

Aloha from Beijing,

September 2020

There is a lot happening here and sometimes it feels like nothing is happening - at the same time! Perhaps you are feeling a similar “hurry up and wait” frustration as the world prays for the COVID scourge to subside.

We are so grateful for your prayers and support in this time of transition. We have had some good conversations with friends/churches about opportunities in various parts of the world. But we have been thinking about the words of our Pastor Svendsen, “*when you are in the fog, anchor!*” We have a visa to stay in China until next June, many workers cannot get back in, we are in good standing with our Beijing International Christian Fellowship, we have an apartment we are sharing with our son, Josiah, and we live in a city with 23 million Gospel-needy people – the capital of the world’s populous nation. And we are glad to share He has opened a door...

A Door Opens Right Here

We have been asked to help teach and encourage pastors and preachers of the largest open and accessible Chinese churches in Beijing – the Three-Self Church. Specifically, we will be mentoring the English service preachers for 3 congregations. Hundreds of people attend these services. This will include Mark being on their regular preaching teams. These churches are now opening and their English services will open soon. (Their English website has not been updated recently – it just so happens the last sermon posted was Mark’s! <http://english.hdchurch.org/>)



For 11 years here in Beijing we have had the privilege of ‘touching the world’ through ministry with international students from 100 nations. But we have had limited opportunities to impact the church of the motherland. Now we are thrilled to have this wider opportunity to serve their young pastors, and the church in China. There are a lot of challenges navigating this opportunity with the current political and spiritual realities, your prayers are much needed.

Beijing remains a very COVID-safe city. Schools and churches are opening. International students who ‘got stuck’ on their campuses have not been able to get off for 7 months! Those who ‘got stuck’ abroad will not be invited back for this Fall term, most of their programs will be on-line.

Birthday Blessings

We both celebrated birthdays in August and are thankful to be blessed with health and strength. It has been a great encouragement to have friends over, be invited out, and just meet up with some of the people we are privileged to be on the Journey with here in Beijing.



Our Children went “Off to Seminary”

One thing I tell young students and servants of the Word today is to build their library digitally. These are words from our experience of a lifetime of dragging books around the world. We have left significant deposits in Uganda and Kazakhstan, but somehow the pile always kept growing! We are both book lovers and have been carrying some of our favorites for decades from Moody, Covenant, and Westminster. That burden was lifted a week or so ago.



We pray that our ‘burden’ will be a great blessing to the faculty and students of Yanjing Theological Seminary (燕京神学院) here in Beijing. English language books are a bit of a specialty item, not all of their community are able to read them. But a growing number can. Pray with us that our ‘children’ and ‘teachers and mentors’ will build up many of the students and faculty in the truths of the Gospel.

“they devoted themselves to...fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer”

The ‘shut down’ of traditional worship gatherings has ‘opened’ many more opportunities here for us to meet with people. We have been busy visiting, hosting, and mentoring leaders. Not meeting together for worship makes people hungry for being together.



One of the books I read in these last few months was “The Gospel Comes with a House Key: Practicing Radically Ordinary Hospitality in Our Post-Christian World” by Rosaria Butterfield. She and her family have been used by God in wonderful ways as they share and speak the Lord Jesus. It’s a great read about something simple – but demanding – that the church needs to do.



About two years ago the young lady in the black shirt (3rd from right) ran up to Dayna during a Sunday service crying that “something is wrong.” She was actually miscarrying! Dayna rushed her and her husband – Esther and Emmanuel from Nigeria - to the hospital right away. After tests and examination, Dayna had to tearfully explain their baby had gone to be with the Lord. You can imagine all of our joy to hold their beautiful daughter. Her name is Success! This was our farewell lunch. Emmanuel finished his Ph.d. and they returned to Nigeria. Pray for them!



Now unto Him who holds the Key of David! Mark and Dayna Blair

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Checks to 'Pioneers' – with attached note: 'Mark and Dayna Blair, Beijing.'
Electronic transfers: <https://give.pioneers.org/p-75-give-to-a-missionary-or-project.aspx>
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