

May 2017

AIDAIR UPDATE



Enjoying
Easter with friends
from church

WE'RE BAAAAACK!

From TX to PA to Japan to...Jakarta?

Since mid-March, it's been a whirlwind of packing, unpacking, repacking, and (finally) settling. While looking for a house, we stayed at the church's volunteer center next to the church for 2 weeks. Then we moved (more on the back page). Then about a week after that, we went to Jakarta, Indonesia to celebrate our mission's 50th anniversary.

Our mission's yearly conference is usually in the mountains of Japan, so it was quite exciting for us to gather south of the equator. This year was also different as it included the country directors from across Asia, past leaders in the mission, and many people who have been involved throughout the history of the mission. We enjoyed a wonderful worship team, a group who took great care of our kids, and the excellent teaching by Ajith Fernando from Sri Lanka (he's a big deal. Check him out.).

Even though I (Roberta) have been a part of Asian Access for close to 7 years, I've often felt like I married in - that I'm an outsider who

doesn't quite understand how the different pieces and people fit together. This conference was helpful for me in understanding and celebrating where God has brought our mission over 50 years and how the Japan missions branch connects with the leadership development branch in other countries.

I loved the humility of current and former leaders. I loved the adventure of being in a new country that is so different from Japan. I loved getting to spend time with friends from Wheaton before the conference started who are doing life and ministry in a very different context than us. I loved the food (wow, a delicious buffet for breakfast, lunch, and dinner!). I loved getting to play with our boys and our mission family in the hotel pool. And I loved opportunities from the front and over meals to hear from many people about what God is doing in and around them.

We had a wonderful time away. We are also excited to be back in Shioyama: to put down roots here and to see what God is going to do.



While visiting friends in Indonesia, we passed these rickshaws on the way to...

- A) The local mosque
- B) The local church
- C) The local public bath
- D) The local Walmart

WE HAVE A HOME

After 8 months of transition, we are getting settled

Thank you for praying. Over the last year, we have asked you several times to pray for a home for our family. We felt that God was clearly leading us to a specific community without a church (East Shiogama) and were trusting that he had a house for us in that location. We are excited to share that God answered our prayers, and we are so grateful.

From Acceptance

I (Roberta) perhaps didn't have the best first response to the house. Despite checking so many boxes (2 toilets! Close to a train station! Insulated! 2 AC units!!! Kitchen connected to living space!), it wasn't as big as I was hoping it would be. I knew in my head that it was God's provision. Why else, after a year of looking diligently for housing with next to no options in our target area, would one house become available days after arriving back (and minutes after viewing the only other available house that was definitely outside of our target area)? I agreed to it then really struggled in my heart feeling that God was punishing me for coveting TX-sized houses. And then...

To Awe

There is so much about this house that we love and that is above and beyond what we were even praying for. A built-in dishwasher?! Fancy-pants self-flushing toilets?! Space for a big refrigerator and a big washer/dryer?! The boys (and us) have been sleeping so well as it's much more quiet than our last house (yay insulation)! It's also much easier to clean and is on a quiet street. Although it's in an older community, our block was leveled to make a road wider and has 8 brand new homes with at

least that many empty lots ready for construction. It's a community in transition, which we love. Our home is an easy 5-minute walk from property the church has owned for decades and hopes to put a ministry building on in the near future (keep your eyes open for more on this soon!). We are still in the early stages of getting to know our neighbors and our community, but people have so far been very kind to and warm with us.

This is also a community that has experienced a lot of trauma and pain over the last 6 years. The March 2011 disaster was responsible for substantial damage in our community with 34 people killed. We are hearing pieces of our neighbor's experiences, and we marvel at their resilience in staying and rebuilding. We hope we will be able to communicate the gospel in a way that is relevant to their experience.

And Anticipation

What is God going to do here? Who will he place in our lives? Which relationships will fade and which ones will grow? Whose stories will we hear and who will hear ours - and the story of Christ?

Right now Joseph (almost 3) is calling everyone he sees friends. When he sees an older couple walking home with their groceries: "Look, Mom, friends!" or when he hears kids playing nearby: "Let's play with friends!" Robert and I like his attitude that everyone we see and meet has potential to be sweet friends - and, as I told J yesterday, who Jesus wants to be friends with, too. We are looking forward with



anticipation to what God will do in this community.

There has been some transition in our church while we were in the US. In some ways we have less of an idea of what our team will look like now than before as 3 friends are moving. Yet we are trusting God and trusting our partner church who is so excited about and committed to this place. We ask you to join with us in praying for wisdom in how to spend our time and in forming a ministry team.

Thank you for your prayers, support, and partnership which allow us to minister alongside Japanese Christians as we seek to see the name of Jesus known throughout Japan.

- R, R, J & B

Partner

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Specific Prayer Points

- For a ministry team
- For good continuing language options (and perseverance) for Roberta
- For favor with people in East Shiogama and that many people will turn to Jesus
- For good reconnecting with friends from our previous term
- For our boys to adjust well to being back in Japan (J will transition from daycare to the 3-year kindergarten next month)

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