

02/08/04

Dear Friend,

Summer is a great time for all the special adventures it brings to us, if you can stand to get out in the heat of it! We recently returned home from our summer vacation. We went to Takayama, near Sendai on the coast, where we rented a cabin from another missionary, just a 50 yard walk to the beach each day! Very relaxing and fun for our kids too.



Life has been busy and exciting since I wrote last. Two highlights are the soccer outreaches and the theater showing for the Jesus film.

World Cup Outreaches

Let me just say the soccer outreaches and all the teams and special people who came for short term trips really made all the yearlong work of preparation worthwhile! We so enjoyed the team from our own Northwest Bible Church in Dallas! God used them in so many ways to reach out to people and to build relationships with those in the churches.

God opened the door for the team to visit a local junior high school, Irumagawa Jr. Hi. The team visited in classrooms to both observe the classes and to interact with the students, depending on the class. Afterwards the team played soccer with the school's soccer team. Although they lost 5-3, our group did some great friendship building. This resulted in 5 new guys visiting the overnight Youth Lock-in at the church the next Friday. This helped show our church members and young people more ways that new people could be brought to church, and the youth group planned activities to try to follow up on this interest.

One of the team members in the Sayama church, Amy, shared her testimony in Noriko's (a church member) English class on June 4, and it really touched Sachiko's heart. At the end Sachiko was in tears and received Christ with the team members! Later Keiko from the class also called and said she wanted to receive Christ after thinking about what was shared and what Sachiko did! Praise God! We are so excited for these new sisters in the Kingdom!

Many people who don't ordinarily come to church eagerly joined the Fiesta Party for ladies where the Gospel message was clearly shared. The NBC team also held a special VBS type program for children on Saturday morning. Please pray with us that more of these people and children would return to church and that we could have personal follow ups with them.

I, (Rochelle) was also very happy with the impact the team had on the ladies in my English Bible Study. Two of the not yet Christian ladies, Mrs. Sekiba and Mrs. Sasaki, were very touched by the love shown by the Texans and by the power of their stories of their faith in Christ. Please be praying for them, as well as all the ladies in my class. Thanks!

We were both rather busy throughout the time! Going to the airport, updating and fixing the website, joining in the outreaches at stadiums, helping translate for Brad when he broke his arm, etc! (The doctor received a Jesus CD there!)

We also got our whole family involved in the stadium outreach on June 26th in Saitama. We all joined people from our local church, from churches nearby the stadium, and various YWAM team members who were here then to distribute Jesus CDs, audio cassettes, pocket guide booklets and 10 language gospels of Luke. By that point there was quite a lot of soccer interest in Japan, and people were very keen to receive our materials, especially the CDs and the pocket guides, but really anything "soccer flavored" as it were.

One of the YWAM team members who went to the distribution at the Yokohama stadium final game said that at that point there was such an interest that he was literally throwing out handfuls of Jesus CDs to the going home crowds!

How important it is now to pray that the seeds sown will bear fruit, that people will read and view and respond to the good news they have received!

One indication that people are viewing the materials is the nearly 200 people who have written emails asking for presents through the website listed on all the materials we passed out. This is a great response for Japan! Pray that many of these will be led to nearby churches and to faith in Jesus! We praise the Lord for all His people who worked so hard to bring the Gospel to tens of thousands of people here in Japan. Thank you for your part through your prayers!

Now I must share about the exciting Grand Opening of the Jesus film in downtown Tokyo! On July 26th a special Tokyo Gospel Night event preceded the Theater Showing, and drew 300 people to hear special speakers and artists (including a gospel choir). Many non-believers heard the gospel there before going on to see the Jesus Movie. Then for the first time in Japan, "Jesus" was shown in a major theater (Tokyo Ginza Cinapatos). There has been lots of advance promotion both in regular public advertising and through the churches, and the film is receiving a special merit recognition through the Yomiuri Newspaper, Japan's largest. We are praying that many more people will go to see the film, especially those who work around the downtown Tokyo area. If the movie draws large numbers of viewers, the movie will open in other theaters downtown. We are really hoping and praying this will happen in this land where Christianity is largely not understood. What a breakthrough this can be. Please intercede with us that God will work mightily through this effort!

Coming up soon in August is a community staff conference for our CCC staff who work "off the campus" here in Japan. We plan to share ideas on how to more effectively use our resources to touch local communities and churches through our ministry. Many of these staff are gathering from scattered regions of Japan. We hope that the Bible input, worship time, fellowship, and prayer together will encourage all of us who labor in this difficult land. We appreciate your prayers for God's wisdom to guide us. Our whole family will attend this conference.

As we head into fall I am very mindful of the "pile" of backlogged administrative work still waiting on me, keeping the national office going and the staffs' needs met. Pray for perseverance and grace for this side of my ministry as well. We love and appreciate you so much! God bless you and thanks for all your faithful gifts and prayers!

Yours for helping reach Japan for Christ,

Steve and Rochelle
Andy, Ben and Melissa