



February 5th, 2010

Mercer Family Ministry Partnership Team Newsletter

Dear Ministry Partner,

It seems like ever since we started the year of with a season of fasting and prayer that people in the church have been telling me about personal breakthroughs in their lives. Our family is no exception.

FAMILY

Many of you were praying for James and he was notified this week that he has been granted a scholarship for 1/3 of his tuition by Sophia University. This is a big answer to prayer for him and he will continue working at Starbucks and teaching private music lessons in order to pay the other 2/3. James is really working hard at school and life – many days he is gone before I wake up and home late at night. His 2 hour commute to Tokyo is not easy, but this week was the start of his winter break and he is now catching up on some much-needed sleep. He now has a life coach (Pastor Ted in Yokohama) who is helping him get more organized and the number of guitar and drum students has is slowly increasing.

Alishea is now in the process of getting her braces and goes to the dental college in Yokosuka about once a week. She is getting taller, smarter and more beautiful. Of course I am totally objective in my opinion on this matter. She works at McDonald's about 8-10 hours per week and spends most of her time doing school work.

Satomi is homeschooling, mothering, housewifing, and ministering to the church members in Yokosuka. This week her parents and sister visited from Nagoya for our church dedication service. Her sister Makimi has decided to move to Yokosuka and help us in the church here from March. She already found an apartment and applied for a job as a dental assistant. This will be a huge help to us in many ways. Makimi has been worship leader, youth leader and Sunday school teacher in her previous church and she also speaks English fairly well too. Please pray for her as this will be her first experience living on her own and it will be a big transition.

I am doing well too. We had some financially challenging times over the holidays with the economy here being so weak, as I know it is everywhere. But this week I received a big answer to my prayers – a new car. Our car was getting too old for renewing the Japanese inspection certificate in December and we decided to junk it. Recently, one of the families in our church bought a newer car and they have given us their van, which is perfect for us. It has only 35,000 miles on it and drives beautifully. What a great gift for us from this generous family – please pray that the Lord blesses them even more so they can bless others too. We still have a lot of Japanese paperwork to finish up in order to get the parking space certificate, Japanese registration, insurance, etc. At times like these I am very thankful for a Japanese wife. Without Satomi I would be pretty lost. I don't know how "true" cross-cultural missionaries ever do it!

CHURCH

At church we are also having great breakthroughs. First of all, we had a special Sunday to dedicate the new floor we are renting in our building. We had two services and served two meals and both the spiritual and natural food was outstanding. Pastor Scott and Naomi Douma came from Yokohama and spoke at both services. If you haven't heard Pastor Scott preach you should check out these messages. I should have them both up on the church website soon. Many of our fellow pastors and leaders from churches around the area also came and helped us celebrate what God is doing in Yokosuka. Here is a picture of the crowd in the evening:



One young man who showed up in the morning came in his military uniform. At first I thought he was Japanese because he spoke so well. But he told me he was an exchange student at the National Defense Academy and I found out he was Indonesian. He is a Christian and was very happy to find a church close to the Academy. He said it is not easy being a Christian in the military in Indonesia and asked me to pray for him. Here is a picture of the morning service:



We had over 80 in the morning and around 100 in the evening service, which is more than we have ever had before in Yokosuka. Here is a group shot we took after the morning service:



In the picture above, Satomi's parents are standing on our right and Pastor Scott and Naomi are standing on our left. I realized very clearly as we dedicated ourselves and the new sanctuary to the work here that we would not be here at all without both of these wonderful couples in our lives. Of course all glory for any success here goes to God first, but there are many others who have helped us faithfully. We are so blessed to be serving him as missionaries and pastors and fulfilling our calling. We are blessed to be able to share this ministry with you who are praying and supporting us. And we are blessed to have so many loving family-members and friends around the world who care about us, encourage us daily, and even tell us what we need to change in order to grow more and be more of a blessing to many.

Here is one more picture from Sunday. This one is of us being prayed for. Thank you for continuing to pray for us and the church.



I will close with a scripture that one of the leaders in our church received from the Holy Spirit during our fasting and prayer time in January. Genesis 28:3 **“May God Almighty bless you and make you fruitful and increase your numbers until you become a community of peoples.”**

Thank you,

Ray

P.S. Please check out our church website <http://www.yokosukachurch.com> it has a cool video that we showed during the dedication. All the church members worked hard on the new sanctuary, but we had a lot of fun too. Watch the video if you don't believe me! Also, if you have facebook you can add me as a friend and see the photo album (link below).



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