

Electronic JOLLY Treatment



JOLLY vt. [*< earlier jot, to jog*] 1. to shake up or jar, as with a bumpy ride 2. to shock or surprise vi. To move along in a bumpy manner n. 1. a sudden jerk, bump, etc. 2. a shock or surprise 3. A stimulating reminder about our ministry in Muslim South-east Asia. *joltingly adv. jolity*

June 2020

PRAISE

1. For God's grace, and blessings, since mid-March.
2. That Nathan has completed (online) high school (with an excellent GPA).
3. For all the work that online school Sgt. Mj. Sandra has done, since arriving in NZ.
4. That we will soon be able to press the pause button for a few weeks, after we have stuffed the house, and stored our (other) stuff.

PRAYER

1. For us both as we support N & M, who both need calmness, stability, but also scaffolding.
2. For God's finances provision while we take a brief pause.
3. For us both as we ease into deputation.
4. For productive stints in front of the screen, and for continued good relationship with Bangkok bosses.
5. For God's continuing guidance, as we work out how to live a local missional lifestyle while also contributing strategically to Kingdom causes in Southeast Asia.
6. For friends in Thailand as they ease out of lockdowns. Some of the projects have had to be paused. Pray for wisdom about when and how to press the other buttons.

Anti-climactic high school completion for Nathan

We are pleased to report that Nathan submitted his final piece of work on his final year of high school, on May 23. New Zealanders are known for many things. Making a fuss is not one of them. As a (perpetually confused) "trans-cultural" family, American traditions of multiple graduation celebrations seem strange, but so was pressing the "submit" button. I (Chris) explained that Kiwi don't graduate from high school (they just finish), but it still felt anticlimactic. Need to mention that he achieved a very good GPA—despite a severe bout of senior-itis (don't bother googling that). Well done, Nathan! Sandra has done a fantastic job at keeping him on track. Remember the days when he was keeping us up at night?

Severely sub-optimal first semester for Michaela

We recently reconnected with Michaela. After three days together, we have a better idea of why "severely sub-optimal" is one of the ways to describe this first semester. It's safe to assume that there are 1,000s (10,000s?) of young undergraduates who are limping through the combined effects of lockdowns, losing part-time jobs, struggled with online lectures/tutorials, and assessments. That's the bad news. The good news is that we are now able to work with her to put together a recovery plan, although we are not (yet) sure what this will look like. We are delighted to (geographically) be in a position to help her as much as she wants and needs. Related to this, feel (again!) vindicated to have based ourselves where we have.

Done, Doing, To Do...

The three of us have been (happily) camping in our 35 square metre "not-so-tiny" house in Otaki, since May 9. Even enjoyed having our first guests. The biggest development since then, was having our power connected (on May 27). The next big thing in our to-do list is sorting the stuff we shipped from Thailand, which is scheduled to arrive on June 4. Once we have set up the house with our stuff and stored the (many) things that there won't be room for, we plan to press the pause button on absolutely any/everything requiring expertise, (emotional) energy, and—most importantly—money. We are not the only people needing to reconfigure our lives. These are uncertain times, but it's good to be "normal." We are working our ways of being, faithful, and faith-filled, but also wise, realistic and responsible.

Easing into it

From June, we will make a small start at re-connecting with individual supporters and supporting Churches (particularly in Palmerston North). We'll be in Auckland in late-July. Realise that it might take a while before Sundays and house-groups are "back to normal." If you wanna beat us to it, here are our phone numbers: 021 702 899 (S); 0223912781 (C). For me, I will be giving more time and energy to writing, which will keep me in the good books of my boss in Bangkok. Doing so will avoid an unpleasantly frantic and stressful end to 2020, which has already been stressful enough. We are curious about when international travel will be possible and affordable. Best to hope for the best, but plan for the worst.

Some (random) highlights

Lighting a fire before the sun takes over by 10 AM. Establishing a mixture of new and old (daily and weekly) rhythms and routines. Re-connecting with Otaki friends who have so warmly welcomed us back. Balancing a lifestyle of reflection, and service encapsulated in our mantra "heads in the cloud, feet in the kitchen, hands on the tools." Looking through photo albums (including wedding photos) which our family have not seen for many years. All the amazing people who have contributed in ways they can, since mid-March. You know who you are! We've been blessed with accommodation, one-off gifts, skilled laboured (at "mates rates"), tools, ideas, and expertise. People have turned up for working bees. We are seriously in debt, which we have every intention of paying back. PTL & thanks heaps!