

2019 Christmas Letter (12/1/2019)

Dear family and friends,

Thanksgiving is drawing near; we hope to get this card and letter in the mail early enough for you to receive it before Christmas arrives! Our Thanksgiving this year will be a bit different from past times; we will be celebrating it in Japan with fellow BMM missionaries there, instead of with friends in Taiwan. Our year 2019 has been a full and active one. Here is a brief synopsis.

We journeyed on numerous, ministry-related, international trips this year. Our travels took us to Hong Kong (Matt in January), Cambodia (together in February), to the US twice (Matt in March & together in August-September), a closed nation (Matt in April), another closed nation (together in July), and as we mentioned above, Japan (together in November). From a purely personal perspective, our 2-day visit at Angkor Wat in Cambodia was one of the highlights of these journeys. However, the

most memorable trip for us during 2019 was our 10-day tour of the Holy Land in May. We had talked for years about taking a special trip for our 30th wedding anniversary; this year was actually our 33rd anniversary, but it was worth the wait! We toured sites from Mt. Hermon in the north to the Dead Sea in the south, including the Galilee area, the Jezreel Valley, and Jerusalem. In addition to over

1100 pictures, our special memento from the trip was a hand-carved nativity scene which we purchased in Bethlehem.

All of this travel (although interesting and profitable from a ministry perspective) has been physically wearing on us. It has also taken its toll on our local ministry in Taiwan. After reevaluation, we are planning to cut back drastically on our international travel next year.

The ministry of Cornerstone Baptist Church in Kaohsiung, Taiwan continues to take forward steps. Josh and Rachel Stewart have done a great job of keeping the church ministry running smoothly during all of our travels. Recently we have seen quite a few new families begin attending our worship services. Some of these have joined the church and we are praying that others

Hand-carved, olive-wood nativity scene from Bethlehem



[more](#)

will follow suit. Matt finished preaching through the book of First Corinthians this year—a series he began in 2015—which included 44 messages in all. This month he began a 4-message series on the book of Ruth. We continue to pray and train toward the day when we can install a national pastor.

We were able to see each of our children while we were in the US in August and September. Luke is in Athens, Alabama and works at a Staples store in their copy & print department; he also helps run their TSA registration booth. Rose and Mike (Elmore) live and work in Middlebury, Vermont; Mike is a deputy sheriff and Rose works in an office for a medical providers group. Elizabeth works in the medical laboratory of a major hospital in Columbia, South Carolina. She is gaining experience and looking toward a possible future ministry in medical missions. All of them are actively involved in their local churches.

Matt passed a major milestone in August when he graduated in absentia from Bob Jones University with a Master of Divinity degree. This completed 14 years of study performed both in residence and online. He was asked by several people if now he was going to go for a doctorate: The answer is “NO!”

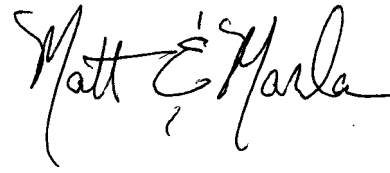
Marla continues to experience nagging physical issues. After two years of regular physical therapy on her neck, we finally abandoned it, since there was no improvement. A recent x-ray shows an S-curve that looks like a Formula 1 race track! This causes frequent severe headaches, numbness in her hands, and stiffness. Additionally, this year she experienced some problems with irregular heartbeat. We are in the process of following this up and working through the medical system to see what can be done about it.

If you don't receive our regular prayer letters and would like to read more about our ministry, you can find all of our recent prayer letters posted on our website at <http://www.hannas.org/prayer-letters/>. You can also find a link where you may subscribe to

have our letters delivered to your email inbox. Thank you for your love, prayers, and support.

In Christ,

Matt & Marla



The Lamb of Bethlehem

*Shepherds rude, their sheep attending—
Heav'nly host from sky descending—
Message grand of joy impending—
Came that night near Bethlehem!*

*Fear—then wonder—at the tidings
Of a Saviour now abiding,
Sacrifice of God's providing—
Lamb of God in Bethlehem!*

*To His bed on knees a'bending—
To the town, their witness lending—
Went those men with joy unending,
And wonder reigned o'er Bethlehem!*

*Mary deep the mystery pondered,
That for men, like sheep who wandered,
Will His precious blood be squandered--
Jesus, Lamb of Bethlehem!*

graduation diploma

