Double Easter Blessing!

Yukiko got an unexpected message from Eiko, a friend from her days at the Japanese elementary school she attended when her family was living in Bangkok. “If you know a good church in New York, would you mind introducing me? I’ve been thinking that I’d like to study the Bible if I have the chance.” The last time Yukiko saw her was in the sixth grade. If it weren’t for Facebook they probably never would have gotten in touch. Eiko just happened to see Yukiko on Facebook and decided to get in touch because she was interested in Christianity. Not only did she get in touch, but she also lives close enough in Tokyo that our church is within range of where she lives and works. Yukiko invited Eiko to our church’s Easter worship service on April 1, where she received Jesus into her heart and received new life. Hallelujah!

Another blessing this past Easter season came through Noriko, a mom friend that Yukiko has gotten close to the last year and a half. After they met up April 11 for a play date they went to back to Noriko’s house afterwards for tea. Yukiko was able to share the Gospel with her again and Noriko make a confession of faith in Christ! She had been expressing a desire to experience the “peace” that Christians often talk about and the conversation always turned to spiritual things when they met, but she also had some fears about believing in Jesus. But as many people prayed for her, she was able to freely confess her sins and offer a prayer to receive Christ into her life without hesitation that day.

Please pray for Eiko and Noriko as they start their new life with God. Pray that they can experience God’s abundance and bear the fruit of the Spirit each day. Please also pray that even in the midst of their very busy lives, they would have opportunities to know God more.

Catching the Vision

Thank you for praying for Campus Forum March 5-8. More than eighty students and staff were encouraged and strengthened through that time. One highlight for students was preparing a presentation about how and why they want to reach others for Christ and start spiritual movements. Teams of students prepared scripture, personal stories and an invitation to partner with us to help build spiritual movements (picture above right). Those teams then went out to visit local churches in the Osaka area to share that vision and pray together for God’s kingdom. It was a powerful time of fellowship, prayer and vision.

God also used that experience to help the four student participants from Tokyo own the vision for sharing Christ, making disciples and starting spiritual movements. At our Tokyo Spring Camp March 17-19 they passed on what they learned, the heart and vision to the other students at the camp. Their enthusiasm was contagious! Other students who came to the camp caught the heart as well and an even larger group of students became excited about reaching their friends and campus with the Gospel in the new school year.

Planning for new student outreach in April began at the camp and spilled over into another gathering where still more students caught a glimpse of God’s heart! Students came up with a plan for connecting and sharing Christ with new students in the first few critical weeks of the semester. They have been the driving force behind the outreach and have seen God do some amazing things. We have been able to meet hundreds of new students so far and more than forty new friends have come to a welcome event so far. Please pray that God would continue to share his heart with our Christian students and use them to reach still others with the love of Christ. Please pray for the salvation of new friends who do not yet know Jesus!
Transitioning from Cru to Japan CCC Staff

We began asking for prayer for a big decision back in July 2015. As an international couple we needed to decide whether to have Yukiko join the U.S. staff of Cru or to have Philip join the full-time staff of Japan Campus Crusade for Christ (JCCC=Japan Cru). Through a number of circumstances a decision originally scheduled to be completed within our first two years of marriage wound up taking more than four(!). It has been a winding road of seemingly endless pros and cons, changes of heart and seeking God’s direction, but we are grateful for the grace leaders on both sides gave us and for the ways that God has faithfully used this process to refine our hearts and strengthen our marriage. We want to give you a long-overdue update on how the Lord is leading us.

We originally applied for a green card for Yukiko at the end of 2015 so that she could be hired as Cru staff. As we continued to pray and reflect, however, we began to sense that perhaps Philip joining the staff of JCCC might be the faith step God was challenging us to consider. The most important factor was our continuing sense of calling to serve long-term in Japan. When we thought about how we could best invest in God’s kingdom work in Japan as a family, it seemed natural and more effective to plant our flag and roots in Japan to have the greatest impact possible.

Having Philip join the staff of JCCC also eliminates the complications of trying to maintain Yukiko’s green card while our family is living outside of the U.S. long-term. Although we still plan to make periodic visits to the U.S. to see family and friends, it is our hope that being based in Japan will also provide a more stable educational environment for our kids as they hit school age in the coming years.

In light of those things, Philip will officially leave Cru staff May 31 and be hired by JCCC on June 1. As of June 1 our family’s salary, benefits, retirement, etc. will be handled by JCCC and our family will be under the leadership, authority and care of JCCC. Our ministry assignment and support needs, however, will not change. If you are currently giving to either Philip or Yukiko in the U.S, you do not need to change or adjust your giving in any way. Your donations will continue to make their way to us in Japan. As our family makes this transition administratively our online giving site (https://give.cru.org/give/View/0550250) may not work properly beginning May 31, but it should be resolved within a few days.

There are still unanswered questions about where this path will lead, but we want to take this first step and trust in God’s continued faithfulness. Please pray with us for a smooth, problem-free transition at the end of this month. Please don’t hesitate to contact us if you have any questions related to our give site, your giving or this transition in general. We praise God for you and are excited to continue partnering with you in the Gospel!

An Update on Tatsuya

Thank you for praying for Tatsuya! He enrolled at a new college beginning in April and has been getting adjusted to his new environment and routines. He has gotten connected at Cru and recently invited a childhood friend who is also studying in Tokyo to one of our welcome events. His friend heard the Gospel and how Tatsuya became a Christian for the first time. God is already using Tatsuya to witness and draw others to himself!

Tatsuya has also been coming to our church regularly. He was planning to be baptized May 27, but has experienced a lot of resistance from his parents. This is very common for many Christians in Japan. Please pray that God would continue to protect and nourish Tatsuya’s young faith and that God would work in his family.

PRAYER POINTS:
* PRAISE FOR EIKO AND NORIKO’S SALVATION!
* PRAYER FOR CONTINUED GROWTH
* SALVATION FOR NEW FRIENDS ON CAMPUS
* SMOOTH TRANSITION FROM CRU TO JAPAN CCC (JUNE 1)
* TATSUYA’S GROWTH AND FAMILY

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