



JCFN Japan & North America

Directors Letter September 2020

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

We continue to pray for all those affected by the Covid-19 Pandemic, and for the health care workers who are responding and for those who are in various decision-making positions. I pray for each of you that your health will be protected as the seasons change, especially at this time when it is getting colder.

◎Small Group Host Meeting & Leader Training

Small group ministry is the center of JCFN's returnee follow-up. When returnees return to Japan, they seek out a church that will be their faith community. Some return to Japan and stay with the church they went to on their first Sunday, while others spend months, and sometimes years, searching for a church to belong to. The small groups support those returnees in such transitions. It is a place where they can meet with others who have been through the same situation and pray with them in their search for a church.

It has been six months since the spread of the Covid-19 Pandemic and the in-person small groups were shut down. During this time, some groups are meeting online. We have been holding "host meetings" with small group leaders every three months, and this was the third host meeting in September when we went online. At the host meeting, we heard reports of gratitude that we were able to get together now that we are online, but at the same time, there were also grim reports of how difficult it has become for people to attend online from their parents' homes with non-Christian family members. Also, not all people have internet access at home, so there are difficulties in that aspect as well. Some groups have decided to take a break while they can't meet in person due to online fatigue. I feel that we still need prayer and wisdom on how we can encourage our leaders and those who participate in the online response as we are forced to deal with it for a while yet.

On the same afternoon that the host meeting was held, a small group leader training was held. We covered topics such as JCFN's vision for small groups and what it takes to lead a group. There were about 15 participants this time, not only from the southern Kanto region, but also from the Tokai and Kansai regions. Because we don't have to worry about where to hold the meetings, while we are forced to have small groups online, we hope that this would be a great opportunity to start a new group, and that many would receive this challenge to expand small group ministries.

◎Vo-cha-lu - V. Ocha LUNCH - Virtual Lunch Meeting

I have always felt that the Japan office located in Ochanomizu is truly a blessing from God. The location of the office makes it easy for returnees to drop by and gives them a chance to visit and pray with us on their way home from work or on their days off. To make it easier for them to stop by, we have been holding an open lunch hour every Thursday as a day to have lunch with returnees under the name of "JCFN de Ocha LUNCH". However, due to the corona pandemic, we have been working remotely mainly, and we felt that it was becoming more and more difficult to invite returnees to drop by. That's why we decided to start a virtual "Ocha LUNCH" again in September. Every Thursday from 12:00 to 13:00, we have started a new time when we can have lunch and talk freely together in the Zoom room. It's called "Vo-cha-lu (V. Ocha LUNCH)". Many returnees have stopped by to join us. There were also participants from the United States. We pray that this new internet style will be used for the follow-up for the returnees.



✿Please pray for JCFN Japan ✿

- ◎ Pray for small group ministry. Pray that the leaders will be encouraged to continue online. Also, please pray that new groups will start.
- ◎ Please pray that Vo-cha-lu (V. Ocha LUNCH) will be used.

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

When you run into a wall.

Last month, while several JCFN campus ministries were on hold or inactive, we reported that a new ministry for Japanese students in New York called "Ippuku" had begun.

Two other student campus ministries that JCFN is involved with (JxJ in Seattle and APU Fridays in California) had made the decision to pause prior to the start of the new school year. However as student leaders continue to pray, think about the vision and prospects of their future ministries, they started to see there must be something they could do now, and they made the decision to follow God's guidance faithfully. Eventually, they decided that JxJ in Seattle would do its outreach ministry online on the fourth Saturday of the month, and APU Friday in California would hold their meetings online every other Friday.

This has made me think that "when we hit the wall" is actually a very valuable opportunity. It's important to stop and pause. This is where we can reevaluate the foundation, direction, purpose, and methods of the things we do regularly or take for granted, the environment and circumstances surrounding them, and seek God's will.

Are you "hitting the wall" right now? If so, I pray that this will be a wonderful time to pause and not be afraid to stop, to pause, to check and savor your relationship with God, and to examine with Him the walls that seem to be looming in front of you.

Please pray for the ongoing ministry in this COVID-19 Pandemic. Pray for wisdom and creativity, especially as we try to make new contacts with new students.

◎Highlights of EC20 Beyond!

In this month's letter, I would like to explain and promote the SEEKERS program and the Youth Program at EC20 Beyond (an online conference).

The SEEKERS program, as the name implies, is for people who are not yet Christians. The program attracts about 20 seekers each time. Usually they are invited by their friends to attend a trip to California, a hot spring, or Disneyland because those extras are so tempting, they come to EC. However, the seekers who attend the EC20 online program this time are, I think, people who really want to know the gospel, who want to learn about Jesus, and who are pursuing what Christianity is all about. will be coming. Please pray that the Lord will use EC20 as an opportunity to prepare the hearts of those who attend and believe in Jesus.

Please invite your friends to this program. We are also looking for people to serve in this program. If you are interested, please go to equipper@equipper.org.

The Youth Program (middle and high school students) is a program that is growing in energy and numbers with each passing year. It will be online this year and will be shorter than the general program. It will only be about three hours long everyday. The program will be done in bilingual (December 27th-29th from 6:00 pm to 9:00 pm California time, and December 28th-30th from 9:00 am to noon Japan time). There will be fun games, heart-filling worship, messages from the Bible that holds answers to the biggest questions, and small groups you can completely and honestly open up to, and you will meet some of friends for life. Please look forward to it. Due to the staff to participant ratio, we are limiting the number of participants to about 50, so please register early.

We will introduce more of EC next month. Also, check out www.equipper.org that are updated And please join the pray warrior ministry to pray for EC20.

✿Please pray for JCFN North America✿

◎Please pray that the online ministries of Japanese students, Ippuku in New York, JxJ in Seattle, and APU Friday in California. Pray that they will glorify God and that God will use the ministry for the salvation of souls. Pray that the staff will be encouraged.

◎For the preparation of each of the EC20 programs, especially the SEEKERS and Youth programs. Also, may God guide people to attend the conference.



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