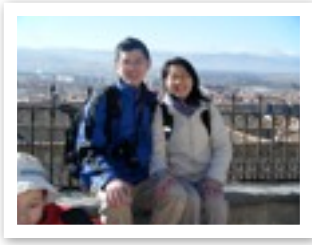


News from the Lais 2009



Year 2009 marked the 10th year of marriage between Pak Wah and myself. We thank our God, for without the teachings from his Word and the constant guidance of His Holy Spirit — to be gentle and kind, to be forgiving and considering for each others' benefits, and to love unceasingly — we would not be so happily married.

As there are so much blessings and thoughts that we would like to share, it is hard to list them all. Therefore, we shall present the year by highlighting some relationships that have blessed and humbled us.

on our parents

During Easter, we went back to Singapore and Malaysia to visit our parents. We were thankful to find both of our parents in higher spirit and better health compared to our last visit in May 2008. Nevertheless, we were also aware of the need to be back sooner and to be around them while they are well enough to enjoy the joy of being with their family, especially their grandchildren. We are also grateful to Pak Wah's sister and brother-in-law for taking care of his mom and my brother and sister-in-law for my parents.

on Fide, our dear daughter

Fide turned 8 this 1st of September. It was in May when Fide went back to school after being home-schooled for a year. The teachers and school-mates welcomed Fide warmly and made every effort to include her into the system. We were relieved to see that she is enjoying their company and learning about different aspects of life joyfully. She writes this about her school : -

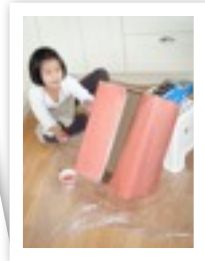
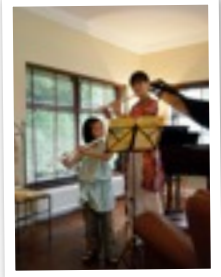
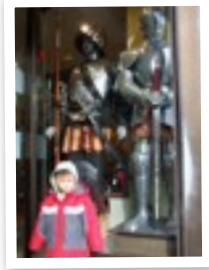
My school is Langley Moor Primary School. There are about 30 children in each level, from Reception to Year 6. This school is a good and friendly school. I suggest you come to this school if you are between age 4-11!

I like to play football at play-time, as it is most fun running about. I also like literacy as I like reading books. I like swimming as that is the only thing that you do in school that involves getting into the water.

I like my teacher, Mrs. Melia, as she is a bit funny and she does not scold me at all! I like the interesting activities that she asked us to do at school. At school, I have millions of friends. I like them.

I like my school a lot. I will miss my school when I go back to Singapore next year. Oh, I will have to think of the queen-sized bed that I am going back to and my cousins to make me feel happy.

Fide continues to have a great appetite for 'good' (soul edifying ? classics ?) books. Her desire to write and illustrate her many stories, and her love for playing beautiful music with her flute has kept her quite busy. She has also passed her Grade 2 practical Flute with distinction in November. Thank you, Joo-Lee, for your great coaching and encouragement !



on Isaiah, our dear son

Isaiah turned 4 this 31st of July. In September he started his 'Reception' year (equivalent to pre-kindergarten, in Singapore system), at the same school as Fide, spending about 6 hours at school. He is settling well. He loves learning his alphabets and phonics, and playing catch with his gang of guys at school.

Apart from becoming more talkative, Isaiah continues to enjoy his action figures like Ultraman, Power Rangers (through he has not watched it before), and Medieval Knights. Nowadays, he also enjoys singing and colouring. His interests are quite different from Fide play and eat !! Isn't this typical of a boy ??

on our Chinese friends

Since September 2008, we have been hosting a Friday night Bible Study for Chinese students in Durham. This is a great treasure bequeath to us by Qiang and Jenny, the founders of this Bible study, after they relocated to Hong Kong last year. Together with two other couples, we host about 20 students, weekly, who are keen to learn about the Bible and the God that Christians believe in. Our greatest joy is interacting deeply with these eager minds, and passionate souls that are seeking hope and a meaningful way of life !! Our children also enjoy the friendships with the lots of 哥哥 (brothers) and 姐姐 (sisters), and are helping out at the Bible study.



In October, at the beginning of Michaelmas term, we had a Mid-Autumn festival for the group. Two weeks before that, we had no moon-cakes, no lanterns, not even an idea whether there will be students coming for the evening. Praises to our heavenly Father! Over the two weeks when we were praying, friends gave moon-cakes, friends brought lanterns from Singapore (even with the colourful candles) and friends brought 20 over friends to the celebration !! The weather was perfect that night, even though it was forecasted otherwise. We (including the children) were thrilled !!

Currently Derek and Carolyn (an English couple) are spearheading the group, Leo and Miranda (a Hong Kong Chinese couple) are supporting. We would need another Chinese couple to take over our role to host the group, in due time. Please pray for us regarding this matter.

on our neighbours

Over the past 6-month, we have been blessed with friendly parents and teachers from Langley Moor Primary school. We have seen wonderful projects being put together by the school with great support from the parents. Many of the students live near the school, in our neighbourhood. The support and friendship in this neighbourhood is like a little 'kampung' ('village' in Malay language), non-pretentious and sincere. We are so thankful that we are accepted and included by the school, the parents, our neighbours, and most importantly Fide's and Isaiah's friends. Without that, it will be really difficult for us to fit in.

Now, a little update about ourselves...if you would like to interact with us further, please feel free to write to us.

on Pak Wah

Reading and writing about church history in the 4th century, being engaged with the theological and spiritual writings of some of the greatest and most godly Christians from this period is what occupies Pak Wah during the weekdays. Over the past few months, he has also been preparing quite a few lessons on the 'Apostles' Creed' for the Friday night Bible Study. In the Summer, he attended both the Ecclesiastical History Conference, where he presented a paper, and the British Patristic Conference. Pak Wah is working towards submitting his thesis by Easter 2010, in order to graduate by July.

For 'recreation', he has me, the children, a fellow Phd student from Malaysia and some of the housework to keep him occupied. Family life, in particular, keeps him more in touch with the practical realities of life!

on Rina

It is quite unusual to have 6 hours in a day to spend, without the children. It takes quite a bit of discipline to apportion the time for work, play and rest, rather than just dumping the whole lot of time into the never-ending housework. So far, the time was well spent and life has been quite satisfying. With Pak Wah's encouragement, I have set a goal to obtain a graded singing certificate before leaving Durham. Thus, in November I took my Grade 5 music theory exam and am now preparing for Grade 7 singing for the coming Easter. Hard work !! Yet it is very exciting. Other than this extra-curriculum project, I continue to bake and cook for family and friends.

This newsletter may sound a bit too 'nice' ! No troubles ? No struggles ? It would be a fairy-tale, if I say 'Yes'! We continue to struggle frequently with our own weaknesses and the ways we have hurt one another. We are helpless in supporting our friends who suffer from broken relationships and loneliness. Our journey of being parents constantly challenges our comfort zones. I can only say that we are hopeful, still. Hope in the love of our heavenly Father, in the life of our humble Saviour, and in the presence of our comforting yet truthful Holy Spirit.

Dear friends, if our plan goes well, we shall see you in Singapore by July 2010 and say goodbye to you in Durham and Manchester, most unwillingly. Till then,

May our God be to you as He is to us, a source of Comfort and Joy, in this coming year.

