

Dear Prayer Partners,

We have been very delinquent in keeping you informed of our ministry news and ask for your forgiveness. Even our web site was not updated for several months. We do not want any of you to think your prayers and financial support is unimportant to us. Quite the contrary, perhaps it is now, more than ever before, that we need the strength and encouragement that come from knowing that so many faithful partners are praying for us and care about our ministry.

The past year in Yoshioka:

In April of 2005 the Yoshioka church faced a very painful crisis as one individual was asked to leave the church and 7 or 8 others chose to go with that person. As if that were not enough, those who remained (10-12 people) experienced a good deal of anger and bitterness towards one another over how the crisis had been handled. Making that situation even more painful was the fact that the associate pastor and his wife were the focus of much of those hard feelings. Nevertheless, we sought healing and strived to honor the body of Christ during this past year. And as I have reported elsewhere, we did see God at work in our midst and we praise him for that. Nevertheless it was a challenge each and every week, and living 60 miles from the church didn't help.

We are happy to say that things are beginning to look and feel better. At our annual business meeting on April 9th we decided to submit a formal request to the denominational personnel committee for help in finding the next pastor for our church. Our associate pastor and his wife have decided to get involved in a new work and our congregation was able to affirm that decision with prayers for blessing upon them. We thank God that it was not a "negative" parting. We have notified the church and the denomination that we will also step down when they find a replacement. While it is hard for some in the church to accept the idea of a new pastor on the heels of all this uncertainty we are convinced that the time is right and ask for your prayers.

Items of Praise:

During the past year we saw God's hand at work in the following ways:

- The birth of a reading group consisting of 2 seekers and 2-3 church members. Upon completing our current book we will probably begin a Bible study
- Continuation of music ministries in the church through piano and voice lessons and a children's gospel choir
- The restarting of kids' English classes at church after a several month blank resulting from the church split last spring
- At our Christmas worship the husband of one of our members came for the first time. We have been praying for him for close to 10 years!

A Witness:

April 14th was Mothers' Day. During our worship service we all gave thanks to God for our mothers and honored all the mothers present with flowers. Early in the service, as we sang the chorus "Worthy, You Are Worthy" a man entered the sanctuary and just stood by the door looking like he wasn't sure what to do. Since I was the only one that could see him I asked a woman in the congregation to go welcome him in. After worship he stayed for the regular time of fellowship and prayer. He introduced himself and said it was not only his first time at our church, but his first time to visit any church of any sort. A complete newcomer! He went on to say that a little over 3 years ago he had been invited to church by a friend, Mr. Konuma and that while it had taken him a long time to respond, here he was! We all smiled and fondly recalled Mr. Konuma; a man who came to faith after suffering a 3 year hospitalization for mental illness and continued to struggle with alcoholism and other addictions. Just over three years ago he passed away of a heart attack at the age of 47.

Imagine my surprise when the newcomer turned to me and said; "I haven't seen Mr. Konuma in a long time. How's he doing?" I had to share the news of his death with this man. But then we realized that it must have been just before his death that Mr. Konuma invited him to church. Mr. Konuma had more problems than most of us will ever face, and yet I'm quite confident that he brought more friends and newcomers to church than anyone else. The Lord used his testimony in a powerful way and here we are, 3 years later, still seeing the fruits.

It was Mothers' Day, making the moment even more significant. Mr. Konuma's single greatest challenge in life was living with the fact that in what became a drunken nightmare several years earlier, he had roughly pushed his mother aside one night, and the injury she sustained in the fall led to her sudden death. He was charged and convicted of

manslaughter and was incarcerated. We never knew about that part of his history when he was with us. He was a broken man in so many ways. He was unable to function normally in society. He couldn't get a job. And he struggled with addictions and mental illness. Yet in Christ he was made new! And today he sits before Jesus throne, made righteous and just by the cross of Jesus Christ. We thank God for the short time we shared with Mr. Konuma and we pray for the Holy Spirit to continue to show us the fruits of his faith.

Other News:

Please continue to pray for Hydi as she teaches at the Christian Academy and shares Christ with many on the tennis courts in Gunma and Tokyo. Also please remember Jim as he teaches at Tokyo Christian University this term and serves on several denominational committees and boards. We thank God for giving the kids a great school year, which is about to wind down in a few weeks.

Please visit our web site for more details and prayer requests at <http://www.geocities.jp/jimkpeterson/>

In Christ,
Jim, Hydi, Miles, Kendra and Eli Peterson