



Colby & Theresa Weinhofer

Empowering National Leaders to plant Authentic National Churches

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BEING PUSHED FROM THE NEST

Change is something that evokes different reactions in different people. For some people it is a welcome change of pace, while for others it is a scary venture into unknown territory. It often change creates challenges (something which evokes a similar polarized response) which can serve as points of growth. This has been the case with Theresa and me these past two months. The departure of the other Christar couple living here in Ube back in January meant that we were the only Westerners here at the Lighthouse Church. This has given us plenty of opportunities to put the language we have been working so hard to learn to good use.



A typical Sunday morning service at the Lighthouse Church

The church has also been facing some challenges and opportunities for growth. In addition to having to pick up the responsibilities of our former coworkers, they found out recently that one of the deacons, along with his wife, will be transferred to another prefecture six hours away. This is can be a big challenge for a church with an average Sunday attendance of 15 people. It will certainly be a time of being pushed "out of the nest" as the church people have to take over some ministries and make decisions to discontinue others. People will certainly be going outside their comfort zones and the church leadership will have an opportunity to decide its priorities all on its own.

Recent Happenings

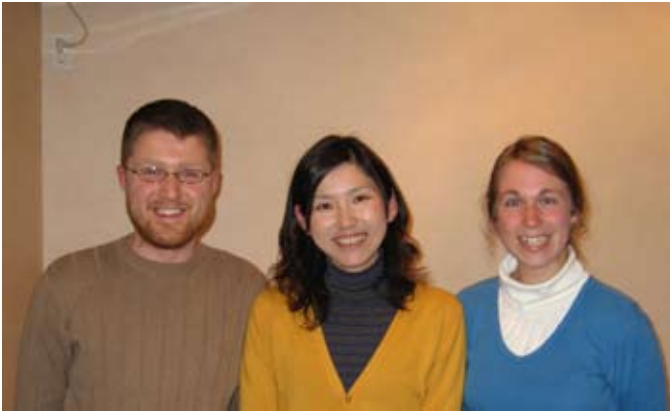
January ended with two celebrations as the church celebrated its 10th anniversary and also the conclusion of the Burwells' ministry. It also brought our one and only significant snowfall – just over an inch and melted by afternoon – although it was enough to have us scrambling to figure out what to do with our English classes. We also spent the last two weeks cramming in as much study as we could for our Level 3 Japanese Language Proficiency Test.

The highlight of February was passing the test on our first try! Far from concluding our language study, this simply means that we are now officially intermediate level students. With that portion

of our study behind us, we began our study of various religious materials, including learning how to share the Gospel and our testimonies in Japanese. On Valentine's Day we celebrated being in Japan for one year and got to enjoy making our own chocolate truffles as we participated in a youth party at church.

Theresa was also able to spend time with some of the women in our English class as they went out for lunch and then to see some sights at a local festival. February ended with the church having its general meeting where the events of last year and the plans for this next year were discussed and approved.

SORTING THROUGH ALL THE CONFUSION



Colby & Theresa with our language helper, Megumi Ono, the wife of one of our deacons.

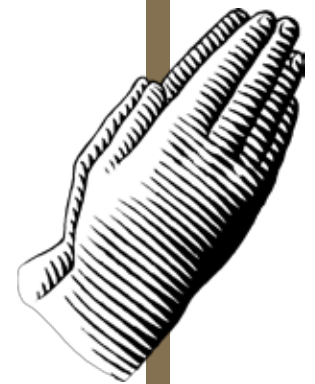
As both language teachers and language learners, we have gotten a front row seat to the quirks of learning a language. One of those is the fact that different languages have different sound inventories which often creates challenges for the learner. English has a larger number of sounds than Japanese which, while it made learning Japanese pronunciation somewhat easier for us, makes hearing and pronouncing similar English words tricky for our students. Japanese uses a sound known as a “flap R” which is somewhat in the middle of the R and L sounds in English. It is therefore

very difficult for them to hear and pronounce the two different sounds in English. Sometimes this can be easily overlooked, but it can cause some problems. People with a fear of “frying” would need to avoid fast food joints rather than airplanes and although the traditional Japanese breakfast is different from a western one, the thought of eating “lice” for breakfast is just as unappetizing to them as it is to us.

We also make our own share of mistakes. The other day, Colby told one of our friends that at his doctor’s visit, he was given some “kusa” (weeds) instead of “kusuri” (medicine). Given the recent popularity of herbal remedies, you can see how this would cause some confusion. We can even confuse things in English. During our religious study recently, we were talking with one of our helpers, Megumi, about words for life and specifically about saving someone’s life. By way of example, Colby mentioned giving an antidote to someone who had been poisoned. Megumi looked puzzled and upon further conversation, we realized that in his haste, Colby had looked up the word anecdote (an interesting story) and used that Japanese word instead. We all had a good laugh!

PRAISE AND PRAYER

- Pray for the Lighthouse Church as it faces some uncertainty about this next year. Pray for God’s wisdom and guidance over them and that more people would be willing to participate and lead various ministries. Pray for growth for the church, both in numbers and in spirit.
- We have been asked by the church to plan two children’s meetings and two youth meetings for this coming year. Because kids and teens are not always as understanding of difficulties in the language, it can sometimes be hard to communicate. Pray that we would have wisdom as we plan these events, that we would be able to use our Japanese well, and that the lives of the kids and teens would be impacted.
- Please continue to pray for our Japanese study as we learn the religious aspects of the language. Pray that we would be able to pray and share in Japanese with ease and accuracy. Pray for opportunities to practice in low-pressure situations.



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