

December 2010 Newsletter  
SAY YES TO JAPAN  
Associated with the Christian Church/Church of Christ

Dear Friends,

## CONVENTION NEWS

### 2010 NMC

A great convention in Lexington, Kentucky! More than 8,000 in attendance. We had constant traffic in our location. This year's phenomenal exhibit helpers each brought unique perspective . . . and worked long hours! Thanks to: missionary Jenann Beckman; former missionaries Betty Turner and Carolyn Barricklow; short-termers Amanda Sims and Isaac Brandewie; missionary kids Sarah and Katie Turner; short-termer and second-in-command Jenna Lusby.

It's always the same but always new: people wanting to reconnect with a missionary, people wanting to go short-term, great young people who have hung out with us every year doing origami and listening to stories, people who have no idea that Japan's material wealth and technology coolness mask a spiritual darkness, people who tell us they continue to pray . . . I talked with a man in his forties who has Japan on his mind and is thinking of packing up his family and moving there.

Thanks to Bob Sims for the following photos, which give you a taste of the experience.



Saturday morning with no prior arrangement, suddenly several "Japan people" showed up. An instant reunion with three generations represented! Back row: MK Greg Maxey; 1972 Ohayo Singers II member Chuck Seevers; MK Dale Mings; short-termer Isaac Brandewie; 3 Axton kids; MK Bob Sims and his daughter, short-termer Amanda Sims; former missionary Paul Axton. Front row: Bev Maxey; Patti Mings; missionary Jenann

Beckman; my dad Hubert Lusby (age 90), who helped build the first Machida Church building 30 years ago; me; MK and former missionary Faith Maxey Axton.



My sister Jenna's handmade Mt. Fuji quilt attracted a lot of attention.



Amanda Sims and Carolyn Barricklow. If Carolyn isn't around to help with origami, we're very insecure!

Betty and Sarah Turner spoke at other events, and Sarah also led one of the teen prayer encounters. Jenna and I led a workshop on "Mysticism in the Church" with at least eighty

people sitting on the floor and spilling into the hallway. If you'd like my two-pager "A Further Look at Contemplative Prayer," let me know.

#### 2011 NMC

Next year's NMC is Nov 17-20 in Atlanta. CC/CofC missionaries--Please let me know if you plan to be part of the Say Yes To Japan exhibit. Two things have come together for next year's theme: Haruka Otsuka of Machida Church had given me 1,000 origami cranes. And I recently learned that more than half of all Japanese ministers are over age 60. So I've decided to decorate with the cranes and emphasize prayer for current Japanese ministers and that the Lord will raise up future ministers.

I'm low on giveaways. (Thanks especially to Haruka and to missionary Keith Summers for my long-lasting mountain of great little gifts!). What I need are Japanesey things (with Japanese writing or art or famous place) like 10-packs from the 100 yen store (so each item is cheap). Chopsticks, pencils, erasers, tissue packs . . . These are put in a shopping basket where visitors can choose what they want. My Web site address is noted with each item so that visitors can link to all your information. If you decide to send anything, my mailing address is at the end of this letter.

### **CHRISTIANITY AND CULTURE**

#### DIVORCE RATE

Check out this July 2009 article "Japan's Divorce Rate Threatens the Family Unit" at <http://www.mnnonline.org/article/12916> .

#### THE FUN SIDE OF BUDDHISM?

I've pasted in the entire article "Japanese Monk Gets Down with the Beat for Buddhism" by Toshi Maeda, Feb 8, 2010. It's a testimony to how much marketing is being done to make the world religions appeal to any given audience. Here in the States, for example, the Tibetan Buddhist sand mandala ceremonies are marketed as cultural exchanges, "symbols of impermanence," etc., when they're really demon-invoking ceremonies. Oddly, when this ceremony was performed recently in the Cincinnati area, they openly described how a god would be invoked to inhabit/empower the sand and then small bags of the sand would be given to visitors. People clamored to get it. Anyway, here's the Japan story:

Tokyo (Reuters): He raps. He chants. And this month, Japan's famed hip-hop loving monk, better known as MC Happiness, will tap dance on stage, in the name of Buddhism.

Kansho Tagai heads the 400-year-old Kyoouji Temple in central Tokyo, offering softly chanted prayers throughout the day amid traditional bell chimes and wafts of incense.

But once in a while, he raises the volume, and the tempo, of these prayers,

going before an audience to rap Buddhist sutra, or teachings, to hip hop beats and in modern Japanese.

