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October 25, 2023

**WHAT HAPPENED TO THE SPALINKS?**

It wasn't supposed to be such a busy or sultry summer, but we have survived, and I'm happy to be able to send you an update at last! God has been very good to us!

**PRAYER ITEMS: ANSWERS (!) AND REQUESTS**

I am very thankful to have finished giving my messages at the Reformed Church in Japan's all eastern Japan retreat, August 1 and 2. The messages are posted on YouTube, and they will be printed and distributed later this fall, so I am hoping for ongoing impact. In a nutshell, my message was "Repent, believe, and hold fast." I have a couple of follow up opportunities I'm preparing for. Your prayers for this event were abundantly answered! Thank you!

Though there are still cases & new versions of Covid, we are moving beyond pandemic strategies and are able to revive many activities (small groups, fellowship meals, etc.) that give more opportunities to worship and to introduce newcomers to the faith. But we also want to use diligently those new strategies we developed under the restrictions, like Internet platforms to widen the impact of ministry. So there are challenges along with thanksgiving!

We in the Japan mission are still very much in a "recruit new workers" mode. Our new missionaries, Perrin and Jodi Werner, wrestle with language learning and make progress towards fluency, and I am excited for their future work. We surely are very thankful for them! But we do need more workers to continue the mission work here, still very desperately needed! I have a meeting tonight with one possible new recruit!



We were once again surprised by the number of members our groups welcomed over the last fiscal year: 34 new members added! 25 is the key target number of members for a new church plant to become an organized congregation, so for the third year in a row, we virtually witnessed the birth of an independent congregation! Praise the Lord of the harvest who is gathering his people!

Pray for more of this, please! And ask the Lord to send us more workers!

**MINISTRY OPPORTUNITIES AROUND HERE**

Events I put on my calendar last year involved preaching at special occasions: the 50th anniversary of the start of a church on May 14, a special "Welcome to worship" outreach advertised by newspaper ads and handbills to make a push to raise the profile of the church and reach out to newcomers on May 28, the retreat held in the Sendai area for the three Reformed Church in Japan presbyteries of eastern Japan, where I was the keynote speaker on August 1-2, and there are still more that lie ahead. On Nov. 5 I'll be visiting Numazu Church, whose development I formerly supervised. On Nov. 7 Ruth and I will visit the Sendai area pastors association and participate in the presbytery meeting, then spend a couple of days visiting 2011 earthquake response projects. Nov. 19 will be ministry in Egota Church, commemorating the 60th anniversary of their organization as CRJM's first Tokyo church plant. Another recent opportunity involved a short trip back to the US as Ruth and I participated in the "Healing Hearts Transforming Nations" workshop in Muskegon, Michigan. We extended our trip a bit and were able to have visits with family, a real treat!



**WHAT LIES AHEAD?**

Ruth and I are beginning to make plans to return to North America, probably at the end of 2024. But the Christian Reformed Japan Mission is eager to welcome new workers for a new generation that will continue the outreach in this strategic but largely unreached land. We hope to add two more new families over the next couple of years to build a younger team to take the baton and carry on!

**MEANWHILE, DON'T GET THE WRONG IDEA!**

We're not quite done yet! I cherish the privilege I have to preach the Good News and to help my colleagues to build momentum for more church planting and growth. There are other new initiatives too, like assisting a new group focused on dealing with and preventing abuse in the churches. The Lord continues to bless with health and vision--literally as I had successful lens replacement surgery last month! We are very grateful for your support as we carry on, and we pray it will be the same for you as you also serve him!

Did I mention the need for prayer for new workers in Japan? I sure did! Thanks for standing with us as we carry on and seek to do still more! Thank you also for your financial support! Please see the enclosed -- *the Spalinks*