

GRACE notes

February 2010



PRAISE & PRAYER

Give thanks for:

- good turnouts for church and student Christmas events.
- Izumi Park Town Church agreeing to call Masamichi Murakami as pastor.
- new students who have been braving cold and snow for the GraceKai English Bible studies.

Pray for:

- my mother, Deborah's, ongoing physical needs during her chemotherapy.
- my father, Jim's, heart procedure at the end of February.
- the Lord's peace on my sister, Mary, who bears the day-to-day stress of these health issues.
- Amy Li preparing to enter student work with us.
- our support needs for the year ahead in the face of the continuing unfavorable exchange rate.

Summer Home Assignment

We're beginning to put together our summer home assignment schedule and we would like to hear from you!

It looks as if we as a family will be arriving in the States at different times in June and July, but we'll all be together in both Chicago and the San Francisco Bay Area between late July and late August. Our Sundays are limited, so we hope to have opportunities to report on our ministry to small groups.

If you have a group at which you would like us to speak, please let us know.

Student Ministry

Levi's departure

Short-term worker Levi Booth, unexpectedly returned to England in mid-January after the immigration office told him that they wouldn't renew his visa a second time. We had planned for him to stay through the end of March. The office did graciously allow Levi a 2-week extension, until after the New Year holidays, so students were able to give him a farewell.

We're thankful for the impact Levi had on students while he was here. He was tireless in making contacts and following through on them. He's now applying to Bible colleges and seeking the Lord's direction for future ministry in Japan.



Levi at the well-attended GraceKai Christmas party

New worker?

At the same time, we're waiting on another short-term worker's application. Amy Li from Hong Kong has already worked with students in Sendai since last spring through Campus Crusade for Christ. They will not be able to sponsor her again this year in Sendai, so Amy approached us about working on our team for another year through OMF's Serve Japan program. Amy is back in Hong Kong at the moment; we're praying that her application will be expedited so she can be with us before the new academic term begins in April.

Izumi Park Town Church

Annual Meeting

The church's annual meeting ran *loong* but otherwise smoothly this past Sunday (14th). Among the ministry reports, the monthly attendance figures stood out for me. Although they don't tell the whole story of what the Lord's doing in the church, they're encouraging. Three years ago, the church's usual attendance was around twenty; this past year, Sunday mornings saw on average over 40 adults worshipping the Lord together! This is a notable size for a Japanese church.

Family

The week before Christmas found both my (Jim's) father and mother in the hospital. My father was admitted after experiencing his second "mini-stroke" in a few months. In January he had surgery to remove a blood clot in his arm, and further tests traced the source of these problems to a small hole between heart chambers. As he wrote, it "only took 75 years to discover it and I think the Lord had something to do with it." He will be having a procedure late this month to repair the hole. Otherwise, he's doing fine and keeping active.

My mother, Deborah, had a successful surgery for an enlarged ovary, but discovered that she has stage 3 ovarian cancer. She began the first of six planned cycles of chemotherapy at the beginning of the year. She is staying with my sister, Mary, and her family in Sacramento during this time.

Pastoral Search

The church enthusiastically welcomed pastoral candidate Masamichi Murakami and his wife, Kyoko during their 2-week visit in January. (They foolishly exchanged an Australian summer for a Sendai winter!) They too expressed their belief that the Lord is directing them to this church. At the annual meeting last week, the church agreed to call him as pastor. Murakami *san* will finish his studies in Sydney in November and could be with us by the end of the year.



Masamichi and Kyoko Murakami during their January visit

Finally, thank you for your partnership in prayer and giving throughout 2009. In a difficult year, the Lord graciously provided 98% of our required support! We thank God, who supplies our every need, for you!

Warmly in Christ,

OMF International



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