

The Hanna Newsletter

Missionaries in Taiwan
with Baptist Mid-Missions

"Good news from a far country" Prov 25:25

October 6, 2010

Dear Praying Friends,

A lot of water has flowed under the bridge since our last prayer letter to you in June. However, we have regularly dipped our buckets into the stream of time as it passed, so that we might have some cold water (Proverbs 25:25) to share with you, our fellow travelers, at the appropriate moment. Here are some water samples!



Our annual teen youth camp was held in July this year and involved full mobilization of our church resources. We had 80 people from nine churches come from all around Taiwan to participate and help. We invited an experienced youth pastor from the States to preach on the theme "Don't Waste Your Life," while one of the other newer (younger!?) Taiwan missionaries ran the activity and game program. Decisions for salvation or dedication of life were made by half a dozen young people.



I (Matt) departed for the US the day after camp to attend a block seminary course. I am several years into a study program toward an advanced degree; several more years remain before it will be completed (Lord willing). For this trip, I was gone from home for about three weeks, which included a weekend visit with our son and a few days spent with my parents in California.

Soon after my return in August, Cornerstone Baptist Church held Vacation Bible School for our neighborhood children. Marla and I helped with various responsibilities, but we let one of our ladies do the planning and organizing. It was a further blessing to have several of our teens help with different aspects of this ministry, as well. Although this year's

program was not large in terms of numbers, it was well organized and effective. We made a few new contacts which have since begun attending Sunday School and Church services. Originally, I had planned to travel abroad after VBS to teach Mainland Chinese house church leaders as I have done in past years. But at the last minute there was a change in the schedule and so it looks like I won't be going this year after all.

In September, Sheldon Lin joined our church staff as an intern for a year. This is a specific answer to prayer because the church ministry load has continued to increase as Cornerstone has grown. Sheldon is one of the young men studying in our Bible School who is preparing for full-time ministry; this internship provides him with training, experience, and exposure to different kinds of church ministries. One way that we will be putting him to work is by assigning him as the "children's pastor" for our children's church program which runs during our 10:00 a.m. worship service. This ministry has recently had some hiccups for one reason or another, but hopefully Sheldon will provide a little more stability, direction, and organization. One of the immediate benefits of Sheldon's arrival was that it finally freed up our family so that we could take a much needed week of vacation! We traveled to Sun Moon Lake in central Taiwan where we enjoyed the beautiful scenery, relaxed away from pressing responsibilities and schedules, and spent time together as a family.



September went out with a roar when Taiwan got plastered by typhoon Fanapi. This is the second year in a row that Southern Taiwan has been hit by a damaging typhoon. This time around, flooding was the major problem because of the excessive amount of rain that fell. During the height of the storm, water was running about three feet deep in the road in front of our house and remained at that level for about six hours. Thankfully, our church did not suffer any major damage; water came right up to the doorstep but didn't enter the church or flood the basement.

In our last prayer letter we asked for special prayer for some of the personal Bible studies that Marla and I were conducting. Unfortunately, we don't have any positive progress to report on this front. We hoped that once the fall schedule began, we would be able to see more consistency in our Bible study schedules and more commitment from those we were teaching, but it has not happened. Pray that God would give us wisdom in counseling and discipling those with whom we have already established relationships, and that He would open doors for us to develop new relationships—with those who will show more commitment to Christ and His Church. Marla's Ladies' Bible Study is beginning to grow; she is methodically leading the ladies through Tedd Tripp's book *Shepherding a Child's Heart*. My teen leadership Bible study is also continuing with three high school boys. We've winnowed out those who were not really interested, but these three who remain are firmly committed.

Pray for Carl, Harry, and Thomas to develop their leadership potential as we study God's Word together.

Dolly Wong returned from furlough in August and has taken in hand the church choir ministry (can you hear Marla shout hooray?). Marla is still the pianist, but the load of planning, leading, directing, and accompanying all at once has now been removed from her. There are about 20 choir members. Under Dolly's capable leadership, they have begun planning and preparing for a Christmas cantata and program to be held on Christmas night.

Our church building committee continues to meet, but we've changed our priority. Before looking for property we have decided to apply for church incorporation first. We are exploring various legal options and paths available to us and moving toward the goal of sending in our application papers by early next year. Incorporation will enable us to legally open accounts in the church's name, issue tax deductible receipts, and purchase property. Please pray for this process.

Luke is doing well in his third year at Bob Jones University studying Bible with a creative writing minor. He still plays his trumpet in the University Band and is chorister for his society. Rose and Beth are both plugging away at their studies in the Hanna Homeschool. Rose will be finishing her coursework and graduating from high school in December. Beth is a Junior in high school.

Our Sunday Evening English fellowship service has been increasing in numbers recently. We have about half a dozen English speaking families who are now attending. Rose and Beth have been teaching the English Sunday School during the preaching time and have about 8 elementary and pre-school aged children. Some of these families are in Taiwan to teach English, some are cross-cultural marriages, and some are missionary families. Several Chinese people also attend. Two of these families have joined our church membership. This English fellowship service is an outreach ministry of our church aimed at ministering to the international community in our city.

Pray for spiritual stability and growth in maturity for our church. We are feeling the pains of expansion; many voices, opinions, and ideas are being raised about the direction our church needs to go. Pray that our church leadership will be able to steer a biblical course through turbulent waters.

October 1, 2010 marked the 20th anniversary of our arrival in Taiwan as missionaries. As we reflect on the past, the one fact which stands uppermost in our minds is God's faithfulness to our family. The second fact is the faithfulness of the churches and individuals who support us. Quite a number of you have stuck with us since the very beginning. We are well aware of the financial difficulties in which many of you (both churches and families) now find yourselves due to the recession in the U.S.A. We appreciate deeply the sacrifice, commitment, and faithfulness which you have exhibited in continuing to



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support us, even during these years of economic contraction. Our own financial support, however, has remained stable in spite of the recession and for that we thank you—and the Lord, who ultimately provides for all of us.

In Christ,

the Hannas
(Matt, Marla, Luke, Rose, & Beth)