



# JCFN Japan & North America

## Directors Letter March 2020

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

Reports about the Coronavirus are appearing in many parts of Japan. Let us pray together for God's hand over improving the situation and for healing for all.

#### ◎Area Ministries Welcoming Returnees

We are 2 months into the year 2020. Various area ministries continue to take place to help welcome and connect with returnees.

On January 18, GiFT (Growing in Fellowship Tokyo) met at Eifuku-minami Church in Tokyo. Going along with the New Year's theme, after a time of praise and worship, people were split into small groups according to the areas they lived in, to make and enjoy playing with their original karuta (Japanese card game associated with pictures and letters of the Japanese alphabet, usually played during the New Year). We could see strong local pride and sense of community, or lack of them, of the people in the cards that were created. As the ice was broken among the participants, they were then divided into small groups according to marital status. In those groups, they reflected on the past year, shared highlights, lowlights, as well as their hopes for the new year, and prayed for each other. Although it was a snowy and cold day, there were about 30 participants, including some that had attended Equipper Conference (EC) at the end of last year. I was part of the married people's small group. There were a few people who had gotten married in the last 1-2 years. Being part of this group made me realize that as JCFN, we are entering into a phase where we need to offer more support towards returnees who are transitioning into new life stages. The next GiFT meeting will be on March 7th, and the theme will be Spring Tea Party.



On February 8th, the first All Nations Returnees in Kansai (ANRK) meeting for the year took place. ANRK changed its format from a large group meeting into gathering in small groups, and continues to meet this way. There were about 10 participants this time, including some new participants. The next ANRK meeting will be on May 16th with a picnic.



On February 22nd, Inspireunion (gathering for returnees in Tokai area, a.k.a. Inspa) held a movie event. Inspa holds a monthly small group called Returnees' Cafe (a.k.a. Recafe), but they had not organized a special event in a long time. In 2019, several core members of Inspa got married. Once again, we are seeing how ministry style changes along with transitions in returnees' life stages. We are praying for wisdom to seek how JCFN can continue to support those area ministries that are going through structural changes.

#### ◎Winter Fundraising Drive Update

Japan Office had a Winter Fundraising Drive in order to meet our needs for our operational funds, winter bonus for the staff, and financial support for new staff. We are grateful for everyone who prayed for us and gave financially. We were able to raise 275,500 yen, which was 18% of our goal of 1,500,000 yen. We would appreciate your continuing prayers for the daily needs of the Japan office to be provided.

#### ✿Please pray for JCFN Japan ✿

◎Please pray for God's blessings and guidance for all the area-specific returnee ministries. Please especially pray for the leaders and participants who are going through life transitions. Please pray for us to have the wisdom to know how best to support them and their ministries.

◎Please pray for the financial needs of JCFN to be met.

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

It's already March, and this is the first newsletter from the head staff. The case of Coronavirus is spreading in the US too. There are signs that restraining orders may be issued for gathering of large groups. Let us pray together for the Lord to protect and bring healing to everyone affected.

### ◎ EC19 Report

2 months have already passed since EC19. It was a conference filled with God's grace and blessings. Ever since we started preparing for the conference, we had faced numerous challenges that left us with no other choice but to trust God, which was the theme of the conference. However, through this EC, many participants experienced how the Lord alone is the only One worthy of our trust, and that as we trust the Lord, He will work in us and through us and in this world. Thank you so much for your financial support towards EC. Here are excerpts of testimonies from the participants.



"This EC was a great experience for me that has made me rethink about what it means to trust and serve the Lord alone instead of relying on myself. I am so glad to have had this opportunity to learn about this during my last winter as a student before entering the workplace. I hope to be able to share the blessings that I have received during EC back in the society. (participant from Japan)

This was my first time attending EC. One of the things I learned at EC is how personal Jesus is, and about the importance of the Bible. After being introduced to Inductive Bible Study, it has become a habit for me to read one chapter of the Bible each day and to study the Bible on my own. I don't think this would have happened had I not attended EC. However, because of EC, I was able to learn to make this a habit for me, which has helped me feel much closer to Jesus. I was a little bit nervous about joining a small group at first, but since we were all around the same age group, we got to know each other well. By God's grace, one of my wishes came true, which was to make friends from the mainland. I was also able to let go of a sad event in my life that I had held onto for the last three years. I could really experience God's presence being close to me during that time. Finally, I would like to thank the people from my church that invited me to attend EC as well as Jesus. (participant from Hawaii)

The biggest blessing I received at EC19 was experiencing the love of Jesus through the Japanese Body of Christ. Right before attending EC, I was struggling with the question of "where do I belong as a Christian?" However, during the Communion time on New Year's Eve, God brought a lot of healing to me. I had never seen so many Japanese Christians in my life, and most of them were from my generation! It was an unbelievable site for someone who grew up as an only child, and had attended a small church without any peers since middle school. I could see and understand not only in my head but with my hearts and skin that the body of Christ was right here, and that I was part of His body. Now I can't wait for God's time to come for me to go back to Japan to be part of bringing revival to Japan as a member of the Japanese body of Christ. I am grateful to the Lord for giving me the opportunity to find healing and freedom at EC, and for everyone who helped me to attend EC. (participant from L.A.)

### ✿Please pray for JCFN North America✿

◎ Preparations for EC20 are underway! We are in the middle of recruiting the planning team members. Please pray for God to call each and every person into the team, and for them to be able to respond to the calling.

◎ We are praying for wisdom about how to organize the joint staff meeting in which staff from North America were scheduled to travel to Japan in March. Please pray for God's guidance and protection in rearranging the plan.

◎ Please pray for the Tsuchida family and Miss Furuya, who are fundraising to come on staff with JCFN.

**Contacts:** Japanese Christian Fellowship Network [www.jcfn.org](http://www.jcfn.org)

**North America Office:** P.O. Box 17982, Irvine, CA 92623-7982 USA [ushq@jcfn.org](mailto:ushq@jcfn.org) tel 949-424-7535

**Japan Office:** OCC Bldg, 2-1 Kanda Surugadai, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0062 [nihon@jcfn.org](mailto:nihon@jcfn.org) tel/fax:03-5217-2505

**Ways to GIVE:** A. **Online credit card:** <https://www.jcfn.org/db/donation.php>

B. **In USA: By check:** Make it payable to JCFN and mail it to the address above, P.O. Box.

C. **In Japan: Postal Account:** Account Name: JCFN Account No. 00100-8-565348

**Bank Account:** Mizuho Bank Kudanshita Branch Store No. 352 Account No. 1161342  
Account Name: JCFN Daihyo Goto Maki