

24<sup>th</sup> April 2008

Hi Dr Lee, Dr Quek, Dr Satterthwaite & Beloved BGST Community,

Thanks so much for your email and for remembering us! We are more than delighted and grateful to have our alma mater, the BGST community praying with us! Thanks for asking and do share it as you deemed appropriate!

## **RECENT UPDATES**

### **1) Our Immediate Family**

Our new addition is Zachary Lim (Lin Kai). He joined the family on 5th Apr 2008 just before mid-night after a very long delivery process which ended in a cesarean. That makes our family 5 now - Sharlene (my wife), Matthew (5 ages old), Owen (3 years old), Zachary (1 month old), and me. I will try to upload a family picture in a week or two.

Zachary Lim needs to be on some light occupational therapy on one of his toes in order to assist it to grow properly. He still has minor jaundice even though it been a month. Otherwise Zachary is healthy now as compared to the doctor's concern at birth (a hole in heart; and possibly other complications) – Praise the LORD!

Sharlene is presenting under confinement, recovering from the cesarean. The rest as all mothers know, are regularly interrupted with Zachary wanting milk, as well as attention seeking activities from Owen, and the children mischief by Matthew and Owen (though these stresses can occasionally be rather amusing.. it is generally more stressful and tiring than fun).

### **2) Tim's Studies**

I have been offered a place of study at the University of Toronto (UOT), Trinity College with Toronto School of Theology, as well as Regent University Divinity School (RUDS), Virginia Beach. We felt compelled towards exploring studies with Regent University, and defer UOT's offer. So, I have written to defer UOT's Ph.D. in Systematic Theology (Interdisciplinary Track) for a year, with the intention of exploring the suitability of Regent University's program.

The study at Regent University will lead towards "Ph.D. in Renewal Studies with concentration in Systematic Theology". This is a 3-years coursework followed by dissertation thereafter. Candidacy is only after clearing comprehensive exam (end of third year). There are several reasons for choosing RUDS primarily.

- a) Firstly, the program at RUDS is more vigorous (more credit hours required). The course requires one to examine issues and show comprehensive understanding of topics from a wide spectrum of Christian traditions. I gather that this would be very helpful for trans-denominational ministry in due course. Besides, the basic/core of the course-work are also gears me up for teaching a range of cognate courses in Systematic Theology. The core courses include: Hermeneutics, Theological Method; Systematic Theology, Historical Theology, Contemporary Theology, Philosophical Hermeneutics, Renewal Biblical Hermeneutics and Renewal Theological Method.

- b) Secondly, is the opportunity to work as teaching assistant and be under the supervision of Prof. Amos Yong. He is a young and prolific constructive evangelical Pentecostal scholar, formerly trained from Western Seminary (conservative), and receives his Ph.D. from Boston University where he learned under Prof. Robert Cumming Neville, a giant constructive scholar in ecumenical engagement on philosophy (including Chinese philosophy), religion and theology. As my research interest matches very closely with Prof Yong's primary research areas (apart from his researches on Pentecostalism), this is an enormous learning opportunity.
- c) Lastly, RUDS offers me a 1-year full-tuition scholarship. As of now, the award is made annually only to 1 Ph.D. student (competing amongst current and incoming students from all cohorts). BGST had a big role to play in shaping our interest for godly scholarship – hopefully, this little 'good news' attests to one of BGST's little fruits of labor! Thanks my teachers! We see this undeserved scholarship as part of God's gracious hand involved in helping us to reduce the financial liability for the first year. Hopefully, God would continue to provide for our studies each year.

### **3) Research Interests**

FYI, my areas of research interests are: (a) comparative religious theology (cf. Keith Ward); and especially in relations to Chinese Religions (b) theology of religions; (c) theological method; (d) ecclesiology, especially evangelical ecclesiology in the light of ecumenism; (e) pneumatology in the light of Pentecostal/Charismatic influence in mainstream Christianity, with a desire to bring corrective to extreme extra-biblical pneumatological articulations of the Christian faith; (f) Asian Systematic Theology (contra to Asian Contextual Missiological Theology proposed by Bishop Hwa Yung); and (g) theological education generally (cf. Robert Banks, etc..).

Many of these areas of interests were honed in me since the time of my studies at BGST. My studies at BGST had allowed me to concretize my early full-time ministry experiences with Trans World Radio in serving churches from Creative Access Nations of Asia, short pastoral experiences both at Evangel Christian Church and Kay Poh Road Baptist Church, as well as the several itinerary preaching engagements with other churches like Faith Mission Home. These experiences has also rekindled an interest to relate my Christian faith in relations to a wider Christian body, especially after having experience Christianity from across a spectrum of Christian traditions (Charismatic; Anglican for a while; Conservative Evangelical, Fundamentalistic Baptist in relations to wider Baptist Community, and Brethren).

I hope that my doctoral studies, and opportunity to work with Prof Yong and others would give me further occasions for thinking more deeply about these areas, as well as for discerning God's leading for scholarly and ministerial contribution in these fields, particularly with an Asian context in mind. I endeavor, God-willing to submit more journal articles throughout my coursework, and even revised my M.Div. thesis for publication.

