

THE TRINKLEIN FAMILY NEWSLETTER
FROM SEOUL, SOUTH KOREA

SEUL

Christmas 2019
Year 4, Heartbeat 8

Peace on Earth



Hans

Gretchen



Abi, 22

Mike, 20

John, 17

As I write this article, many nations are concerned about the cryptic words from North Korea concerning a coming “Christmas gift”...some fearing one thing, some another. As their nearest non-aligned neighbor, I’ve seen lots of speculation about rising tensions and what it all might mean for **South Korea**!

“Well, what *does* it mean?” I imagine our supporters are wondering. So I’ll tell you:I don’t know. What I *can* tell you is that:

- (a) this isn’t the first time ominous words have flowed from the North;
- (b) I haven’t seen any South Koreans packing their bags this time, either;
- (c) the LC-MS Office of International Mission has connections with an excellent organization that keeps tabs on geopolitical goings-on, and they have not issued a single alert about this situation.

Thus we’ll keep at our post, doing what God through the Synod has called us to do, remembering that it’s His plan that will prevail on earth.

I surely do wish there weren’t “wars and rumors of wars” all around the globe—but of course Jesus *did* warn us ahead of time to expect them (Matt. 24:6). And any glance at media news outlets will reveal endless strife both between and within nations. It seems to mock the essence of the Christmas message of “Peace on Earth, good will to men,” doesn’t it? Where *is* the peace-on-earth the angels proclaimed? It wasn’t just a pious wish, you know—it was a announcement of **fact**. Humans wish; God declares. So if it’s real, where is that real peace found?

You and I know that the Peace the angels announced was the peace-with-God that Jesus won for us on the cross (Romans 5:1). There certainly wasn’t *political* peace on earth the day Jesus was born! Men didn’t suddenly stop thieving or lying or coveting, either. Sin still ran rampant in Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. But from heaven’s perspective, Jesus’ victory over sin, death, and the devil was already an accomplished fact—remember that Revelation calls Him “the Lamb who was slain from the creation of the world” (Rev. 13:8)...so that night the angels could announce it as accomplished reality.

But not everyone knows or accepts the peace Jesus came to bring. And when a person’s heart isn’t at peace with God, it’s very likely they won’t be at peace with their neighbors, either; hence the conflicts that plague mankind to this day. (James 4:1ff.) The answer? Work all the harder to bring the Good News to those who either haven’t heard or haven’t believed it yet. There really is only one way to that true peace, and we’ve (all!) been tasked

with being bringers-of-glad-tidings (2 Cor. 5:16-21). Since the problem extends to “the ends of the earth” as mentioned above, it only makes sense that Jesus would commission His disciples (including us!) to go that far in being His witnesses (Acts 1:8)!

That’s why the Trinkleins are here in South Korea, almost exactly the other side of the globe from our old home: to bring the Good News. My call as a Theological Educator is pretty different from what most people think of when they hear the word “missionary”—I wear a coat and tie, not khakis. I brandish a whiteboard marker, not a machete. But the students I work with are facing incredible pressures to perform and conform to the pattern of their Korean world. Many feel completely overwhelmed and helpless; others feel fearful and inadequate; a very large percentage of them do not confess Jesus as their Savior. What a ripe field in which to labor! How great an opportunity to introduce them to the peace the angels sang over Bethlehem!

Thank you for your prayers and good will—we certainly need AND appreciate them. May God bless us all in the new year, with peace on the inside and the outside, too.

With you in His service,

Fun Korean Fact

The big Korean standardized test (similar to the SAT) was given in November. This test is crucial for the students’ futures. In Korean, the word for failing a test is the same as slipping/falling. For this reason, many students avoid eating slippery foods such as noodles or seaweed soup the day before a big exam like the SAT for fear that a good grade will “slip away” from them.

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SIBLING STRIP

Back in Illinois, my siblings and I were part of a community orchestra. It wasn't professional by any means, but I especially enjoyed the opportunity to play in an orchestra. After moving to Korea, that was one of the things that I really missed.

Last year, at around Christmas time, Abi's voice teacher gave us the opportunity to play in his semi-professional orchestra. I was thrilled at the possibility of playing in an orchestra once again, but I was also nervous when I realized that I would be playing alongside professional musicians. I didn't know if my contribution would be appreciated or not, but I decided to join anyway... and I had an amazing time. I got to know some wonderful people, play in an amazing orchestra, and gain confidence and experience. It was without a doubt one of the highlights of last year's Christmas season.

This year, Abi and I received the invitation to play once more in that orchestra. Naturally we said yes, and so mid-December found us sitting in one of the most historic churches in Seoul, playing Handel's Messiah alongside a choir of almost 100 people. Despite it being one of the coldest days in December, the church was packed full with people from all over Korea. What a blessing it was to be able to bless so many others by doing something I love to do!

One of my favorite elements of the Christmas story is that after announcing to Mary that she would supernaturally conceive the Messiah, the angel told her about Elizabeth's pregnancy. I remember feeling amazed when I first realized the graciousness and kindness of God in sharing this bit of information with Mary. Scripture tells us in Luke 1:39 that Mary "got ready and *hurried* to a town in the hill country of Judea, where she entered Zechariah's home and greeted Elizabeth" (NIV, my emphasis added). What a perfect haven God provided for Mary and His precious Son during Jesus' first three months on earth! No wonder Mary hurried to get there! God also gave Mary a perfect mentor—an older woman who was experiencing something very similar (a remarkable first-time pregnancy), but who was "a few steps ahead of her." Generally speaking, the first trimester of pregnancy is a very vulnerable period of time. And during this particular pregnancy there was also the dimension of judgment and criticism that would inevitably come because Mary, as an unwed pregnant woman, would have to bear reproach for a sin she had not committed. So God, in His kindness, provided not only a physical haven for Mary and Jesus, but a spiritual and emotional one as well. The first words Mary heard when she arrived at Zechariah and Elizabeth's home were words of blessing—"Blessed are you among women, and blessed is the child you will bear!" (Luke 1:42)—and then affirmation for her willingness to believe the words God had spoken to her—"Blessed is she who has believed that what the Lord has said to her would be accomplished!" (Luke 1:45) What a welcome! And how encouraged Mary must have felt! The three months she spent in their home must have filled her with great joy and strengthened her faith in preparation for some of the difficulties that were yet to come.

I suspect that these three months also benefited dear Elizabeth. Mary's presence in their home would certainly have confirmed the promises God had given to her and Zechariah, as well. What a gift fellowship is within the body of Christ!

May we boldly speak blessing and encouragement to one another as we hold onto the promises of God, walk with Him each day, and expectantly wait for His second coming!

Gretchen

Mike



1. Hans and Gretchen sharing Christmas greetings with our Korean church
2. Abi, Mike, and John playing their instruments for faculty/staff chapel at LTU
3. Hans teaching an English class shortly before finals
4. Abi and Mike before their performance mentioned in Mike's article

Prayer Requests

1.	For grace to learn Korean
2.	That God would continue to draw Evgenii, M.G.K., G.M.K, N.L., Son, & Min to Himself
4.	For diligence & efficient time management for all of us
5.	For a greater desire to pray & that God would teach us to pray more effectively
6.	For greater boldness & courage
7.	For God's blessings on our lives in the New Year

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You can also send your gifts to our friends at Mission Central 40718 Highway E-16 Mapleton, IA 51034.