

Second Quarter Report  
September,2017

“Should not I pity Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than 120,000 persons who do not know their right hand from their left, and much cattle?”

Jonah 4:11

Yamagata City has double the population of that of Nineveh, i.e., 250,000 people. Historically speaking, people in Yamagata have not held to a religion that would offer human sacrifices to a deity as many ancient Middle and Near Eastern countries of idol worshippers had done, including this great city of Nineveh. Yet, Yamagata people have been no less sinners than those in the ancient city of Nineveh in that they have kept on ignoring and turning their eyes from their one and only Creator and Savior, the true source of their life. If the Lord our God was so gracious to offer a way to repentance and forgiveness of Nineveh’s sin, surely, He has the same heart of compassion and patience toward those in Yamagata “who cannot tell their right hand from their left.” Thus, the Lord still has much to say and much to do for the gospel work in Yamagata. What do you think?

As is true with our long-time friend, Mr. Tada, a large and serious element which prevents the Japanese people in general from coming to faith and walking in the Lord Jesus, is, ironically enough, a matter pertaining to their “life after death.” Most Japanese people are concerned about their graveyard. For one thing, they are troubled by the reality, upon coming to faith in Christ, of whether they will be allowed to be buried in their ancestral graves. For another thing, they are afraid to face problems such as “Who will look after the ancestral family graves?” Here are three Christians who have gone through these problems because, first, they have learned to stand strong in obedience to Christ deciding in faith not to follow the Buddhist way of idolizing their deceased family members, and secondly, because our church has its own graveyard to bury our loved ones. Many churches in Japan do not have their own burial place, which in turn causes Christians and seekers to struggle with heathen burial customs because they most likely have to bury the family members in a Buddhist temple. Mrs. Akiho and Mrs. Suzuki lost their husbands rather recently and they finally buried their husbands (They had been already cremated.) in the church cemetery this June after some struggle with their family Buddhist connections. BTW, our church cemetery is one which was purchased jointly almost 30 years ago with five RCJ churches and one OPC Mission Chapel in Sendai City. We are glad that we don’t have to argue concerning the Women in the Office with our RCJ brothers and sisters in heaven!



From left, myself, Kotaro, Mrs. Akiho's son, Mrs. Akiho, Mrs. Suzuki and Shio Yashima, Mrs. A's daughter. Kotaro is the only non-Christian in this group. I had the privilege in the service of introducing to him the message of hope of resurrection when Christ returns!

In May I met with the Rev. Daisuke Kimura of the Presbyterian Church in Japan, who is a pioneer evangelist pastor at Grace Center Church Sendai. As mentioned many times, Sendai is the largest city in the Tohoku (Northeastern) District on the Honshu Island of Japan with a population of 1,100,000, about 40 miles east of Yamagata. The PCJ had not had any gospel work in this region until after the 2011 East Japan Great Earthquake and Tsunami. Thus, opening an evangelistic post in Sendai is the first step for the PCJ's plan to expand its gospel ministry and to establish a new presbytery in the Tohoku District. Now, our Yamagata Reformed Church, having left the RCJ (Reformed Church in Japan) and now working together in co-operation with the OPC Japan Mission, is in search of a national Reformed and Presbyterian denomination.



In the picture above on my left is the Rev. Daisuke Kimura,  
and the two young people to his left are members of his church.

The Presbyterian Church in Japan is one of the few denominations we are blessed to consider as our joining partner. This is the reason why I met with Mr. Kimura in May, and in June we invited him to our pulpit, extending the right hand of fellowship to our brethren in the PCJ. I am planning to meet him again this September for further discussion to deepen our understanding.

Our daughter Megumi and her husband Jason had their second baby, Milan Zoe, last year. They asked their own church session in NY if was OK for Milan to be baptized by her grandfather. With their NY church's consent and together with our session's interview with the parents, I was honored to baptize our No. six grandchild on August 6th, on the day of which all our Yaegashi clan from NY and Tokyo, except for James (our oldest son who had a film shooting in CA), gathered to celebrate the occasion. They also gave me a surprise 70<sup>th</sup> birthday party.



Milan Zoe, our 6<sup>th</sup> grandchild, being baptized by her Jii-Ji (Grandpa in Japanese)



On Milan's Infant Baptism Sunday 14 Yaegashi children and grandchildren gathered at Yamagata Reformed church on Aug. 6<sup>th</sup>

On the last Thursday through Saturday in July we held our annual Vacation Bible School. In the past several years we have lost more and more children. This year we have only two in our regular Sunday School. The rest of the participants for the VBS came from various contacts outside the church! This summer one such connection this summer was Mrs. Jamna Harada, a Nepalian married to a Japanese, with two children. Just a couple of days before the opening day, I went to visit her at work and re-invited her children to come to the VBS. And they did. She brought her two lovely children. I made a joke about it to our church people, saying "I just successfully made a business contract and earned some customers!" Indeed, it happened as Jesus taught, "Ask and it shall be given to you. Seek and it shall be found. Knock and it shall be opened."



From left Hina (10), Julie (8), Mrs. Harada, Mrs. Akiho, Kei (Katie's student), Katie & Mrs. Ito

This year's theme for the VBS was "The Adventure and Life of Joseph." Kei in the picture wears the fabulous coat Jacob gave to Joseph. When we heard that our MTW friends held their VBS, some 100 children gathered, my reaction was that I wish we could have had at least thirty! Some might say, "Why not 100?" Well, our church can hold only up to 35 and beyond that we would literally not be able to move. However, please do continue praying for us that these children will join our Sunday School and their parents come to church!

Prayer Requests:

- 1) That the Lord help Mr. Sasaki and Dr. Yamamoto to be prepared soon for ordination as elders and Mr. Inoue as a deacon. They are now studying with me the Westminster Confession of Faith.
- 2) That the Lord encourage our members to bring one person to church or to weekly Bible meetings either from their family or from their friend-circle to share the gospel.
- 3) That the Lord will grant us sufficient funds for re-modeling our old house-church. It can hold only about 35 people. The church has about ¥10,000,000(c.\$100,000) and we are short of ¥150,000,000 to reach the goal for the building project.
- 4) That the Lord will provide a successor to take my place upon my retirement and show us the way to join a sound Reformed-Presbyterian body, hopefully and prayerfully, before the end of 2022.
- 5) That the several seekers who faithfully come to worship and hear the gospel every Sunday may soon come to profession of faith.

Your servant for Christ's sake in Yamagata Japan,

Kazuhiko (Kaz) Yaegashi

OPC Japan Mission Missionary & Ministerial Member of the PCA

Presenting the report to:

The Presbytery of MS Valley of the PCA

The Committee on Foreign Missions of the Ohio Presbytery of the OPC

The Committee for the Support of Japan Mission

The Committee on Foreign Missions of the OPC General Assembly