“When I listened to rap music for the first time, it was in English so I couldn’t understand a word,” Tagai told Reuters.

“I realised that the same can be said for Buddhist sutras because most people can’t understand a word. And the thing is, listening to rap music makes you feel good even though it may be incomprehensible.”

Tagai, whose community has dubbed him “Mr Happiness” for his positive outlook, has been rapping since 2006.

The 49-year-old monk hosts a variety of youth events at his temple, often inviting children and artists to take part in untraditional, open sessions which blend modern words and phrases with Buddhist teachings, to make the faith more relevant today.

“With our new approach to the younger generation, I really hope that they’ll see the fun side of Buddhism and actually be interested in the religion,” he said.

Tagai’s philosophy has won him many fans, and later this month he hopes to keep them interested by breaking into a new genre—mixing Buddhist chants with tap-dancing.

The temple’s first tap-dancing show will feature a professional dancer moving to Tagai’s chants. The monk also plans to take to the stage, and said he was considering dancing the samba at another performance.

Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the 6th century and has become a mainstream religion.

#### EAST-WEST MUSIC

In July 2010 I noted this video of wadaiko (Japanese drums) and black gospel: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0Y-lxI-fVCc>. Might be fun to play this during one of your church services!

#### JAPAN’S YOUNG MEN

This paragraph is taken directly from missionary Walter Maxey’s newsletter of summer-fall 2010: Japan’s young men today are causing many older Japanese to be concerned about Japan’s future. Jeff Kingston, in his recently published book, *Contemporary Japan*, has put his finger on the cause of this concern, when he says this generation has lost “the willingness to sacrifice for the company.” Japanese men, ages 20 to 34, are refusing the 70-hour work weeks of their fathers, which were typical of the economic boom of the 1980s. They are more interested in balanced lives with time for their family and hobbies.

While Japan's economic future may seem uncertain as it rests on the shoulders of young men who refuse to sacrifice everything for work, this paradigm shift gives us hope that this generation might come to realize that a "balanced life" means taking care of one's spiritual needs, too.

## **NEWS**

### **PRO-NORTH KOREA SCHOOLS**

According to this article, there are 10 "pro-Pyongyang" (capital of North Korea) high schools in Japan. There has been some concern that anti-Japanese education is being done. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/cgi-bin/nn20101104a2.html>

## **PROGRAM/MINISTRY IDEAS**

### **PRAYER PARTNERS**

The Kentucky Baptist Convention offers a way to enlist prayer partners: <http://www.go2alltheworld.com/2010/11/japan-prayer-advocates-needed/>

### **HOME-STAY HOSTS**

The Japanese Evangelical Missionary Society ([www.jems.org](http://www.jems.org)) is compiling a list of names of people in the U.S. who have a heart for the Japanese people and would be open to hosting Japanese visitors. Some of you missionaries might want to pass this along to your serious supporters. Interested people should contact: [RickC@jems.org](mailto:RickC@jems.org).

### **SonRise CAFÉ**

I met missionaries Steve and Kelly Baughn (Baptist) at Japanese church here in Cincinnati a couple of years ago. They had a daring idea about coffee shop evangelism in Tokyo, and I see that they are actually doing it now. They are with [www.teamjapan.org](http://www.teamjapan.org), and within that, their Tokyo Metro Ministry Initiative team has its own site: [www.tmmi-japan.org](http://www.tmmi-japan.org). The SonRise Café's site is: [www.sonrisecafetokyo.com](http://www.sonrisecafetokyo.com). They have live music and art exhibits and sell nice crafts. I think missionaries will enjoy looking at this, both for the connection and also for ideas.

## **RESOURCES**

### **BIBLE STUDIES, ETC.**

Check out [www.jesus-follower.org](http://www.jesus-follower.org) for Bible study materials that can be printed out. Available in Japanese, English, and some also with furigana.

### **ORIGAMI**

Missionaries Phil and Kim Kornegay made me aware of this site that shows how to make hundreds of origami objects with step-by-step video instructions, even animated

instructions: [www.origami-club.com/en](http://www.origami-club.com/en) . Very fun to recommend to any youth groups or children's SS classes that support Japan missions.

Sincere thanks to all Japan pray-ers, fans, and warriors!

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(Thank you for NOT adding this e-mail address to your list for forwards of jokes, inspirational pieces, petitions, etc.)