

WINTER 2018

Second Level Ministry

~ MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH DISCIPLINE ~

Ministry Updates

*"There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens...Nothing is better for them than to rejoice, and to do good in their lives."
Ecclesiastes 3:1,12*



Greetings from the Board of Directors (by Keishi Kasuya)

This winter season has been quite cold here in Atlanta, Georgia and also in Japan. Not only have we had snow, but also record-setting low temperatures. My family welcomed the new year with bursted water pipes the night we returned from vacation for the holidays! That experience made me long for warmer weather and the coming of spring! Yet, despite the bad weather and our negative circumstances, we must remember that every day is a gift from God to be used for His glory. And although life isn't always easy, God is always good and faithful! For 2018, let's remember His goodness day by day! In all circumstances, we can give thanks to cultivate a grateful heart!

THREE NEW SISTERS!

What a miraculous night. Karin, Mio, and Maho were all SO excited at the invitation to come learn more about God. Even in the car on the way, their anticipation was almost tangible.

Sitting together at a table in a cafe, we (three believers) started by sharing our personal testimonies. Then, we talked about the differences of views towards God/gods between Japanese and Christians. The girls all seemed able to easily believe in the Gospel at any moment, but since they were eager to learn more, we went through our First Level Lesson, 'Who Is God?' before asking if they wanted to accept Christ. We talked about how incredible, sovereign, and personal our God is. Then, we explained the meaning of the Gospel. All three girls accepted Jesus as their own savior! It was amazing to watch the Lord soften their hearts and open their eyes to the truth. We witnessed the undeniable presence of Holy Spirit and incredible work of God to save people.

Since that night, all these three girls were filled with joy and excitement. The transition to discipleship was so smooth and all three girls were growing in faith and obedience day by day. We met with them every week and focused on learning the basics of Christian walks. They shared their testimonies and were baptized on December 9. Their roommates noticed their change after becoming Christians. We challenged each of them to share their testimony with their friends. They are obedient to His words and even started being a witness to others! Currently, they all went back to Japan. We found mentors to stay connected to His words. They are in the process of finding a home church as well.

Please pray for God's protection for each of them and that they will continue to be a blessing and witness to others. *(written by Mayumi Pohl)*



(Written by Matthew Barany - Mobilizer
- Associate Staff of Second Level Ministry)

I'm very grateful to have had the opportunity to attend Equippers Conference 2017. The conference took place at Murrieta Springs Christian Conference center (Los Angeles, CA). There were about 400 people. I had never seen so many Japanese Christians gathered in one location. What a sight!

I attended the conference as representative of Second Level Ministry. We set out to connect with others, hoping to find mentors/mentees and make our resources available. I enjoyed sharing our vision/goals with whoever would listen, and even getting to share an announcement about Second Level. I'm glad to have made new friends and new connections with others from various ministries. I met several others who shared the same heart and passion for the Japanese. They were excited to learn that Second Level exists to disciple and mentor Japanese believers. They prayed for us that God would raise up more disciple makers for our program.

My highlights include the deep conversations I had with my small group, seeing Japanese worshipping in Japanese, and seeing Japanese Christians actively pursuing their faith and seeking to be equipped and connected with one another. One night I witnessed a room full of Japanese Christian men singing, huddled in prayer and listening intently to the speaker. It was truly an incredible sight and a vision that I pray into for the nation of Japan.

The conference theme focused on "Freedom". We pray and hope the Japanese find this freedom in having a relationship with Jesus and then sharing about that relationship with others. May God continue to be glorified. May we find true freedom in Christ. May Christ be found and followed by the Japanese!

Mentorship Bears Fruit

Four years ago, Ai Kobayashi (who lived in Canada at that time) applied for mentoring before going back to Japan. We assigned Wakako Minamoto (our associate staff) to be her mentor. They met over Skype regularly once a week for several months until she returned to Japan. She had a pure faith then too, but Ai was very nervous to go home and often shared worrisome thoughts. They focused on learning about God's words and seeking His will in every situation.

After going back to Japan, Ai was reminded of many things that her mentor shared and what they learned together. Instead of just teaching these things, Wakako walked with Ai through processing these truths and actually 'applied' them to her spiritual life. The words Ai gained kept encouraging her, and God was always guiding her step by step. As she adjusts to her new life back in Japan, she is very thankful to be in a Christian community where she can continue to grow.



left: Ai Kobayashi
right: Wakako Minamoto
(Second Level Associate Staff)

God brought a surprise! Both Ai and Wakako were at the 2017 Equipper Conference. It was the first time that they met face to face without any screen. It was such a joyful and convicting experience to learn how mentorship can bring fruit. We all praise the Lord as we see the evidence of her spiritual growth. As we attend and serve at this conference every year, we realize that returnees are in need of mentoring. "Personal care" is needed to support many young Christian lives.

