

FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM

As we reflect on the story of the conversion of Sanae's family and her 88-year-old father, we cannot help but be reminded that the connection with her family first started in 1965, when 4-year-old Sanae became acquainted with David at kindergarten. The Lord used this connection to help Japan Mission workers befriend their family and many of the extended family were saved as a result!

Alex and Eri Verwey have three children. Nao (3) just entered kindergarten, and Joey (6) and Will (8) are now in elementary school. The Lord has enabled us to develop numerous relationships with children and parents over the years due to the friends these three children first made at school.

The Kids Club ministry (CAYA Kinder) was started in 2016 as a result of many of these friendships. We praise the Lord for some of these families that have since started to attend church and found the Lord.

Pray that the Lord would continue to work in the hearts of these family members, so that they and their extended families may come to a true knowledge of the Savior!

CORONAVIRUS UPDATE

As cases in Japan fluctuate, the country has been forced into a *state of emergency* from time-to-time. However, schools have remained open, so many of the English classes have continued, although some have opted to participate via zoom. As things open up, all seem to resume and it is easier to have social interaction with students, friends and neighbors.

Japan Mission sometimes holds an overnight English camp as part of its outreach. As we prayed, the Lord guided us to hold two separate events with fewer people and forego the overnight stay. Consequently, we are now in the process of planning two days of events, which will be held outdoors, for two separate groups of students and friends on **September 19 and 20**.

Pray that many seeds that will be sown into the hearts of the unsaved and that neither COVID-19 nor typhoons would prevent these events from taking place.



JAPAN MISSION

CALLED TO SERVE

May / June 2021

KINDERGARTEN FRIENDSHIP

Sanae was born in the city of Osaka in August 1961. Her parents practiced Buddhism and Shintoism, but were not particularly devoted.

"When I was 4 years old, I entered kindergarten," Sanae shared. "It was at this kindergarten that I noticed a foreign little boy. His name was David. We later became friends, since we rode on the same bus to kindergarten. My first contact with Christianity was when I met David near the bus stop and his parents, Neil and Peggy, prayed with us before we went off to kindergarten.

"David and his parents would invite me and some of my friends to meetings at Japan Mission where they showed Christian films and told us about the Bible. David would sometimes come and play at my house and a worker from the mission would accompany him. These workers became friends with my mother and told her about Jesus. It was during 1965 that she decided to become a Christian and started to attend church. That was when I started to attend Sunday School.

"My father was a strict school teacher who was not home most of the time because he was a workaholic. When he heard that my mother had become a Christian, he was most annoyed. As a child, he was taught that Christianity was an evil religion that tried to invade Japan centuries ago, and that it was not a dignified religion suited for the well-informed and cultured Japanese people. We could not freely pray before meals in front of him without a glare or stern comment. Any discussion of Christianity while he was at home was not allowed.

"When I was 11 years old, I became scared when my mother told me that if I did not confess my sin I would go to hell, so I reluctantly agreed. It was through this experience that I started to become certain of the existence of a Creator God, but I did not read my Bible

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or develop a relationship with the Lord at that time.

"It was not until I was 20 years old and a university student when I became more serious about my belief in the Lord. I felt empty and was searching for a sense of purpose. I was also worried about the future and felt that there had to be something more to life, so I started to pray and read the Bible.

"I then joined a Bible study and found my love and devotion for the Lord Jesus grew as I realized how deeply He loved me. This happened as we were studying and memorizing Psalm 23. ***Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever*** (Psalm 23:6). I confessed my sin and felt a wonderful peace come over me as I came to the realization that He had a wonderful plan for my future.

"My mother and I prayed for the salvation of my father for many years. Eventually my brother, grandmother, grandfather, great grandmother and mother's sister all became Christians, but my father stubbornly stuck to his traditional ways.

"While at university I received training in childhood education, so I worked for 10 years as a preschool teacher in a Christian school which was owned and operated by my church. It was during this time that Lord led me to marry Megumu. He was a believer and worked as a lawyer.

"I faced a struggle with two bouts

of cancer after we were married and had to take leave of my work. I praise the Lord because I have now been in remission for 15 years with no signs of cancer.

"It was during this time that the Lord showed me that time was short and placed a burden in my heart to serve my community in a way that would make more of an impact.

"The Lord then opened the door for me to work as a counselor for the city. They referred many children with various disabilities to me. The Lord gave me the following Bible verse as I witnessed the intense struggles of these children. ***Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy*** (Proverbs 31:8-9). The Lord has since presented me with many opportunities to counsel entire families, with whom I have been able to pray and offer counsel from the Bible.

"It was during April 2020, when the pandemic was in full swing, that my 88-year-old father's work suddenly came to an end. He became desperate for something to keep himself busy during the *state of emergency*. He began to feel an unbearable void in his soul as his social life came to a sudden halt. He was left with so much time to think that he was forced to face his inner thoughts.

"My father then began to spend more time with me and started to help out at my church, just to give

himself something to do to pass the time. He quickly made friends with the church members and was introduced to a brand-new Christian way of life. As a result, he gave his heart to the Lord in August 2020!

"COVID-19 has been a terrible disaster for many, but for my

father — it was exactly what he needed to re-evaluate life and find the Lord!"

Sometimes it requires much prayer and patience over many decades. We praise the Lord for the way He continues to transform hearts according to His perfect timing!



Sanae & Megumu Shiraki with David

PRAYER REQUESTS

Pray for Sanae's health and that the cancer will remain in remission. **Pray** also for wisdom and discernment as **Sanae Shiraki** continues to work for the city as a counselor and specializes in counseling children with disabilities. She often has opportunities to encourage them and their families through prayer and a Scripture, as they face very difficult circumstances. Sanae has found a unique way to **let her light shine** for the Lord in her community as she brings hope to the needy.

Pray for Sanae's husband, **Megumu Shiraki**, who works as a lawyer. He has helped Japan Mission and many other Christian organizations get their legal matters in order as it pertains to government recognition, land registration and other legal issues. It has been a true answer to prayer to have a trustworthy Christian who can skillfully guide and assist us in these complexities.