

# Our **BIG** 2011 Prayer & Update Letter



## Merry Christmas!

We had so much fun making this letter last year that we decided to do it again!

Thanks for being a part of our lives. What a year this was!!!



## Aiden-chan

Aiden is now in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade, and doing very well. Motomachi Elementary held a speech contest in May, all in Japanese, of course, and out of the 26 students in her class, Aiden won first place! She went on to do her speech in front of over 300 classmates. We were so surprised, and so proud. And so jealous! She really is fluent now, which is such a blessing.



She also participated in a pretty ambitious “Soranbushi” dance routine at the annual sports festival. They practiced so much that her legs ached with muscle-pain for quite a while! But the end-product was fun to watch. Not something you see in Hawaii every day.

## Rayna-chan

Rayna's now in 2<sup>nd</sup> grade, and got to bang away on the cymbals in the October sports festival. She had some stressful weeks dealing with some amazingly petty “bullying” problems in the neighborhood. But she was the perfect blend of kind and courageous, and came through it wonderfully. She's growing up fast!



Ray-ray, as she is often called, also switched activities from her soccer league to a fun hip-hop dance class this fall. We had no doubt that she would enjoy it. A decent portion of the videos on mommy's iPhone are of Rayna dancing her heart out at random moments. Her “happyoukai” dance performance in early December was a treat for us all to attend.





## Elijah-kun

With a little encouragement, Elijah joined Rayna's soccer team while she was still playing. Now, he's loving it, and playing at his kindergarten a lot also. This year, he also fell in love with the legos, and sticker-trading with his friends.

Another surprise this year was Eli's entire kindergarten class singing Christmas carols on stage at Tokyo Disneyland! He even got free admission and the family got a nice discount. Score!



## Our Church on the Move

In 2010, Yokohama Grace Bible Church took a step of faith, moving from a 7-day rental facility to a weekly set-up routine. In 2011, we found a semi-stable location called Cliffside Dance Hall, and saving towards a permanent home has begun.



Also a highlight this year was YGBC's 25<sup>th</sup> Anniv celebration in November. Not uncommon for Japan, it's taken a long time for this church to find true momentum. On this special day, we basked in a powerful atmosphere of God's faithfulness.



## Summer Travels

We are fortunate to be able to come home more often than a lot of Japanese missionaries, but this year we got a mega-blessing when Lauren's parents celebrated their 50<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary by taking our whole family, plus Ross and Traci (Lauren's brother and sister-in-law) on a big mainland trip.

We also got lucky with Ted's mom flying us over to Missouri on the front end, where she lives during the summers. The highlights of the Missouri stretch were the endangered big cat refuge, where we slept in grandma's RV outside of a tiger cage, and a fun restaurant called Lamberts, where they throw hot rolls to you from across the room!

Next, we joined up with the Morihara clan, starting in Las Vegas, and then driving south around the entire Grand Canyon and then back up to beautiful Zion National Park in Utah. Next, a couple more days in Vegas, then Mickey's place over in Anaheim! Another great stop was Legoland in San Diego, which was surprisingly cute and fun. Also got to see Ted's sister Maile in San Diego, which was a real treat.

### ***Congratulations to Roy and Audrey!***

No room for more pictures here, but in August we also rushed back to Japan for the church's annual Kids Camp, this year near Mount Fuji. The kids LOVED it. They learned the Hawaiian word, "Hanapa'a," and how to "catch" your friends' attention towards Jesus.



# 2011 MINISTRY HIGHLIGHTS

It never gets old! We watched these lives change before our very eyes this year. Brand new Christians. Each one making steady strides forward in their relationship with Christ. Woo hoo!



**Erika** is a high school junior, and visited church because one of our main youth leaders, Sarah Douma, started teaching at her school. **She's now an usher and one of the brightest smiles at youth service each week.**



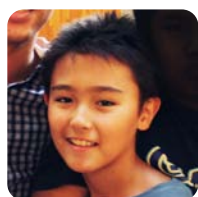
**Midori** grew up in YGBC, but somehow never made a quality decision for Christ in her childhood. But as a college freshman, she dove in head first! **She's sporting our new baptism shirt, which says, "I have decided!"**



**Nagomi** is Midori's sister and a high school senior in the same boat. She gave her life to Christ in August and got baptized along with her sister in November of this year.



