

Dear Partners in Ministry,

Spring is in the air and here in Japan that means lots of changes. This month is the end of the Japanese school year and fiscal year. April is when the new year starts. So this is the season of graduations, annual business meetings, and best of all, cherry blossoms!

Let me begin by recounting an encouraging experience I had recently at a pastors' meeting!

I suppose there is no denying it. If you asked me to come up with a list of fun or exciting things to do, attending a pastors' meeting would not make my top ten; maybe not even my top twenty-five! Nevertheless, I attend pastors' meetings fairly often, and some times even look forward to them. Yesterday was one such day. Four times a year all the pastors in the Japan Covenant get together and yesterday we were meeting at a church in Kawasaki. It was a cold morning and as I left the house the rain was beginning to turn to sleet. When the train I was riding emerged from the subway system in downtown Tokyo I was surprised to see snow falling fairly hard. By the time a co-worker and I got to the final train station it was really coming down and beginning to accumulate even on the pavement. The ten minute walk to the church revealed that the soles of my shoes are no longer water proof!

This particular group of pastors are really like family to me. The pastor of the host church was a high school student at the Chigasaki Church where my parents worked when I was five. I sat next to another older pastor who was recalling the time he took me and his son fishing. We were both pre-schoolers. Among that group were pastors who had known me all through my childhood, pastors who were at my wedding, pastors who dedicated my infant children, and pastors who have graciously allowed me to work along side them for the past seventeen years. But what really struck me yesterday was how rich this family is.

- The sermon we heard called us to unite around our baptism in Jesus Christ and stand firm against the powers and principalities that would have us look elsewhere for unity.

- We received an incredibly moving word of testimony from our eldest pastor who just lost his wife a few weeks ago. He said the greatest encouragement he received thru her death was in the final words she spoke to him; "See ya later!"
- We heard from our newest missionaries; a young couple trying to juggle the challenges of new ministry, language study, and a baby. He's American, she's Japanese and their baby is just plain adorable!
- We celebrated over the report of renewed young adult ministries; a report that was given by a second generation Japanese pastor who grew up in this family and a Taiwanese missionary who just joined us a year ago.
- We agreed to take unprecedented steps to encourage young, new pastors who are joining our ranks.
- He heard reports from two churches who are welcoming missionaries from Korea to come work with them.
- And in the end we prayed together, in Jesus' name!

On March 13th I'll be translating for one of our Japanese Covenant pastors when he preaches at a very large international church that is considering joining the Japan Covenant! Please pray that God's will can be made clear to everyone.

Beginning in April I will be going up to Gunma once a month to help train lay preachers. This is a crucial ministry since we are facing a shortage of pastors in Gunma and are praying for the Holy Spirit to raise up and use more lay people.

Also I have been given the opportunity to disciple a classmate of Eli's who is preparing for baptism. Please pray that Motoko will find assurance in her faith.

Other upcoming highlights include:

- Covenant Seminary Graduation (March 14th)
- Preaching at local Covenant churches
- Spring Retreat with our Covenant missionary co-workers at the end of March
- Lent; the time when we prepare our hearts for the celebration of Easter

Family Update:

- Miles continues to do well at college and enjoy the beauty of his location high in the Rockies of Colorado. He hopes to come home for summer break so we are excited about that!
- Kendra is very excited for the opportunity to go on a missions trip this summer. It looks like she will probably be heading to the Dominican Republic! Please remember her in your prayers as she works on putting together all the pieces; especially the financing.
- Kendra and Eli have finished their basketball seasons and are already practicing for track and field!
- Hydi continues to split her time between teaching at CAJ and doing a variety of sports ministries. Spring is a busy season for tennis tournaments! Please pray that she will continue to have opportunities to share the good news.

Thank you for your prayers and support. We value your partnership in these ministries!

In Christ,

Jim, Hydi, Miles, Kendra and Eli Peterson

If you are interested in making a financial contribution toward these ministries you can do so online by following [this link](#).

If you would like to follow our blog [click here](#).

You can also look us up on Facebook or Skype!