

Merry Christmas!

May the love of Jesus overflow in your life always! Pardon us for the long gap since our last letter; no excuses, we just didn't get a round-tuit. Anyway, in our last letter we announced our transfer from MUP to IMF and we are happy to report this organizational transition has gone well. We are settled in with IMF now, and Dan has become the IMF Japan Field Coordinator, so he is gradually taking on more responsibilities for recruiting, placement, training, and encouraging other missionaries.

On the family front, we have some sad news. After completing two tours in Iraq with the army, Dan's son Larry got into serious trouble when he was not able to readjust to life in the USA. PTSD and other factors contributed to Larry making some bad decisions that have landed him in federal prison in Texarkana, Texas. We have made several trips to visit him, but we really feel that we need to provide more support and encouragement by visiting him weekly for a time. So we are preparing for a four month trip to Texas, from February to May. Thank you for praying for Larry and for our visits with him.

Osaka International Church (OIC) has been very understanding of the situation, but we know the church needs a pastor who is there for them. With a four month absence coming up and the possibility of more trips after that, Dan decided that he should step down from the senior pastor position and make room for the church to call someone new. We have been at OIC for over 11 years, so the transition won't be easy, but January 26th will be Dan's last Sunday as pastor.

We are not sure what our ministry will look like when we return to Osaka next June, but Dan has been interested in the possibilities for reaching Japanese online, so an internet-focused evangelistic ministry is one possibility. We will have some time to think and pray while we are in Texas, and we know the Lord will lead us. We will also try to visit family and friends on the east coast while we are in the USA.

We pray that all is well with you and your loved ones; God bless you always!

In Jesus' love, Dan and Karen



Tim (Chinese American)



Michael
(Germany)



Kayo



Satoshi



Yuko (pink) and Hiroko
(gray) - you'll have to
imagine Hiroko's smile



another Hiroko

WIDER MINISTRY

Personal evangelism, church planting, and pastoring local churches are the front lines in missions. But these things need to be supported by resources, tools, and the mobilization of new missionaries and local workers. In recent years, the Lord has been using us more in these "wider" activities that support ministry across Japan. Karen's Japan Video Praise DVDs (available on Amazon), her Japan-tailored database service for contact management (details at L4JP.com), and her help with other technical projects are examples of wider ministry. Dan has been busy pastoring OIC, but he has also produced pre-evangelistic videos for his YouTube channel "Dan4Osaka", annual Christmas messages for AM radio, and an article for the *Japan Harvest* missions magazine.

Training local workers and helping new missionaries get started has always been part of our ministry, but in his new role as the IMF Japan Field Coordinator, Dan may be doing much more of this. In just the last three months, we had a direct receiving role for two new missionary families coming to Japan, and we also assisted with others. It is exciting to see how God not only prepares us for new ministry opportunities, but also uses us to help others to launch their own ministries.

The Invisible Seekers

Middle-aged Japanese men – the least likely demographic to come to church – continue to be the largest group viewing Dan's YouTube channel. This fact has startled every missionary and Japanese pastor I have mentioned it to. It seems that there are a lot of "invisible seekers" in this group who want to learn about Jesus, but won't visit a church. So far the only person we have heard of coming to faith after watching these YouTube videos was a young woman. But Japanese are watching and learning about Jesus and the potential for this kind of outreach seems unlimited. At this time, there is little high-quality Japanese Christian content on the web. But we want to study more and pray lots regarding what the Lord might want us to do in this area. Please pray with us about what our role should be.

Joy of the Lord Mural

Since our last prayer letter we have had 7 baptisms – check out the smiles!

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"Fill the Hall for the Glory of God"

In April 2012 Dan challenged the OIC congregation to stretch themselves in prayer and bold witness with a goal of filling the 300-seat worship hall for the glory of God at the 2013 Easter worship service.

In addition to personal evangelism efforts, we hosted four evangelistic concerts to make it easier for church members to invite family and friends to come, and we held special times of prayer and training for evangelism.

We did not quite fill the hall on Easter, but we did set a new record of over 200 adults in the main service (photo above) and, we hope, encouraged many Christians to be bolder and more intentional in sharing their faith. While attendance did not stay that high, we rejoice that so many came to worship with us, and we trust that the Lord will complete the good work He has begun in these hearts.

A joyful reason for lower OIC attendance is that some OIC members have joined Associate Pastor Joseph and Amy Totsis at their new Abide Calvary Chapel church plant in south Osaka (abide-osaka.org). It is exciting for us and OIC to be partners in this work and we pray that a good core group to get Abide CC established will form quickly. Praise the Lord that it is going well so far! From April, Joseph will be at Abide fulltime. Please pray with us for Abide and for the Lord to bring the right person to be the future pastor at OIC.

New Alpha Course Leaders

We continue to give thanks to the Lord for the wonderful things He is doing through the Alpha Course at OIC. Many of the Japanese we baptize at OIC come to faith after attending Alpha and it is also our best tool for raising up new lay leaders for small groups and other ministries. Every course is a spiritual battle, but the Lord shows His power and love even in the midst of struggles with relationships and interesting guests.

Our last bilingual Alpha was led by a team of two Japanese, a German, and an Indonesian. Both of the Japanese leaders came to faith through Alpha and were baptized in 2012. Can you recognize them in the baptism "mural" on the front page?



6000 Miles for 1000 Friends

Social media makes short-term mission longer

In October 2012, a team of five came from Calvary Chapel Oceanside, CA to minister with us for eleven days. Dan had a new idea of how to help these short-term missionaries have a long-term impact by creating a Facebook group to link them with the people they met in Japan. The team chose the name, "6000 Miles for 1000 Friends," and set a crazy goal to get 1000 people to join by taking their photos and posting them to the group. Check it out at:



Oddie with a group of highschoolers that loved his original Christian hip-hop

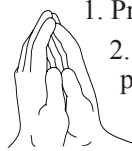
<http://facebook.com/groups/6000milesfor1000friends>



4 missionaries, 4 new friends, 1 silly pose

The Facebook group currently has 342 members. Dan and others continue to post Scriptures and other content to encourage the members in their spiritual journey. This way we can water the seeds for many years!

Prayer Points



1. Pray for OIC as they look for their new pastor.
2. Pray for Larry, that God would pour out His love, peace, and hope upon him, and that the Holy Spirit will draw him back to Jesus.
3. Pray that we would use our time in the States wisely, and it would bring glory to Him.
4. Ask the Lord to lead us in His plans for the new ministry that we will begin after returning to Japan.
5. As always, praise the Lord for His love and grace, and pray for the people of Japan to come to know Him!

A Final Word from the Word

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."

~ Joshua 1:9 ~