



SEPTEMBER 2019

Dear friends,

We hope that you and your family are all well, and that things are going very well for you, your family, children and work. We are so thankful for you and your friendship, your support and prayers for us. You are such an important part of our lives and work, and are such a great blessing to us!

We have now returned home to China after being away for about 7 weeks on our trip to visit Polly's mom and other relatives in Brazil. The main reason of this trip was to help take care of Polly's 91-year-old mother in Brazil and also visit and minister to her other relatives there. (Also, since our ticket had a stop-over in the USA, we were able to visit Mike's sister in Virginia as well.)

7 Weeks to Brazil and Back (to China) - Taking Time To Honor And Strengthen Family



Polly's 91-year-old mother, next to one of her beautiful Japanese flower arrangements

Mike and I (Polly) have made it a point to make the long trip from China back to Brazil (and the US) to visit our relatives every 2 years or so since we came to China 19 years ago. We are so thankful for the opportunity to visit and minister to our relatives on these trips, as we can share with them what the Lord is doing in our lives and also bring those who have not yet received salvation closer to Him.

Also, as we are getting older, we understand more how our roots and background influenced and formed us, and we want to honor and thank Polly's mom (our only living parent) and our siblings and other relatives.

For me, Polly, there is also an element of being at peace with myself, as growing up as a Japanese second generation born and raised in Brazil, there were plenty of conflicts between myself and my mother, who wanted to have her children behave like the Japanese people from her generation used to do (she came to Brazil in 1933!).

Being not only the first Christian, but also the first missionary in my family brought lots of conflicts in a traditional Japanese family. I praise God that now, they not only accept my choice, but can recognize that because I love God, He gives me strength, good health, faith, and peace, and I am finally

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able to share God's solutions to problems to their lives as well.

Our trip started with an 8-hour bullet train trip to Hong Kong, and then the next day we flew to Virginia to visit Mike's sister. We stayed 4 lovely days with her and her husband. They are not believers yet, but both she and her husband were very sweet, accepting and caring as we spent time together. Mike's grandfather was a pastor and missionary doctor for 42 years in Oman, and Mike and his sister spent time looking at his grandfather's old Bible (which was full of notes and writings in the margins) and going over some other books about their family heritage together.

Polly and her mom looking at family albums

Caring For Polly's Mother And Other Relatives

From there, we flew to Sao Paulo and stayed there mainly to take care of Polly's mother.

She is physically independent (can walk and eat by herself) but she has loss of short term memory, so she can easily get lost and not be able to find her way home if she goes out alone in the street, which she likes to do as she lives right in the center of town, or take medicine several times in a row as she forgets she has taken it, etc. So, because of her senility she needs 24-hour attention.

She has two caregivers, one for the day, other for the night-time, both have been caring for her for many years. On this trip we were able to give both of them a needed vacation and other rest days, by us caring for Polly's mom in their place. They both have basically been working seven days a week, as Polly's mom doesn't accept new people to help care for her.



Mike and his sister looking at their grandfather's Bible



Besides the care of Polly's mother, we had a great time with Polly's two older sisters and one brother, their spouses and children. We indeed have grown closer to each of them and were able to pray together with them (with great receptivity on their part), for their lives, work and children, which shows that the Lord is working in their hearts to bring them closer to Him, as we prayerfully try to show His love to them on every visit. Polly also visited with her closest cousins, spouses and children, and we also visited with 3 sets of uncles and aunts. They were very open to our prayers and witness, and we had some good very times ministering to them. A great victory is that two of these relatives received the Lord, so wonderful! We ministered to at least 29 relatives on this trip!

God's "Set-Ups"!

We could see also how so many times the Lord "set up" people to come across our path during our trip, either in airports, on buses or trains, doing shopping, or whatever we were doing, bringing people to us who needed either to know and receive the Lord, or to have prayer, love and encouragement.

