
the *Divine Adventure*

the official newsletter of the Allen family

Fall 2007

Volume 7

Current happenings...What's new?

The past few months have been eventful ones for the Allen family! We were grateful to spend time with many of you in May/June during our trip to the "States". We spent several weeks in San Diego, celebrating the completion of Matthew's MBA, and visiting friends; then we moved on to short trips in Ohio and Illinois which allowed our boys to enjoy some time with their grandparents. It was a whirlwind, but it was very refreshing and encouraging to us after so many months away.

In July, we awaited the news from LAM about our ministry placement. Through a series of events, the Lord confirmed our decision to stay in Costa Rica to serve with ProMETA, the on-line seminary project we have shared with you about. LAM and ProMETA have agreed to have me be their Director of Administration, serving in the areas of technology and business planning.

We are happy to say that we are now getting settled in, which is wonderful after feeling very displaced this last year! Joshua will be attending a Costa Rican school, which will challenge and build his Spanish skills, and Samuel will soon begin attending preschool a few mornings a week, mostly to help him learn the language.



And... of course, our little Simon Matthew finally made his arrival into the world! He was born on Aug. 10, just 2 days after Samuel turned 3, and 2 weeks before Joshua's 8th birthday. It seems that August will always be a busy month for us! Praise God, little Simon was born healthy, and is already growing like crazy!

Other than that, nothing much new to share about...

Lessons from the School of Hard Knocks

Since you have been a part of our adventure from the beginning, you know that we are first-term missionaries, with no previous full-time ministry experience. We have learned this past year that the 'flunk-out rate' for first-term missionaries is alarmingly high. We have seen this first hand as we have observed missionary friends struggling with depression, serious health problems, issues with their kids, and even some who have had to return home to address marital issues. As followers of Jesus Christ, we have an enemy committed to making sure we meet resistance and attacks at every corner.

As I try to stand guard against this spiritual enemy, I am aware that the most effective tools this enemy has are my own pride and self-sufficiency. Ministry, and the Christian life in general, are intended by God to be done only in the strength of Jesus, and with the empowerment of the Holy Spirit. As soon as self-reliance creeps in, we cease to be totally reliant on our God, and we thereby assume the role intended to be played by God alone. As I continue my study of the book of Jeremiah, this passage about self-reliance stopped me dead in my tracks.

Reflect on this. Jeremiah 17:5-8:

This is what the LORD says:

"Cursed is the one who trusts in man, who depends on flesh for his strength and whose heart turns away from the LORD. He will be like a bush in the wastelands; he will not see prosperity when it comes.

He will dwell in the parched places of the desert, in a salt land where no one lives."

"But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit."

These verses set me straight in that I often think my own abilities and ideas will suffice in managing my family, relationships, and ministry. There is danger in this, but also there is a promise of blessing if we can learn to trust in our trustworthy God.

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Ministry Update

As I officially assume the role of Director of Administration at ProMETA (Programas de Maestría en Estudios Teológicos Accesibles), I have the task of prioritizing and planning upcoming projects. Unlike previous positions I have held where I managed a budget or had the ability to ask management for project funding, this job comes with no funds. That means if it needs to get done, we reach into our own pockets or appeal to you as our friends, supporters, and co-laborers, to find the necessary resources to accomplish the tasks at hand. As such, from time to time, we will be prayerfully sharing specific needs with you via our newsletters and our blog. Currently, here are a couple of ideas on how you could help.



Stay in touch with us! We want to be a part of your life, and pray for you.

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- Office remodeling: The ProMETA office is a converted house that needs to accommodate more than a dozen theology professors, production staff, and other volunteers. We could use some help with demolition, construction, and electrical wiring to make the building God has given us more useful. Our home church in San Diego is planning a small work team in Dec. or Jan., so let us know if you are interested in joining them.
- ProMETA needs four new desktop computers for use in producing new courses. Since computer equipment costs about 40% more here, we would be grateful for financial assistance or new/used equipment donations.
- We currently are preparing new courses (Old Testament) and need help in covering course development costs, including copyright permissions to use and translate theology books, paying translators, and server hardware to develop and host the courses.

Thank you for being a part of the ministry, and for making it possible for us to be a part of this team of people God has called to this specific work at this specific time.

Financial gifts to support our family and our ministry can be sent to:



All gifts are tax deductible and the Latin America Mission will provide receipts for IRS purposes.

Prayer Corner

- For ProMETA as a ministry, that the process of incorporating as a 'religious association' recognized by the Costa Rican government would be finalized promptly.
- Please pray for Matthew's Dad (Ron), as he begins chemotherapy in his fight against Stage IV colon cancer. Lift us up, too, as it is very hard to be far away and unable to care for and encourage him in-person.
- Please remember Joshua in prayer as he starts at a new school and struggles with learning Spanish. We're asking God to provide Joshua with at least one close friend at school.
- For us to have patience and understanding as we work through the process of getting the necessary identification documents for Simon. Getting passports (U.S. and Costa Rican) for Simon is critical, and bureaucracy makes this slow and complicated.
- Personal financial support, as our insurance costs just went up significantly, resulting in us being about 20% under-supported each month.