

July 2013

AIDAIR UPDATE



Kids ministry in a local park

STILL WAITING

To go or not to go...that is the question

We are in yet another cycle of “go, wait, go” regarding planting a church. Despite being asked to consider going ahead, we still feel very strongly, in alignment with A2 vision, that we need to wait until God raises up Japanese partners to be committed to and lead the plant. We as foreigners desire to be in supporting roles - not leading it and definitely not doing it alone.

The community our partner pastor and we are considering is a very new community that basically grew up around a train station in the last several years and is made up primarily of young families. We see this as a strategic community and hope that the newness of the area might mean that people are more open to relationship and exploring new ideas. This is an area without a church.

Despite the need, we continue to pray and wait. We are waiting for God's timing, direction, and provision. We are waiting to see how God burdens our church for this community. We are

waiting for clarity, vision, and resources (primarily people at this point!).

In the meantime, we wait by continuing to deepen relationships with people in our partner church. We wait by joining and coming along what our partners are doing. Robert is getting more deeply connected with his students and their families, and I (Roberta) am helping out with various events at temporary housing. Summer is busy with volunteer teams, kids events, and church events. Whether playing with kids in a park, meeting with a neighbor lady for tea, picking up trash with new friends at the beach, it's not hard to keep a full schedule.

Please continue to pray that God leads us. We feel somewhat torn between wanting to get more deeply invested where we are and preparing to go. We can easily find meaningful work to do at our partner church, yet we also desire to be available to be a part of seeing God's Kingdom come to Shinden-Higashi.



What's on the rope?

- A) Seaweed
- B) Oysters
- C) Crabs
- D) None of the above

DOING

What we are doing as we wait

We have shared several times over the last few months how we are waiting for clear direction about our next steps in ministry. We are prayerfully trying to discern with our partner church whether or not we should proceed with the church plant as Roberta discussed on the previous page. That doesn't mean we are just sitting around waiting though. We have the privilege of taking part in many exciting ministry activities here in Tohoku. Here are a few snapshots of what we are doing as we wait.

People in the community

Roberta, as you may know, has a knack for meeting new people. Even though she has limited "official" ministry responsibilities at Shiogama Church, she is consistently bringing people she meets in our community to events and Sunday worship. It has also been humorous to see the way she has met these new friends through things like accidentally tripping a child in a restaurant or while picking up trash on the beach.

A new family in church

We are constantly looking for ways to bridge our English ministry in a local pre-school with the local church. To help facilitate this we have started a monthly English Sunday school with a theme that is relevant to both Christians and non-Christians. For example, this month's theme is thankfulness. We all had a pleasant surprise this Sunday when a boy from one of my classes came with his parents. They seemed to have a good time. Please pray that they would feel comfortable at church and grow in their understanding and love for Christ.

Drawing Jesus

At our last small group we did a fun activity. We have several people who enjoy the arts, so I thought it would be interesting to use their artistic abilities to see how they view Jesus. I asked everyone to draw a picture that they could use to communicate who Jesus is without words. It was really fun to see the various images and themes people used. Drawings ranged from tunnels, to simple crosses, to detailed storyboards. As we went around the room sharing what the various drawings meant, I was struck by the depth of peoples' relationship with Christ and how creative they are as communicators.

A2 Missionaries

Roberta and I also have the privilege of supervising two new missionary units in our region. One is a single guy working with one of the church plants from our church. The other is a family of 4 working with a church in a nearby town. For me it is both challenging and exciting to consistently be around them and hear about their passion for Jesus and Japan.

Deep conversations on a boat

The other day I was on a fishing boat with a friend learning a bit about his trade. I figured I would just learn how to set some lines and talk about the weather. To my surprise, he started to



Where are we going?

ask questions about faith. We had a significant but relaxed conversation over the hour we were out on the water. It is exciting to see how God uses relationships for natural opportunities to share about Jesus.

Regardless of location

While waiting to see how God leads our future ministry, it is a enjoyable and busy season of "doing" at the mother church. We are learning a lot through English ministry, disaster relief, children's ministry, mission responsibilities, and simply doing life. While we want to know what God has in store for the future, we desire to be faithful in the present. Regardless of whether we are in Shiogama or Shinden-Higashi we desire our lives to reflect the love of Christ through both word and deed. Please join us in praying that many people would come to know Jesus in the near and distant future here in northern Japan.

Thanks for partnering with us,

-R&R

Partner

To partner financially:

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Specific Prayer Points

- Japanese language acquisition
- A refreshing vacation :-)
- English students to know Jesus
- Monthly English Sunday school
- For Roba no kai (the young adult small group that we facilitate)
- Our health
- Joy in ministry
- Strong relationships with our ministry partners

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