

Youth In ACTion!

Attachment to the CJM Reporter - Fall 2020

TESTIMONY

By Elissa Kunihiro

Despite growing up in a Christian family, I was saved at the age of 19 through the persistent love of Christians in a campus ministry at the University of Toronto. In the first months following my new life in Christ, I read Isaiah 43:7, and wondered what it meant to be created for God's glory. At that time, I met a Japanese student at a campus outreach week. We connected easily, and she told me, "I feel close to you—maybe it's because you're Japanese, even though you don't speak Japanese!"

As a fourth-generation Japanese Canadian, with Japanese ethnicity but little language or culture, I was stunned. Did God make me Japanese, so that I could connect with Japanese people for His glory?

A year later, I went to Japan for a two-week Prayer Journey with OMF, hearing stories of



Editor's Note: Elissa grew up in the Toronto area and is one of the youth leaders at the Japanese Gospel Church of Toronto (JGCT). Her parents are Doug & Marianne Kunihiro, members of JGCT with long-time association with the church.

God's faithfulness and praying for His work in Tohoku, Japan. And afterwards, returning to Toronto, I prayed that God would continue to reveal His will for my growing love for Japan, and teach me to live missionally in my last year as a full-time university student. God answered abundantly through the opportunity to serve in international student ministry with friends who also had a heart for Japan. We had the joy of sharing life with 10 Japanese friends, many of whom had never met Christians before. I could see God drawing them—one friend came to Toronto to learn Gospel music; another opened up about her questions about the afterlife; another wanted to study theology upon returning to Japan! I was in awe of God's sovereignty—that He would bring these friends across the world for our lives to intersect in Toronto, for their chance to experience the love of Christ and to confirm my desire to serve the Japanese people. (Continue on page 4)

CROSSOVER JAPANESE CHURCH OF CALGARY *by Dave Ng*

Although it's been a tumultuous year, by God's grace we were able to launch Johnny's Life group this summer. Johnny's is founded on the verse John 5:24 "I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has **crossed over** from death to life."

Johnny's endeavours to reach out and share the hope of Jesus Christ to any who would listen.

Through gathering together, we hope to build community and spur one another on to living the life Christ has called us to live. Our first meeting began over Zoom where we introduced ourselves to each other and played a few ice breakers. Since then we have met for noodles in Bowness Park,



Johnny's noodle fellowship at Bowness Park

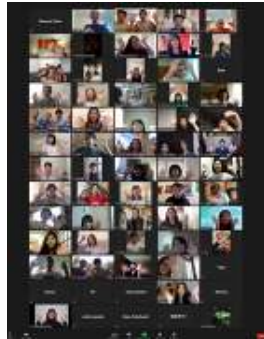
said farewell to brother Yuki over a BBQ, gone for a trail walk at 12 Mile Coulee and the Bird Sanctuary, been served a Korean meal by Charley and most recently gathered for a movie night.

Through each of these activities we have prayed and encouraged one another in our own walk of life and are developing a good and beautiful community. We have seen a range of attendance and without a doubt each meeting has been very meaningful. Seeing Johnny's growing is a reminder that although it is great to be on the mountain top, it is in the valley that we see fruit grow. And during this difficult and out of control time we see that God is still sovereign and at work in the lives of His children. Praise God for his grace and goodness. □



Johnny's group resting during hike

COVID19: The virus which has affected the entire world. Our church as well has been affected by this, and has switched to online services beginning March 22. After recognizing that the in-person gatherings inside the church had decreased significantly, the youth leaders decided to utilize the Zoom platform to continue the fellowship. Our online ministry soon grew to be a fellowship of not only our church but to the entire world. One of these ministries includes the Bible Reading Ministry. This began on Sunday, March 29, when six young adults decided to commit their time to read Scripture and discuss through zoom. On the Bible Reading day, they spent 9 hours reading the four Gospels in one sitting. They experienced an enormous amount of blessing through this time, so they made a decision to commit their time to make this a weekly ministry of Scripture reading



and discussion via zoom. After approximately two months, these leaders found themselves organizing around 50 people from all across the globe, gathering on this call every week. And on August 29, they organize the worship song, “The Blessing”, amongst the members of the Bible Reading group, to pray for God’s continuous blessings upon the world.

