during this extra time we will have in the States. Please pray to that end.

The next major event on the horizon for our family is Luke's high school graduation on May 30. He is enrolled at BJU for the fall with a major in Bible and minor in music (trumpet). Pray for the many life-shaping decisions that he will be making during the next few years. He has been working hard all year toward the goal of obtaining his Michigan driver's license and should be able to complete the requirements by his 18<sup>th</sup> birthday in July.

The Chinese have a saying: "Live to old age; study to old age." Marla is continuing to study to keep her Michigan Nursing license active and has completed several CE credits this year. Matt is also continuing to work toward his D.PTh. from BJU by taking two block courses and a video correspondence course. He will need to work hard over the next several months to complete requirements for two of these courses still in process. Pray for these efforts.

Please continue to pray for Cornerstone Baptist Church as well. Tad and Hannah Wychopen are now in the States for a few months to apply for a resident missionary visa. They plan to return to Taiwan in June for another year in which they plan to continue their language studies and ministries at the church. Pat and Mary Delaney are moving things forward with their leadership of the church in our absence. Matt's short visit with them in February was one of the things that gave us confidence to extend our furlough. They are doing a great job. Sheldon Lin, the young man from our church who is interested in full-time service, just returned to Kaohsiung after a year of Bible training abroad. Please pray for him to stay on track both spiritually and in his preparation for ministry. Also please continue to pray for us to accomplish our furlough goals. To the four goals mentioned in our last letter we have added an additional "R": to ***Return to Taiwan***. (See more about these goals on our website.) Pray for us as we make our plans to return and expand the ministry in Taiwan according to God's will and enabling.

In Christ,

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Matt, Marla, Luke, Rose, & Beth