

THE BENEKES' JAPAN JOURNAL

Connecting College Students in Kyoto to Jesus



Dear Friends,

How are you? We pray your summer is going well. It's been far too long since we wrote. Here are some highlights from the past semester...

In-Country Mission Trips (3/13-15)

It was March 12, the last night of Spring Camp (see Kyoto participants above). The next day, 3 teams were scheduled to leave on mission trips to unreached parts of Japan. Yet even after repeated invitations, only 1 student had signed up for my team. *At this rate*, I thought, *we may have to cancel*. I dreaded telling the local pastor that we wouldn't be coming.

Then that student got up and made a passionate plea for others to join us. **By the end of the night, 5 more students had signed up!** In a few hours, we went from possibly cancelling the trip to being the largest of the 3 teams. It was a dramatic reminder of God's faithfulness and the power of student leadership. As a result, that weekend, we were able to hand out fliers and have spiritual conversations with many people in the neighborhood. One woman I spoke with said, "I knew about the church, but no one ever talked to me about Jesus!"

From 9/3-6, in partnership with several local churches and mission organizations, I will be leading another group of students on a trip to Ise (about 2 hours from Kyoto). The Shinto shrines there are the most sacred in Japan. They have been popular pilgrimage sites for over 1,300 years. As a result, believers in Ise face many obstacles in proclaiming the

Praises & Prayer Requests

- Praise God for a successful Spring Camp and In-Country Mission Trips (3/13-15)!
- Pray for Ise Mission (9/3-6), that many would sign up and our ministry would be fruitful
- Praise God for Satoshi's baptism (5/10)!
- Pray for Satoshi's growth and the salvation of his family
- Praise God for our 4 returning interns' faithful service!
- Pray for the 3 upcoming interns and the Kim family as they adjust to life and ministry on our team in Kyoto



light of Christ. During our trip, we will be visiting local homes to pray for people and share the gospel.

Please pray that many students could attend the trip, that it would be fruitful in reaching new people, and that the Christians in Ise would be encouraged by our team's presence.

Satoshi's Baptism (5/10)

Some of you may remember that, when our family visited America last summer, I spoke about a student named Satoshi. Satoshi first met a few of our interns on campus in Fall 2024 and became a Christian that Christmas. He began attending church and growing in his faith. However, his parents strongly opposed him being baptized.

Well, after more than a year of observing the changes in Satoshi's life, his parents finally relented. So on May 10, we all gathered to celebrate his baptism in a local river in Kyoto (right).

Please pray for Satoshi's continued growth in faith and leadership as he finishes his last semester, and for the salvation of his family.

New Team Members

At the end of July, we said goodbye to 4 interns who returned to the United States after 2 years of faithful service (above). Next week, we will be welcoming 3 more American interns (1 returning, 2 new—see top right photo) to Kyoto. *Please pray for their adjustment to life in Japan and their intensive language study as they prepare for the start of the fall semester.*

In other news, our Korean teammates the Kim family have finished their 2 years of language study and been placed in Kyoto long-term! They will be joining us full-time on campus beginning this fall.

Please pray for the Kims as they integrate with our American team. Pray for wisdom to work well together across languages and cultures in a way that glorifies God and strengthens our ministry.

Thank you for your continued partnership with us over the past semester, despite our lack of regular communication. Your prayers and support are vital to our ministry, so we want to prioritize these updates going forward. We will do our best to write again in September. Until then, may God bless you!



Yours in Christ,
Ryan, Jungshin, Lela, Micah, & Hannah