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

Dear Friends,

In the power of the Holy Spirit, by February 2020, we will stir up a movement of 24 lifelong multiplying disciples on 8 university campuses. Thank you for praying for our **Year-End Planning Retreat (2/13-15)**! This new vision statement for our ministry was the result of discussions during that time.

Currently we have about 8 students on 3 main campuses whom we consider to be “multiplying disciples” (disciples who actively share their faith and make disciples of others). Over the next three years, we are trusting God to triple the size of our current ministry. We desire to see more and more students in Kobe enter into a relationship with Christ, be built up in their faith, and be sent out to reach others.

To that end, we began this year’s ministry on April 1 with a 3-week prayer-and-fasting chain. We also handed out more than 9,000 fliers on 10 campuses around Kobe to advertise our outreach. Tomorrow is our **International Friends Picnic (4/22)** freshman outreach, and next Thursday we will have the first of our monthly **Coffee Times (4/27)**.

Please pray for the new students attending these events: that Christians would catch the vision to share Christ with others on their campuses, and that those who do not yet know Christ would experience his love through our community.

Although we would love to join these outreach events ourselves, our family left Japan on April 19 to come to South Korea. We will be staying here with Jungshin’s family until May 18, when we fly to Boise, ID for the start of a 5-month stay in the United States. We will return to Japan after October 19.

Why leave Japan for so long? Well, because we do not pay Social Security in Japan, the government requires us to leave the country for 6 months every 5 years. Since we came in May 2012, we had to leave by the end of April 2017. We chose April 19 because it let us stay long enough to help start the new school year, but also gets us back early enough in October to join most of the fall semester.

We will continue to keep you posted on developments and



Kobe students and staff families at our Year-End Planning Retreat (2/13-15)



Handing out fliers with our new interns from Korea at Freshman Orientation



Family selfie with the cherry blossoms before our 6-month leave from Japan

prayer needs in Kobe as we move around Korea and the States over the next 6 months. For now, we will spend a few weeks here in Seoul recuperating from our recent busyness, reconnecting with family, meeting with friends and ministry partners, and preparing for our time back in America.

We apologize for breaking this news to you so suddenly after our lack of communication over the past few months. We had every intention of writing earlier, but in the midst of traveling, ministry, preparing to move, and caring for Lela, we were just too overwhelmed to do so. We will do our very best to update you in a more timely manner in the future.

Before we go, we wanted to share a couple highlights with you from our ministry in March:

Campus Forum (3/1-3). This year our national gathering of Japan Campus Crusade for Christ staff and students was held in Kobe. A large part of the program was participants interviewing members of the Kobe ministry to learn from our example. Ryan was in charge of putting together the small groups and interview schedule. After the interviews, there was a time to encourage the Kobe team with stories of how God had been working. It was a meaningful time to reflect on how the Lord has led us over the past 5 years, starting from nothing and growing to be a model for the rest of the country.

Evangelism Seminar (3/8, 22). Ryan and our Kobe team leader were invited to teach a church women's group how to share the gospel using the *Knowing God Personally* booklet. At the end of the first session, we challenged the women to list 5 people they had been praying for and take initiative to share the gospel with them over the next two weeks. When we met again for the next session, we were amazed to hear the stories of how many of them actually did so! In fact the pastor was so impressed, he invited our team leader back to teach the same material to the whole church in June.

Thank you again for your faithful prayers and partnership with our ministry. We look forward to what God has in store for our family in this season of "Sabbath" away from Japan. We will write you again after we arrive in Idaho next month!

Yours in Christ,

Ryan & Jungshin



Kobe Team at Campus Forum (3/1-3).
Almost one hundred staff and students
attended from around the country!



Teaching evangelism with the *Knowing God Personally* booklet to the women and pastor of a local church (3/8, 22)

PRAISES & PRAYERS

- *Praise* God for fruitful planning in February, ministry in March, and start to new school year in April!
- *Pray* for Int'l Friends Picnic (4/22) and Coffee Time (4/27) outreaches
- *Pray* for time staying with Jungshin's family in Korea (4/19-5/18)
- *Pray* for adjustment to travels over next 6 months and Kobe staff team's added responsibilities as we're gone

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