

A Quick Update / Report

24th June 2008

Preamble

Greetings Friends & Prayer Supporters! I have been away from Singapore for almost 4 weeks now. But the busyness of life here at Virginia Beach has left me little room for wandering in my mind about missing the comfort of home (except on occasions thinking about my family and friends).

God's Grace for me in America

The first few weeks was focused on administrative matters (banking, postal, electric services, school registration, payments of rental, school fees, etc.). Still needing favor with the application of credit cards and bank loan for housing.

God has overwhelmed me with His kindness – He has supplied quite a number of the basic things that we would need for living in USA through a graduating Regent University student and a Korean family who had just moved out. The School Housing Office's has also offered kind and exceptional rent-free provision of basic furnishing for the 1st year of my studies (I am the first international student to benefit from this scheme, and the other international students envies me). So, if we do move out later this year, we would only need to purchase a few more items and we would be alright. Praise the Lord!

Studies in Regent University

Overview

Studies began on 2 June 2008. Since then, the pace has been almost crazy. During the residency phase 1 (to end next week), we have about 1,000-2,500 pages of difficult scholarly readings to digest, analyze, and review as course-readings for papers, debates, presentations, etc.. This is in addition to all the classes and seminars we are to attend each day. Effectively, it met that I had only slept 3 -4 hours every day (though some days I sleep lesser and other rarer days if my body is unable to handle it, I would miss my readings and sleep through the night). Thank God for strength so far and for desire to keep-up with the readings! Yes, we are supposed to read for comprehensive and analysis... so still trying to put into practice a speed-reading course taken a week ago...

Presentation, Papers, etc..

This week, I will have the following presentations:

- 1 Response Paper Presentation (US time, 25th June 2008 9.00am, 12 hours behind SING),
- 1 Major Presentation Paper (US time, 26th June 2008 8.30am) and
- 1 Critical Book Review to Present (US time, 26th June 2008, 10am).

After this week, we would be given time to research, read and produce more papers for submission (due end of June and middle of July 2008). This includes:

- 2 major papers to submit for coursework,
- 2 book reviews to submit for coursework,
- 2 biographical articles to be submitted for publication in an upcoming dictionary,
- 2 book reviews to be submitted for journal articles

I am to continue to read to prepare for *Comprehensive Exams* as well as *on-going course reading assignments* (both are separate and distinct list).

Also, I must clear *Theological German* and *Advanced German* by the first-two years, which at the moment, I must either do it as a self-study, or enroll for Old Dominion University's Humanities language program. Have not have time to think about this as yet.

Other Activities

God was gracious enough to give me several opportunities for short ministry:

- Short sermonette at a PhD Dinner, for Faculty, Staff, & Students of all cohorts
- Short ministry time with some students as well as graduating students

I have visited 2 churches so far, and done some preliminary home-work in sourcing for schooling options for Matthew and Owen before they arrived (scheduled for 20th July 2008). Also, I am still in the look-out for a cheaper international students and dependents insurance program (the school's insurance program is USD 10,000 per annum).

Prayer & Concerns

1. Strength & Good Physical, Mental, Intellectual & Linguistic Health & Abilities; for me and my family in Singapore (Sharlene, Matthew, Owen and Zachary), mother and in-laws in Singapore. FYI. I try to run and speak on skype with my family every day.
2. Wisdom and capacity for the rigors of my studies, as well as wisdom, protections, and blessings for all of our supporters and prayer partners at home.
3. Wisdom on discussions with loan officers, banks, real estate agents, etc., and for God to provide us a loan for purchasing a simple house during the 4-5 years of our study stay in the US. The purchase market is good now (USD 150,000 – 170,000 for a unit). Otherwise, rental would be USD 50,000 at least for the 4-5 years. Of course, it is dependent on whether God is giving us the peace for it.
4. God's leading to settle-down into a home church during the time of our stay.
5. Basic Needs still waiting to be filled – Housing loan, student & dependents insurance, Purchase of a good second-hand Car, CD-DVD Player, etc..