For instance, when we went to the supermarket, twice God brought to our attention an older man there, and so we asked him if there was anything he would like prayer for. He told us that he has cancer. So we prayed for his healing on the spot, and also shared how he could receive the Healer, Jesus, in his heart, which he was very happy to do. He was very moved, and promised to read the Bible and join a church!



A precious elderly man whose heart was touched, and received Jesus after we prayed for his healing

Encouraging a young woman while on the train



On the train going to visit some relatives, a young lady sat by us. She loved Jesus but felt hurt by her former church and because of that, had put aside her relationship with the Lord. As we talked, we felt the Lord ministering healing to her past hurts and setting her free to love the Lord again.



On the plane back from Sao Paulo, Brazil, one of the air stewardesses was especially kind and caring to the passengers, so we took the time to tell her how much we admired her for that. She was very touched, as no one had ever told her that before. She shared how she had wanted to work in the Red Cross before, but it

didn't work out, and she became an air stewardess. She told us how she almost died recently from a poisonous spider bite. Since she still had some dizziness and weakness from that experience, we prayed for her total healing and also for her to receive the Lord. She was very thankful for our prayers and we encouraged her to read the Bible, which she promised to do.

A young man who we met selling products on the street who had the word "Blessed" tattooed on his neck. When asking him about it, he told us that he almost died of a motorcycle accident a year before, but God spared his life. Since he was still having pain and problems with the metal plates and screws put in his body, we prayed for his healing, and he immediately felt more freedom of movement.



After that, he prayed to receive the Lord with us and we encouraged him how God has a special purpose for his life.

16 people received the Lord during this trip, plus we were able to pray for about 19 other people, most of these knew the Lord but needed prayer for healing, depression, family problems, or to receive some encouraging words for their lives.



A government worker who came to know Jesus after we shared His Word and His love with her



A pastor and his family who we prayed for and encouraged, after a very difficult time in their lives



A restaurant manager who found the Bread and Water of Life when she received the Lord

It was wonderful, too, to return home to our beloved China and begin to see our close local friends again. However, we can feel the pressure here of our local situation continuing to become tighter and tighter, as we heard of still more Christian workers in our city being asked to leave the country within 3 days, and the work situation of some of our local friends becoming more restricted by having extra requirements, such as being asked to sign papers admitting they are Christians, as well as more local underground churches being closed.

We will need to be continually evaluating the way we do things here, due to more religious restrictions being passed recently and local officials coming under more pressure to enforce them.

We had already started varying the place of our Bible studies, rotating the meetings between our local friends' homes. But we feel that because of this tightening, we will have to start not bringing our phones with us going to visit friends, and asking them to do the same when coming to our home (because our exact location and that of our friends can be traced by our phones), and to be prepared for a visit from the authorities by some English games, cultural exchange things, or a movie out when we begin our meetings, so as to look quite natural as to why we are together. We are praying about how to train our friends better to stand in their faith, in the light that we might not be able to stay here very long. It is very sobering to say the least.

Also, although we as foreigners could be asked to leave, lose some of our belongings, or be fined etc., our local friends do not have the option of moving to another country, so we need to be especially careful to protect them as their lives can be very affected, they can be demoted or lose their jobs because of them being associated with Christianity, or even be eventually put in jail or persecuted in other ways.

So we thank you for your prayers for our protection, wisdom and direction, and that we will be acting in faith, not fear, and receive clear direction from the Holy Spirit as how to operate these days, as well as for the protection of our local friends.

BACK
TO
CHINA

We do believe His promises, that "He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty." (Psalm 91:1), so we praise God that we can abide in His "secret place" and stay safe even though the circumstances around us are more difficult.

We want to thank you again for your friendship, prayers, support and partnership of our work here, we are so thankful for your kind and sacrificial giving that enables us to be here in China and continue to spread the Gospel and the love and Word of God to the people here.

With much appreciation and love,

Love Mike and Polly



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