The Gospel Night 2020 will take place on November 6 via YouTube. Our special guest speakers from Japan will be Pastor Tatsuya Shindo and Pastor Takafumi Nagasawa. We are truly thankful that God has blessed us with the technology and talent to be able to preach the gospel to all nations virtually. We are further thankful that this year was filled with fellowship and scripture reading to strengthen the foundation of our faith. Jesus said in Luke 19:10, “For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost”. Through Gospel night, we pray that we can preach the gospel to all nations virtually, while praying for the day that the entire world lifts up the mighty name of Jesus. Mark 16:15. □



JAPANESE GOSPEL CHURCH OF TORONTO *by Adam Shih,*

The past 6 months have really expanded our minds thinking about ministry and grown our creativity in making disciples.

Our youth have had to adjust to a lot of things being taken away from them. Many of the ways that they have found their identity in - school, sports, friend groups, events, travel - have been taken away. On one hand this has been very tough on them. On the other, it has been a tremendous opportunity to grow and to build their identity on a more solid foundation. We always want them to define their identity in Christ.

We are continuing to meet every Friday evening but have developed a different type of schedule for meet-



ing virtually. We gather the whole student ministries group every other week for some fellowship, Bible study, games and more. For the other weeks we cycle between girls and guys nights. The girls and guys nights have been incredible in terms of openness, vulnerability, and honesty.

Topics range from dating, to Netflix and tough questions about faith and the Bible that are rarely asked in church.

These things will, of course, never replace face to face gatherings. But with some perseverance we have really become accustomed to the new style of virtual meetings. My prayer is that



we will be able to use the time we have together wisely, and that all of our students will be able to grow and mature through this time of change and uncertainty. □

In light of the pandemic, Calgary’s Gracepoint Fellowship College and Career group (C&C) has been learning to cope with the new social

YOUNG ADULTS *by William Hoshizaki*

Church started up. These weekly studies rapidly grew from less than ten attendees to almost seventy-five with people from across Canada, Japan, and the US attending. It’s a tribute to God’s



norms and safety precautions, and over this past summer has explored new ways to fellowship and experience the evermore important sense of community. Our monthly events turned from playing household board games to trying out various distanced sports like golfing at a driving range which has brought new creative ideas for future events.

Our weekly in-person bible studies turned into Zoom calls with over double our regular attendees through technology’s ability to connect with people outside Calgary. As well, during the summer a collaboration with the young adults in the Vancouver Japanese Gospel

Church started up. These weekly studies rapidly grew from less than ten attendees to almost seventy-five with people from across Canada, Japan, and the US attending. It’s a tribute to God’s grace that even during these difficult times, His ministries can adapt, grow and flourish.



Everyone is determined to get through these difficult times, and our C&C group appreciates the effort of our Canadian medical workers. We are all trying to help in any way possible, and some of our C&C have found new ways to help those in need like blood donations. We know it will be a while before things will get back to the way they were and that in the meantime, the new “normal” might not be something we enjoy. But we believe as a group that this is an opportunity to grow, both personally and collectively; for it is through these hard times that we develop perseverance, character, and hope. □

YOUTH GROUP *by Ethan Tano, GPF Youth Leader*

Greetings from the Gracepoint Fellowship Youth Group!

Our Summer and Spring ministry at GPF (Gracepoint Fellowship) was slightly delayed due to COVID-19. Our yearly Spring and Fall Retreats have been cancelled, and any proposed youth events have been postponed as well. Regardless, our ministry continued via. weekly Zoom calls, socially distanced gatherings (more recently), and competitive Spikeball tournaments.

The summer study focus was based on Lee Strobel's book “A Case for a Creator”, an apologetics based book conveying the empirical scientific proof of creation and a Creator.

