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CLARK UPDATE MARCH 2007

THE GOSPEL AND JAPANESE LADIES

Dear Friends and Family,

Greetings to you from Japan! We always thank God for you. Your partnership in our ministry enables us to serve Jesus here! Our time here in Japan is drawing to a close, although it is still hard to believe. We know that God who has taken care of us, blessed us, and used us in ministry will continue to be faithful as we return to the US.

This month I taught the last class for my two English Bible study classes. These ladies have become my dear friends over the years and I want to tell you about them. One group started when Melissa was in pre-school, about 10 years ago! Many ladies have come and gone from the class, but 2 ladies, Mrs. Ishiguro and Mrs. Sasaki, have attended the class from the very first one! For our last class, we read through the 4 Spiritual Laws booklet together. I wanted to make sure they all truly understood the gospel and to give the not-yet Christian ladies one more chance to receive Jesus. We had a good discussion going with many questions asked and the ladies were very atten-

tive. However, the 3 ladies there who were not already Christians did not pray to receive Christ that day. Mrs. Ishiguro said that she found it hard to accept the idea that someone would die for her. Mrs. Sasaki said that the gospel seems great, but she worries about not being able to attend church and fulfill all the church's expectations. Mrs. Nagashima said that she likes to be in control of her own life and can't imagine asking God to be on the throne of her life. I tried to answer each lady's concerns, and I really want them to understand the wonderful blessings that come to us when we trust in Jesus. Please pray for these ladies as surely God will bring the time when they are ready to come to Christ. Two ladies in the picture above who are also not yet believers are Mrs. Shida and Mrs. Taniyama. Please pray for them too!

The other two ladies, Mrs. Katayama & Mrs. Yoshizawa, are Christians and are active in a church near their homes.



English Bible Class Ladies: Left to Right: Mrs. Katayama, Mrs. Shida, Mrs. Yoshizawa, Mrs. Sasaki, Mrs. Taniyama. Not pictured: Mrs. Ishiguro and Mrs. Nagashima.

They both love Jesus so much and are eager to help others know and love God. Mrs. Katayama has her own Bible discussion group with moms from her daughter's preschool class. She has also helped me by translating messages I have given on marriage and child raising. These ladies are a great encouragement to me because I know they will continue to reach others with the Gospel!

In my other class we have been studying the life of Paul. Our last lesson was about Paul's journey to Athens from Acts 17 where he spoke to a very religious people who worshipped many idols, including an "unknown God." It was amazing how this chapter spoke to the ladies. Mrs. Kobayashi related how

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We are sending prayer request updates by email more frequently than by prayer letter. Please send us a note to let us know that we may add you to our email list: stcinjapan@aol.com



she had grown up in a Shinto home where they believe in thousands of gods, but now she is married to a Buddhist man and they have the altar for her husband's deceased father in their home. Every day she puts out tea for the father's spirit and prays to "I don't know who," she said, that her father-in-law's afterlife be blessed. Her father-in-law also gave her a statue (idol) to put in the yard for her to worship and since it was his dying wish, she does so, though she doesn't know why. She and two other not-yet Christian ladies in the group said they enjoy studying the Bible, but they don't know what is true. It was so fun to tell them again about the true Creator God and Jesus His Son. I showed them the verse in Acts 17:27 : "God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us." I told them to pray and seek God, and to ask God to show them who is the true God. I reminded them that He wants

to be found by them. Please pray for Mrs. Kobayashi, Mrs. Saitoh, and Mrs. Kawakami to truly seek to know God and that God would reveal Himself to them in a special way. Mrs. Kawakami seems very close to believing as she said she believes that the Bible is true, but she is hesitant to become a Christian since she can't go to church on Sunday because her husband is at home then.

As you can see, it is not easy to lead the Japanese to faith in Jesus. Yet, today, at church I was at a goodbye party for a Japanese lady who will move to New York with her family in April. She prayed to receive Christ with one of our CCC staff, Ayumi Satoh, 2 years ago and was baptized last year. Her sweet faith is a joy to behold and she has



The Group studying Acts: From left to right: Mrs. Kobayashi, me, Mrs. Kawakami, Junko Satoh, Yoshiko Satoh, Mrs. Saitoh

blessed all of us at church and as part of our school's PTA executive committee! She is so thankful for her salvation and wants her husband to come to faith in Jesus as well. So, God is at work and I thank Him so much for the privilege of sharing Christ's love with many Japanese ladies over the years. Thank you for enabling Steve and me to live here, raise our kids here, and plant many seeds of the Gospel. To God be all the Glory!

We love you!

*Steve, Rochelle, Andy, Ben,
Melissa and Josh*

Just to be clear, we are not planning to leave Campus Crusade, but to continue to be your missionaries with CCC. While we change our base of operations from Tokyo to Orlando, we are still pursuing the kind of work that will enable us to contribute to the evangelization of Japan and Asia and the World!

It is true that Japan is a more expensive place to live than the US, but in our first year back in the States we will need to have airfare to get back, money to buy a car, purchase new household goods, travel to Pennsylvania to assist Rochelle's mom, put a second son in college (!), and, well, our expenses for this next one year won't be going down much at all. Special gifts to help us in this transition year will be really appreciated.

We ask each of you who is currently giving financially to continue with us as we start a new part of the adventure of helping fulfill the Great Commission as Campus Crusade staff. Thank you so much!