

The Hanna Newsletter

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



Missionaries to Taiwan

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July 26, 2024

Dear Friends, Family, and Partners,

Since our last letter in late April, Marla and I have much to report. Thank you for your ongoing prayers for us during our travels and ministry in Texas, Taiwan, and elsewhere during this period.

Perhaps twenty years ago in Taiwan, while our children were still at home with us, they gave me (Matt) a ball cap emblazoned with the letter "T" on it. I've worn it, walked and worked in it, washed it, lost it, and found it through the years, and I continue to wear it often. I am frequently startled while passing through distant airports when complete strangers approach me and wish to exchange high-fives; invariably, they assume (wrongfully) that I am a fellow-booster of their favorite athletic team. The "T" is ambiguous enough that fans of many different sports teams have made this blunder. However, I am not a sports fan and, as far as I know, the "T" has never stood for anything at all! If people ask me for an explanation, I tell them that "T" stands for "Taiwan." Gospel ministry in Taiwan is the one thing that I have been truly passionate about over the years!



Matt's "T" ball cap (2017)

Our experience during the past year, as we have transitioned away from 30 years of Taiwan ministry, has been disconcerting and disorienting. It has felt a bit like the activity that our church youth director used to announce: "Tonight after church there will be a D.U. for the teens." That is to say, **destination unknown!** We have had perfect confidence that God was leading us away from Taiwan, while at the same time having absolutely no idea where or what He might be leading us to!



Katy, Texas

It now appears that the search process we have been pursuing over the last year is finally narrowing down to one place: Katy, Texas. However, don't expect us to buy cowboy boots and a ten-gallon hat; my old "T" baseball cap will continue to work just fine for me!

At the end of April, we drove the one-thousand-mile journey back to Katy for a repeat visit at Good News Baptist Church. This time we stayed for most of two months. Matt preached (9X) and taught (7X); Marla played piano (11X), taught children's Sunday School (2X), and spoke to a ladies' fellowship. Together we visited in people's

homes and began to learn our way around town. It was a very full and profitable period of ministry. The time and opportunities we had to visit with Pastor Gerald and Julie Hawk and their family confirmed in all of our minds and hearts that God is directing us to pursue a transition to Good News Baptist Church as



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our new field of ministry. We will be partnering with the Hawks and seeking to revitalize this BMM church plant.

In the middle of our time in Katy, Marla and I had the opportunity to fly to Cleveland for a three-day conference on church revitalization that was held at the BMM Global Ministry Center. During this conference we received timely and helpful instruction that directly applies to the needs of Good News Baptist Church. We continue to learn about the congregation; it is, in fact, an organized church. It originally was planted by a BMM church planting missionary more than thirty years ago and is not yet fully independent. The church needs a boost to renew its vitality and forward progress toward the goals of self-support, healthy growth, and self-governance.



Preaching at Good News BC

Toward the end of June, Marla and I once again packed up our car and headed back to South Carolina. We were sad to leave the brothers and sisters at GNBC. Scarcely had we settled in at our daughter's home before Matt again headed out—this time by air—on a three-week trip overseas.



Two Students Graduated from the Training Program

I (Matt) first flew to Taiwan and spent a very busy week closing personal accounts and wrapping up the final details of our life there. On the last Sunday of my visit, I preached at Cornerstone Baptist Church, where we ministered for so long. I enjoyed several meals and times of fellowship with the brothers and sisters of the congregation. From there, I traveled on to another destination in Asia, where I taught a week-long Bible course in Mandarin Chinese. Two students graduated from the program during my visit. It was both bittersweet and exhilarating to be back among Chinese people again. Finally, I stopped over in California for a few days on my return trip to spend time with my elderly mother.

In personal news, our son Luke and fiancé Heather are getting married on September 21st in Huntsville, Alabama. Our daughter Rose and husband Mike announced that they are expecting their second child in January, for which we are in great expectation! Our youngest daughter Beth recently completed another ten-day medical mission trip—this time to Honduras. She has another trip planned for later this year.

We recognize that our transition from Taiwan to North America may require some of our supporting churches to re-evaluate their support of our ministry. During this process, we desire to be as transparent and informative as possible about the changes taking place in our ministry, in order to equip you to make an informed decision. It is certainly our hope that we can continue in partnership with each of our existing supporting churches; Marla and I will continue to engage in missional gospel ministry in our new location. Here is how we see this transition taking place in the near future.

We have been carefully communicating with our sending church and with our mission leadership about this transition. We expect to receive formal approval of our change during BMM's September governance meetings. In the meantime, we have been issued a new support estimate that reflects our anticipated cost of living in Katy, Texas. We will need to raise an additional \$2,000 per month of regular support. We have set a tentative goal for ourselves of moving to Katy before the end of the year—perhaps as early as October. This will depend to a certain degree on how quickly we can raise the additional support that we need.

Here are some matters about which you can pray: First, Good News Baptist Church will be holding a VBS program from July 29 – August 2. A church in Lincoln, Nebraska is coming to assist the congregation in running the program. Second, Marla and I will be meeting with the Hawks on a date yet to be determined in the month of August for a period of evaluation, discussion, and strategic planning regarding the future direction of the GNBC ministry and our partnership together with them. Pray for God's wisdom and guidance as well as unity of mind for our team as we conduct these planning sessions. Finally, pray for God to quickly provide the needed support so that we can soon make the move out to Katy.

In Christ,

Matt & Marla
Matt & Marla Hanna



Rev. Gerald Hawk, missionary pastor

