

Being His Hands

Mission Report & Prayer Requests: Mito, Japan

Joel & Kristin Osborne and Hiroaki & Megumi Akahoshi



Salt of the Earth & Light of the World

The cross of Christ frees us to go forward together to maturity as His disciples

Atsushi, Joel and Hiro have been working together to preach a series throughout January and February based on [Matthew 2-5 & 1 Corinthians 1-3](#) – ‘*Going Forward In Uncertain Times*,’ ‘*I Am The Beloved, You Are The Beloved*,’ ‘*Going Forward In Unity*,’ ‘*The Cross of Christ*,’ ‘*Salt of the Earth, Light of the World*,’ and ‘*Going Forward Toward Maturity*’ - and we’ve also used that to guide our thoughts in communion. **We can see how God chose these passages for us, and how the Spirit is bearing fruit spiritually in our church family.**

One of the striking ways we see fruit borne is in [improved relationships and more spiritual conversations with family and friends who do not yet believe in Christ](#). This should not be taken for granted in a culture that struggles to find ways to share faith even with those (perhaps especially with those) close to them. Recently, several have been sharing about how God

opened doors to be salt and light in tangible ways. People are given renewed hope because of the cross of Christ, and there is a keen hunger to mature.

Joel continues to teach about testimonies on Sunday mornings – who testifies and to whom, and including why, when and how. [We’ve been reading about Stephen’s testimony in Acts 7 \(in conjunction with the movie, Silence\) and now we are moving to John’s gospel to read about the blind man in chapter 9 and the Samaritan woman in chapter 4](#). Now there are 5 regular students who are young, first generation Christians.

Our [couples cell](#) continues to study ‘Five Love Languages’ and we just had a meal, games & prayer time for our [youth](#). This doesn’t include [hours of fellowship, mentoring and discipling](#) that take place throughout the week. The church is growing and we give thanks to God.



Above: (top) Mom teaching quilting to the ladies in Mito; (second) Mom and Auntie with Mom's former student in Okinawa; (third) Mom and Auntie was hosted by one of the church member's family;

Below: (top) with Megumi's whole family; (bottom) with Megumi's sister.



Canadian Guests

When we married, Kristin and I chose a home with the intent that it could be used by God and for God, specifically in providing hospitality for our own families as well as church family and friends. We were blessed to have my mom and aunt with us for nearly seven weeks.

We could see the impact made upon young and old alike in Mito, as well as with friends in Singapore. **One highlight was going to Okinawa and meeting a young woman who was Mom & Dad's neighbor and had come to faith through them. Since then, her husband, her mother, and her grandmother all became followers of Christ, and now her young son is being brought up in faith.**

Another treat was taking Mom and Auntie Val to Cambodia and watching them interact with the team, and see Mom teach about Jesus to the children at BCS and in the local school (she's a pro!). Auntie's gift for listening blessed others.

In such a short time, their ministry encouraged us and breathed life and wisdom into so many young Christians. **They not only came for Christmas, they incarnated Christ themselves with their love and service.** Thanks, Mom and Auntie, for coming.

Hiro & Meg family

"Wow... that was very deep..." "What is the faith that they had...?" "They chose to be killed for it... That must be something very significant..."

A few questions and some silence were there as we were leaving the movie theater when Megumi and I went to watch the movie "Silence" by Martin Scorsese with Megumi's parents and her younger sister.

It was the sister and her dad's idea and suggestion. One night when we went over Megumi's parents' for a dinner in January, the sister told us about the movie and that it's a story about Christians. We're surprised that she brought it up. Whether it's because her older sister and the brother-in-law are Christians or because of something else, she obviously had an interest in it. Then, suddenly her dad said, "Why don't we all go for the movie together then? And let's have a meal after that. That way, we can talk about it and ask them if there is something that we don't understand!" Of course, we both try to build/deepen a relationship with them to share the gospel, but I felt like we saw God was working through them, too. We ended up eating dinner together before the movie but not after because it's a midnight show, but they were so happy and the dad told us "Thank you so much for a wonderful night!!" I realized that **sharing the gospel begins with having these kind of significant moments together.**

Megumi's younger sister starts going to Ibaraki Christian University in April. Please pray for her and Megumi's family, and for us as we continue to deepen the relationship with them.



