



Japan Journal | MARCH 18, 2019

Updating You on the Benekes' Ministry to College Students in Kobe!

Dear Friends,

No, in case you were wondering, the Beneke family has not fallen off the face of the planet! We're still here and doing ministry in Kobe. It's just that these past few months have been some of the busiest I can recall in, well, ever. Let me bring you up to speed on what's been going on in our lives...

First, thank you for praying for our Christmas outreach last December! We had a great turnout of new students at our Christmas Party (12/14) and Coffee Time (12/20) events. Several of them even prayed to trust Jesus as their Savior. Praise God! Because Christmas in Japan is followed directly by the New Year's holiday and final exams, it's often difficult to follow up those new students who express an interest in the gospel at our events. Yet we trust that the seeds that were planted there will ultimately bear fruit in God's time.

For example, a student at Kobe University named **Chisato** recently prayed and received Christ. She first connected with our ministry when a friend invited her to the Christmas Party in 2017. *Please pray for Chisato's growth, and for God to work in the hearts of all who heard the gospel last Christmas.*

I began my 5th semester of seminary in January. As of next month, I will have completed almost 1/3 of my MDiv program. I hope to graduate in 2022. This year, I began to study Greek. Needless to say, learning a new language takes a lot of time and effort. But it is a great joy to be able to read God's Word in its original language. *Please pray for wisdom to learn well and balance my studies with family and ministry.*

In addition to my seminary studies and responsibilities in Kobe, the main thing that has occupied my time these past few months is my work with Japan CCC's Digital Strategies (DS) Team. First, I was placed in charge of a conference called **Film School (2/13-16)**. Several members of Korea CCC's media team came to teach 32 staff and students from across the country how to produce short films for ministry. During the conference, each of four teams created a new short film—scripting, shooting, and editing it by themselves. On the last day, students voted for one short film to include in a new, evangelistic smart phone application called “Gateway.”



Micah will be 6 months old on 3/25!
Lela likes playing with her baby brother



New believer Chisato (2nd from left)
at her first Christmas Party in 2017



Singing some Japanese karaoke while emceeding at Film School (2/13-16)

You may recall that I traveled to Korea last summer to learn how to use this “Gateway” application. Since January, our DS Team has been working to translate it to the Japanese language and culture. We finished Version 1.0 just in time for Campus Forum (2/25-28), Japan CCC’s national student conference. After learning about the Gateway application in the morning, participants went out in the afternoon and used it to start spiritual conversations with people around the city.

Overall, the feedback from staff and students was highly positive. Many commented that they found it much easier to approach people with a video than a tract. Today I heard that a student who appears in one of the films has been sharing it with many of her friends over the past month. So far, three of them have prayed with her and received Christ!

In preparation for the new school year beginning in April, we are now working on an update to the Gateway application with additional videos. *Please pray God would use this tool to spread the Good News of Jesus on campuses across Japan.*

Here in Kobe, we are also preparing for the new school year. Next week, we will be mailing a newsletter introducing our Kobe ministry to several hundred churches in the area. From 4/1-5, we will be handing out close to 10,000 fliers on a dozen different campuses around the city. The following weeks, we will hold our **Freshman Welcome Picnic (4/13)** and **Coffee Time (4/18)** outreach events. *Please pray that God would use each of these activities to connect us with Christian students and others who are open spiritually.*

Unfortunately, I will not be in Kobe for some of these outreaches because I will be traveling to Argentina as Japan CCC’s representative at the **Global DS Conference (4/10-19).** *Please pray that, through this conference, I would gain new ideas to help advance our ministry in Japan. Pray also for Jungshin as she watches the children while I am gone.*

Thank you for your faithful prayers and partnership, even in this busy season of our sporadic correspondence. I will do my best to write you again after I come back from Argentina next month. Until then, may God bless you abundantly!

Yours in Christ,

Ryan & Jungshin



Screen shot from the winning film, “Lost,” chosen for inclusion in Gateway



Using Gateway to approach people in the park at Campus Forum (2/25-28)

PRAISES & PRAYERS

- *Praise God for students who received Christ, a fruitful Film School and Campus Forum, and translating the Gateway application into Japanese!*
- *Pray for Chisato’s growth in Christ*
- *Pray God would use fliers (4/1-5), the Freshmen Welcome Picnic (4/13), and Coffee Time (4/18) to connect us to spiritually open students on campus*
- *Pray for the DS Global Conference in Argentina (4/10-19)*
- *Pray for wisdom to balance seminary studies, family, and ministry*

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