



JCFN Japan & North America

Directors Letter August 2019

✿JCFN Japan Ministry Report✿ (Chihiro Okada, Japan Director)

◎BBWIT19

BBWIT19 (Bridge Builders Whatever IT Takes) was held at a church in Machida, Tokyo from July 14-15. Although it was only for one full day, a total of 22 staff, small group leaders and returnee ministry leaders from various places, spanning from Tochigi in the north and Tottori in the south, attended this leadership training camp.

BBWIT has been taking place every year since 2017 in July over the Japanese national holiday called the “Day of the Sea.” The last 2 BBWITs were organized and led by JCFN staff. However, this year, I (Chihiro Okada) was going to give birth in April and then take a maternity leave until June. Therefore, we recruited some past BBWIT attendants to help organize the training for this year along with other associate staff. They came up with the theme for the training and planned the entire program by themselves. “Committing to the Vision” was the theme for this year. The training provided the participants to reflect on God’s vision for their personal lives as well as for their ministries. At the end of the program, our chairman of the board, pastor Hiroaki Yonai, shared a message from the book of Jonah. He encouraged and challenged the participants as he spoke about the struggle that is found where vision and commitment meet. The training camp ended by having all 22 participants sharing about what they gained through attending BBWIT19. We pray that each person will continue to share the blessing from this training as they are sent back to serve in their ministries.



Because of the Tokyo Olympics, the “Day of Sea” is being moved to August next year. Therefore, it will be difficult to hold BBWIT in July. Please pray for wisdom for planning next year’s BBWIT. In addition, we are planning to hold a contemplative retreat in Japan this fall titled “C-BBWIT,” which is a retreat that is similar to the one that has taken place in North America.

◎GiFT Summer Celebration

GiFT (Growing in Fellowship Tokyo) hosted a summer celebration on July 20th. Summer is a time where many returnees come together, including short-term visitors from the US as well as other places. GiFT has been organizing a gathering every July in order to help people connect with each other by making the gathering welcoming and hospitable for newcomers. Guest speaker Mr. Akiya Shimomura gave a message about the importance of being connected with each other and responding to God’s call in our lives. The gathering created opportunities for new people to get connected with ministries and small groups in their neighboring areas.



During the same time as GiFT, ANRK was held in the Kansai area. ANRK will continue to meet as small groups in the future. Please also be praying for those ministries that are focusing on following up on returnees.

✿Please pray for JCFN Japan ✿

◎Let’s give thanks for the BBWIT19 training camp. Please be praying for the participants as they return to their home ministries. Please also be praying for the preparations for C-BBWIT which is scheduled for this October.

◎Please be praying for the returnee followup ministries in various areas. Please pray for those who have returned to Japan this summer.

✿JCFN North America Ministry Report ✿ (Setsu Shimizu, North America Director)

◎Prospects for Japanese Evangelism in North America

Changes in Student Ministry

When JCFN was founded in 1990, there were 59,000 Japanese students studying in the U.S. In 2006, this number was down to 26,000. In 2017, it is even slimmer at less than 19,000. There were more long-term students studying in the U.S., but over the years, there has been an increase in the number of short-term exchange students, numbering about 6000.

In student ministry, the focus used to be more on reaching university students over community college students. This was because those students had more time to be invested in to become Christian disciples, starting from forming a friendship with them, then sharing the gospel and seeing them come to faith, discipling and providing leadership training to them. However, these days, many students are choosing to start out in community colleges for the first two to three years before transferring to a 4-year university. Even at universities, there is an increase in the number of exchange students who are here for less than a year. For those reasons, there has been a shift in focusing on reaching Japanese students at community colleges before they start attending universities.



Moreover, it has become crucial for us to cooperate with other international student ministries. By strengthening our partnership with them, we can better support Christian students who come from Japan in their faith and cultural adjustments, as well as empower them to grow in their faith through their ministry experiences.

By the time this letter reaches you, a new school year would be under way in the U.S. We have already received followup requests for newly-arrived students. Please pray for those students that the gospel would take root in their hearts, that they would stand firm in their faith, that they would be agents to spread the gospel during their time here, and that they would grow as Christ's disciples.

◎Evangelism by Japanese and local churches

There are about 150 Japanese churches in North America. Some of them do not have pastors. Japanese churches come in many different forms, engaging in evangelism according to the local needs. Many Japanese churches held VBS programs during the summer. Many Japanese children in Los Angeles and Detroit attended VBS programs at local churches that partners with JCFN. We hope that these opportunities would lead to not only the children hearing the gospel, but also reaching out to the families. Please especially pray for good followup to happen between Japanese and local churches with families that had children attending VBS.

✿Please pray for JCFN North America✿

◎2 Evangelistic camps will be held in Seattle in August and September. JEMS camp will be from August 16-18, and JXJ camp from September 13-15. Please pray for souls to be saved through those camps.

◎Contemplative retreat called C-WIT for leadership development will be held in San Francisco on September 28th. Please pray for the participants to be able to deepen their relationship with God through this time.

◎A new school year is starting in the U.S. Please pray for the campus ministries mentioned above. Please especially pray that those involved in the ministries will be able to form good initial connections with many new international students, as well as deepen friendships and effectively share the gospel with them.

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