



About half of the choir (see below)



A recent photo

“Jesus had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd.” Mark 6:34

Christmas report

Because of severely depleted numbers, we were unable to have our usual Christmas outreach meeting. But God had an unusual plan for us, one thing amazingly leading to another!

We learnt that the big Christmas festival in Osaka on 4th Dec was to feature an 81 year old phenomenally talented guitarist. He became a Christian at the age of 76, and was to share his story. It would be followed by a clear Bible message. It turned out that most of our many senior friends had been his fans since their youth, and the interest was high. Of course nobody could go as far as Osaka, so we began a campaign of visiting our many friends to introduce them to the You-tube connection, at the same time sharing other Christmas material. (Not all seniors are familiar with You-tube!)

One of our friends is the co-ordinator of a small local choir. She herself watched the Osaka event, and introduced it to the other choir members. She also invited us to sit in on their choir practice of traditional British Christmas carols sung in Japanese! Although the singing was in Japanese, none would have had much idea of what they were singing about! But the quality of the production was magnificent! When the Japanese people do something, they do it well!!

We discovered that we knew about half of the choir members and some have been to outreach functions at the church. In addition, we were unexpectedly treated as special guests, and Shuichi was asked to speak briefly. He took the opportunity of telling the story behind the song Amazing Grace, which the conductor had sung in English.

We were also free to distribute to the choir members the wonderful story of a family of 5 that we knew in another place (the mother and one daughter had not long come to the Lord). It is the story of their experience of betrayal by a close friend, involving them in a debt of over \$500,000. They chose the path of costly forgiveness, all working overtime for 11 years to clear the debt. They passed through other life-risking tragedies on the way, too big and complex to describe here. The father came to the Lord, and on his initiative, reconciliation was achieved with his false friend, releasing all concerned from the years of pain. It was enabled by the power of the risen Christ in their lives. This story illustrates so well the meaning and purpose of Christmas, what Christ has done for us through the cross, and can now do in us.

We have been sharing this story widely, including in the final senior’s English class and there was unusual depth of interest. This kind of betrayal is something that a surprising number of Japanese people have experienced. We personally know 3 others. We are sharing the gospel with them, but as yet without leading to faith. Please pray for their spiritual release.

Friends in trouble

Mr Mitamura:

We have mentioned this man before. I taught him English at a university over 40 years ago. He has two adult daughters, one handicapped and institutionalized, the other a social drop out since her own uni days. His wife, with all her trials, has occasionally become suicidal. In recent years. She sometimes retreats to her room, having her meals there alone, and not coming out for months. The daughter also behaves in this way. Mr M always welcomes us on our occasional visits, and enjoys talking to Shuichi, but has a strong (Satan inspired) sense of responsibility to care for the state of his dead parents through ancestor worship, as well as local Buddhist “responsibilities”. This will not release him to follow through.

But recently, there has been a change. He suddenly rang and made an appointment to come and talk. This time he really came!! He spent a couple of hours honestly pouring out his heart. In the end he was willing for Shuichi to pray with him. When we recommended his reading the life of Christ, he replied, “That’s funny, just the other day, I decided to dig out the Bible you gave me years ago as a student! But the print is too small for me now.” We gave him a “Concise Bible” to take home.

A few days later he rang to say the three of them had been able to eat together! He called it a miracle. He followed it up with another visit, but it is not clear, whether he is moving forward.

Please pray for our contact with him, and if possible with his wife, and for spiritual release.

Mr and Mrs Azai.

We mentioned this couple in our last prayer letter. Until recently he had been this area leader for many years. We told how they had welcomed us warmly, and had even supported advertising for the church. As reported, we had a very good visit with them on our way home from the Autumn Fun Festival, when Mrs A shared deeply personal things with us for the first time.

Recently we had a need to visit them in their home again. We went to the home repeatedly, called out, but no one responded, even though the door was not locked and there seemed to be someone in the inner rooms. So finally, we waited longer than usual, and eventually Mrs Azai appeared looking like death warmed up! “Shuichi asked, “Are you alright?”

Then it all spilled out! “My daughter died!” (It was 2 weeks since the funeral.)

The daughter was only 46, an only child, and lived with them with her husband and son,. She had no health issues of any kind. She was sleeping beside Mrs Azai. In the middle of the night, she made a snoring-type noise, her blood pressure suddenly shot up, and she was dead! (She did not have high BP!).

In her deep distress Mrs Azai wanted to talk about it. I asked permission to pray with her, and she readily gave it, knowing it would be to the Christian God. So I took her hands and in prayer brought her to the heavenly Father in the Name of Christ. At that she began to weep, and slowly calmed down.

We ask for prayer for our contact with this couple too, and for their spiritual release.

Ryoko K

We were on our way to a visit, but “unfortunately “ needed to park at a little distance. Suddenly a lady came out of a nearby house, saw us, hesitated, looked closer, and ran up excitedly. “How lovely to see you again!” she cried. She was an old English class student, married a Britisher and went to Osaka over 10 years ago! She told us that she and her daughter had recently come back to stay with her parents, whom we already knew quite well. Are you here for a while?” I asked. “We are here to live!” was her answer. In rural Japan, this usually means there has been a divorce, with all the pain that involves for all the family. She wants to keep in touch. Please pray for God to open the way for personal time with her.