



A Minute with the Masons



Japanese Evangelical Missionary Society

Oasis Church, Osaka, Japan

A newsletter of Michael & Chris Mason

Issue 87 March 2020

Dear Praying Family and Friends,

If you have been following the news, you know that Japan is one of the main coronavirus hotspots in the world right now. Over 1000 cases have been confirmed so far (most coming from the cruise ship that was docked in Yokohama a few weeks back), and some health experts say that the number of cases might actually be 10x higher. Needless to say, there is a decent amount of fear, anxiety and uncertainty in Japan right now, as this virus is touching many aspects of people's daily lives. All schools have been closed for the month of March, and the number of airline flights to and from Japan have been greatly reduced. Most public gatherings have been canceled (including the annual gathering of JEMS missionaries scheduled for late March), sporting events are being held in front of empty stadiums (fans are forbidden to attend), and amusement parks are closed (including Tokyo Disneyland). Even churches are being impacted. Some churches have temporarily suspended their Sunday gatherings, while others are telling their people to stay home and watch the live stream of the service instead. Other churches are continuing to gather but are enforcing a 1 meter rule. All people are required to sit at least 1 meter (3 feet) from the person next to them.



Needless to say, **PLEASE PRAY** for the nation of Japan. On both the government and personal level, may people experience peace in place of anxiety, and wisdom in place of knee jerk reaction. Obviously, **PLEASE ALSO PRAY** for the containment of the virus. Not only do we pray for no further loss of life, but if the 2020 Tokyo Olympics were to be canceled, that would be a huge economic and emotional blow to Japan. And most of all, **PLEASE PRAY** for the church in Japan. May this current situation give Christians a new

opportunity to proclaim the Good News of a Savior who can be our Rock in times of trouble and our Peace in times of fear.



OASIS CHURCH

The effects of the coronavirus are also being felt at Oasis Church, especially in regards to our outreach program, Kid's Cafeteria. With our next event being scheduled for March 8th, we are still unsure about how to proceed. On the one hand, since kids are not in school for the entire month of March, single moms need the support of services like Kid's Cafeteria more than ever. For this reason, some church members want to move ahead with our March event. On the other hand, since most public gatherings around Japan are being canceled in order to prevent the possible spread of the virus, other church members think it is better for Kid's Cafeteria to take the month off. Both sides make valid points and have wonderful intentions, and so now we are trying to discern which direction the Lord would like us to go. Honestly, this has been a good time of growth for the church as we seek the Lord together and search for unity and harmony in the midst of differing opinions. **PLEASE PRAY** that the Lord would give us clear guidance as to how to move forward with Kid's Cafeteria for as long as this virus remains a threat.

MEMBER CARE

In February we made a quick trip to Tokyo to attend an all-day seminar that looked at the various

factors that influenced missionaries in Japan to either leave or remain on the mission field. While there was a ton of insightful information during the 6-hour event, we walked away with one main thought: member care is important in helping missionaries to thrive in their ministry situation. This encouraged us even more to come along side our fellow JEMS missionaries and offer the emotional and spiritual support that they need in order to fulfill the call God has placed on their lives. To this end, on the same trip we were able to visit three JEMS missionary families who are working in the Tokyo area. That was a wonderful (but short) time for us, and we hope that we were a blessing to them as well. **PLEASE PRAY** for us as we continue to discover what this is new role will look like for us. Unfortunately, since the JEMS Missionary gathering in March was canceled, we will not be able to connect with the various missionaries who are not in our area of Japan. **PLEASE PRAY** that the Lord might open doors of opportunity to travel and visit them in the coming months.



Some of the JEMS Missionaries at the Church Planter's Institute last November.

NEW HOUSING

In our last newsletter we asked you to pray for our search for a new place to live. Well, your prayers have been heard! After a long search we have finally found a new place, and we hope to get all of the paper work done and make it official by March 15th. If all goes smoothly, we will probably move during the first week of April. The house is a bit older than we had hoped for, but the age of the house means the rent is close to the price range we were shooting for. As for the size and location, we couldn't be happier. We have a spare room for guests, we are a 7 minute walk from the train station, and there is a large park just one block away! We are thankful to the Lord for proving such an ideal place for us. Our desire is that he would use us to be a blessing to our new neighborhood and to use the house to help build his Kingdom in the city of Sakai. With this in mind, we ask that you **PLEASE PRAY** for all of the little (and big) things

that need to happen in the next 30 days as we prepare to move (signing contracts, packing, turning utilities off/on, visiting used furniture stores, etc...).

PLEASE ALSO PRAY that the Lord would provide for our financial needs. Now that we are leaving the countryside of Nara and heading back into urban Osaka, our monthly expenses will increase by about \$500 a month. We trust that the Lord is leading us to make this move, so we also trust that He will stir the hearts of his people to help bring our support up to the required level. Having said that, it is still easy for us to worry about things like this. May we cling to the words of legendary missionary Hudson Taylor:

"God's man, doing God's work will never lack God's supply."

PERSONAL

On a more personal note, we ask that you would pray for our son Luke. During his Spring break (March 8-15), he will be joining 200 other students from his school on a mission trip to Ensenada, Mexico. Every year the school partners with a local church in the area to do a wide variety of community service projects. Luke has been assigned to a construction crew that will be adding a wing to a rehabilitation center. **PLEASE PRAY** that this would be a wonderful growing experience for Luke. May the Lord give him safety (from wayward hammers!), good relationships with team members and a love for the people of Mexico.

Thanks again for all of your prayers and support for us. More than ever, your partnership with us is highly appreciated as we prepare to enter this next season of ministry.

Many blessing in Jesus,

Michael & Chris



Singing "Friend of God" at February Kid's Cafeteria



3 Ways to Support the Masons



* On-Line Giving

You can make one-time, monthly, quarterly or annual donations with your credit card via the JEMS' Network For Good donation site. Links to the site can be found here:

www.jems.org/missionaries (click on the donate link under the Mason's bio)

www.masonsinjapan.com (the donate button is on the bottom of the page)

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* Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT)

Electronic Funds Transfer (ETF) Authorization Form for gifts preferenced* for Michael & Chris Mason

Monthly Donation: [] \$250 [] \$100 [] \$50 [] \$25 [] \$ _____

Starting Month: _____. I would like to transfer on: ___ 1st or ___ 15th of the month.

I authorize my bank to pay JEMS the amount listed above on the 1st or 15th working day of every month. This authorization will remain in effect until I notify JEMS in writing that I wish to change or discontinue the contribution.

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Signature _____ Date _____

(required for EFT payments)

I have enclosed my **voided blank check** from the bank account to be used for the EFT withdrawal.

Please place this **form** and your **voided check** in an envelope and mail to:
JEMS, 948 E. 2nd St., Los Angeles, CA 90012.

* While a donor may express a preference for a gift, IRS regulations state that tax-deductible gifts must be under the complete discretion of the non-profit organization. Please contact JEMS if you have questions.

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* Send Support by Mail

Here is my gift of \$_____ preferenced* for Michael & Chris Mason

I want to receive a paper version of the Mason's prayer letter

I want to save a tree! Please send me the Mason's prayer letter via e-mail

Please remove me from the Mason's mailing list

Name _____

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Email _____

Please make **check payable to "JEMS"** and leave the **memo line blank**.

Your check, along with this form, can be mailed to: JEMS, 948 E. 2nd St., Los Angeles, CA 90012.

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