

# HERRINGTONS IN HARUNA

## January 2010

We are excited to start the New Year! We are looking forward to continuing the work the Lord has put in front of us. This year we are hoping to have a "Gospel Meeting" in March, take our language classes to the next level, start an LST style class, teach more about Jesus to the young children that come to the Wednesday evening classes, and further our own relationships with God. Pray that God will change hearts here!

### THE WORK IN HARUNA

We began our New Year here with a planning session with Brother Obata. Part of our new plan here in Haruna is to have Paul preach once a month in Japanese. It's a lot of hard work for Paul and Brother Obata in translation, but we feel it's important work. From our planning sessions in the New Year we have decided to teach 2 complimentary sermon series about God's will for us. Brother Obata is focusing on personal discipleship and Paul is focusing on the church as a whole. He is establishing what the church should look like from the Bible and our role. This month Brother Obata focused on humility, servant hood, and Paul preached on the Restoration Movement and "What is the church?" Together we hope to create a greater understanding of our role as Christians in today's society.

On January 11th we started the day off watching a Japanese New Years tradition that they had been preparing for a couple of weeks. They built up large bamboo stalks and put brush underneath with many Daruma dolls inside and around the outside. Then people put their new years wishes on pieces of paper and tied them somewhere on the brush pile. At 7:30am they lit it on fire. Along with the fire they put sake (alcoholic drink) into shorter bamboo stalks next to the big bon fire. Many of the locals had hot sake to ring in the new year. And for the kids (and any missionaries) they had a sweet non-alcoholic rice drink called amasake to keep us warm. They really had a big turn out with lots of food and a warm fire. We enjoyed walking around talking to more of our neighbors and Paul was introduced to the local volunteer fire department. Since Paul was about their age they asked if he would be interested in volunteering some time. At first we thought it was just nice that they asked, but after thinking about it we decided it would be a great idea if he could help out. What a great way to earn respect from our area and get to know other men Paul's age. This gives Paul a good goal for fitness training and for language study too. Well, we will see if he can do it next year!



Potluck Sunday with two visitors.

The bamboo fire for the New Year celebration.

*BELOW:* Paul, Stacey and the volunteer fire department for Haruna.



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### MONTHLY MEETINGS

Paul and Brother Obata made the trip to Yokota to go to another preacher's meeting. It's important for the ministers here to encourage each other and this also is a time when they have one of the men lead a study geared towards the growth of the ministers themselves. It was good to see and encourage the many ministers around Tokyo.

We took another trip by ourselves this month towards Tokyo. The Obatas had a funeral to attend and couldn't make it to a meeting in Mito. So we decided to go by ourselves. We made it there with no problems and the meeting continued the theme of discipleship. We really enjoyed listening and even understood most of the lesson in Japanese. Afterwards we rewarded ourselves with a trip to Akihabara (electric town) in Tokyo. It was fun to be on our own exploring, in one of the most exciting cities in the world.



The meeting in Yokota.

Paul leading Wednesday night Bible class in the office.



### CHILDREN'S CLASS



New kids coming for class on Wednesday evening.



Our kids class took over the big room. We've been able to spread out and start new material.



The children's classes are really picking up. We are so excited to see the young smiling faces coming to the building every week. We are trying hard to teach them the Truth through a very limited vocabulary. We know most of the children come for the English exposure, but planting the seed of Jesus is our job. We hope to be able to see, one day, the fruits these seeds produce. Paul in 1Corinthians 3:6 tells us *"I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow."* It is so wonderful to see the scriptures alive and how they apply to our lives. Last month we had very low attendance, but with God's help He brought more kids to our class. We've had up to 7 kids and 3 adults (moms that stay with their kids) at once. We actually had to take over the adult's class room. So now the kids and I are in the main room of the building and the adults meet in the office. I have to say it's very nice to spread the kids out. It has made teaching the children much easier too. In the coming months I hope to add more crafts and activities to the lessons, so that they have a better understanding of who Jesus and God are.

Go to [www.herringtonjapan.com](http://www.herringtonjapan.com) for more information and to read our blog.

