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**HOW DO YOU DEFINE A GOOD DAY?**

1. A very excited friend and colleague emails me that her PET scan now shows she is in remission from her breast cancer! And she is not the only one... Thank you, Lord!
2. News programs report on the extensive infiltration by the “Unification Church”(=Moonies) of the governing Liberal Democratic Party. The reporters are careful to distinguish this cult from genuine Christianity and even cite some cases where Christian workers have helped victims escape the clutches of the church, now known as the “Family Federation for World Peace and Unification,” with the now deceased founder Sun Myung Moon still worshipped as the true Messiah (and the true heavenly Father).
3. Indications point to ongoing and extensive connecting by non-Christians with our worship services using various Internet platforms, a phenomenon that started along with the COVID-19 pandemic! You can feel my smile, right?!

**HANDSHAKES, LONG CLINGY HUGS & TEARS**

Does this sound like Japan? Isn't this the place that tends to eschew physical contact, much preferring the polite bow? Yes, that preference is still real, but recently we've begun to visit churches throughout the country where we've been involved over the years, taking the opportunity

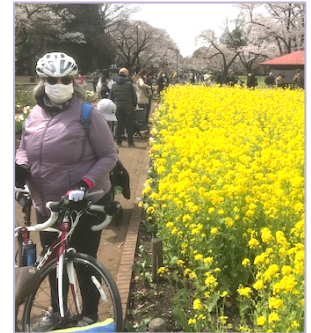


to proclaim the Gospel message one more time, but telling folks also that it is unlikely we will be able to visit them again, since we'll probably be heading back to North America at the end of this year. We're finding similar reactions to what

Paul faced as written in Acts 20:36-38. Bittersweet times, these, but more sweet than bitter! We've found in some recent visits that folks tend to show up who haven't attended in a long time. Numbers are at times double a normal worship service! That happened recently when we visited Nozomi Center (Great East Japan Earthquake response center, now also a church plant, with 18 at worship instead of the usual 10), and also at Toyoake Church, site of our first church plant assignment in the early 1980's (How delightful to be able to see the life that remains in seeds we sowed 40 years ago)! We have a couple more visits to far-flung places in the weeks ahead and are looking forward to more of that! (Try looking up “Niigata” and “Utsunomiya” to see more examples of places we plan to visit.)

**EARLY SPRING COMING? BRING IT ON!**

Despite a surging record crop of pollen blowing around these days, Ruth continues her hobby of biking as much as weather permits. We've also been doing some walking, always amazed at the variety of birds, from king fishers to herons to cormorants, sharing the stream near our home with enormous carp and tiny ayu (the favorite lunch of the egrets). Ducks, turtles, crayfish, and on and on the list goes! Along with spring come the cherry blossoms which will be everywhere around us by the middle of March. Can't wait! The bright yellow rape flowers are already out, as are more varieties of plum blossoms that you ever knew existed! Along with the advent of the cherry blossoms will be a visit by our son Jonathan and his family. We hope for a few picnics and nature walks! Hooray for grandchildren!



**MISSIONARY RERUITMENT!**

We asked that you ask the Lord of Harvest to send new workers to this field. Well friends, something is afoot! We are in conversation with THREE possible families who are seriously considering God's call! Continue to ask the Lord to make his will clear to these folks! Reaching substantial fund-raising goals is a big hurdle for all of us here, so may we ask you to consider again if you can partner with these new people as you continue to do for us? We also need the blessing of the “home office” folks who have to balance things all over the world (and in North America too) in order to deploy more resources here. The fact that 99% of the Japanese people do not know Christ weighs heavily on our hearts, but we are making a difference, and we believe that the best days lie ahead for the powerful coming of God's kingdom here!

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP**

We are very grateful for so many who hold us and our work up in prayer, some every day! It's very humbling, but also a huge encouragement to us! Giving to provide the financial resources is also a way that you bless us and the work we do. *Thank you!* Please pray for us as we work with our East Asia team to develop plans and budgets for fiscal year 24-25, which starts on July 1, 2024. Proposals are due in about a couple of weeks!

*Larry and Ruth*

*Please see page 2! There's a bit more to tell...*