



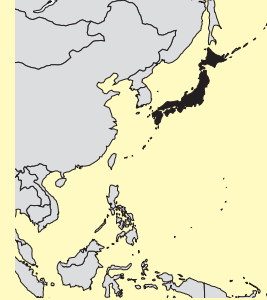
# RCA Missionary Update

## from the Brownells

Young people in Japan are struggling with spiritual emptiness in spite of their material abundance. Many withdraw and become hopeless, engage in crime, or commit suicide, and the church in Japan is having trouble reaching the next generation. Nathan and Nozomi Brownell will be working in cooperation with the church in Japan to renew youth ministry. They will focus on developing a relational youth ministry through schools in the Yokohama area, and they will practice a ministry of hospitality and develop a network to spread the vision for a revived youth outreach across Japan. Nathan and Nozomi have three sons: Kenneth, Raymond, and Luke.

### Japan facts:

- Population: 127,333,000
- Size: 377,835 square miles (slightly smaller than California)
- Major religions: 84 percent Shinto and Buddhist, 16 percent other (0.7 percent Christian)



### MINISTRY

Youth Ministry

### LOCATION

Yokohama, Japan

### PARTNER

Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan (United Church of Christ in Japan)

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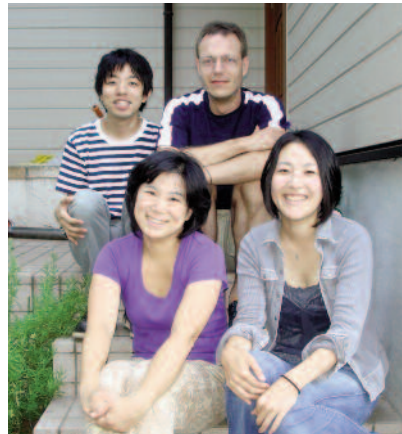
Dear Friends,

November 2008

Greeting from the city of Yokohama. We are grateful for your prayers and support. It is widely known that Japan is a good and safe country. Many who visit this country would likely be impressed by its cleanliness, safety, and people's politeness. However, it is also very difficult to commit oneself to Christianity in this country. The society whose foundation is not on Christ, but built upon false gods—materialism, strong inclination toward success, and humanism—goes against the way of Christ in so many ways.

Many Japanese who experienced Christian faith and its loving fellowship during their stays in the U.S. or other Christian countries are struggling to maintain their faith after returning to Japan. Too often they cannot endure the hardship of living without good Christian fellowship, especially in the rural part of the country. The lack of the fellowship weakens their relationship with Christ. Without help they are often overwhelmed by the waves of the intense work schedules and eventually attacked by the emotional and spiritual depression. It is said that 80 percent of Japanese who became Christian abroad fall away from faith because of the lack of fellowship to support them.

Nathan and I served eight years for the Japanese American United Church in New York City, and while we



*Takashi Yamada and Yuila san returnees (Takashi was baptized in the USA)*

were there we sent many of our members back to Japan. We have been praying for them that they would be connected to the churches in Japan and keep growing in faith. Since the beginning of our journey as missionaries, it has been our hope to now receive such returnees from abroad, in order to support and encourage their experience

in Christ. Over the past year, God introduced us to more such folks and finally last week we were able to start the "Returnees' Fellowship" as a part of the Green House ministry. Among those who attended the fellowship, was Masae who had become a Christian, while she was with us at Japanese American United Church in New York City. Although she came back to Japan seven years ago, she could not find a church to belong to until just recently. Miyuki became Christian through her journey from Australia to Michigan States University. Yoshiko and her

American husband, Matt, are from Texas. Some of the short-term missionary teachers also joined the fellowship. We shared lunch as well as our faith experiences in foreign countries and prayed for each other. We hope that more people will join the fellowship so that through telling their stories and hearing those of others they will be encouraged and equipped to serve Japanese local churches.

Let us tell you about the summer in Yokohama. We had a wonderful Vacation Bible School in August at Yokohama Union Church. Eleven volunteers from the States helped make it possible for the church to serve fifty-six children and their families. We are grateful for Grace Reformed Church in Lansing, IL and Chinese American Church in Sacramento, CA for sending wonderful people to Yokohama. They worked very hard decorating the sanctuary, leading the children in the program even during the extremely hot and humid weather. When the parents found out that the volunteers came from the States sacrificing their own resources and time, with help and support from their churches, they were utterly in awe. They were amazed at the love of Christ moving people in such a way—giving themselves to the little ones in a foreign country! They have never met such people.



Summer 2008, Yokohama Union Church VBS with team from Grace Reformed in Lansing, Illinois, and YUC volunteers.

This fall Nathan is continuing to teach English conversation classes at Ferris Girls' School. He regularly speaks at school chapel as well as parents' Bible study class and feels free to share the good news of Christ.



Nathan with the Japan-Taiwan youth exchange program, summer 2008

I am continuously working with the Children & Worship program, leading the program for Yokohama Union Church on Sundays as well as YUC preschool class each Friday. Reaching out to the preschool mothers though Bible study group is also one of my present callings.



Greenhouse team 2008

We have resumed gathering for the mission school students at the Green House after the summer vacation. This year we are focusing more toward the small group ministry. Each time we gather, we share the word of God and pray for the students according to their requests.



Anna Herzog and Tabi Ekvall, RCA mission associates helping decorate the Greenhouse and Children & Worship Center

Please continue to pray and support the youth ministry in Yokohama.



Children & Worship settings at Greenhouse

Hope in God,  
*Nathan & Nozomi Brownell*  
 Nathan & Nozomi Brownell  
 (Kenneth, Raymond & Luke)