

Holiday Greetings

from the Hanna family

December 14, 2010

Dear Family, Friends, and Supporters,

We wish you all a joyous and blessed Christmas. Marla always jokes that our calendar only has two pages on it—July and December. These months are the summit peaks of every year, for which the other months are only footnotes of planning, preparation, and anticipation. This December's special event will be a Christmas cantata performed by our choir. We are hoping that 140-150 people will come for this special program on Christmas evening, a large number of whom we expect to be unbelievers who will hear the gospel through both music and preaching. Please pray for our church people who are all involved in one way or another in this important evangelistic outreach.

This is also a good opportunity for us to recap the events of the past year. This year we have seen about four adults come to Christ and eight adults join the church membership. Our church is working toward the goal of obtaining legal organizational status so that we can eventually purchase our own property. We have also seen some important ministries take forward steps including our adult S.S. Class (led by Sam Hung), the choir (under the leadership of Dolly Wong), and our children's church ministry (led by Sheldon Lin). A team of ladies recently took the initiative to begin a daytime visitation ministry. This is not to suggest that there have not been problems of one kind or another, but that God is slowly maturing our congregation and developing leadership skills.

Please pray especially for several of our young men who are taking steps toward future ministry. As we consider their individual and family needs, we are trying to guide them into training programs that will equip them for the ministries that God has for them. Of course, their character and spiritual development must proceed in tandem with their academic preparation. This aspect of their training is proving to be the greatest challenge to Marla and I, who are constantly confronted with our own failures, weaknesses, and personality flaws.

Our family is now in an important transition period. Luke is in his third year at Bob Jones University as a Bible Major and Rose will be joining him there this fall, Lord willing. Beth is now a high school Junior. Marla and I are preparing ourselves for the coming changes as our children fly the nest. Luke will be joining us here in Taiwan next week to celebrate the Christmas holiday. He will have many opportunities to minister during his stay. We'll see how much of his Chinese language he still remembers! It has been two years since he has returned and Marla and the girls have not seen him at all during that period. We are looking forward to having our family gathered together for a short while. In early June Marla and Rose will be going to the US to get Rose ready for college. Marla will probably be absent for

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one to two months to help Rose with this important transition, while Beth and I carry on here.



My progress toward an advanced ministry degree is moving forward very slowly. I took a course in July/August, but have not been able to take another recently. Please pray that I would be able to balance demanding ministry responsibilities with the need to increase my leadership skills, Bible knowledge, and personal growth in grace and holiness. The flip side to my own studies and coursework is my teaching ministry at the Bible School. This last semester I did not teach a course so that I could focus on church needs, but I will be teaching a course second semester.

Marla also carries a heavy load of responsibility as wife, mother, home-school teacher, pastor's wife, church pianist, piano teacher, and leader of the ladies' Bible study. The ladies' Bible study has grown to quite a large group now. Please pray for Marla in all of these responsibilities to draw upon God's sufficiency. Also pray that when she steps away in June to take Rose to the U.S. other ladies will take up some of these ministries so that they can continue in her absence.

Finally, we do not wish only to be retrospective, we also want to look forward to what God desires for us do in the next year and beyond. Our church election of officers will be held in January. Pray for God to lead our congregation to make wise choices in those who serve. If the Lord tarries, we hope to see the church eventually mature to the place that it will have a qualified and faithful national pastor. We walk a tightrope. We have seen the consequences when Taiwan missionaries too soon left the churches they have planted. This has usually ended either with the church dwindling down to nothing or changing its doctrine and practice to accommodate the prevailing "Christian culture" here. On the other hand, by sticking around too long, the missionary can easily stifle the church's development and promote an unhealthy dependence on a man (which poison's the environment for any national pastor that follows). None of these outcomes is desirable. Only God is sufficient (2Cor 3:5-6) to accomplish what we cannot. Please pray that Christ would continue to build His church in Taiwan.

We thank you for your prayers for our family, our church, and for the people of Taiwan. We appreciate your faithfulness in supporting us financially so that we can minister the Word of God to the Chinese people. May God bless you in 2011 as you grow and serve Him in your own corner of the harvest field.

In Christ,

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



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