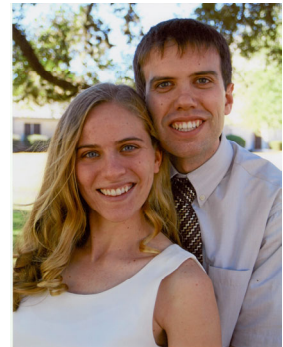




December 2008

Greetings from the Byrne family! As December begins, we can't wait to start receiving pictures, cards and letters to help us catch up on what is happening in the lives of our faraway family and friends. For those of you who feel the same way, here is our news!

For our family, the year 2008 began with great joy and excitement as we celebrated the marriage of our daughter Laura to Jason Porterfield. Their wedding took place on January 13th as part of the Sunday morning worship service at Friendswood Friends Church. It was simple, Christ-centered, and very beautiful. The service included scripture readings by Jason and Laura's family and friends of verses that were instrumental in their calling to minister among the poor. Andrea's trumpet prelude and recessional were amazing. Dozens of our friends and family helped to make the reception a wonderful, joyful celebration by doing everything from helping to cook a meal for 250 people to working to transform the church gym into a beautiful, candlelit garden-like setting. It was a wonderful day, most of all because of Jason and Laura's great joy in beginning their life together. Their plans are to move to Jakarta, Indonesia by next summer, where they will live in a slum community and minister to the poor. Laura hopes to use her skills as a physician to help people with medical needs, but their main desire is to share Christ's love. For the next few months they will continue to live in the "downtown eastside" slum area of Vancouver, Canada. They are working with a team from their mission organization, "Servants to Asia's Urban Poor" to minister there in Vancouver while also working to prepare the Jakarta team to begin that new work in 2009. Please pray for them as they prepare for this transition!



It was wonderful to have Andrea with us for part of the summer while she was on "home assignment" from her work with Evangelical Friends Mission in Aguascalientes, Mexico. She had been praying about the possibility of moving to the U.S. for a while to attend seminary but instead decided to return to Aguascalientes and continue in ministry there while also studying for her Master of Arts in Global Leadership through Fuller Theological Seminary. Their program allows her to complete most of her studies on the mission field. She uses the internet to interact with professors and fellow students from all over the world, submits her assignments by email, and has two intensive sessions of several weeks each on the Fuller campus in California. So far the classes have been very enjoyable and helpful for her. Along with her classes and ministry activities, Andrea continues to enjoy playing trumpet with the Aguascalientes Symphony Orchestra. She recently joined them on a 5-day concert tour to Morelia, Michoacan. Andrea has been dating a young man named Aristoteles for about a year. "Aris" (pronounced AH-reece) is a law student who is also very involved in the Friends ministry in Aguascalientes. We have met Aris briefly, but Andrea is excited for us to get to know him better on a visit next spring. He will graduate from law school in June.



We can't believe that Sara is already a junior – her college years seem to be flying by! It has been fun to see Sara discover, develop and use her gifts in ministry. She is great at working with kids, and continues to give leadership to the "KIA" (Kids in Action) program at Oklahoma City Friends Church, which is about 20 minutes from her college campus at Southern Nazarene University. KIA has grown from a handful of kids, mostly children of church attenders, to a large, racially diverse group of children from the community. Many of the kids come from difficult family situations, and working with them can be a real challenge. Sara's persistence, love and creativity help her to find ways to reach out to them and make a difference in their lives. Sara spent the first half of her summer working as an intern in children's ministry at Friendswood Friends – a great learning opportunity for her. Then she spent several weeks in Mexico helping with VBS and other ministry projects at the Nueva Rosita and Agujita Friends Churches. She had a great time, improved her Spanish, and learned some valuable lessons about ministry from the Mexican Friends. Sara is feeling increasingly drawn to some kind of inner city ministry. She is involved in a group at SNU that ministers to the homeless. She also continues to play on the tennis team. We were privileged again this year to travel to Mobile to watch the team compete in the national championships.



Our work with the Coalition for Hispanic Ministries continues to bring variety, challenge, excitement and fulfillment to our lives. It has been a busy year, with the usual full schedule of travel and local ministry, along with a few surprises – like Hurricane Ike! Through the joys and the challenges we are so thankful for the amazing gift of knowing Jesus. We are looking forward to some time off as we travel to Ohio to spend Christmas with our families. We pray that your Christmas celebration will be joyous and meaningful, and that 2009 will be a year full of blessing for you and your loved ones. Please let us know what is happening in your world!

Love in Christ, David and Joyce Byrne & family