

ADAIR UPDATE



Enjoying Japan's beauty: Summer vacation 2013

MULTICULTURAL

Our ministry is more diverse than we expected

Reaching out to young Japanese people in Japanese - that is a primary focus of our ministry here in Japan. In Kyushu I (Robert) was in a very rural rice and tobacco farming village. I knew a handful of people who spoke English and even less who were from a country other than Japan. I assumed working in post-disaster Tohoku would be the same.

We have mentioned Roba-no-kai (our young adult small group) in several newsletters over the last few months. It has been exciting to see it grow from 4 people to 14-18 consistently. We probably need to either stop calling ourselves a small group or multiply into two groups in the near future.

Over the last few months our attendance by Japanese friends and internationals in the area has greatly increased. We have a couple people who have a parent from another country and a few that were born in other Asian countries and are living in Japan. It's not uncommon to hear

up to 3 languages being spoken during our discussion times. We also have non-Christian friends participating at almost every gathering. This international environment is both exciting and challenging.

There is a beauty to the variety of ways people from different cultures engage Scripture. We have the privilege of hearing people from very different cultures express their understanding of Jesus. I am really excited about how this group is growing into a fun, safe, Christ-honoring community.

Please pray that as our group grows we would know how to best encourage each person to grow in their relationship with Christ; whether this means people encountering Jesus for the first time or maturing in their faith. Also please pray for our ability to communicate as we work in a combination of Japanese and English with other languages mixed in from time to time. It's not what we expected, but it's really fun.



How many countries are represented in this recent picture of our small group?

- A) 2
- B) 4
- C) 6
- D) 8

SINGING WITH A CHOIR

More multicultural fun

There are several common forms of outreach in Japanese churches that I (Roberta) don't quite get. One is hula dancing to worship music; another is gospel music. That is how I, Roberta from central PA, find myself singing hearty alto in a gospel choir in Japan.

The Sister Act effect

I don't really understand when and how gospel music became popular in Japan, but I think the fact that *Sister Act* is several of my friends' favorite movie has something to do with it. Like many other churches in Japan, our church recently started a gospel choir as a way to connect Japanese people with...the gospel! A professional gospel singer from Jamaica leads the group, and it's pretty fun! Although I was hesitant in having another evening commitment, the choir has been a neat way for members from our church to connect with members of our community.

Some people in the choir are from the church, some are friends and neighbors of church members, and a few are friends we have met through the disaster relief ministry. We sing songs (mostly in English) such as "Ride on King Jesus," "Falling in Love with Jesus," and "Praise the Lord with Me." We are far from professional, but we are singing about Jesus and having a good time in the process. Hopefully, little by little through both the lyrics and deepening relationships, we will see many of these friends put their hope in Christ.

Our singing debut

The last Sunday in August, we debuted a few songs at church and went out for lunch

afterwards. It was interesting to hear the reaction of people (some in their 40s and 50s) who just experienced a Sunday worship service for the first time. The pastor shared a simple message about what the term "gospel" means for Christians, and I think it was received well by our gospel choir friends. Also, a non-Christian in the choir who works at a hospice was very moved by Sunday service and wants to share worship music with the people in her care.

Forming community

Although we just practice two evenings a month, we are starting to see one another out in the community (including bumping into one mother and son at an ice cream shop last week). Another young mother in the choir is a believer but hasn't seemed to get connected with other young women at our church. My friend who organizes the choir shared with me how excited she was to be able to have coffee with this young mother and hear more about her life. This might sound very basic, but opening up to people about one's life seems to take much more time in Japan and it really encouraged my friend.

What I'm learning

Despite singing most of the songs in English, I'm learning a lot. Through seeing the



difficulty some people are having with English phonetics, I'm learning more about challenges in pronunciation (wow, I didn't realize how hard "v," "i," "r," "th," and "wo" sounds are for many Japanese speakers - good to know for teaching English in the future!). I'm also learning more about the Japanese way of organizing and communicating with a group (sometimes I don't understand why certain choices are made and later come to appreciate them). I'm also learning from watching the patience my Japanese Christian friends have in relationships.

We desire to see our church friends grow in confidence and boldness in their witness and be burdened for those without Christ. We desire to see our unbelieving gospel choir friends to understand and experience the love of Christ. And we desire to see whole families impacted and transformed by that same love.

Thanks for partnering with us,

-R&R

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Specific Prayer Points

- Japanese language acquisition
- Wisdom for the future
- English students and Gospel choir friends to know Jesus
- Monthly English Sunday school
- Roba-no-kai (the young adult small group that we facilitate)
- Joy in ministry
- Strong relationships with our ministry partners

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