

Second Quarter Report for 2016
August 1st

“For the Lord so has commanded us saying, ‘I have made you a light for the Gentiles that you may bring salvation to the ends of the earth.’” Act 13:47

Therefore, we continue to witness for Christ among the Japanese people who do not know Him yet. And our work must be grounded firmly on the Word of God as to how we should live in this world and teach what the Lord has commanded us in His Word. Thus in April our Yamagata Reformed Church stood bravely and decided to walk a separate way from our long-associated brethren of the RCJ. The issue was how the household of God is to be carried out, i.e., how God’s Church is to be ruled when it comes to the matter of leadership by two separate genders. Does the Lord command us to choose elders from among men or equally among men and women as the world wants to be fair toward both genders?

On Sunday afternoon on April 24, I was installed “anew” as pastor of the Yamagata Reformed Church. The installation service was carried out by the OPC Japan Mission based upon the cooperative relationship our church entered with the Mission. The Mission decided to appoint the Rev. Uomoto to be the second elder of our church to form a provisional session.

Several men came from the RCJ Tohoku Presbytery to congratulate the church’s new start, with whom our church and the OPC Mission had cooperated for the last several decades. Dr. Lauer, Chairman of the OPC Japan Mission, officiated in the installation service, with Rev. Cummings giving the charge both to me and to the Yamagata Church members, followed by a prayer for installation by Rev. Uomoto, all three men being ordained members of the Mission. It was truly a joyful occasion for Yamagata Church as the Lord poured upon us His abundant grace that we may begin another chapter for His kingdom in this city.



Dr. Lauer asking Pastor Kaz Installation vows



These people in Christ gathered for the installation service

Just before my installation service in April we had a called congregational meeting, in which we needed to iron out the co-operative agreement for evangelism with the OPC Japan Mission. Our request with the co-operative agreement was graciously accepted by the Mission (waiting, however, for a blessing from the OPC Ohio Presbytery's FMC). In that congregational meeting we chose two men for elder-candidates and one man for deacon-candidate, for all of whom we are praying that they be trained and prepared for installation in a year or two. Please remember Dr. Hiroshi Yamamoto and Mr. Shinji Sasaki as future elders, and Mr. Shinichi Inoue as a deacon in your prayers. Both Dr. Yamamoto and Mr. Sasaki have been faithfully studying Reformed doctrines with me preparing themselves in the firm knowledge of biblical teaching.

While the gentiles in the city of Antioch in Pisidia were glad to hear the gospel preached by Paul and Barnabas and "believed" (Acts 13:48), our "gentile" Japanese friends are still slow, having been indecisive coming to rely on Jesus, the one and only Savior. Mr. Tada, Mrs. Nakamura and Mr. Yarimizu, all our major seekers are faithful in coming to hear the gospel every week at Sunday worship, but they haven't come forward yet in profession of faith. In a situation like this we are comforted with such significant words as Paul added to the description of those gentiles, for he says "as many as were appointed to eternal life believed! Yes, it is we who must preach the full gospel and it is the Lord Who gives us the harvest from among "His appointed (chosen) ones!" So will you continue praying with us for their salvation?

We have a young lady, a student at Yamagata Nursing College, Nao Muto, coming to our fellowship since April. Her mother is a former member of our church. Nao is studying to be a mid-wife like her mother, wishing to work someday at her mother's clinic. Shio, our youngest adult member, has just begun a youth meeting with Nao.

BTW, Shio Akiho is engaged to a Christian man from Yamagata and is scheduled to be married in September. Shio and her fiancé, Masato Yashima, have been taking pre-marital counseling from me. Masato is a member of an evangelical church called "The Church of Christ's Brethren." His church comes from a Holiness line of tradition. Right now Shio really wants him to come to our church and become a Reformed

Christian. Please pray about this household situation!

We have not given up, of course, witnessing Christ to little ones! We held a three-day VBS on July 28~30. Our theme this year is “Joshua, a Courageous Leader for God’s People.” Since we covered the life of Moses last year, it seemed quite appropriate to take up the life of Joshua, the next leader for God’s people after Moses.

It is getting harder in this country to reach children because their time is taken not only by school activities but also by other community & private club activities which often fall on Sundays. Even for covenant children, when they go to Junior High School, life is basically “invaded” by school events, against which the Christian parents usually do not fight but rather give in thinking that school life is more important than their children’s coming to church. Along with this cultural battle, there is that particular problem of rebellion every youth faces, i.e., he wants to go his own way!



Three children attending Day 1 of our VBS
(Big yellow characters say “Joshua” in Japanese.)

In April Megumi (our oldest daughter) and Jason had their second baby. The Lord blessed them with another child of the covenant, Milan Zoe, after several years of patient waiting. Milan in Japanese characters mean “beautiful orchid.” Kaila, now a big sister (8) just can’t take her eyes off her new little sister. Due to a change of the owner of the apartment, they were given an eviction notice to leave the place as of August 1. They have a temporary place to live for a month, but are in desperate need of finding a new place to move into. Because of Jason’s work and Kaila’s schooling, we would appreciate it if you might remember this aspect of our family in your prayers. They live in Brooklyn, NY. Katie went to NY to help Megumi with the new baby for a month from the middle of May to the middle of June.

Then in the last week of May, I decided to make a surprise visit to the baby, Megumi and the other NY Yaegashi crew including my dear wife. I was not so sure, however, if I would be physically capable of making a short trip over the Pacific Ocean since I had not been in good condition. Emi, our youngest daughter, however, encouraged me come to NY. She told me that this is a precious moment for the family and that if I hadn’t gone then, I may not see the new granddaughter for another year or two until Megumi comes to see us here. Well, the Lord blessed my secret plan and the surprise was successful! And we had a wonderful family reunion. I was there

from May 31 till June 7. Having served 39 years as missionary-pastor, I thought to myself “Why haven’t I come up with this kind of adventure and break before?”



Jiji (Grandpa) & Grammy with (from left) Anna (10), Kaila (8), Milan (2 months) & Sam (13)

While Katie was in NY, she had her 70th birthday on June 19, and seventy-five people gathered to congratulate her. I was already back in Japan and so I missed the blessed birthday party and joyful fellowship. The Lord has blessed my dearest wife for all those years with her beloved family and wonderful friends.

In the last week of June, I was in the hospital for six days to have an operation treatment for an intestinal hernia. It seems I have been recovering all right, except for the slow healing of a particular area of incision caused by endoscopic operation.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Pray for the two elder candidates, Dr. Yamamoto & Mr. Sasaki in their growth both in biblical knowledge and in practice of faith.
- Pray that the Holy Spirit might bring Mr. Tada, Mrs. Nakamura and Mr. Yarimizu to deciding for Christ.
- Pray that the Lord might give wisdom and direction to Yamagata Reformed Church as we look for a partner national church, with which in the future (hopefully before too long) we might join together.
- Pray that the Lord will send our way young people that we may hand over the torch of faith to a new generation.
- Pray that the Lord will give us vision and resource to have a new building suitable for the place of worship for more people to gather.
- Pray that the Lord will provide my successor, a new Japanese pastor, as Yamagata Church will face the reality of my retirement in next few years.

Your servant for Christ’s sake in Yamagata Japan,

Kazuhiko (Kaz) Yaegashi
OPC Missionary & Ministerial Member of the PCA

Presenting this report to:

The Presbytery of MS Valley of PCA

The Committee on Foreign Missions of the Ohio Presbytery of the OPC

The Committee for the Support of Japan Mission

Cc to: The Committee on Foreign Missions of the OPC General Assembly