### **4) Funding Status.**

We are blessed to have the support from some of our friends, from Bethesda Chapel, and from family members coming along us in our quest after God's leading. At the moment, together with our savings, pledged supports and Teaching Assistant supposed fees receivable (all else unchanged), we have about a shortage of USD10,000 – USD15,000 per annum. The impact will be greater especially from the second year onwards (if I am not awarded a scholarship in year two). I am at present waiting reply on a scholarship application with a Foundation/Trust.

If the shortage of funds persists, we would have to return after the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Thereafter, I would endeavor to complete the program via a contextual mode – i.e. to travel the RUDS for intensive residency 4 times a year (about a month each) during the coursework phase, and to take up some work in Singapore. We hope that we do not need this option.

### **5) Family Setting in RUDS**

I plan to be at RUDS by 22 May 2008. The Pre-residency phase starts 1 May and different assignments have to be turned in by 20-26 May 2008. Residency begins 1 June 2008 for the 2008 PhD Cohort. The family will join me in July 2008 shortly after Sharlene's brother's wedding – her brother, Sean Yang and his fiancée, Debbie Liew, has kindly consented to travel with Sharlene and our three children to Virginia Beach.

We have secured a family housing in Regent University itself (even though rental is higher, we save on other costs) until a better option comes along. The housing for family is unfurnished – that means, quite some sourcing and purchasing may be needed to get the unit in order for the family to join me in July 2008.

It is our intention to send Matthew to formal school there (Kindergarten), and explore for Owen to go for several hours of playschool. Sharlene will be with Zachary and the children most of the time. We are only able to explore options when we are there in Virginia Beach as the public schools do not handle email enquiries. Hopefully, we will settle in sooner than later.

### **6) Travel Plans.**

I am scheduled to travel on United Airlines on 21 May 2008, 7.15am. As mentioned, Sharlene and kids will travel with her brother, Sean Yang and his wife (by then), Debbie Liew in July 2008 to link-up with me in Virginia Beach. Hopefully all work out smoothly in due course.

### **7) Other Pertinent Concerns**

I am in the midst of working through all logistics involved:

- a) Rental of our unit in Singapore (needed to pay for expenses in Singapore);
- b) Logistical arrangements for matters needing attention in Singapore whilst away
- c) Air-freight to RUDS (some of our books)
- d) The various assignments to be turned in by various deadlines in May 2008.
- e) Preaching assignment in Singapore (11 May 2008)
- f) A Business project to complete and handover (hopefully by 8-10 May 2008)
- g) Logistical and other details with RUDS that pertains to our relocation.

Sharlene would have to look into:

- a) Handing-over her heavy work-load after her confinement. Even though her company has graciously allowed her on a 1-year no-pay-leave (renewability is uncertain), she hopes to have a proper handover before she departs since she was not able to do so earlier due to Zachary's early arrival.
- b) Logistics for the move later on in July 2008.
- c) Spiritual, emotional, mental and physical preparation for the move and changes.

## OUR PRAYER REQUESTS

- 1) God's wisdom, guidance, favor and provisions (friendship, support, church-life, community-life, family life, finances, etc.) for all that relates with our temporal relocation and throughout the 4 years. We especially need God's perspective and strength for all of us to cope with the transitions, the settlement, the new work-loads and new routines (hopefully we settle into one soon), and new adaptation to a different culture and society.
- 2) God's wisdom, guidance, patience, and love be poured on my beloved wife, Sharlene, who will probably shoulder heavily the responsibility of nurturing our 3 very active children. Matthew has been diagnosed with moderate ADHA (Attention-Deficit-Hyperactivity-Disorder) and now we began to understand why he tries us ever so regularly. Owen, on the other hand, is active, but very introverted, and do not seem to respond well to changes. This means, a lot more is demanded of us, and especially Sharlene and including Matthew's current and new teachers.
- 3) God's wisdom, guidance, discernment, and provisions in my studies, teaching assistance, ministerial engagements whilst studying, to truly equip and prepare me as a full person and to shape us as a family, for knowing Christ, loving God, obeying Him, as well as for the ministry that God has in mind for us to serve Him in the largeness of His wider Kingdom, both for Asia, for Singapore, and beyond.
- 4) God's peace, comfort and love to be with Sharlene's family, especially our in-laws – our dad and mom (Gary and Ming), Sharlene's siblings (Serene and Sean), aunts and uncles, who have demonstrated tremendous sacrificial love for us from the time Matthew, Owen and Zachary each joined the family clan – we have grown so closely attached to them that the silence that will soon come to the family after the grandchildren travels will be mediated by the very gracious, loving, comforting and assuring presence of God for each of them as they adapt to the many changes that will take place.
- 5) God's peace and revelation be mediated to my extended family (my mother, sister, brother-in-law, who are yet to walk with Christ).
- 6) In the immediate term, for God's wisdom and supernatural strength to complete the many necessary and tiring activities in the transitions.

P.S. BGST Admin & Library Staff – If I had yet to thank you before, many thanks for your dedications in the years we share our life together! I always have fond memories of our conversations (at meals and/or at the Bishan campus when I was still a student between Jan 2002 - Jan 2005).

Thanks so much one and all for praying and journeying with us!

Blessings

Tim, Shar, Matt, Owen and Zach  
Tel: 92732270 (Hp)  
Email: [worldtim@hotmail.com](mailto:worldtim@hotmail.com)