

A DAIR UPDATE



GOOD TIMING FOR A RETREAT

Listening to God individually and corporately

In mid-May, we went to A2's annual Spring Retreat in beautiful Karuizawa. It usually meets in March, so this year, instead of snow, we were greeted with cherry blossoms and great weather. Robert was the retreat coordinator and, although he can't take credit for the blue skies, I (Roberta) will credit him with doing a ton to make it all run smoothly.

A major theme of the conference this year was the *rhema* of God, which is the revealed word of God from the Holy Spirit. It is always in agreement with *logos*, the written word of God, but it is specific to a situation, person, and time. We had time to practice listening to God with prayer coaches as well as special times of praying with and being prayed for by a prayer team.

As you might guess from my last newsletter, I went feeling pretty stressed and felt like I was on my last nerve. I'm happy to share that I returned full and refreshed (although

Robert was pretty tired). I experienced the presence of God, believe he revealed himself to me in a personal, gentle way, and released some things over to him. It was great spending extended time with our whole A2 family - sharing stories, singing English worship songs, and being silly together.

I also came back more convinced that a big part of my ministry in Japan is prayer: praying for people, praying with people, and listening to God regarding what to pray. I have a lot to learn!

For me (Robert) more than anything, retreat was a chance to reconnect with our mission family. Our daily lives are primarily spent with our Japanese partners, so it is easy to lose our A2 identity. I was grateful for long conversations and times to reflect with friends that I don't see often enough. Also, as you can see from the picture to the right, retreat wasn't just a bunch of serious meetings. I'm looking forward to next time we are together as a mission family.



Why are Robert's pants so tight?

- A) He is wearing Roberta's jeans.
- B) He is participating in a Tight Pants skit
- C) His standard dress preferences have changed dramatically in the last year
- D) A and B

IT'S ABOUT PEOPLE

New connections; new friends

It is often hard for me (Roberta) to meet people in Japan. That said, the last couple of months (especially this last month) were pretty full of new, fun connections.

Out with friends

After church a few months ago, Robert and I went to a little bakery for coffee with 3 or 4 friends. As I was leaning over to put my bag on the ground, I accidentally tripped a little girl. I apologized a bunch to her and her mother...and somehow wound up getting the mom's phone number. We have since met 4 or 5 times to practice English and Japanese. A few weeks ago, she came to an event at the church with her family. Then, last Thursday after hanging out for a few hours, she allowed me to (oh so awkwardly) pray for her and her family.

Surfer wives

A nearby A2 missionary recently started a ministry to surfers. A couple of times a month, a small group of people from the church go to a surfers' beach and hand out coffee to surfers and their families. They also meet and talk with people and help clean up the beach. I've gone a couple of times, and, for someone like me who loves to meet new people, it's pretty fun!

A few weeks ago, a lady (whose husband was surfing) and her young son joined us for coffee and hot chocolate. When we started talking, she asked me where I work. I told her that I work with a church. She shared with me that she went to Catholic kindergarten and learned a lunch-time prayer. I asked her if she could teach it to me. She did (with a pack of cigarettes between her perfectly folded hands

as she sweetly said, "God, thank you for this day and this lunch. In Jesus' name, amen."). After she told me some about her life, I asked if I could pray for her. She, too, allowed me to pray a simple blessing over her and her family.

Neighbors

Last year, I met a friendly Filipino lady in front of our house. After not seeing her for a year, I ran into her again recently. Because her husband, who is Japanese, is away on business for several months, she is living with her in-laws a few houses away from us. Although she has a Catholic background, she married into a Shinto-Buddhist family. We speak in a funny mixture of Japanese and English, but it's been great to have a neighborhood friend! She came to an outreach concert with me last week and met several people from our church. She also came over a few times for hints on passing the Japanese driving test. We prayed together about it, and she told me that she believes that God answered our prayers and helped her pass!

A Kosovar in Japan?!

Although a secret prayer of mine was to meet a Kosovar at some point in Japan, I (oh-thee-of-little-faith) thought it was an impossible request. Well, last Tuesday, Robert and I had coffee for 2 1/2 hours with a new Kosovar friend and his sister. One of just a handful of Kosovars in Japan, he has never met a Kosovar in the 10+



Fruit from Kids' English Ministry

years he has lived here. He works about a 20-minute walk from where I have Japanese class, and his wife's parents live about a 10-minute walk from our house.

I am eager to see how this relationship develops. I don't think it's just a cool coincidence – I think it's divinely orchestrated, and I believe God has something special in store for him and his whole family. It's also a sweet confirmation from God that he hears even the most ridiculous prayers. Amazingly, a missionary is renting a room from his parents in Kosovo. Also amazingly, he seems pretty open to talk about issues of faith and identity (and physics – for which I'm pretty useless, but Robert holds his own).

Please join us in the privilege of praying for these new friends! May God continue to open doors for relationship – and may he give those around us a hunger and thirst for Him!

Thanks for partnering with us,

-R&R

Partner

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Specific Prayer Points

- For wisdom regarding continued language study
- For these new relationships (and communication. Big time.)
- For Robert's English students and their families
- For conversations in the next 2 weeks pertaining to a future church plant
- For Roba no kai (the young adult small group that we facilitate)

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D) Robert and an A2 friend did a dance from a late night show to give another colleague a hard time about wearing "tight pants." And yes, Robert is wearing Roberta's jeans.