

# Youth In ACTion!

Attachment to the CJM Reporter - Fall 2015

## Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church

By Chris Collins (Staff)

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ!

Do you remember what it was like to be a youth? Do you remember what it was that you hoped for in life and how much of the world you actually understood back then? I've been thinking about how important it is to try to see life from the perspective of my younger brothers and sisters again. We will have little positive influence in their lives if we cannot also relate to their world. But we must also remember that in our well-intentioned zeal to enter the world of someone from another generation, we may end up presumptuously censoring those particular truths of the Gospel that we think will offend them or drive them further from Christ. This censorship might look like love in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but it is actually one of the least loving things we can do for our younger friends. It is far better for someone to be temporarily driven away by the truth about Christ than to be deceived into believing in a fake version of Him for many years to come.

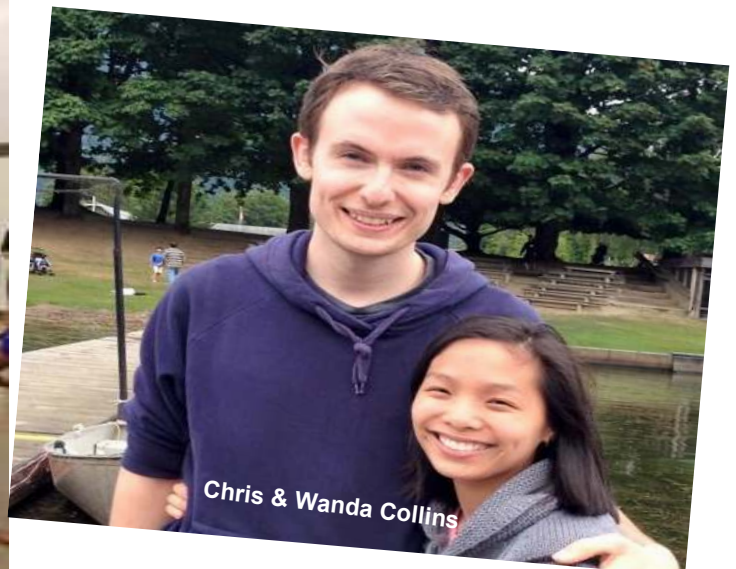
The reason why I bring this topic up in our report is because, as I mentioned in our last update, we have been running a new weekly youth group called "the Way" since last

March. It only runs for an hour-and-a-half each Wednesday evening, but we've grown from just three or four youth to a regular group of seven or eight and we've had a ton of fun. We've gone out to the park to play Grounders under the stars. We've gone out to McDonalds for smoothies and iced coffee. We've used scotch tape to make trip wires between the pews in order to transform our sanctuary into a maze – and then we turn off the lights and have the other youth race to find a way through it using only the light of their cell phones!

But "the Way" is not just 'a way' for church staff to plan the social lives of the youth. We spend just as much time talking through Scripture and relating it to our lives as we do running around and laughing. Games are awesome and I love spending any time at all with my younger brothers and sisters, but Christ died "that those who live might no longer live for themselves but for him who for their sake died and was raised." (2 Corinthians 5:15) We have a mission on this earth that goes beyond merely having fun and our youth have enormous potential to fulfill it. Let us remind them of this! Let us pray that the Holy Spirit would convict them of this! Let us labour with all our energy to turn their eyes toward the grace and truth of Christ. And let us be prepared to lovingly and firmly confront them with God's call to repentance – even if we know it is the last thing that they will want to hear in that moment.



"Tug-a-War" - VJGC summer camp



Chris & Wanda Collins

# Crossover Japanese Church of Calgary

By Yuki Koyama (Retreat Participant)



Crossroad and Banff church young adults Retreat at Canmore, AB

## Young Adults

### Retreat in Banff/Canmore

Our Crossover Young Adults' group was invited to Pastor Minoru's house for a weekend retreat. He has a strong will and leadership for young people to connect with God. Our group had about 15 Japanese young men and women which included a few university students.

On the first morning, we joined the Japanese community service of Banff to clean up the Banff Main Street. We separated into two teams to clean up, and we found so many cigarette butts on the sidewalk and in the plant boxes. After that, we had an enjoyable lunch together.

In the afternoon, we were planning to walk around a few lakes, but unfortunately, it was raining. So, we decided to go to Minoru's house and played some card games. That was a good idea because we had a chance to get to know each other better. There were some new faces to join this group, so a few people were still shy to talk. But, they became comfortable by the end of our time together. During the games, pastor Minoru's wife Izumi cooked dinner for us. We were supposed to help her with the cooking but she was so fast! So we just set up the plates and cups when she showed up at the kitchen. She made us Oyakodon and Chizimi which was so good!

During the night, we had group talks where men and

women were separated into different rooms. Then, we shared with our groups the struggles we had within ourselves. That was a great time because it is oftentimes difficult to share the stress we have to the opposite gender. After our meeting, everyone gathered back into the living room and we sang a song along with pastor Minoru's guitar. That was the most beautiful part about this retreat. At the end of the night, some people were still talking with some snacks and tea. They might have slept for only a few hours.

In the morning of the second day, we joined the Banff



Crossroad & Banff church young adults at home of Pastor Minoru & Izumi Enoki in Canmore, AB

Grace Church service. That morning was nice and calm, inside the building we had a great atmosphere to praise God. We sang a lot of songs, and listened to pastor Minoru's message. After the service, we had lunch with the people from this church, they were very kind to us.

This retreat was a great time, we thank all the people who helped us.



