

The Hanna Newsletter

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



Missionaries to Taiwan



May 4, 2020

Dear Praying Friends,

In a topsy-turvy world, Marla and I are grateful that we serve a God who knows tomorrow. As the global agenda has come to a screeching halt due to the virus pandemic, our own ministry schedule, travel arrangements, and personal plans have also been placed on hold—"until further notice."

Thankfully, early on in the virus outbreak Taiwan charted a proactive course that—so far—has kept the case numbers low in our nation. This means that our society has continued to function much as usual, with only a few restrictions in place, but no lockdown. We have been permitted to meet together as a congregation for regular worship services and other regular activities by taking people's temperature on entering the building, spraying hands with alcohol, and wearing masks at all times.

Although Marla had led the choir to complete most of the preparation for a special cantata to be performed on Easter Sunday, we had to cancel the cantata portion, because of the new mask-wearing requirement. Nevertheless, we had a wonderful and meaningful service as the congregation rejoiced together over Christ's resurrection; by taking special precautions, we also were able to share the Lord's Supper. It was an especially meaningful Easter, because we all had a renewed sense of appreciation for the right to meet and worship together, when much of the world was locked down at home.

Here is an important announcement for all of our supporters, family, and friends: As of mid-April, Matt has resigned his position as BMM's Field Administrator for Asia and the Pacific. We had almost reached the 4-year mark in this position. Over the course of this period, it became clear to us that we could not continue indefinitely to carry concurrent responsibility for both our local Taiwan ministries and the needs of our regional missionaries. We feel passionate about both ministries, but we were frustrated by our inability to give either job the full attention it deserved. When forced to make a choice, we felt God's best plan for us was to return to placing our full focus on "finishing the job" at Cornerstone Baptist Church (Kaohsiung). We are convinced that this was the right decision; nevertheless, it has cost us many a pang to surrender the shepherd-care of our Asia missionaries, with whom we have developed so many close bonds.

Back in January, before the virus outbreak had become a pandemic, we purchased air tickets for a planned furlough in the US to begin on June 15. Now, with the US in turmoil and so many other nations also affected, we are not sure if or when our travel will take place. Our original plans were to spend a few months this summer in the eastern US and then move to the West Coast for the fall months. Lord willing, we still hope at the least to get in the West Coast portion of our itinerary. Our desire is to report to our supporting churches in California and Arizona. This will only take place if the pandemic subsides and if it does not resume in the fall. Please pray for wisdom as we consider our options and make our arrangements in the next few weeks. Thank you for your prayers on our behalf.

In Christ,

Matt & Marla Hanna