Love & Serve Mission: Cambodia, December 2016

Going To Places Others Don't Go (or Don't Want To Go)

The choices Jesus made of where to go and who to be with likely made the disciples feel uncomfortable now and then. If they had just stayed with the Jews, it would've been okay, but the Samaritan woman, the Syro-Phoenician woman, and the centurion must've 'pushed their buttons' just a little bit. Had they stayed in the nice 'safe' synagogues, perhaps everything would've been okay, but going out into the storm or having the demon possessed man ('Legion', who was likely naked and scraped up badly) pushed them out of their comfort zones.

'Going To Places Others Don't Go' (or Don't Want To Go) was the theme our discussions and devotionals in December. **Faith in Christ, and following Him will inevitably take us to people and places we wouldn't otherwise choose for ourselves, much like the disciples' experience in the Gospels.**

A team of 24 people, representing 5 nations and spanning in age from 13 to 76 years old took a journey with Christ again to love and serve 300 students and 10 staff at our school in Cambodia, and to be with their families, and to work in 2 local schools in the nearby villages. Struggling with poverty, disease, broken families, corruption in the society and government, deep loneliness and embarrassment – we faced them with a sense of hope and love of Christ.

People's problems weren't solved, but we came alongside people and that makes a difference. **Perhaps those who change the most are those who go to serve, to listen, and to love. We truly discover the heart of Christ and become formed spiritually as we obediently follow His lead into the places others don't go or don't want to go.** Please continue to celebrate with us what God is doing and pray for our ongoing mission there.

Get Involved: Prayer

- * **Ibaraki Christian (Campus Ministry)** – as we wind down another academic year, and prepare for the new one coming in April, please pray for Yoshiya Noguchi and his Religious Dept. staff as they seek ways to bring Christ more tangibly into the lives of the faculty and students. Pray for us as we take 3 new freshman to Cambodia, that our relationships will deepen and that we can connect spiritually with them and with their friends in the upcoming year.
- * **EBC (English Bible Class), Café Night & Karate Kids** – ask God to bless these various ways Mito church is trying to reach out into the community to form meaningful relationships and to shine the light of Christ in Mito city.
- * **Kristin & Megumi** – pray for our wives who both serve as teachers; pray for Kristin as she continues her graduate studies and tries to balance that with work and her areas of ministry; pray for Megumi and Yoko (fellow church member) who are coordinating chapel for the Christian mission kindergarten where they work.
- * **Love & Serve Mission** – next month (March), Hiro and Joel will lead a team of nine (including themselves) to Cambodia. The other seven students are all university students (4 freshmen, 1 sophomore, 1 junior, 1 senior – 3 guys, 4 girls). Please pray for seeds of faith to be planted in them.



*Above: One of our close friends, the Suzukis came to spend Christmas with us from Sendai;
Below: We continue to be so blessed and encouraged through many of the church members. Alex is one of them, for sure.*



Our Needs: Financial Partners

Financial support can be sent to:

IN CANADA

Bramalea Church of Christ,
Attn: Joel Osborne/Hiro Akahoshi – Japan/Cambodia Mission
750 Clark Blvd, Brampton, ON Canada L6T 3Y2
Phone: (905) 792-2297; Email: mail@bramaleacofc.ca

IN AMERICA

S&R Ministries, Inc,
Attn: Joel Osborne/Hiro Akahoshi– Japan/Cambodia Mission
PO Box 563, Edmond, OK 73083

For questions or more information, please contact us at:

Joel Osborne – joelsensei5@gmail.com

Hiroaki Akahoshi – hxa04@acu.edu

We can also communicate via Skype and Facetime.