**Maya**, now 8 years old, was a student at the preschool that our church used to run. After moving on to elementary school, even though her parents are not Christians, she just kept coming around to church with her brother Kyle (below). She loves our Kids Church, and has started her own relationship with Christ. She's also **one of Rayna's best friends.**



**Kyle**, 12 years old, first found our church through his sister, but enthusiastically responded to the gospel message like few kids his age. **He thinks church is just awesome! And we think he's pretty awesome, too!**



**Tracy** first came to Grace Bible Church Honolulu through Ted's mission team to Hawaii in Feb '10. We homestayd with Tracy's auntie & the wonderful Wu family in Kaimuki. **This year, she moved to Japan to learn Japanese, found Christ at YGBC in the spring, & got baptized in the fall!**



This prayer meeting has 20+ attending every week!



Aloha English Club drew in a bunch of new friends.



Our youth worship service got cool lights this year.



Camp in August was "atsui!" (hot/exciting!)



1<sup>st</sup> ever Youth Victory Weekend. Big breakthroughs!

## Jammin'!!!

We count, because people count! Every life is a big deal!!!

### 23 Salvations

Brand new Christians!!!  
Six children, five youth/college,  
and twelve adults.

### 30 Baptisms

Took the plunge Christians!  
Five children, eight youth/college,  
and seventeen adults.

### 22 Victory Weekend

First-time attendees of  
our discipleship retreat.  
Plus, nine youth!



# And in closing . . .

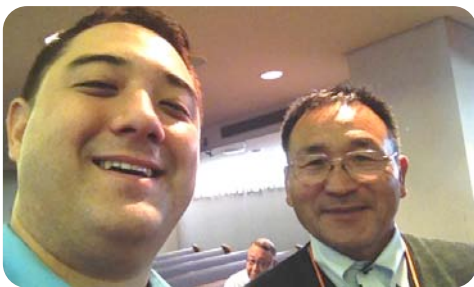
Of course, it's hard to look back on 2011 without talking about the disaster in March. It was a wild, stressful stretch of time. Our hearts broke, and our prayers went up, and our feet went out to help in whatever way we could.

Our group of ten Every Nation Churches in Japan rallied supplies and volunteers, and partnered with other wonderful organizations in the Tohoku area. Other Every Nation friends and churches sent generous donations, which allowed us to do more than we thought possible. At this point, we've sent almost 50 tons of relief supplies, and 20+ teams to deliver goods, clean up debris, shovel out mud, cook barbecues, entertain children, and do anything else that was needed. Scott Zukeran, one of our volunteers, a carpenter from Pearl City, Hawaii, ended up staying in Tohoku for six months to do some of the real rebuilding!

The work continues, although we are slowing down a bit. Through the response of so many Christians, the love of God is really spreading in the area. Some locals asked where our teams were from, and when they learn we're from the Tokyo area, they say, "Oh, are you Christians, too?" Something truly good is coming out of all of this.



**Motoyoshi Team.** Ted's first working trip to Tohoku was in early May. We primarily helped the Miura family (above middle).



**Kishinami Sensei and Grandpa Miura.** Ted was blessed while attending an EQUIP leadership conference in October. He saw Pastor Kishinami, who had hosted our team in May, and was continuing his outreach in the town of Motoyoshi. Grandpa Miura has since become a believer and is attending church quite regularly!



## FUNDRAISING UPDATE

This year was pretty unique for us in the fundraising department as well. Because of the huge shift in the yen-dollar exchange rate in 2010, we set aside time for two big fundraising pushes this year, one in January, and one in the summer. Both trips went well, providing the boost we needed to avoid a serious situation.

Another surprise came along in the form of some side work that Ted has begun. He gets to put on this fancy-looking robe and perform weddings ...in Japanese! He gets to read much of it from a script, which helps a lot. And the pay will close most of the gap we have been facing.



## *The best way to help...*

Some things never change! Of course, we welcome pledge increases any time. But you might be surprised to know that, in general, the best help our current partners can give us is to introduce us to a friend or two. So simple! But it really causes a chain reaction of new relationships, and the bottom line impact is significant. We hope to see you soon... and will probably ask about this!

# 本当にありがとうございます！

Thank you so much!!! ...for all of the prayers and support throughout this year! We'll be in Japan for another two plus years, and are praying about our next steps after that. But in the mean time, we are experiencing God's grace and blessing as we "shine" in Japan the best we know how.