

Greetings from Japan - October Update for Jim and Hydi Peterson

Covenant Blog: <http://blogs.covchurch.org/jhpeterson/>

Due to a technical issue our September update didn't get sent out so please accept our apologies. Our goal is to keep you regularly updated on what God is doing in and around us as we seek to faithfully carry out our Lord's great commission.

Unlike many of your locations, fall comes late and lasts a long time here in Japan. Autumn colors are in their peak in the surrounding mountains and just getting started here in Tokyo.

Here are a few recent highlights from our ministry.

Japan Covenant Ministerium (Sept. 6-7)

We met with our Japanese Covenant pastors, church workers and missionaries at the Akagi Bible Camp for a time of prayer and discussion about ministry.

One of our biggest prayers is that God would help us move forward to reach young people more effectively. With only a handful of exceptions most of our churches are really struggling in this area. But we are deeply committed to seeing that change. Statistics show that more Japanese young people prefer Christianity than any other religion. And yet the church has not figured out how to tap into this openness. Please pray for a powerful leading of the Holy Spirit as we seek new and effective means to reach out for Christ.

Church Weekend Away (Sept. 11-12)

I went with the members of Grace Mission Church for a weekend of worship, study and fun in a quiet spot in the forest. I was given the opportunity to lead the study sessions on the theme of revitalizing devotional life, and we learned about Lectio Divina, a meditative reading of God's Word. Please pray for this small congregation seeking to be used by God. Our current location in Tokyo is very close to several large universities and so we are surrounded by a large population of students. How does a handful of mostly middle aged followers of Jesus break through the age barrier and share the wonderful news of the gospel with a hungry generation? Also keep our pastor, Rev. Sakamoto in your prayers as he commutes a long ways to the church and continues to deal with diabetes.

Tokyo School of Preachers (Sept. 27)

I am part of Japan's largest study group for preachers and on this day I was asked to give a presentation with Rev. Katsuki Hirano based on our participation in the 2010 Festival of Homiletics in Nashville last May. It was a deeply inspirational time for me and I thank God for the opportunity to share some of that joy and encouragement with fellow preachers here in Japan, all of whom are facing the incredible challenge of boldly speaking God's Word in a nation where very few have heard, or even want to hear. Less than 1% of Japanese people know Christ! Please pray for the Holy Spirit to break down barriers and prepare this land for the great harvest.

A Visit From Our New Advocates (Sept. 30- Oct. 4)

Peter and Ruthie Dutton, missionaries in Thailand, have recently taken on the responsibilities of being our ECC World Mission Asia Coordinators, replacing our dear friends and co-workers, David and Ronna Husby. The Duttons made their first visit to Japan in their new role at the end of September and we were able to spend time with them and talk about how we can effectively partner for ministry here in Japan. Please pray for them as they adjust to this new role, which requires scaling back on some of their own ministries in Thailand.

New Co-workers!

Grant and Miho Buchholtz arrived in Japan on September 30th after a significant delay due to some government bureaucratic red tape issues. On October 3rd I had the opportunity to preach at the Tsurumi Covenant Church where they are living and working. It was great to meet with them and visit a church I hadn't been to in something like 15 years. Please pray for them as they get adjusted to life in Japan and explore various ministry opportunities.

Four Days in the Woods! (Oct. 4-7)

Every fall the entire 11th grade at Christian Academy goes out for a wilderness experience where the kids learn how to survive in the wilderness and develop teamwork skills. Hydi was one of the adult leaders of a team. Our daughter Kendra was also one of the participants (not in her mother's group though!!) We were thrilled when they all returned without injury or other serious incident. In the past they have experienced typhoons and more so this

was a great year. It is an opportunity for the kids to face some daunting challenges and learn about getting along with each other.

Covenant Seminary Classes Begin (Oct. 14)

The second semester at the seminary is under way and so I am once again teaching classes in homiletics (preaching) and pietism (Covenant church history). I am very encouraged by this year's student body and the seminary is continuing to experience significant growth while most other seminaries in Japan are struggling to keep afloat. Praise God for this wonderful ministry of helping prepare the next generation of church leaders in Japan!

Fall Evangelistic Outreach (Oct. 23-24)

I was invited to speak at an outreach event at the Annaka Bible Church in Gunma Prefecture. There was a Saturday evening seekers service, Sunday morning worship and Sunday afternoon youth group event. This is a church of about 25-30 people in a rural location up in the mountains. We were thrilled to see several new people come and hear the good news. Please pray that the seeds sown will take root and that these individuals will come to know Christ.

Tennis Ministries

Hydi has been able to participate in several fall tournaments and other events, often as the only Christian there. Her network of friends and acquaintances continues to grow and she has been blessed with many opportunities to share the joy of Christ with this community of athletes. Please pray for more Spirit led encounters and receptive hearts.

Upcoming Event

This weekend, (Nov. 12-13) our ECC missionary group will be meeting for our annual conference, where we spend time in prayer, group care, ministry planning and fellowship. We want nothing more than to be used by the Holy Spirit in this land that is hungering for truth and meaning. We seek to see the Kingdom of God and the Body of Christ built up in this place. *Thy kingdom come, thy will be done!*

Family Update

This week our family is all over the globe. Eli and I are holding the fort back at home here in Tokyo. Hydi is on the southern island of Okinawa with the Christian Academy tennis team she coaches for a season end tournament. Kendra is in Seoul, Korea with the Christian Academy girls volleyball team for their tournament. Miles carries on in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado in his freshman year at Western State College (Gunnison, CO) and seems to be thoroughly enjoying college life.

Financial Needs

We are continually blessed and humbled by your generosity in giving towards the work here in Japan. In these financially tough times many churches are finding it difficult to meet budgets and maintain giving levels. We are very aware of the realities being faced and want you to know that this is nothing unique to any one church or region. The tough part is that right now the US\$ is at an all time low. One dollar will get you about 80 yen right now. Just a couple years ago it was worth over 110 yen. That means the actual cost of doing ministry here in Japan has increased by almost 30%. We continue to trust that God will meet the needs of the church everywhere, and in particular that our own financial needs will be met. Last year was the first time in several years that our support was not at or very near 100%. It came in somewhere in the mid-80s. So far this year it looks like we are down even a bit more so we simply ask you to prayerfully consider whether God might be leading you to make a special gift. The Covenant has recently established a system for online giving that makes it very easy. Please follow this link if you are interest. covchurch.kintera.org/give/jhpeterson Of course, traditional methods are fine too. Checks can be sent to the ECC Department of World Mission, 8303 W Higgins Road, Chicago, IL 60631, clearly marked as "Support for Jim and Hydi Peterson".

Thank you so much for your prayers, and for your partnership in this ministry.

In Christ,
Jim and Hydi Peterson