

Land of the Risen Son

イエス・キリストは日本を愛する

(Jesus loves Japan)

This month, rather than tell you a story or two about something that's recently happened in our ministry, we thought we'd take this opportunity to highlight a few ministries that we're planning to start in the near future!

“Tea with Valerie”

As some of you might know, once upon a time I wrote a book. It was a memoir that focussed on the spiritual lessons we learned through our journey towards becoming missionaries in Japan, and the difficulties we faced when we finally got here.

After writing that book, I started to receive correspondence from some interesting people. Though I didn't know anything about them, they felt as though they'd already become friends with me, through my book. In time, many of those relationships became two-way friendships.

When coronavirus hit, I realized that we might be able to use this type of friendship-building to create relationships with people in Okinawa and other parts of Japan. That's part of what we've been trying to do with our cooking club videos: making them relational, sharing tidbits about our lives and relationship, and hopefully having some fun while doing it.

However, our goal in coming to Japan is not to just build these sorts of friendships, but also to share the good news of Jesus' love and forgiveness with the people of Japan. We hope that the principle of building relational trust first, which has served us so well in ministry here, will carry over in an online forum.

So, we're planning to release a second YouTube channel this December, which will address issues surrounding our spiritual relationships. Since it will be Christmas time, the first video will answer the question, “Why do we celebrate Christmas?” After that, we'll branch off into other topics, such as the how to have a healthy relationship with God, the idea that Christianity is not a Western religion (a common misconception in Japan), and so on.

Seaside Chapel Community Cleanup Crew

We've recently noticed that there seems to be more garbage floating around Itoman than there used to be. This may have something to do with our area getting older. In Okinawa, buildings need to be replaced every 50 years or so because the climate is so hard on them that the steel within the concrete starts to rust out. Our area is now over 30 years old, which is usually when you start to see a decline in building quality. The

“I'VE REALLY MISSED OUR SPIRITUAL CONVERSATIONS! I'M GOING TO TAKE THE DAY OFF OF WORK SO WE CAN MEET!”

– Vanessa, a friend who used to work at our local grocery store

Interesting Facts



Cooling and Heating

Okinawan homes don't typically have insulation; or centralized air conditioning and heating. We heat and cool each room individually, turning everything off when we leave.



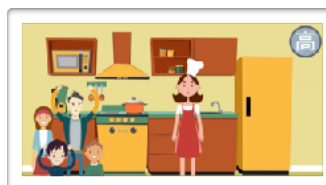
Annual Cleaning

We've been told that Okinawan cockroaches are attracted to the cooking grease that gets trapped in air conditioners, so it's important to have your air conditioners cleaned each year to remove any eggs that may have been laid before they hatch!

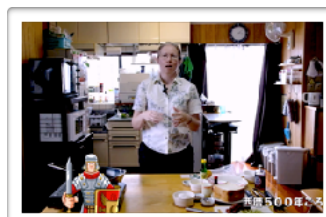


Electricity rates

Since Okinawa doesn't use nuclear power (which is cheap), our electricity is more expensive than much of the country. Many people here use their air conditioning for only an hour or two while they sleep.



Online cooking club: a fun, animated component



...and face-to-face relationship

affluent start to move away, and everything starts to look a little more run down.

We see this as a great opportunity to show Jesus' love to our neighbours. Though there are community cleanup days held every 3-4 months, we want to show our community that we care for them on a more regular basis. We've put forward a proposal to the church that we could set up teams of 5-10 people who swoop through as many parks as possible in a 1-2 hour period every month, and pick up garbage. Each team member will wear a custom-designed T-shirt, with "Love Itoman" on the front, and "Seaside Chapel Cleanup Crew" on the back, so that passing cars and pedestrians can easily see what's going on.

Higa sensei and Tsuneko sensei have enthusiastically received this idea, and we'll be presenting it to more of the church leadership later this month.

Teams will be equipped not only with gloves and garbage bags, but also with fliers to hand out to anyone who stops to question what's going on. We hope this method will help bypass the natural shyness of the Japanese to speak to strangers, especially about their faith.



"Love Itoman"

Robot Club

Okinawa is the poorest prefecture in all of Japan—and not by a little bit. The average annual income of someone living here is about half the national average. Itoman city is the poorest city in Okinawa. There are loads of single-parent families here, many of whom are led by mothers who have suffered abuse.

Knowing how tight money can be for a single parent, we want to see what we can do to open up opportunities for kids who don't have many chances to participate in expensive after-school clubs. So, we're currently exploring the possibility of starting a robot club when coronavirus has settled down a little more. It would be targeted specifically to poor families with single parents, and would allow kids to have a chance to see if they like programming and robotics before they begin making life choices about what they might study later in their education.

We see this as a wonderful way to build into the lives of kids and families within our community. Since we'll be meeting at the church, the other church members will be able to build relationships with these families too, and perhaps provide assistance in other ways as well.



Lego robots



A picnic lunch in the park

Cooking Club #2:
Spaghetti

Cooking Club #1:
Chocolate Chip Cookies

Cooking Club #3:
French Toast

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.

Correspondence can be sent to:



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