

Land of the Risen Son

イエス・キリストは日本を愛する

(Jesus loves Japan)

Interesting Facts

Cell Phones...

While there are more cell phones than people in Japan (10% more than the population), we've found that the primary use of cell phones is to write text messages rather than to call people!

Using the phones...

(right: an example of a transit advisory)

It is frowned upon to use your phone while on public transit. Each phone has a "polite" mode (aka silent mode). Transit frequently plays messages asking passengers to switch to polite mode and refrain from making calls.



Texting...

(right: Japanese emoticons)

Since so much communication is via text, the Japanese invented Emoji to help convey meanings more clearly. If you own an iPhone, the Emoji keyboard includes several distinctly-Japanese options.



Update: A Singular Sojourn (Peter & Valerie Limmer)

Barb & Bart...

We first met Barb and Bart in the spring of 2013 at one of Peter's violin mini-concerts held in a local park. Following this, they began to attend church regularly on the invitation of a Christian neighbour. Barbara enthusiastically showed up an hour early each Sunday morning, copying out the scriptures for the day's sermon by hand. She said that writing things out helped her to learn better. We encouraged her in this, knowing that "the word of God will not return void" (Is. 55:11).

After coming to our home Canada Day party in July 2013, they reciprocated with an invitation to their home for dinner in August. We were very honored. Bart's longtime Christian friend, Gideon, was also in attendance. At Barb's request, during that visit we had a Bible study, reading and discussing 6 different stories about Jesus' teachings, miracles, death, and resurrection. After hearing that Jesus is the Good Shepherd, Barbara exclaimed, "Jesus is our father, Amaterasu (the sun goddess) is our mother, and we are all one family." We prayed about how to respond to this, and felt that God was telling us not to engage this topic further. He would give later opportunities.

In September, Barbara and Bart joined Bible English class and our Sunday English service. They also started taking the



By the time we remembered to take our Canada Day party picture, 6 people had already left!

church's baptism class, led by Pastor Higa. Since so many people in Japan come to Christ only to abandon Him later, baptism is seen as a firmer commitment to Him, particularly since it also includes an element of declaring that the person will worship only Jesus, and not also his or her ancestral gods. When she learned this, Barb was inflamed and cut off all contact between herself, the church, and the church members.

We had heard that when Japanese people feel offended, they will often cut people completely out of their lives. However, this was the first time that we had experienced this. Barb took pity on this stupid foreigner, and gently continued sporadic contact with me, via email. I became her only remaining connection with Seaside Chapel; Bart continued in his friendship with Gideon.

Two months later, Barbara and Bart reappeared at church. Their body language

was illuminating. Bart was the one who first entered the building, carried their new Bible, and was responsive to the worship leader's requests. Barbara, by contrast, stomped in, slumped down in her chair, and sullenly sat through the service. Afterward, she practically ran from the building. Still, we were joy-filled at seeing them there. It was a wonderful affirmation of a message we had earlier received from God, that He wasn't done with them yet.

Barb and Bart began to attend the Sunday services with increasing regularity. We tried to give them lots of space, but also to be very loving. In December 2013, we were invited to their house for dinner again. They pulled out all the stops for the meal, and I got the sense that this was their way of apologizing for the earlier disruption in our relationship. Our bond continued to grow in warmth.

An animal person, Barb has a new dog whom she treats as her surrogate child. On one Sunday when we were walking to church, we saw that a wild kitten living by our house was mortally wounded. I told Barb about it. Seeing my distress at suffering, Barb opened up to me more than she ever had in the past, and told me about a fight that she and Bart had just had that morning. I prayed with her for her marriage, and for Jesus' peace to come to their home.

A few weeks later, we hosted our third annual Canada Day party. Up until that time, we thought that the maximum capacity of our 450 sq. ft. apartment was 30 people, however it turns out that we underestimated. This year 39 people attended, more than 1/3 of them not Christians! In previous outreach events, we noticed that each segment of our friends and acquaintances tended to keep to themselves without engaging

people in other segments. This phenomenon is quite well-known in Japan, where people tend to warmly embrace those in their "group", to the exclusion of all others. We found this to be a distressing barrier in establishing relationships, particularly between church members and new attendees. However, this year we gave our guests name tags, and this strategy worked marvellously. Many of them co-mingled

with each other, and forged meaningful connections.

At our Canada Day party, Barbara ended up having a pretty in-depth spiritual conversation with Karin, one of Higa sensei's daughters; and later she began to have meetings with Tsuneko Sensei, the pastor's wife. In mid-July, Barbara and Burt both decided to become Christians, follow Jesus only, and be baptized.

Cheesy Baked Tomatoes

Peter doesn't usually liked baked tomatoes, but we're both addicted to this recipe!

Preparation time: 20 minutes
Yield: 4 servings

Ingredients

4 tomatoes, halved
1/4 cup freshly grated Parmesan cheese
1/4 cup shredded mozzarella or white cheddar
1 tsp dried basil
1 tsp dried oregano
1/2 tsp salt
Freshly ground pepper, to taste

Directions

1. Preheat oven to 450° F.
2. Place tomatoes cut-side up on a baking sheet.
3. Mix together Parmesan, basil, oregano, salt, and pepper in a small bowl.
4. Spread cut side of tomatoes thickly with Parmesan mixture. Sprinkle shredded cheese on top.
5. Mist lightly with non-fat cooking spray and bake until the tomatoes are tender, about 15 minutes



Together with Barb and Bart after their baptism.



Their friend, Gideon, sharing.



Many people came to their baptism.

Contact Information

Thank You!

Thank you for your interest in our work. We send out newsletters every two months. If at any point you decide that you don't want to receive them anymore, just write or email us (japan@peterandvalerie.com).

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