

JCFN North America Director Letter

September 2023

Hallelujah!

How is everyone doing? Fall has arrived, and the new school year has started in North America. Though it's a bit late, I'd like to share various events that took place this summer in North America.

© **Central Conference 2023** ©

CC23 was held over Memorial Weekend (May 27-29) at Trinity Evangelical Divinity School in the suburbs of Chicago. The theme was "The Torch - Toward the Crown of Righteousness," and Pastor Toshiyuki Ozawa (Westminster Japanese Church in Atlanta) delivered messages based on 2 Timothy. This family-style camp, attended by over 100 participants, ranging from children to youth and adults, was not only enjoyed by those from the Midwest but also by newcomers from other regions. It was a time of wonderful fellowship.

© **WIT23 Leadership Camp** ©

WIT23 was held in Southern California near the JCFN office from June 15 to 17, 2023. WIT is a leadership camp where past participants become staff, set themes, and lead sessions through peer teaching. This year, with a small group of 12 participants, we explored the theme "Radical Humility - Jesus Christ is Lord." We spent deep moments reflecting on radical humility as taught by Jesus, confronting our own pride and false humility, and being led to repentance. We firmly believe that humility is the most critical element in leadership.

© **Annual Board Meeting** ©

This year's JCFN board meeting took place over three days for three hours each day, conducted via Zoom. Considering the time zones across Japan, North America, and the UK (with the UK meeting taking place late at night), we deeply appreciate the dedication of the board members. The meeting covered reports from the staff, prospects and plans for the next fiscal year's ministry, discussions on various matters, financial reports and budget discussions, and reports from each ministry. It was a very intense and productive discussion. We hope for an in-person meeting next year.

© **Michigan Bible Camp** ©

From August 11th to 13th, the 26th Michigan Bible Camp was held at Camp Michawana. This time, I had the honor of being invited as one of the speakers, marking JCFN's first-ever participation. This camp is truly a grassroots movement organized by volunteers living in Michigan, who dedicate their time to pray, plan, and prepare for the event. As previously reported, there is a significant population of expatriates working in the automotive industry in Michigan, and despite the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic, outreach efforts have remained active through local church English conversation classes and more. One particular church has been hosting gatherings for the wives of expatriates, with over 150 attendees each week, providing an opportunity for them to encounter the Gospel. It became evident that the success of this ministry depends on Japanese-speaking Christians living in Michigan, and the Michigan Bible Camp appears to be one of the vital places where their faith is nurtured and strengthened. We hope and pray that more leaders will be raised up, and we are committed to supporting this ministry at JCFN.

Following the camp, we had the chance to visit the leaders and pastors involved in a ministry that targets Japanese people in Michigan. Through outreach to families of expatriates after the pandemic, they have noticed a strong openness to the Gospel and a desire for Bible studies among many individuals. While the reasons behind this are not entirely clear, it is wonderful to see the seeds of the Gospel being sown. We also have a

strong desire to plan missions trips for follow-up with those who return to Japan. At JCFN, we aim to create collaborative relationships with host churches and support these follow-up journeys.

◎ Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church (VJGC) ◎

The weekend after the Michigan Bible Camp, from August 18th to 20th, we participated in VJGC's (Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church) church camp. I served as a speaker for the English-speaking group, while my husband, Mao, served as a speaker for the Japanese-speaking group. VJGC is a church primarily made up of Japanese and Japanese-Canadian members, including second and third-generation individuals, which began as a Japanese outreach ministry in 1962. They actively engage in outreach to those who visit Canada for working holidays, study abroad, or work assignments. During this camp, five international students and their families were baptized. The church is bilingual, and the Japanese and English ministries work closely together. One of the EC22 speakers, Mrs. Mari Fukusaku, serves in this church along with her husband, Pastor Tetsuya Fukusako.

Additionally, there is a youth camp held around the same time as EC, and we had the opportunity to hear testimonies from the youth camp. It was evident that the Lord is working powerfully among the youth. During EC, we expressed our desire to get connected via internet with the youth camp for shared worship and prayer time. Not only in Canada but also throughout the United States, youth ministry is becoming more active. It is a time when we must firmly grasp the vision and passion the Lord has for youth.

✿Please pray for JCFN✿

◎ **【Japan】** Please pray that activities in regions such as GiFT (Tokyo), Inspa (Aichi), Chugoku-Shikoku, ANRK (Kansai), and others for returnees will continue to be guided and blessed, while new gatherings are established in new regions to serve as a support system for returnees.

◎ **【Japan】** Please pray for JCE7. Approximately 1,000 participants are expected to attend from all over the country. We would be grateful if you could pray that this evangelistic conference will be used for the mission of Japan and the world, as well as to prepare a support system for returnees in Japan.

◎ **【North America】** On May 27-29, Central Conference 2023 ended with many blessings outside of Chicago, Illinois. We will report back to you, but first we would like to thank you for your prayers! Thank you very much!

◎ **【North America】** WIT23 Leadership Camp will be held on June 15-17. Please pray that they will learn about humility, which is essential as leaders and as Christians, under the theme of "Radical Humility." However, we have talked on staff that humility is not something to be learned, but to be experienced. Please pray that we will listen to the Lord's leading and be prepared.

◎ **【Daisuke Tsuchida】** Please pray for two things for Daisuke. One is that we are currently looking for a place to move. Please pray that we can find a place in the area we want at a reasonable price. Please pray that we can continue to seek with patience and hope. Also, the religious visa renewal process has begun. Please pray that all financial needs will be met promptly and that the visa will be renewed without delay.

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