

Clemente Newsletter

June 2016

David's Discussions

“So, how are you?” I never realized a casual greeting could turn out to be a question of deep significance. But Jane Hsieh, one of our seminary students, responded with a lengthy telling of her current family situation. I listened and we prayed. Right there at the motorcycle parking area, we bowed our heads together and I put my hands over her shoulders and we prayed.

Right about the same week, I bumped into Pastor Lawrence, one of our seminary alumni and a recent graduate. So, I asked the same simple question: “How are you?” And he responded with a long explanation of their local church’s condition, its move to a new location. He also recounted some of his struggles with pastoral life and the joy of expecting a second child. So, right there and then, in the hallway in front of the main entrance of the seminary bookstore, we prayed. I placed my hand over Lawrence’s shoulder and asked God for more blessings and guidance for this new local church pastor.

“Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.” (Colossians 4:2) I have to confess I haven’t been praying with all steadfastness, as Paul has reminded us. However, I am grateful that “being watchful” in prayer is not an individual endeavor. My prayers for our seminary students resonate with the prayers of our faculty and staff. Prayer is a community thing. I give thanks to God, because whenever I pray for Jane and Lawrence, I know that many friends in Michigan and Illinois are also praying together with me.

At our graduation day, right before the ceremony started, Jane Hsieh came to me and we both had our selfies taken together with our cell phones. She graduated this year. I was so happy for her. Honestly though, when I first met her and had her in my class a few years back, I never thought she would make it. I saw a lot of hardships and trials that might keep her from reaching graduation. But, she made it. To God be the glory! This year, she finished with an MA in Christian Studies. In between our selfie photo snapshots, she repeatedly thanked me. I felt a little embarrassed. I did not do much. All I did was encourage her with her reports, coached her on some writing assignments, and some other small stuff that any

teacher would do for one's student. Obviously, she did the hard work to get to this point. I took her hand, and together we smiled. I whispered to her and said: "God's grace is sufficient."

Sarah's Sentiments

It was our last Moms in Prayer meeting. A time of reflection and looking back on the school year, reminiscing and expressing our thanks for what God had done in our lives and in the lives of our children. I was moved by the stories my friends told, but when it came my time to share, I was at a loss for words. Why is this so difficult, I wondered. Why can't I think back to the first day of school and sift through the months to find the highlights or an overarching theme for this year? Then it hit me. It's so difficult because the kids were in two different schools. In two different countries. On two different continents. It's almost as if I couldn't think of the two experiences, Mulberry Grove and Morrison Academy, as belonging to the same unit of time -- "this school year."

We had the opportunity to reflect and celebrate even more than usual this May as Jacob graduated from elementary school and Carmen graduated from middle school. It was fun to watch them with their classmates and to visit with fellow parents who are walking on this journey of raising children with us. It was good to express our thanks to the dedicated teachers serving at Morrison Academy who have made such an impact in the lives of all of their students, especially Carmen and Jacob. But again it felt like something was missing. There were more people we could reminisce with. More people we should thank.

We've heard it said that it takes a village to raise a child. I'm both overwhelmed and thankful to God for the great big global village that has been praying for, listening to, encouraging, and loving Jacob and Carmen through the years. **Thank you** for being such an integral part of their lives. And **thank you** for your continued prayers as they enter middle school (!) and high school (!!) this August.

Prayers and Petitions

***** Pray for David and a mission team from Taiwan as they are currently visiting our FM ministries in Osaka, Japan until July 6th. This mission trip consists

of a music ministry team. Pray for a meaningful experience with our God for the whole team of nine people. Also, pray for Sarah, Carmen, and Jacob, who remain in Kaohsiung.

***** Summer is a busy time for Taiwan local churches as many prepare outreaches and camps for children and youth. Pray for God's guidance and inspiration for leaders and volunteers as they share the love of Jesus with those who attend.

***** Pray for our Set Free Movement connection here in Taiwan as the women's group meets regularly for fellowship. Currently they are participating in Mandarin lessons to help them communicate more effectively with their husbands and children. Pray that they will be encouraged by their progress and feel the love and presence of God as they meet together.

Finance Update

We thank God for the many partners in ministry who pray for us and give financially so we can continue His work in Taiwan and Asia. We are encouraged by the consistent committed support we receive, as well as the occasional unexpected contributions that help us remain close to our budget. As we approach the middle of the year, we are still in need of more financial partners. Please pray with us regarding this need.

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