



JCFN Japan & North America

Directors Letter August 2020

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

People in many parts of Japan continue to feel the weariness of being on high alert not only for the spreading of the coronavirus, but also for the continuing brutal heatwave. We are praying for God's protection for everyone.

◎GRC21 Kick Off Meeting (July 11th)

Although we were not able to mention this in our last newsletter, we had an online kick off meeting for GRC21 (Global Returnees Conference) on Saturday, July 11th. There were about 70 participants at the meeting. We heard from the director of GRC21 on the theme of the conference, introduced the members of the planning team, and had a time of worship, and listened to a testimony from a former GRC participant. One of the GRC 21 speakers, Rev. Eiko Takamizawa, gave a message, and we concluded our time by breaking into small groups to pray for the upcoming conference. This kick off meeting served as the official announcement for GRC21 which will be held in May of 2021.

The GRC21 planning team was formed in March and has since been in discussion about God's will in how to go about in organizing the conference as the coronavirus continues to affect our lives. The theme of the conference is "In Jesus's Name..." and the theme Bible verse is taken from Acts 3:16. It is our hope that all the participants will find encouragement and be able to carry out what they have been called to do with the authority they have in Jesus' name.

◎~V.OCHAHOP~Virtual Prayer Meeting

JCFN Japan has held a monthly prayer meeting on every second Saturday under the name of "OCHAHOP (Ochanomizu House of Prayer)." However, since all the staff had to start working remotely, the prayer meeting that used to meet in the office was put on hold. In June, we decided to test-run an online prayer meeting on the second Saturday. Although the number of participants was small, it was encouraging to have people not only from the Tokyo area, but even from other areas. Therefore, we decided to continue to have online prayer meetings, and renamed it to "V.OCHAHOP (Virtual OCHAHOP)."

Because the GRC21 kick off meeting was held on the second Saturday in July, V.OCHAHOP did not take place in July. However, we are hoping to restart the online monthly prayer meeting in August. The focus for V.OCHAHOP in September will be GRC21, and will be led by the prayer coordinator for GRC21. Since it is an online meeting, people are able to attend from anywhere in Japan. We look forward to having more people join our prayer circle in the future.

◎GiFT Online•Again

Growing in Fellowship Tokyo (GiFT) was held as an online meeting in June due to the pandemic. Although the organizers were hoping to and preparing to have an in-person gathering in August, they had to once again meet online due to the continuing spreading of the coronavirus. 35 people participated in this meeting, once again, not only from the Kanto area but also from other parts of the country. Small groups were formed according to different interests of people, where each person could attend two groups. One person who recently moved to the Kanto area and was looking for a community attended for the first time. It was a great opportunity for people to share and process what they have been thinking and experiencing during this period of the pandemic.



The next GiFT is scheduled for November 3rd.

✿Please pray for JCFN Japan ✿

- ◎Please pray for the preparations for GRC21.
- ◎Please pray that God will work mightily in and through V.OCHAHOP.
- ◎Please pray for us to be able to discern God's wisdom on how to hold returnees' gatherings and continue to encourage them.

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

To Obey, and to Leave the Result in God's Hand

"I might as well close shop!" this is my honest feeling these days. Summer is ending and a new school year is about to start, but we have had zero encounter with new students. Instead, I have been sending off many students at the airport who are returning to Japan since fall classes are all online. A sense of emptiness, frustration, restlessness, and sadness overwhelms my heart. If there are no students to reach out to, I might as well close shop!

It is indeed a very difficult time for students who have had to postpone, cancel, or cut short their plans to study abroad. People's businesses, jobs, health and lives of their families continue to be placed in great danger.

Campus ministries that we have been partnering with are also facing the tough reality of not having international students to reach, not having international student leaders, or not being able to use the classrooms and school facilities that they used to meet in even if they still have some students. However, we still feel that no matter how small the number may be, and how hard it may be to meet them, there are still many souls who are in need of knowing Jesus, especially because of our current situation! There are international students who are still striving to do their best, despite feeling the weight of loneliness and isolation. What we can do, moreover, what we must do now, is to depend on the Lord in prayer, seek creative ways to minister, keep on knocking for doors to open, and turn to His voice.

One of the participants at the WIT20, a leadership training camp held in June, was led by the Lord to start a new ministry toward Japanese students in New York called "Ippuku (means "a little break")". This person and others are using various SNS platforms to try to connect with new students, and have started holding a series of welcome events online. As I write this article, the third event out of the five-event series is taking place. For the first two events, the only participants were their staff and support members. They decided to spend their time together for team building and to pray.

The step of faith those people have taken has challenged my faith greatly. Yes, results are important. We care about outcome and numbers. However, what is more important is to fear God, and to obey Him. What the Lord delights in is not in what activity we do, but in our broken heart.

Today, I am praying that I will hope in the Lord and be able to obey Him. I am also praying that everyone who reads this will be able to listen to the Lord's voice and obey Him, especially at such a challenging time as this.



◎Registration Open for EC20 Beyond!

Please register for the EC20 Beyond conference which will be online! It will be a 3-day conference (from December 27, 3pm to December 30, 7pm PST). There is no travel cost involved, and the conference fee is \$30 with a super-earlybird discount, \$40 with an earlybird discount, and \$45 for regular registration. There will be an option to purchase EC20 Beyond T-shirts (includes a complimentary journal with the EC20 theme "Listen" logo!).

Because it will be an online conference, we anticipate having people not only from around North America, but more participants from Japan than in the past. Those from other places (Asia, Oceania, Europe, South America, etc.) are all welcome as well! There will be a special youth program (\$20/participant), a seekers' track (\$20/participant), as well as RJC for Americans who have a heart to reach Japanese people!

Please check out www.equipper.org (under construction)! We invite you to join our prayer warriors by praying for the preparations for this conference.

✿Please pray for JCFN North America ✿

◎Please pray for "Ippuku", the ministry for Japanese students in New York, to be used to reveal God's glory, to bless and save souls, and for the staff to stay encouraged.

◎Please pray for a smooth registration process for EC20, and for all the preparations ahead.

◎Please pray for other student ministries in North America as they seek their next steps. May they be able to listen and obey as the Lord leads them.

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