

# Big news!

## At a glance:

- We accepted a team invitation! 🎉
- Language + spiritual conversations
- Prayer requests

Yet again more time has passed between updates than we had intended... thank you all for being patient with us. At least we can blame it on life being so full in great ways! We're continuing in our language classes, meeting with friends at shops and parks, and connecting with neighbors over tea. With a move from the capital city on the not-so-distant horizon, there have been many conversations and a few trips sprinkled throughout the past few months as well. Keep reading for more details ↓

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## Invitation: Accepted ✓

When we first came to this country almost two years ago (!!), we decided to spend the first few years in the capital city to focus on language learning and cultural acquisition before joining or starting a new team elsewhere. With the end of our time here approaching, we've been in the process of trying to discern where God is leading us next.

We are thrilled to announce that after many conversations and with much prayer, **we have officially accepted a team invitation and we know what's next for us after the capital city!** We will be moving about three hours north of here to a much smaller city (population ~150,000) in the Sea region. As far as we know, there have been zero workers in the city for at least the past 100 years. We have heard through the grapevine of one person in the city coming to Christ not very long ago - praise the Lord! Other than this one person there are no (known) believers.

The team that we will be joining is currently made up of us and our team leaders who have three daughters (8, 7, and 4 years old). They are currently in the States wrapping up a home assignment/furlough, but they return in January and will be moving to the new city. We aren't exactly sure when we will move from the capital city to join them, but it would be April at the very *very* soonest and maybe August at the latest.

Pray for God to send dreams and visions to the residents in the city, and that when we arrive we would be able to find those people and share the Good News with them. Pray that we and our team leaders would have favor from the local government and be granted visas that allow us to stay in the city. Please pray that even now the Lord would be preparing places for us to call home and neighbors to call friends.

**Pray that we would see a church spring to life in the darkness, and that local believers would rise up to take ownership and leadership of the church. Pray for not just *one* church, but one church in *every* neighborhood!**

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## Language & Spiritual Conversations

Language learning. Ohhhh, language learning. We love it so much and yet some days we wonder what in the world we're doing. The language we are learning is a hard language, especially for English

speakers. The grammar structure is wildly different. All things considered, we are encouraged with the progress that we've made in learning it. Some days feel really good and we are able to participate in meaningful conversations without much effort. Other days... well, other days we are *extra* thankful that the Lord is at always work despite our weaknesses. We thought it may be interesting to share some of the ways that we start/engage in spiritual conversations:

- Us mentioning our practices of reading the Bible, praying, and going to church (we have been attending an international church in the city) to continually identify ourselves as spiritual people.
- Names typically carry a lot of meaning here, so R has gotten to share the Bible passages that we associate with Baby J and Baby M's names.
- We hear a lot about the majority religion here and if we're having a conversation in a taxi that's typically what it's about. We try to non-confrontationally ask questions about what they believe and why, and we're often able to share about why we follow Jesus. Practically everyone that we have asked (in almost two years) says that they have never met a Christian before.
- We are frequently asked why we chose to live here. "*Why this country? We're trying to go to America and you left America to come here?!*" We often start by sharing how we've been blessed to travel to many countries and how we found this country to be so beautiful (it's true, so everyone immediately agrees). We also talk about how we're interested in the religious history here - again always trying to identify ourselves as spiritual people but more importantly people who follow Jesus.
- When we talk in deeper conversations about our lives and histories, we try to make a point to share that we did not always follow Jesus. This gets peoples attention because they almost always assume that we have been Christians from birth, either because our parents were Christians or because we are Americans. That's common in this part of the world and within the majority religion - to be a from this country is to be apart of the majority religion. They are one and the same. There's no decision to be made, it's part of who they are.
- Some people have identified us as being "different." Obviously we are different in that we are foreigners and not native here...but they have specifically noted our joy, warmth, "good energy", etc. These comments give us opportunities to talk about how we were not always this way, and that what they are noticing is only because of our relationship with Jesus.
- There are local holidays and celebrations that open doors for spiritual conversations, as well as our holidays like Christmas and Easter which many people are curious about.
- And then there are people who ask what Baby J is saying when she sings "Jesus loves me" to herself :-)

We're encouraged as we reflect on the conversations that we have been able to have. The more we progress in language learning, the deeper we are able to go in our relationships. There are spiritual words that we need to learn in order to talk about faith, but there are also *worldviews* and *assumptions* and all of the *nuances* of how these things are talked about that we are still learning. Our goal is to be able to share the Gospel in the heart language of those that we are serving, so it will be important for us to continue pressing into learning this language *really well*.

Please join us in praying that we'd be able to clearly share the Gospel with our current friends and neighbors before we move, and that we'd arrive in our new city able to clearly share the Gospel with our new friends and neighbors.

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### **Prayer Requests**

- A is in the process of establishing a web design/development business. This will help us establish a local identity in our new city and also provide A an opportunity to explore some of his passions and skills. Please pray that the business would open relational doors and be an overall blessing to our family.
- Baby M's doctors are recommending that she remains helmeted until her first birthday in May. Pray that her development would proceed as expected and that no additional surgery would be needed in the future.
- We won't be moving for a few months, but please be praying already for good goodbyes. It will be very **very** hard to say goodbye to our neighbors and friends in the capital city. Pray that we would have great opportunities to share the Good News with them.
- Please pray through the requests above for the new city, and pray for the one new believer 🙏
- There are a few one-time expenses for our family ahead. Our move from the capital city and settling in a new city will bring along the obvious associated costs, but other expenses have to do with helping us stay in the country long-term. We will share more about this in another update soon, but in the meantime please be praying that we would trust the Lord for big things and that He would raise whatever funds are needed. If you're an individual or family that contributes toward year-end giving opportunities, we'll have one for you to consider!

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Thanks for taking the time to read this update and pray with us :-)

Grace and peace,  
A+R+J+M