The iconic Three Sisters Mountain at Canmore, AB



Junya Hatta

## Baptism Testimony on October 18, 2015

By Junya Hatta

Today I have been given the privilege to tell you about my own journey of struggle, redemption, and hope: the hope

found in Jesus Christ. Although my life has been relatively short, my journey has not.

My past: I grew up in a stable home with loving parents and a brother. When I was born, my mom, a devout Catholic, made a commitment to Christ that she will raise her sons to be part of God's family. From Kindergarten until the end of high school, everyday for 30 min, my mother would hold Bible studies for my brother and I after school. We would study scriptures and follow along her home-made handout sheets. As well, my father, a Buddhist at the time, made a commitment as well to bring us to mass every weekend. I couldn't have prayed for a better spiritually supporting family than the one that I was blessed with. I can attest that my firmly rooted faith comes from them.

However, life is never as stable as we believe. My faith and world had never been shaken as much as when I was 20 years of age. People asked me if something happened, but it was actually a lack there of. I was in my 20's and life was a mundane replay of yesterday. Many people would continually tell me that the years in school are the best years of my life. If this held true, then I knew my life was in trouble. This realization rocked my world.

My lassitude caused concern for my parents and my mother sent me to Trinity Western University in Langley, BC – a former Bible college. Upon arrival, I felt disgust by the joyous Christians on campus. I remember constantly being bitter with God. Many of my set backs and misery was blamed on what I thought was God's unfaithfulness to me. Later on, I realized that I easily blame things I don't understand. I was quick to blame Christ for the obstacles in my life that I never understood. I knew in order to withdraw my accusations against God I must be willing to get to know Him on a personal level. I knew I wanted the feelings that my Protestant friends had and this so called "personal relationship with Christ". It wasn't until I turned 21 that I felt what my friends had been describing. I made a Confession of Faith and made Jesus Christ my Lord and Saviour that day.

My present: My interest in baptism occurred when my father was baptized in 2014. For over 30 years my father celebrated mass with us and finally made a decision to follow Christ in April. It was beautiful seeing a grown man humbling himself and forgoing biases to take a literal and

figurative leap of faith. I also wanted a public declaration of faith as well. This thought lingered in my head and it stayed with me. I read the baptism of Jesus for months and wondered the significance of it. I told myself, "Jesus was the Son of God. Therefore, baptism did not symbolize salvation. Jesus was also free from sin, therefore, it was not a cleansing of sins". This made me think that the only logical answer was that His baptism was a public declaration of His obedience to His Father – leaving carpentry and instead starting His ministry. Although I received all the sacraments of Catholicism including Infant Baptism and Confirmation, I wanted my own opportunity to show my obedience to God and start my ministry so He may say, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well-pleased." (Matthew 3:17) The way Jesus returned to Nazareth from Galilee, God worked his will into my life that I may return from Vancouver to Toronto. It only made sense to be baptized in JGCT.



Junya baptized by Pastor Kevin at JGCT, Oct. 18, 2015

Future: John 15: 1 – 8 perfectly states and restates the future I am willing to accept. There is a difference between knowing about Christ and knowing Christ. There is also a difference living a life FOR Jesus and living a life WITH Jesus. My actions and intentions will help me remain in Him, while God's forgiving grace will remain in me. In John 15: 1 – 8, the word "remain" appears 8 times. The significance of remaining has been stated and restated by the author. Therefore, I am called not to progress or improve beyond God's will, glory, or love, but to simply remain in it. Remaining requires no force. Remaining requires no overdoing. Remaining simply involves patience and most importantly obedience. Although the future is unclear from Chicago to Azusa to Vancouver; to being a writer, physical therapist or even a pastor, these dreams will remain in Him.

Conclusion: So thank you for taking this journey with me. I finish by saying, please see baptism not as something that Christians have to do, but something Christians get to do. See my baptism and be thankful that you became a new creation in Christ. Be grateful that you have your sins washed away. Be thankful that you are part of a global and heavenly family in Christ. If my baptism represents one thing, it is that we get to be thankful. So, thank you friends. Thank you family. Thank you Jesus Christ. Thank You always. Amen.



By Pastor Kevin Ueta

This past summer our church sent out a team of four students and four counselors on a short-term missions trip to Japan. The team members consisted of: Adam Shih, Sharon Tam, Carolyn Miura, Kaylin Miura, Charlotte Yoneyama, Joshua Hirano, Brett Kawaguchi, and Pastor Kevin Ueta.

We served alongside OMF missionaries, Martin and Ruth Ghent in Aomori prefecture in Japan. Our work consisted primarily of helping the churches with their various ministries, including several community bridge-building ministries. Our overall vision for our student ministries at our church is to equip and empower students as Christ-following disciples who are passionate about Christ and God's mission to the world.

We felt that the opportunity this summer was a challenging way for the students and counselors to gain a better understanding of how God is working in different parts of the world. As a team we learned what it meant to fully rely on God and each other as a family on and off the field. The members of the team all encountered different challenges and blessings but it was evident that God was at work to stretch our perspectives on His work in Japan and our faith in Him.

Upon returning back to Canada it was encouraging to see some of the team members gain a renewed passion to be involved in some of our outreach ministries for Japanese-speaking students and young adults. Others have pursued their calling in various other ministries at our church. We hope that this will continue to shift our culture to becoming more mindful of God's mission to the world – locally and globally.



The JGCT team and others at Ippo Ippo in Yamada-machi, Iwate-ken



Fall Youth Retreat at Willow Springs



Preparing or the crowd around the campfire



Aaron Ghent's commissioning service as missionary under OMF to Japan. Oct. 18, 2015



Hello Youth Leaders! I'm Marie, your editor for the YIA section of the CJM Reporter. 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 2016. Looking forward to your article then! Thank you! YIA Editor