



Barton Prayer Letter

JAPAN FOR CHRIST, CHRIST FOR THE WORLD

NOVEMBER 2011

Dear Friends in the Lord,

First of all let me apologize for my long silence. It is not that I have not been thinking of you who have been praying for me. It is simply that life has been happening pretty fast these past few months. Excuses? Well, you know.

It has now been five months since Cheryl was called home to be with our Lord on June 26th. I miss her. But I wouldn't call her back. She has received that for which we are all striving, that for which we have given our lives to Japan for—the reward of eternal life. I have testified to many of the beauty and grace of her last days.

Despite all the pain and suffering she went through, I never heard her complain or fuss during those eleven days in the hospital. I still am amazed when I recall it. Instead, I heard her say, "I'm sorry," a thousand times, and "Thank you," two thousand times to everyone who visited, to all who lent a helping hand, from nursing staff to dieticians to housekeeping staff to the many who visited and called. We had been married for 35 years, and yet, even I had not yet seen the depth of faith and beauty of spirit that she exhibited in those last difficult days.

I thank God for the privilege of being her husband. I thank God for our family who surrounded us with love. I thank God for all of you who lifted us up in prayer and helped us remain. *Steady Till Sunset*

The Campus
of Tamagawa
Seigakuin

STEADY TILL SUNSET

If you haven't heard, the book project for which we had asked you to pray for this past spring was finished and Cheryl's second devotional book, *Steady Till Sunset* came off the presses at the end of May. It was a glorious day for Cheryl; one for which she had pushed hard to bring about. The book contains thirty-one devotionals, many dealing with her cancer journey and all inspired through her walk with the Lord. The book is available through Warner Press.

I am now working with Cheryl's dear friend and faithful translator, Kazumi So, so the book can be published in Japanese this coming spring.

BACK TO JAPAN

I returned to Japan on August 2nd. That first week back was the national summer conference of the Japanese Church of God. I then climbed Mt. Fuji with Cheryl's picture in my pocket, visited Tarumi Church of God in Kobe, and spent a short time helping with tsunami relief in a town in the Tohoku region.

EARTHQUAKE/Tsunami RELIEF

Many have asked about the recovery from the devastating Great Eastern Japan Earthquake and Tsunami which occurred on March 11 this past spring. You have read reports of the amazing calmness and stoicism of those whose lives were forever altered by this indescribable natural disaster. Those reports are true. The work of restoration goes on now and will take years to complete, but people all over the world have sent gifts of love and words of encouragement. The Church of God in North America sent a total of \$233,696.31 for the relief efforts. Thank you for caring. Lives have been put back on track and the presence of God's church has been enhanced by your gifts.

There are no churches of God in the stricken area. This in itself says to me that there is still much work for the Church of God to do in Japan.

THE WORK

My responsibilities at the church and school started upon my arrival in August. I was pleased to be back in the pulpit of Tamagawa Church of God. I am so thankful for Tomoko Fujiwara, the church's associate pastor who kept things running smoothly during my absence, and does the same even now that I am back!

On November 13th we had "A Day Of Blessing For Children" at the church with 30 children participating. This is an adaptation of a traditional Japanese ceremony called "7-5-3", held annually at Shinto Shrines for the blessing of little ones. Many of the parents who came that Sunday do not come to church regularly. The church has found a calling in this neighborhood to reach out to families of small children.

I also visited Korea in late October with our 175 junior class girls. Korea and Japan have had some difficult times over their common history, but the positive spirit and joy seen in the faces of our girls and their new friends at our sister school, Soong Eui Girls' School in Seoul, give bright hope for good international relations in the future. It is amazing what a "personal touch" can do to heal old wounds.

OUR FAMILY

Our kids returned to their homes and teaching positions on July 27th; Ben to Guam, Stephanie and Donald and kids to China. I am so thankful that all were able to be there when Cheryl passed away. The greatest sacrifice for us as missionaries is separation from family. In the end, we were all together. What a blessing that was. How faithful is our God!

Praise!

Praise God for the baptism of 80 year old Haruo Murayama at his home on October 22nd. Please pray as he battles cancer, and for his wife, Eiko, as she stands by his side.

Please Pray

*Stephanie will give birth to our third grandchild at the end of this month. She and the family are in Beijing for the birth. Pray for safety for her and our "little man", as she calls him.

*Pray for the Japan Staff Retreat to be held on Nov. 26th. Pray for renewal and encouragement. Pray for new SAM Nelecia Murrell and her work in the Kansai area churches.

*Pray for the Churches of God in Japan as Christmas season approaches. It is a pivotal time of evangelism.

*Pray for Tama Sei's Christmas Praise Service and the 700 or so alumnae and PTA parents who will attend.

*Pray for Tamagawa Church of God; specifically for the Christmas Eve Candle Service on Dec. 24th and worship on the 25th.

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