

# WE ARE PLANTING A CHURCH

EARLY SUMMER 2005

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## *So what have I been doing?*

I have been here almost 3 months and I apologize that I have not written sooner. First off let me give you the quick rundown of what I have been up to the last couple of months.



THE GUYS AND I AT DFW THE MORNING I LEFT FOR JAPAN

When I arrived in Japan I immediately went to the Asian Access Spring retreat which is held in Nagano prefecture. This was an awesome opportunity to get to know the rest of the missionaries and reconnect with some old friends. It was also a good transition

being able to spend my first week in Japan with several Americans.

After the retreat training began. It was held for a week in Sanda, which is a small town near Osaka.

After a week of training in Sanda I went to Kyushu and was introduced to Mi-

namata Church, which is the mother church for the plant. After 3 days in Minamata I traveled to Kumamoto city for another week of training with my supervisors for the next three years.

After that I returned to Minamata and have been here ever since.

In June I will move to Okuchi which is the actual city where the church plant will be. Okuchi is a town of about 24,000 people in a beautiful valley in Kagoshima prefecture.

### WHICH OF THESE IS NOT TRUE

- ◆ It costs me about \$50 (US) to fill up my cars 12 gallon tank
- ◆ An apple costs about \$1.20 (US)
- ◆ A 12oz can of Dr. Pepper cost \$1.25 (US)
- ◆ Rice is \$1.00 (US) per kg



## *Three rules of ministry...according to my Japanese Pastor*

So late on a Saturday night I arrived in Minamata. In all of my training I had been taught how Japanese Pastors are very serious, and do not like to joke around.

Anyway, my first night in Minamata I had dinner with two of the three pastors at the church. We went to a beautiful Spanish restaurant on a hillside overlooking Yatsushiro Bay. I must say that I was a bit nervous and apprehensive about making a good first impression with

the people I would be working with for the next three years.

Midway through our dinner, Mamoru, the pastor of evangelism told me that there were only three rules for my schedule during my time in Minamata.

First, every morning at 6:00 AM the two of us would have a prayer meeting.

Second, on weekdays we would go running at 5:30 AM so that we would be both physically and spiritu-

ally fit.

And third we would fast every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday.

Needless to say I was a little worried about my ability to complete this schedule.

Luckily for me the stereotypes that had been presented to me did not apply to my pastors. We do have a daily prayer meeting, but it is at 10:00 AM. And they were just joking about the other two rules.

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## *My Pastors*



**MAMROU SENSEI, KAMIZONO SENSEI, AND SATORU SENSEI**

These are the three pastors I am working with for the next 3 years. In the middle of the picture is Kamizono Sensei, the senior pastor of our church. She became pastor about 10 years ago when her husband passed

### *Kumon*

Several people have asked me how the language study is going. I am not going to lie that for the most part it giving me a lot of trouble. Slowly but steadily I am improving though. I am taking classes at an after school program called Kumon. It is a self passed program where I have about an hours worth of homework everyday plus a few hours of classroom work twice a week.

originally from Okinawa and has two children, Eri and Mana.

The gentleman on the left is Mamoru Sensei and he is the pastor of evangelism. He was born and grew up in

It has been quite a change from this time last year. Last spring I was sitting in graduate level engineering classes at Texas A&M University watching my ego grow every day. This year I sit in a class next to Japanese elementary school students amazed at the work they can do.

My teacher is very helpful though, and the kids are a lot of fun. The material is focused on

away.

On the right is Satoru Sensei. He is married to Kamizono Sensei's daughter and is the other main pastor of the

church. He is

Izumi, a town near Minamata, and is a graduate of Oral Roberts University in Oklahoma.

For the next three years he will be my immediate authority figure and my partner in planting the church in Okuchi.

They are a great group of Godly men and women, and I am excited about the prospect of working under them for the next few years of my life.



**HIROKI AND TAKE**

grammar and proper Japanese. This gives me a good foundation. Most of my conversational Japanese comes from time I spend with my Japanese friends.

I am still pretty useless, but I am slowly progressing towards fluency.

THANK YOU TO  
 EVERYONE WHO IS  
 SUPPORTING THIS  
 PROJECT BOTH  
 FINANCIALLY AND  
 THROUGH PRAYER,  
 YOU REALLY ARE  
 IMPACTING A CITY  
 FOR CHRIST

## *Yard work, Japanese Style (something interesting about the culture)*

We mow the yard with a weed eater, a rake, and a lot of sweat.

The church, my apartment, and all of the pastors houses' are on the same lot. So once a month several church members, the two male pastors and myself do all of the yard work for the property.

We do normal things like weed the garden, and trim the bushes. But the interesting thing is that

we mow the grass with a weed eater. One of the pastors cuts the grass as low as possible with the weed eater, and the rest of us follow with a rake. We then rake up the grass and cart it off to be burned.

What would take 30 minutes with a mower takes 2 hours for 3-5 guys. But it is the way we do things over here. Not complaining, just something that struck



**MINAMATA CHURCH**

me as funny about the way people do things here

## *Devotion, “Joy Joy”, and the Okuchi boys*

I wanted to quickly share some of the things I have been doing ministry-wise to this point.

One of my favorite things I have been doing is devotion. Every morning Mamoru and I meet with some of the young people. We begin by having worship together, then we spend about 45 minutes studying a chapter of the Bible. We wrap up by spending some time praying for Minamata Church, the church plant in Okuchi, and each other.

