



Dear Friends,

Greetings from the Byrne family! We pray that this letter finds you well, reflecting on God's blessings over this past year as you prepare to celebrate our Savior's birth. For our family, an appropriate theme for the year could be "The Not-So-Empty Nest". For quite some time it had been just the two of us at home, with our nearest family member an 8-hour drive away and the others scattered across the country or around the world. But in 2011, everything from transitions in our kids' lives to health issues for Joyce's Mom have kept our home full to overflowing all year long. Over the past months we have gone from being "Skype" grandparents to participating daily in our grandchildren's lives, learned more about wound care than we ever would have imagined, welcomed a new member to our family, moved lots of furniture and boxes, and shared some wonderful moments of love and laughter in our very full house. A few highlights:



Welcome, Luke! When we wrote to you last Christmas, we had recently heard the good news that Laura and Jason were expecting another baby. At the time they were living in Indonesia, but due to Laura's high risk pregnancy and some health concerns for their one-year-old daughter Mika, they decided to come back to the States for the baby's birth. Luke Evan Porterfield was born on July 21st and has been such a joy to all of us. He is a happy little boy whose contagious smiles light up the room. Mika is a wonderful big sister, and it has been an amazing gift to us as grandparents to spend many hours with her. We are filled with wonder as we experience the world through her eyes. A few months after getting back to the U.S., Jason and Laura decided through much prayer and consultation with others not to return to their ministry in the slums of Jakarta after Luke's birth. Jason has accepted a position as the U.S. Director for their mission organization, Servants to Asia's Urban Poor, and is also working on a Master of Divinity degree through Fuller Seminary. They have all been staying with us since March but are hoping to move into a home of their own in the Houston area early next year.

Back to the Classroom – Sara and Eric have both been hitting the books this fall – Eric as a first year law student and Sara as a first year high school math teacher with classes in algebra, geometry and math models. Both of them work long hours, but they are doing well and learning a lot. We love to hear Sara "think out loud" about ways to reach and engage her students, many of whom have significant challenges to overcome. Eric obviously enjoys his classes, and shares lots of interesting law-related stories and facts with us when he is around. He can find a legal connection to pretty much any topic. A special blessing for Sara and Eric this year has been purchasing their first home. After doing quite a bit of moving around for their first year or so of married life (including a brief stint in our "not-so-empty nest"), they are thrilled to be more settled and are having fun working on their house a little bit at a time. They are just 20 minutes away from us, so we enjoy seeing them often.



A Weekend to Remember – One of the highlights of the year for us was a trip to see Andrea in Aguascalientes last September, when she was scheduled to perform one of her favorite pieces, Mahler's Fifth Symphony, with the Aguascalientes Symphonic Orchestra. The concert was amazing, and we had a great weekend getting reacquainted with some of the believers in Aguas, eating Andrea's delicious Mexican cooking, celebrating Joyce's birthday with a picnic in the park, and hearing Andrea preach an excellent sermon in flawless Spanish to the congregation at Pocitos. Andrea has been ministering in Aguascalientes for nearly 6 years now. She continues to work on her Masters degree and may soon have the opportunity to work as a graduate teaching assistant for one of her professors. We miss her greatly, but are thankful for things like Skype and email that help us to keep in touch.



Joyce has been busy with her administrative responsibilities at the Friendswood Friends Church and being "Grammie" to Mika and Luke, while David has had an especially heavy travel schedule this year. He loves the opportunities that he has to fellowship and partner with Hispanics who are working in ministry all over the U.S. and Latin America through his work with CHM. In 2011 he has taught seminary classes to up-and-coming church leaders in Mexico City, worked with new church plants in San Antonio and Indiana, helped to lead a conference for Bolivian youth, and has spoken at many other conferences, retreats and meetings. The Instituto ALMA leadership training program reaches even further, with Spanish-speaking students from almost every continent being equipped for ministry through the materials available on the internet. We are so grateful for your support and prayers for this ministry.

As you celebrate Christ's birth and look ahead to the new year, may God fill your heart with the peace that only He can bring, and may it overflow into the lives of those around you. Please write, call or email to let us know how YOU are doing!

In Christ's love,
David and Joyce Byrne

