



Yuri Nakano

MISSIONARY IN JAPAN



FEBRUARY 2024

SEEING THE SILVER LINING

Praises

- Praise for God's provision and safety in a situation that could have been far worse! (Read on to find out why.)
- Praise for good opportunities to share God's love at Christmas time.
- Praise God that in the midst of change, difficulties, and even disappointment there are blessings that are too many to count.

Prayer

- Pray for me and also Shan Reed as we continue to facilitate ladies' seminars to the Japan Baptist churches. Our next one is February 17 for the Aichi prefecture churches, focusing on the thirst of our hearts.
- Pray for the relief and rebuilding efforts for the victims of the Noto Peninsula earthquake that hit Japan on New Year's Day and that the Christian organizations and churches would work effectively together to bring the love of Christ to the area.
- Pray for me as I continue to carry out Field Director responsibilities in the midst of many changes that are foreseen to come, and also for Shan Reed as Treasurer as we balance ministry and love the people who are around us. Pray that we would both prioritize God foremost and have a healthy rhythm of life.

Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

ISAIAH 40:30-31 (NIV)

The end of 2023 and the start of 2024 was not the way I had planned or imagined it would go. My colleague, Shan Reed, had a fire in her apartment on the morning of Christmas Eve. She had forgotten to blow out her Advent candles before leaving for church. What could have turned out to be a total disaster, by God's grace, did not! No one was hurt, and there was no damage done to other apartments surrounding hers. The actual fire also was limited to a very small area, which was taken care of with just one dishpan full of water! We saw

the hand of God in the midst of what looked like a terrible dark cloud hanging over us. Christmas Day and many days onwards were spent cleaning out the soot, packing things away, making phone calls, signing documents, etc. Shan's neighbors and friends came out to help in unbelievable ways. This is a testimony to the loving ways she has developed relationships with her neighbors over the years she has lived there. The smoke and soot, unfortunately, covered the entire apartment, so she could not stay there. She stayed with me for two weeks until she

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could move into another apartment. We witnessed miraculous provision countless times. Despite the fact that at the end of the year and into the new year many businesses shut down for the holidays, she was able to find a new rental place right away in the same complex she used to live in many years ago! This update sounds like an update from her rather than me, but what happens to her affects me, as we work closely together, so I can't help but write about her when I share about myself. We are just a tiny team. I am Field Director and she is the Treasurer. I am so thankful that we work so well together and in times of crisis we can be there for each other. Praise God! There is definitely a silver lining to the clouds.



One of the miracles that I thought was significant was the fact that out of Shan's Nativity set, all burned but the baby Jesus!

Before the fire, there were several opportunities to share about the meaning of Christmas. I volunteer at the local community center seniors program, and every Christmas for the last seven years I have used my puppets to bring some cheer. This year, Ducky and Winston (turtle) sang "Silent Night" and Tony (monkey) helped me to share a story about a Christian man who wrote the Japanese lyrics, "If You're Happy and You Know It," based on Scripture and his experiences with relief work after the Second World War.



Even after the fire, we still had our Christmas Eve Candlelight service at Komyo Christian Church.

This year was no exception that it is always the most well-attended service of the year.



The new year did not start well for Japan with a magnitude 7.6 earthquake in Ishikawa prefecture. Over 200 people lost their lives, and many homes were destroyed. The relief efforts were difficult because of the damage to roads and snowy weather, with many aftershocks. In the last 30 years, Japan has experienced four different large earthquakes. I have been in Japan for all of these, but always distant from them. The silver lining about the previous earthquakes is that Christian aid and the Gospel has reached these areas, more than ever before. A Japanese pastor recently told me that in the Tohoku region there are seven times more conversions there than the rest of Japan. Many Christian organizations and churches are banding together to provide relief and help. Please pray for these efforts and for the many victims.

Thank you for your faithful prayers and support. My word of the year is "hope," taken from Isaiah 40:30. I look forward to how God will reveal His glory and presence here in Japan to provide hope in a time where it is so desperately needed.

Shalom and blessings,

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