Every Wednesday is Joy Joy. My pastors wife, (Yuki Sensei) spent 8 years in Hawaii growing up.

After returning to Minamata, she and Satoru sensei began an English school as a tool for evangelism. So Joy Joy began 11 years ago. Now Joy Joy has about 60 students in 5 classes. I will be teaching 2 of these classes over the next 3 years. Each class consists of a 30 minute English lesson followed by a 15 minute chapel time.

One day after Kumon I was wandering around Okuchi aimlessly, looking for a good spot to read for a while. I saw some guys skateboarding outside of a police station and stopped to watch for a while. It turned out



**SOGI WATERFALLS NEAR OKUCHI**

that one of these guys had spent a year in Australia and spoke English. So for the last month or so I have been hanging out with these 15 skater boys.

## *Culture Shock*

Yay for culture shock. A simple definition of culture shock is the discomfort and stress caused by being in a culture (usually foreign country) where you don't understand the language, what is acceptable/unacceptable behavior, or how to complete simple tasks.

I equate the feeling to trying to

dance with a girl when you don't know how to dance, can't hear the music, and there are a lot of people watching. Hmm, reminds me of high school.

Anyway, it is a real issue, the adjustment to the culture and language is the most stressful part of my daily life. The memory of past mistakes, and the fear

of making new ones tempts me to be very timid. It is a daily battle to continue to attack the culture and be willing to make mistakes as I learn. I have good days and bad days. I ask that you pray that I will have the perseverance to continue to take risks. My heart's desire is to adjust quickly and well.

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## *Tight Black Pants (sorry, no picture available)*

When I arrived in Minamata I was told that a long time church member was dying of cancer. She was in the hospital and they expected her to die any day.

Well this woman turned out to be quite the fighter and she managed to live for another month. During this time there was a lot of confusion over when the funeral was going to be, etc.

One day I was talking with the pastor I am working with and he told me that “the senior pastor

wants you to be at the funeral and we are leaving at 2:00 PM. You need to have black pants, white shirt, and a black tie”

This was at 12:30, and all I had was the shirt, so I took off in my car to the largest clothing store I knew of. Once there the only black pants I could find were the right length but were extremely tight. (looked like something a girl would wear to the club) I had no choice but to buy them because we were leaving in 30 minutes and I had to have pants.

So I rushed home, changed into the tight black pants, my normal white shirt, and the tie.

I looked like a complete idiot and when my pastor opened the door at 2:00 he was wearing jeans and a tee shirt and just started laughing. The funeral was not today, he meant we needed to go shopping for the pants.



**IN OSAKA WITH SOME**

**UPDATE NEWSLETTER FROM ROBERT ADAIR**

Robert Adair  
c/o Minamata Fukuin Kristo Kyokai  
Tsukinoura 248-12  
Minamata-shi, Kumamoto-ken  
Japan 867-0035

Phone: 090-7471-0290  
Phone from America  
81-90-7471-0290  
E-mail: Robert@fatrobert.com

**I HAVE A WEB  
PAGE,  
WWW.FATROB  
ERT.COM**

*The mass of men lead lives of quiet desperation. What is called resignation is confirmed desperation. From the desperate city you go into the desperate country, and have to console yourself with the bravery of minks and muskrats. A stereotyped but unconscious despair is concealed even under what are called games and amusements of mankind. There is no play in them, for this comes after work.*  
(H. D. Thoreau)

*But their idols are silver and gold, made by the hands of men. They have mouths, but cannot speak, eyes, but cannot see; they have ears, but cannot hear, noses, but they cannot smell; they have hands, but cannot feel; feet, but they cannot walk; nor can they utter a sound with their throats. Those who make them will be like them, and so will all who trust in them.*  
(from the one hundred and fifteenth psalm)

*Confessions*



**PLAYGROUND IN FRONT OF  
A SHINTO SHRINE**

So I was going to use this section of the update to expound on the two quotes above, they are both excellent, but I think I will let you ponder them as much as you want on your own.

Instead I thought it would be beneficial for me to spend some time confessing the things I am struggling with here in Japan. I do this for two reasons. First it will give you, my friends, family, supporters, or some combination of the three a more honest look

into how I am doing. Secondly, if y'all know about the things I am struggling with or the ways I am coming up short, I don't have to worry about hiding them from you.

We will start with one of the more obvious ones. I am doing very poorly communicating what is going on here. It is a reality that you are partnering with me in ministry be that through prayer, finances, or both. But unless I do a better job at communicating what is going on here in Japan you won't know what you are partnering with..

Secondly, there is a tremendous pressure to perform as far as ministry is concerned. Even though I cognitively know I am not being judged and graded by how many come to Christ, or

how fast the church grows, it is still a daily struggle not to hold myself to that.

Finally language is pretty depressing some days. Even though I am making progress, my inability to control the Japanese language limits me in most aspects of my life. In the relationships I am able to have with people, reading signs, understanding culture, grocery shopping, and almost every other aspect of life here I am limited by my Japanese.

Well I don't want you to think life is horrible here or anything. Just wanted to be honest about some of the more difficult things in life here. Those are definitely areas you can pray for me.

Well that's about all for this issue. Hopefully the next one will arrive at your door in 2-3 months instead of about 6.