

The Hanna Newsletter

Missionaries to Taiwan



"Good news from a far country" (Proverbs 25:25)



September 7, 2015

Dear Praying Friends,

We have two new missionary families, which are now working with us at Cornerstone Baptist Church. In our last letter, we told you about the arrival of the Stewart family to work with our ministry. Josh and Rachel Stewart are Baptist Mid-Missions missionaries with two small children. After moving to Taiwan from another field in May, they set up housekeeping in an apartment nearby the church and resumed their language studies. In August the Bollon family also arrived. Brian and Erin Bollon have four children and serve with a sister mission agency. Their family is beginning to get settled in the apartment above the church and plans to begin language study in a few weeks. These families are long-awaited answers to our prayer for more Christian workers in Taiwan.

Both families are facing challenges with their visas. When Cornerstone completes its government registration, it should solve this problem (Lord willing). Praise the Lord, our application for registration was accepted by the government in August and we are now moving into the organizational phase. We need to hold several organizational meetings according to governmental guidelines over the next several months. The whole process should culminate in a legal organization that will allow us to hold accounts and property in the organizational name. It will also allow us to sponsor missionary visas for our new missionaries. For the time being, the new families are using temporary visas that require them to exit the country periodically. Marla's and my residence permits also come up for renewal on October 1. Please pray that we will be able to renew them without difficulty.

My plan (announced in our last prayer letter) to start preaching through 1 Corinthians has been postponed, because of the challenges to our schedule after the arrival of the new missionaries. Instead, on Sunday mornings I have been working through the book of James, which is a book that I have worked with before. However, I am still hoping to begin 1 Corinthians soon. Please pray for grace to arrange the time required for adequate preparation. Pray also for the spiritual benefit and growth of our people through this portion of Scripture.

We are beginning to see long-term growth among some of the people in our congregation. People who were once pew-warmers have begun to take the initiative to use their gifts in various ways. We have seen others demonstrate greater stability in their personal and spiritual life. These are results (we believe) of the power of God's Word to change lives. However, we are still woefully understaffed and have had to retrench in some areas. Our biggest lack is national men willing to train for ministry. We look forward to the potential expansion of church ministries, when our new missionaries can begin to contribute. However, the Stewarts have at least a year or more of language study before they will be in position to begin helping, and the Bollons are just in the beginning stages of their language study. Pray for grace and wisdom as Marla and I both carry heavier ministry loads at present.

Our summer youth camp in July was well attended, with about 15 teens and workers from our church. Rose and Beth, who were visiting with us during the summer, especially enjoyed seeing many friends from the other churches with whom we fellowship. Then in August Cornerstone held its annual VBS. Grace and Jerry Hsu organized and led that ministry; Emily Luo, a local missionary supported by our church, came to teach the Bible lesson; and many adults and teens from the church helped run the program. Thirty children came each day; about half were church kids and half were unchurched. All of them heard clear gospel presentations. We are hoping to draw some of the family members of these unchurched kids to our annual church barbecue later this month (Saturday, September 26).

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Next week I will be traveling to teach a one-week block course on the book of Revelation in a location outside of Taiwan. In addition, I will begin teaching the second semester of "The Life of Christ" right here in our own local Bible college. Please pray for effective teaching and for the growth of the students.

Recently Marla has faced some personal grief with the death of her oldest sister, Bethany McCurley, in August. Earlier this summer Bethany had been diagnosed with a rare, yet aggressive form of lymphoma. The Lord took her home in a very short time. This is the fourth death in our family in the last few years. We are grateful to each church and individual that prays and gives so that we can continue to minister here. We are acutely aware of this need in our lives and ministry.

In Christ,

Matt and Marla Hanna