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## PRAYER REQUEST



We have told you a little about Junko-san's battle with cancer in past newsletters, but we need your help even more now. Junko has been in and out of the hospital 3 times in 2 months. She has gotten steadily worse. As a get well present I drew out the words "Amazing Grace" and a scripture for her. With the talent of Mark Yeakley and David Earles we gave Junko-san a copy of an acappella version of the song so that she could listen to it while she was in the hospital. It brought tears to her eyes as she listened to the song. The doctors told her there is nothing more they can do to prolong her life. She has been visiting the church for about 3 and 1/2 months. She has a strong curiosity, but has not made any steps to salvation that we know of. We visited her in the hospital recently and she was in such pain. She cried the entire time we were there. We sang a few song to her and then asked if she needed us to leave. After a prayer we left with tears in our eyes as we watched her curl up into a ball and try to fall asleep. It is a scary thing to see someone so close to death not know their Savior. But in the end none of us know how close to death we are. We are trying to take every opportunity to show God's love to her, and over the next few weeks we are going to sit down with her and try to show her as much of God's word that she will let us. Please pray for Junko-san's heart and that God will give us any and every opportunity to study with her. With just us, this is impossible, but with God, all things are possible.



Saying farewell to the Matsumotos.

**Top left:**  
Obata, Amy, Hamana,  
Rieko, & Ryosuke,  
**Bottom left:**  
Paul, Mr. Matsumoto,  
Mrs. Matsumoto, &  
Stacey

## CHANGES ARE DIFFICULT

This month we had a family move from the congregation here in Haruna. We know this happens all the time in American and sometimes it's months before we realize families are gone, but with such a small family of believers in Japan it makes a big impact. The Matsumotos decided to return to the Plymouth Brethren church where Mrs. Matsumoto grew up and her mother attended for 50 years. We were sad to see them go, but we know God will take care of their needs where ever they go. The Plymouth Brethren are very similar to the churches of Christ but they generally are much more conservative. After services we enjoyed a small lunch and the Matsumotos stayed and sang songs with all of us. We will use this as a time to turn to the Lord and trust that He knows what's best for all of us. We are excited to see who God will bring into our path in the coming months. And it inspires us to increase our outreach in the community!

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1ST GOSPEL MEETING IN HARUNA

On March 17th, 18th and 19th we will be hosting Haruna's first Gospel Meeting. We are very excited to be able to do this. Our theme will be **"The Abundant Life"** John 10:10 *"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly"*

Derin Dopps, Tim O'Neal, and Jason Leslie are coming from Northside church of Christ in Wichita, Kansas. They are coming to Japan for 5 days on their way home from mission work in the Philippines. Each of them will be speaking one of the three nights to a variety of listeners. Obata-san has never had the man power to support a Gospel meeting before and is looking forward to seeing how the community receives it. So please pray for the hearts of those in Haruna and the surrounding cities. The congregation will be passing out about 2,000 flyers door to door and any business that will allow us to display a flyer. We are hoping to have at least 50 people each night. We will give each person that comes a packet of information about the Church and we will give everyone a copy of the New Testament Japanese Bible. Each night the men will talk about a different aspect of the "Abundant Life." They will speak in English and Obata-san will translate. After each talk we will provide snacks and tea for the audience and to have a chance to talk to those that come and give them an opportunity to ask any questions they may have.

## **Special Prayer requests for this meeting:**

- Derin, Tim, and Jason's preparation for their trip to the Philippines and Japan.
- The congregation and Haruna church of Christ to provide as much support as they can to this outreach and be able to join in this work as the Body of Christ.
- Obata-san, that he may be able to translate everything with as little stress as possible.
- That we may be able to get the congregation involved and get all the preparations here done.



Takasaki. The city we will be inviting to this meeting.

## **Our Prayer Requests**

- The health of Obata-san and his wife.
- To keep studying the Japanese language and building relationships as best we can.
- To be able to help the Christians here to understand what it means to be a disciple of Christ.
- To step out of our comfort zone and reach out to those that God is putting in front of us.
- The health and salvation of Junko as she is battling a very severe cancer.
- The Gospel meeting in March with guest speakers: Derin Dopps, Tim O'Neal, & Jason Leslie.



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