It has been beneficial to me as well as the rest of the leaders, to fully come into our own and develop a sense of leadership and discernment in the church this year. The progression in passion for serving Christ continues to grow even within our youngest members. It is great to see and experience the creative insight

that the new participants provide to the weekly conversations. I am greatly encouraged to see them reading their Bibles, praying together, and getting more comfortable as brothers and sisters in Christ.

We are looking forward to beginning the newest venture into the Bible this October, in a weekly in-person study, surveying the Book of John using N.T. Wright's, “For Everyone” Bible Study Series. Unfortunately due to current COVID restrictions we are unable to participate in events that we have done in previous years.

God has given us an abundance of blessings and I look forward to what he has in store for us for the rest of 2020. Thank you all for the prayers.

For those planning to attend the CJM Sunnyside Family Camp, August 2-8, 2021, we look forward to seeing you there! □



Keeping safe during our Bible study

Praise the name of the Lord! What a crazy year this has been! We are grateful though, for everything that God has taught us in these unusual times and situations. The physical gatherings at church and young adults group have obviously stopped earlier this year, seemingly very suddenly. Not knowing how bad or how long the pandemic would affect our church meetings, we walked after the footsteps of other churches around us to shift to online gatherings using Zoom. We were all missing each other since we could not meet



Matheson Lake hike and swim

physically outside of church either, so the hype when we all saw each other virtually on the screen for the first time was great.

Though it was a steep learning curve for the non-tech savvy members (myself included), thankfully, once we got started, we were able to have a blessed time together. The one great thing about this was that a few members that were in Japan at that time, or ones that have returned were able to attend the gathering! It was refreshing to see some old faces and hear what God has been doing in their lives. After 4

months of being confined, meeting only on the internet, we finally held small scale gatherings, such as, hiking and a lake dip as the summer will soon be coming to a close. This was very liberating and much needed fellowship times together. As we have often experienced before, the yakiniku prepared at the pastor's house following these outings are the tastiest you will find anywhere. We have our meetings at the pastors home regularly.

I think one of the meaningful lessons we have learned together during this period is to trust. We are constantly reminded that we don't have control over anything but ourselves, however, there is one that knows and has power over everything. We are glad to call him our God and in doing so, trust Him for everything. In return, He gives us peace. Hallelujah! □



Zoom Young Adults meeting - from Canada and Japan

(Continued from page 1)

God used one friend in particular as confirmation. As he learned about Christ through our friendship, he said, "I'm really lucky, because I got to come to Toronto to hear this—but most people in Japan will never meet a Christian. I want more Japanese students to get the chance to hear about Christ!" My friend understood that his country was unreached with the Gospel, and that Jesus is good, even though he isn't a Christian. His hope was my prayer, too, and I felt compelled to be a part of the answer.

In 2021, I will be returning to Tohoku, Japan with OMF to serve in student ministry for one year. Perhaps God made me Japanese and saved me through student ministry so that I can serve Him in student ministry among the Japanese! I pray that God might also use this year to help me discern whether He may lead me to serve as a long-term missionary in Japan or in Japanese diaspora ministry in the future. God has done much in my life in these three years, and I pray that my life would be an offering of thanksgiving in this year in Japan and the years beyond! □

Great Bible Verses for Young People

1 Corinthians 10:13 *No temptation has overtaken you except what is common to mankind. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can endure it.*

1 Timothy 4:12 *Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity.*

"A COMMUNITY IS ONLY AS STRONG AS WHAT IT IS BASED UPON. THE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY IS MEANT TO BE OF THE HIGHEST CALIBER BECAUSE OF WHO IT IS BASED UPON."

- QUOTE FROM WORD ON THE STREET (WOTS) MAGAZINE - ISSUE 82

Hello Youth Leaders. Thank you for your contributions to this newsletter. It's so good to hear what is going on in your neck of the woods. We aim to put out the CJM Reporter with the Youth In Action attachment twice a year; our next publication will be in Spring 2021. Looking forward to your article then! Thank you! YIA Editor