

April 7, 2011

Greetings from Hamilton, Ontario, Canada!

It's been 7 years since my family moved from Malaysia to Taiwan under God's direction. Then God laid on my heart that we should return to Canada for a Sabbatical rest after 6 years. As the time approached my heart started to become full of fears of the unknown: How would my family adjust to Canada? Could we find a suitable /affordable place to live? Would my wife like it? Where should we live? What about my work?

I praise God as I see how God has dealt with my fears.

1. Finding agreement: A year ago, neither my daughter or wife were willing to come to Canada:

My daughter wanted to graduate from primary school (Grade 6) in Taiwan and my wife didn't want to leave Taiwan or to have me unemployed. But God has worked. First my daughters thinking changed: she wanted to come to Canada. More recently, my wife agreed under 2 conditions: 6 months not 1 year, and my mother agree that the place I found was suitable. *God's timing is good!*

2. Facilitating departure: A new law, passed last year in Taiwan, allows fathers to take 6 months off work at reduced salary, to help care for young children. *God's timing is good!*

3. Providing confirmation at church: In the fall, the idea of Sabbath rest was prominent in a number of messages. *God's timing is good!*

4. Finding a home: Rent or try to buy? Where? Oakville(near my mother and home church)?, Northern Canada (low cost, service opportunity)? multicultural Hamilton?

(a) *Closed Doors:* Spiritual leaders in Taiwan suggested that the 2nd option would be a disaster for my family. Friends helped us look in Burlington/Oakville. It soon became obvious that buying in Oakville/Burlington was not financially feasible—the agent found only one property within our price range in 3 months: it sold immediately. On the internet, one house on the Hamilton Mountain caught my eye. I asked God that if this was the house, let it be available when I arrived with 2 children in Canada on Saturday January 15th. Due to sickness, we delayed our flight for 3 days. When we arrived in Canada, the property was gone. Door Closed. What next? Rent in Bronte: no one was willing to rent to us (4 children, no Canadian credit rating). Door Closed.

(b) *Open Door:* Scanning the Spectator's Real Estate section, 1 house jumped out at me. Sunday afternoon after visiting my Aunt Kay at Macassa Lodge (a city hospice), we drove passed it. I felt prompted to knock on the door. The owner welcomed us in. It felt right. My mother came in. She felt similarly: Sharon would like this house Tuesday we looked at the area. School? Cathy Wever about 1' walk (Teachers very positive “I didn't want to come here but now I don't want to leave.”) Church? Wentworth Baptist Church 30 seconds walk, pastor served in Pakistan for 11 years with YWAM. Recreation? Indoor swimming pool (Family year pass \$132) 2 minutes walk. Transportation? 30 seconds walk to Cannon Street Bus. Transport one way to downtown and the other to my mothers house (only 90 minutes and \$2 via free transfer to Burlington Transit). Praying for God's confirmation, I surprised myself when I heard myself asking God for the specific selling price of 149,000 (11,000 below asking price). I did not mean to pray this number. I submitted an offer for 141,000. The seller replied that the minimum acceptable price was 149,000! *God's confirmation gives us peace.*



Fig. 1 Picture of Family taken March 2011

5. Moving in and Furnishing “All I have needed thy hands have provided, great is your faithfulness LORD unto me.” The sellers blessed us by leaving the house perfectly clean with toilet paper and soap in the bathrooms, as well as a lawnmower and new BBQ in the backyard! I am thankful to numerous brothers and sisters from Harvest Bible Chapel and other churches who have shared their belongings with us to completely furnish the house and those who took their own time to help me to collect the articles. What amazes me is how everything fits together. For example (See Fig, 2), the wall (painted by former owner, person1) the couch and lamp (donated by person 2), the carpet (person 3) and artificial plants (person 4) all fit together perfectly. *God's concern for detail is amazing!*



Fig. 2 Story Time taken March 2011

6. Response of family My family loves it here. *Aien & Johann* enjoy school. They are also taking advantage of the free swimming time and lessons in the after school program. The Thursday and Sunday Bible Clubs are a great hit. (Johann asks almost every day if it is Bible Club day!) During March break they attended a day camp at the Eva Rothwell center (\$5/child). *Leon* also enjoys Sunday school, frequently asking if he can go to church. He attends the free Niwasa drop-in center (across the street) 2 days/week. *Sharon* is making friends and learning English as she talks with other mothers at Niwasa, and at free cooking and sewing classes at the school. She appreciates the convenience of shopping at the nearby No Frills supermarket (We are thankful for one person giving us a PC gift card) and looking at things at the used baby clothes shop. Sharon loves the house and the community—to the point of extending her stay in Canada (“You go back to Taiwan first and I will stay here with the children!”) Truly, *God has done “exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think”*

7. Reflecting on the Process

(a) *Regarding God and faith*: “Trust and Obey for there is no other way to be happy in Jesus.” Its obvious. Without leaving I would not be experiencing this joy now. So why do I struggle so hard to trust God and believe even after I see his wonderful working in my life? Its not logical.

(b) *Pearl of Great Price*. Just as the merchant sold all he possessed to buy the pearl; I am using my savings, and selling my investments to purchase a beautiful house my wife. This is a challenge in faith, the temptation is to think: “What if....”

(c) *Thinking of Sharon*. In looking for accommodation, I thought about what would suit my wife. In the past, I might thought first of what would be best for ministry or as an investment.

(d) *Gift or Giver* God has given me great gifts: four lovely children, drawing my wife back to himself in this past year, and now this house here in Canada. The danger to my faith is that of loving the gifts more than the giver.

(e) “*Above all that we ask or think*” A Tuba given by my high school band leader – I have not played this lovely instrument that I love for over 30 years! Now I have one at home to practice. (Little Leon does quite well in blowing it.) A grandmother clock left by the previous owner creates great joy for my sons as they count the hours as they hear it strike.

8. Future The default position is to return to the same university in Taiwan in September for the next school year. The house: I don't know. Sell or keep?

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