

~~ The MANSELLS ~~

Your Voice in Japan Since 1983



Dear Praying Friends,

November 2016

And Jonathan said to the young man that bore his armour, Come, and let us go over unto the garrison of these uncircumcised: it may be that the LORD will work for us: for there is no restraint to the LORD to save by many or by few. And his armourbearer said unto him, Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart. I Sam. 14:6,7



In this passage we see the vital importance of one man. God's power to work with many or few people and the faith and courage of Jonathan is emphasized and well it should be. Let us consider however the armor bearer. As Jonathan's armor bearer, it was his job to carry extra weapons and to stand behind his master to make sure that any fallen enemies were dead. It was his duty to guard the back of the warrior. We do not know his name nor is any honor given to him. Yet his loyalty and trust in following Jonathan cannot be overlooked. **"Do all that is in thine heart: turn thee; behold, I am with thee according to thy heart."** Most of us are not out in the lead in ministry battles. We can and must be the armor bearers for those who are. Praying, caring, giving, encouraging and doing the daily duties which may seem menial but are vital to the success of any ministry. Let us be faithful and enthusiastic in the position God has placed us in the local church so that Christ may be glorified.

December is one of the busiest months of the year and we are thankful for each opportunity the month brings. An elderly doctor and his wife who we have known several years live now about 5 hours from us in the city. The last four years we have met them in Sapporo around the first of the month because both of the wives have birthdays then. They have no children that are local and seem to really want to continue this tradition. Ken also has weekly English study with **Dr. Mitsu** via Skype. While Dr. Mitsu has asked Ken to pull back on the specific Bible study in the class, the Lord always opens a door for some witnessing. We use this visit also as an opportunity. We gave them an English/Japanese Bible study format as a present and are asking God to use that in their lives to make them true seekers of the truth of the Bible. Thank you for praying for Dr. Mitsu and his wife Tomoko.

During this month is also when we hand out invitations to the evangelistic Christmas program and a monthly **Bible verse calendar**. Calendar giving is a common practice in Japan as a thank you for your patronage. We know God can use the smallest efforts to spark an interest in what the Word of God is saying. Ken has been asked many times in the past what a specific verse meant and we look forward to seeing what God can do through that this year.

Our annual Christmas program was on the 23rd. It is a holiday and usually most will come more to that than if we held it on the 25th because that day is a typical business/school day. This year because the 23rd fell on a Friday, several told us they would be out of town due to the three day weekend. While our attendance indeed was lower than other times, we are thankful for the ones who came of which all were new attendees except for three adults. Christmas is only advertised as a santa related event. You find no manger scenes to be bought nor do most Japanese know what the true meaning is about. We are thankful we can share the reason we celebrate at this time of year.

Our **special music** included a duet by Ken and Vicki, a trio with the flute/Heather, guitar/Jonathan, and Vicki on the taishogoto, a flute/piano duet and the Marks children singing Silent Night in both English and Japanese with actions. Jonathan and Heather worked up a study in English and Japanese of **the Colors of Christmas which was our theme** this year. **Ken** then preached off those color themes in his final challenge. Tea time always provides some good conversation time with various ones. We especially wanted to get to know several moms of English students that came. We were also thankful that **Mrs. Sonoda** was able to be with us to help in the program. It's always a blessing to hear her read the Luke story of God's birth. Her prayer for the New Year, as well, during our prayer time after everyone left was precious.

Christmas theme continued on Christmas morning with the special service on the 25th. We were blessed to have a local couple attend that morning. **Mr. Kuroda is a professing Christian and his wife very positively says, "He is a Christian, I am not!"** Lunch together, after the service, provided over an hour long testimony time with the Kurodas. While Mr. Kuroda didn't say much during the time, we concentrated on hearing his wife's thoughts and both Brother Jonathan and Ken were able to give deeper testimony of their salvation as well as address her thoughts. Please pray for us to have more opportunities with the Kurodas and that they will return again.

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In late June of 2015, the **Jonathan Marks family** came to Teshio to begin their ministry in Japan. After a year and a half of study and experience in a small town ministry here in Teshio, there is now an opportunity for them to work in a large city ministry. Sometime after the first of the year, the Marks will be moving on to their next stage of ministry and training. We are grateful for the opportunity to have been able to be a part of the beginning of the Marks ministry for Christ in Japan. Thank you for your continued support and prayers for the Marks as they enter this next step.

Our final time during the **Christmas season** was special as we spent an afternoon and evening with the Marks and then as we went to Nayoro to spend a couple days with fellow missionaries, the Randy Smith family. We always miss our blood family especially during traditional family gathering times, but we thank God for giving us 'adopted' family here on the mission field. It is a blessing we never take for granted and appreciate more and more each year.

Lastly we want to **thank each of you**, who through this year have upheld us and God's work in Teshio in your hearts and prayers. We know we do not communicate very often personally with you but we do not take you for granted. The work here cannot be accomplished without the 'armor bearers' God has placed in our lives. Please continue to take us to the Throne of Grace and beings prayers go both ways, we are always blessed to have you share your needs with us so we can pray for you! God bless you! You are family to us!

Prayer requests and Praise:

1. Mrs. Sonoda hopes to be able to attend more faithfully
2. New year to provide new opportunities of study and contact
3. Kristan and Cecily as they continue to prepare to come as summer interns (2017). Cecily is still trying to raise her support and ticket funds.
4. Marks as they prepare to move
5. Mr. Shimizu who is one of our believers transferred in his job, but keeps in contact with Ken—asking God to open a door to transfer him to a different school for teaching during his final four years of teaching. The new school year begins in April.
6. Other believers in Teshio who are in unsaved families and do not easily attend services. —Mrs. Kawabata, Mrs. Kuwata, Mrs. Hashimoto

Serving Christ Together,

Ken & Vicki Mansell

Just A Prayer At Night – Your evening is our daytime!

