

ADAIR UPDATE



Kids from the church's English program

IN SEARCH OF A NEW HOME

Where will we live for our next season in Japan?

Even before Robert and I started dating at Wheaton College, we both had people over to our apartments a lot. That didn't change after we got married - nor after we moved to Japan. This week, too, we had friends (individuals and groups) over 7 times. Both of us enjoy "gathering" and hosting, and we have had many good experiences doing so in our current home.

When we come back after our 6 months of home assignment in the US, however, we won't be returning to this house. We, in connection with the vision of our partner church, feel called to the city of Shiogama (roughly 60,000 people), which is the city right next to where we currently live. We are hoping to find a good home that will be a comfortable and safe place for us and our friends.

Several of Robert's English students and a few other friends live in one particular neighborhood. The leaders of our church are intrigued by this area, too, as it has many young families and seems to have the least connection

with the city Shinto shrine (the center of religious life in the region).

Although one option is to wait until after home assignment to find a home and move, we would prefer to do so beforehand. Ideally, we want a house with decent parking and warmth (both are often hard to come by in Japan), good landlords (occasionally difficult for both foreigners and Christians), and decent access to a train station, grocery store, park, school, etc. Would you pray with us for God's provision and timing for our next home?

Over the next 8 months, we have many upcoming transitions and appreciate your prayers! We are excited to welcome our 2nd son who is due on March 2nd. Additionally, we will be wrapping up our first term here as a family in August. Please pray that we will be wise with our time and energy, that we will steward the relationships God has given us well, and that we will be faithful to what he has called us to in these next several months.



Roberta's favorite animal
We enjoyed a few days in another prefecture over the New Year holidays. A highlight was seeing many monkeys. According to the Chinese calendar, 2016 is...
a) The year of the goat
b) The year of the sheep
c) The year of the monkey

MARRIAGE ALPHA

Mawage. It's what bwings us togethah today.

The Princess Bride might not be that popular in Japan, but difficulty in marriage? Yes, this has been a repeated theme in listening to various people in our lives here over the past several years. You may be familiar with the Alpha Course (an introduction to Christ with an emphasis on discussion). Alpha has created a similar course for marriage for both Christians and non-Christians. We hope to launch this 7-week program on Valentine's Day.

Why marriage?

Neither of us are counselors - nor do we want to be pegged in marriage and family ministry simply because we are a young family. Robert loves kids, I love grandmas and grandpas, and we are huge fans of our single friends.

Yet we have both listened to a lot of pain in the marriages of people around us. Many seem to not want to follow the pattern of their parents' marriages but don't seem to know what a healthy marriage can look like in terms of roles and communication styles.

Japan has increasing divorce rate, which doesn't surprise us as we hear stories of different kinds of dysfunction, bitterness, unforgiveness, hurt, and distrust. People in our circle have various baggage from previous marriages and relationships, stress related to different cultures, and various challenges connected to unspoken expectations, fear of the future, child-raising, etc.

I (Roberta) have noticed that many of my friends speak of their husbands with distain ("I like it when he's on business trips or stays late

at work. When he's home, he's worse than a child"). Both of us hear stories of affairs, sexual difficulties, confusion, and more. There are some people with decent marriages, but all of us (I'm including us in this!) can learn and grow in marriage.

We want to see health in our friends' relationships - particularly in their marriages. We want to see healing and hope in friends who either want out or who have settled expecting to be miserable (*shouganai* - "it can't be helped," is a common phrase in Japanese expressing the fatalistic tendencies of the culture). We believe that this is a felt need among people in our circle as well as something that God cares about deeply.

Why this tool?

Friends in our mission are a part of bringing the Alpha Marriage Course to Japan. We've heard really positive reports about marriages being strengthened and even saved through the content of the course.

It might seem strange to watch a British couple dubbed in Japanese talking about marriage. Wouldn't a tool made by and for Japanese people be better? Yet, just as Robert and I hear all sorts of stuff we probably wouldn't from our Japanese friends if we had Japanese faces, the "foreign"-ness of the program seems to disarm and appeal to people.

Why us?

As a couple who has been married for just 5 years, it might seem silly for us to be "leading"



Family of
3...soon to be
4!

a course on marriage. Thankfully, apart from a role similar to an MC that keeps the flow and arranging logistics, we don't have a "leader" or even "facilitator" role. Instead of sharing in small groups, we will be only sharing with our spouses.

We look forward to learning more about working together as partners, which can be difficult given both life stage and varying language abilities. We are also intrigued by the possibility of using this resource in the future as a part of reaching out to people in Shiogama.

We appreciate your prayers for the participants (both Christians and non-Christians), for logistics (arranging childcare, dessert, etc.), and for us to learn a lot in the process. Oh yes, and that we'll be able to be flexible with a newborn arriving early on in the course.

As always, thanks so much for your partnership. We look forward to reconnecting with you later this year. Fondly,

- R, R, and J

Partner

To partner financially:

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Specific Prayer Points

- A continued healthy pregnancy and preparation for Baby 2!
- Provision of our next home
- Good practice for us and a good launch with the Marriage Course
- Various friends to hear and respond to the Gospel
- 1:1 Bible studies, coaching sessions, etc.
- Small group, English students, mom group, etc.

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