

October 2015

ADAIR UPDATE



Picnic with friends from church

ENGLISH STUDENTS AND FRIENDS

Tuesday morning community

I (Roberta) teach an English class for moms. It started 3 years ago with classes once a month. Since I started leading it 2 years ago, we've transitioned to meeting every Tuesday morning. Although the group changes significantly due to job transfers, work commitments, and kids' illnesses, it's a neat community of women who are interested in English and are willing to meet at a church for more practice. This week, we had a potluck party at my house. Then a few of us spent several hours together on Friday on a mini-road trip. I am grateful for opportunities to get more involved in each other's lives.

Several weeks ago, we started using a bilingual book written by an A2 colleague on parenting. I am therefore both teacher and student - a teacher of English but learning a lot from the more experienced moms. Although talking about holidays, food, and hobbies is fine, I have enjoyed the new vulnerability and depth in our conversations as we admit weakness and

mistakes, talk about our experiences as both daughters and moms, and encourage one another. This is a side to these women I am just beginning to know, and I count it a special privilege.

In the text we are using, we occasionally read Bible verses and talk about themes such as being image bearers of God. Sometimes what we do seems so spiritually small; that the gap between the Shinto-Buddhist beliefs of my students and Christian faith is too wide. I feel like there are too many steps between their current reality and them someday knowing, loving, and following Christ.

Yet I trust that seeds are being planted, that God is hearing our simple prayers at the end of class for one another, and that he knows and loves these women. Two of the current group live in the city where we are hoping to plant in the future. Please pray for favor and for fruit with these ladies.



Why are we so happy?

- A) Because Joseph is going to be a big brother
- B) Because Joseph is going to have a little brother
- C) Because playing in the park is Joseph's favorite
- D) All of the above

WHAT ARE WE DOING HERE?

A question we ask ourselves more often than we want to admit

Don't get me (Robert) wrong: we have a strong sense of call, a realization of the need for the gospel in Japan, and a desire to serve here faithfully. But on a Wednesday morning when I am responding to e-mails and looking for a fun but doable song for a kids' Christmas program, it is easy for my mind to wonder and doubt about whether what we are doing here actually matters.

What does matter

There are things that we know are valuable. Just last week I was walking with a friend who recently visited our church for the first time. She asked me, "Even though I am not a Christian, is it okay for me to keep coming to church?" I was thrilled and said yes. Assuming she was only interested in the social aspects of church, I went on to talk about how much fun a recent picnic had been. I was surprised when she stopped me and said, "Sure, the picnic was good, but I was really interested in what the sermon and the Bible study after church said about God. I had never heard any of that before." She enjoys our company, but she also seems to be growing in curiosity about the God we Christians claim to follow. It's easy to be excited about that.

I am reading a book by Tim Keller titled *Counterfeit Gods* and am challenged by how many areas of my life in which I live in a functional idolatry. This also applies to my vocational identity as a missionary in Japan. There is a strong temptation to only find satisfaction in the things that make good newsletter stories. I feel like a success or failure based on whether or not I did what a good missionary was supposed to do this week as

opposed to whether or not my actions were actually pleasing to God.

Facing toward or away

A friend of ours challenged us to look at evangelism in terms of whether or not a person's life is orientated towards Christ as opposed to the more common insider/outsider model. In the end, Christ will look at each of our lives and a declaration will be made about our salvation. I don't argue this fact, but it is a difficult metric to measure your vocational success by, and I don't know how scriptural it is as a way to evaluate the Christian life.

Whether my friend is saved or not is a question of ultimate significance. Yet in my daily life it is freeing and exciting to look at our relationship through the lens of "Did I help him orient his life towards Christ today?" This is also exciting because I can have success without someone actually praying "the prayer" or being baptized.

It is our passionate desire that all of our friends in our community place their hope in Jesus. Today I want to measure my life by whether or not I helped them look towards Jesus.

Moving Forward

As this first term wraps up in 8 months, we are beginning to look at what God is calling us to in the next season here in Shiogama. Over the last 3+ years, there have been multiple starts



Fall hiking in Japan with friends

and stops surrounding a potential church plant. We have had seasons of excitement, disappointment, and apathy. Right now, the plan is to help start a new church in the neighboring city of Shiogama. Even as I type this, I feel the pressure that if we don't have a church (of 10, 20, 100) in the next 5 years we are failures.

Please pray for us as we prepare for this plant with our church family that we would be able to measure our success by the things that we can control. In February of 2005, a mentor and friend sat me down and challenged me that I should only measure myself by how faithful I am in what God has called me to and not by the amount of fruit I see. This is true for us still today. While we desire to see a large church form soon, please join us in praying that we will measure success by the things we can control. Help us to trust God for his part and to be faithful in ours.

Thanks for your prayers and partnership,
-R&R (&J)

Partner

To partner financially:

www.sim.org/giveusa then click

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Or by mail: SIM USA

P.O. Box 7900

Charlotte, NC 28241-7900

Memo: R&R Adair Support #038207

Specific Prayer Points

- Upcoming Thanksgiving outreach and multiple Christmas-related outreaches
- English students, Gospel choir friends, beach ministry relationships, and fellow island volunteers to know Jesus
- The formation of a team for the future church plant in Shiogama
- Wisdom in peer counseling relationships
- Language acquisition
- A healthy pregnancy :)

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