

the gillespies and the Good News



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PRAYER REQUESTS

- *For Our Relationship:* That God would continue to walk us through this challenging time of soul-searching and healing, that we wouldn't give up on trusting Him, and that He would continue to provide relationships with others who would want to walk alongside us
- *For Our Ministry:* That God would help us continue to grow in our knowledge of and love for Him and how his love can transform our lives, so that we might be able to share it with others
- *For our Financial Support:* **Praise God** for bringing **16 new people** onto our support team
- **Please pray** for new people to share with—we have nearly exhausted our list of contacts in San Diego
- *For Dartmouth:* That God would continue to open doors for staff and students to share the gospel with others & that they would respond to Christ – whether in formal or informal settings

OUR DEAR FRIENDS,

Happy New Year! It is indeed February, but this is our first communication with many of you, so we'd like to share our warmest wishes. Our 2009 has been filled with great joys and great challenges already. The first few weeks spent in New England meeting with students and friends were so refreshing. Living in community daily there was a great blessing after seeing friends in San Diego just a couple times each week while we've been raising financial support.

Our lives are currently moving much more slowly than at any time in recent history. This has created an environment in which we are thinking more deeply on life and reflecting more fully on our pasts, not having the hustle and bustle of everyday life to attract most of our attention. It's uncomfortable, to be honest. I, Jason, in particular, am learning that I have a great deal of hurt in my past – hurt that I've rarely chosen to work through or feel emotionally; I've always had something else to distract me, another place to focus my attention and efforts. This slower pace of life is not just enabling the hurt to surface, but allowing me to see that my response in it is often a sinful one as I seek to meet my needs rather than look for ways to give to others. I'm discovering significant parts of my life with which I am not trusting God; many of the decisions I have made over the years (and am making) have been out of a hurting heart, not one filled with God's love and acceptance.

Though hard, Faye and I are grateful for this time of preparation. We really hope to reach out to students and provide them a place to be accepted. We hope also to share with them the depth of God's grace toward us, love for us, and endless pursuit of us. Only once we ourselves experience how deeply treasured and secure we are can we hope to truly communicate how much God, through Jesus, treasures them. There are a great number of students like us who have spent their lives working to earn love and acceptance, not knowing that God gives these freely.

MERE CONVERSATIONS

The *Mere Christianity* discussion groups were not as widely attended as we had hoped. (Sadly, we left NH before the discussion groups even started up, so didn't get to participate at all.) However, the students and other staff did have some really encouraging conversations – some with non-Christians and others with Christians not really involved on campus. They are seeing that more frequent and deeper conversations take place in less structured settings. One student had his Resident Assistant ask him to help lead a group that wanted to talk about spiritual things. We are really excited about this as we see small steps toward ministry being more a part of life and not only at planned events. We have also had some great conversations with people recently, stemming from our own reading of *Mere Christianity*. We're praying for many more opportunities here in San Diego to talk with others about their beliefs about God.

