

December 13, 2017

To the Advisory Board of the Joshua & Sunnyo Buck Mission Fund:

Grace and peace to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! In this Christmas season may you find comfort and joy in God's indescribable gift of his Son. I thank God for the years of prayer and support of the JSB Mission Fund. In this letter I would like to briefly report on what God has been doing this past year.

Let me first begin with how God has been working in my own heart. All my life I have been quietly laboring to write my own success story. Perhaps it is the "American" in me. It is a story where everything goes as planned and everything looks good. But through God's Word and my own experiences, I have been awakened to the fact that God writes our stories, not us. And God does not write "success" stories, he writes gospel stories.

Every believer's life-story has a gospel tone and shape to it. This flows out of our union with Christ. We see it in the life of Moses, Joseph, Ruth, David, Peter, and Paul. Gospel stories are stories of death and resurrection. They are stories of weakness and power, humility and love. They are stories that are unexpected, that we would never imagine writing ourselves, but in the end are beautiful, transformative, and redemptive. Ultimately, they are stories where God alone receives the glory as we decrease and he increases.

God's providence, therefore, guides us into gospel stories. With this understanding I can better enter into the gospel stories of my life with humility instead of raging pride. I can have assurance that God is working for my good and for his glory, no matter how frustrating or disappointing life might be. At a heart level, I can be liberated from the idolatry of success, I can handle suffering with greater patience, and I can move outside of myself and love others.

This past year our church was ready to relocate. With the potential relocation, I was imagining God opening up many new doors of ministry. But as the months went by, it was becoming clearer to me that it was not going to happen. It took some time to recover from the disappointment and move on. I had to let go of my plans and submit to God's. I had to humbly let my own dreams die. Even now I struggle, but I press on knowing that God writes our stories and his are always better than mine.

This past summer Laura took Anderson on his first mission trip. They went to an orphanage in Southeast Asia to lead a VBS. Despite the hot weather, Anderson did well, helping in various ways and befriending the children. As our children grow older, we look forward to more opportunities for them to serve the Lord. Libby is our little lady in the house. She's grown quite a bit this year. She enjoys playing the piano and spending time with friends. Nathaniel's smile and happy disposition continues to be a blessing to everyone around him. One of his favorite activities is playing football in the house and tackling his older brother.

As we come to a close this year, we thank God for his steadfast love. He is more gracious than we could ever know. And please continue to pray for us, that we head into the New Year full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and that we always remember our God who is able to do far more abundantly than all we ask or imagine.

Blessings,

Rev. Andrew Park

P.S. Please see below for photos from this past year



Clockwise, beginning from the upper left: 1) A community outreach event 2) Praying for a neighbor in the community 3) Anderson at the orphanage in Southeast Asia 4) Going over the sermon with some of the kids after service 5) Leading a new members' service 6) On the mission field in Oaxaca, Mexico

