



The Kingdom of Heaven The darkness of a long, cold winter has finally started to be edged out by the light of the sun. It's amazing how the sun affects our well being. Having come to Japan after life in sunny Florida, we realize now how much we miss the sun's rays. The same can be said about the spiritual state of Japan. If you've ever been completely surrounded by unbelievers, then you know what a spiritual drain it can be. We came to Japan a little over six months ago with the hope of sharing the Kingdom but quickly realized that this will be a long process. Estimates say that less than 1% of Japan's 127 million people belong to the Kingdom, yet that number is declining as the older Christian generation dies. It'd be easy to distance ourselves from the darkness and only hang around people of the light, but that is not why we were called. God's Word always reminds us of our mission.

Matthew 8:11 I say to you that many will come from the east and the west, and will take their places at the feast with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven.

We are messengers sharing invitations to the great banquet. Japanese people love to eat, so we are keen to feed them both physically and spiritually. Would you pray about it?

Daniel 7:27 Then the sovereignty, power and greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven will be handed over to the saints, the people of the Most High. His kingdom will be an everlasting kingdom, and all rulers will worship and obey him.

DID YOU KNOW? わかりましたか。

春 The kanji for spring (*haru*) is made from the characters for 'sun' and 'rising higher.' It represents the idea that after the dark winter,

this is the season when the sun rises higher and grows more intense.



We were blanketed with a foot of snow in one night. It reminded us of God's promised blessings - *overflowing*.



Like a rare Big Foot sighting, we were excited to spot our first wild monkey in Karuizawa. They are known to be messy.



We enjoyed worship with our Tokyo team and meeting Maya Megumi, the newest addition to the *Shields of Faith* family.



Ellissa has starting taking guitar lessons to join the worship teams at church.

What talents has God gifted you with to serve Him?

The days around equinox (both spring and autumn) are called *Higan no Chu-Nichi*. Because these days mark the changing of seasonal weather patterns, the Japanese have this saying: "*Atsusa samusa mo Higan made*," which means, "Heat and cold last until *Higan*."

Despite the beauty of the area where we live, beauty doesn't prevent people from killing themselves. Nearly 600 people committed suicide in our prefecture last year.

Ai No Kesshin is the Japanese Christian adoption agency through which God brought two children to Team Expansion missionaries Corey and Nicki Shields.

Ai No Kesshin is looking to place children and also for volunteers to help answer calls.

Email rtgordon@tokai.or.jp for more information.



Once you get outside of major cities like Tokyo, this is what the typical landscape looks like. This mountain range hems in the southern boundary of our little town of Karuizawa attracting many Tokyoites in the winter for ski and snowboarding fun.

Prayer and Praises

Praises that Garry got an A in the Mission Theology course last semester.

Praises that we have all recovered from our colds, and Weiling's hearing is slowly being restored as medication deals with a serious ear infection.

Pray for God to raise up more workers who will minister in Japan.

Pray about how you can become more involved in sharing the Kingdom of Heaven with others.

Pray for fruitful prayer walks that our teammates do in Tokyo.

From Team Expansion's President Doug Lucas

Have you ever tried to analyze what constitutes the *missionary call*? What I mean is, why would a reasonable man or woman decide to leave home, family and friends for the sake of people he or she doesn't even know yet? During college, I remember learning that a missionary call is when "one sees a need and knows that he or she can meet that need." It was Frederick Buechner who wrote, "The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet." (Wishful Thinking: A Seeker's ABC). Perhaps it's that way with your favorite Team Expansion missionary. For my part, I am certainly inspired by many of them. In fact, if I ever waiver in my own commitment to *the Cause*, all I have to do is remember their response to the call and, for some reason, I take strength. If you regularly partner with a Team Expansion worker in prayer and/or in giving, you're a part of that strength. For that, we are very grateful. May God bless you as you participate regularly in encouraging an ongoing commitment to that *missionary call*!

Thank you for your partnership and support!



Please pray that Aaron would participate more in class. He always sings Japanese songs at home, but not at school.



Garry shared a message about the *sign of Jonah* during English service at Karuizawa International Fellowship.



Add us as a friend on FACEBOOK
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Help Us Proclaim His Name!

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