Mentoring can be done in a short time. Of course, it can also last for many years. Either way, are you willing to invest in someone's life? There are ways that you can serve. Second Level Ministry supports your planning as you start mentoring. Please contact us if you would like to help a Japanese new believer!

DETROIT TRAINING

In September, we had the privilege of serving at St. Matthew Church in Detroit, Michigan. There are 100 Japanese people coming to this church throughout the week, and even the signs inside the church are in Japanese! Local American Christians are faithfully serving to share the Gospel with Japanese. Although their ministries are focused on evangelism, the purpose of our training was for those volunteers to be aware of the Jesus' command to make disciples and walking towards that direction in their service. Even in the pre-evangelism stage, it is important to keep the big picture in our mind, because it could be forgotten at times when we are so busy meeting needs for non-believers. When we hold onto the Great commission, our way to serve changes.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." Amen. - Matthew 28:19-20

Let's pray that the Lord will bring the harvest through their ministries! Pray for salvation and disciples of Christ will be raised!

Right: Staff at
St. Matthew Church



In the end of December, we had an opportunity to offer a cultural training that is effectively used for evangelism towards Japanese. It covered some of the key concepts of Japanese culture and its effect on Japanese people's spirituality and ministry. As we reach out to Japanese, it is imperative to know the culture in depth. It changes how we interact with people and how we share the Gospel!

The Japanese ministry in Miami, Florida is very unique. This group consists of Japanese Christians and Spanish speaking people who love Japan. They meet every Saturday morning in the same building as the Japanese school. Our training was done in Japanese, and it got translated to Spanish this time. The training seemed to be well-received, and we pray for God's blessing on Japanese ministries in Miami.

At one of the gatherings, there were many non-believers, and we had to switch our original plans from evangelism training to simply sharing the Gospel message. It was obvious that there were some strong seekers! And this opportunity was very significant because seekers were able to meet local Japanese Christians. They expressed that they would like to come back to the regular meetings (Bible studies). Our hope is that local Christians will be united in Spirit and be able to reach out to non-believers in the area effectively. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek." (Romans 1:16)



ANNOUNCEMENTS

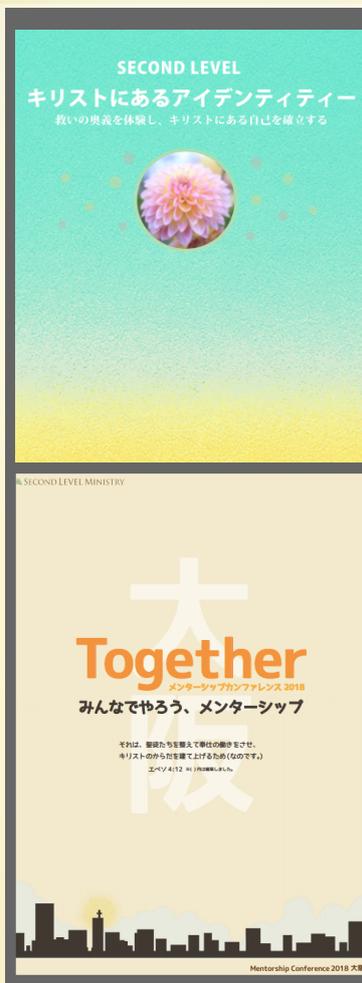
New Resource! *"Identity in Christ"*

We are saved by grace. And this reality is full of mysterious truths that are abundant in divine wisdom and knowledge. God gave us a new life, so we are to respond and walk in a manner worthy of the new life we have received.

The more we understand about our savior Jesus Christ and God's will for us, the more we will see how rich and wonderful it is to be in Christ. When we find and firmly grasp our identity in Christ, God's desires for us become more clear. This understanding helps us break free from our own distorted self-images and shapes us into vessels to be used by Him.

In order to grow as a Christian, learning our identity in Christ is essential. Using this book, let's learn what the Bible says about the new identity we have received through salvation. Let's shift the perspective from our point of view to God's point of view, regarding our identity.

This resource is available at the Second Level Store (Please visit our website) and on Amazon.



2018 Mentorship Conference

When: June 15-16, 2018

Where: Osaka, Japan

Theme: **Together**

Ephesians 4:12

*"to equip the saints for the work
of ministry, for building up the
body of Christ..."*

For more information:
www.mentorshipconference.org

Staff Updates

Jeremy Brooks- *Discipleship Coach and Outreach Coordinator*
Lizzie Brooks- *Coordinator of Ministry Communications and Relations*

The Brookses have officially begun their full-time work with Second Level Ministry. The Lord has used the past four months of building a team to confirm His calling in their lives and to give them vision for this next season. They are so amazed by God's provision and eager to see all that He has in store for them through working with Second Level Ministry!

Already they have been able to start studying the Bible with students and are building connections with the Japanese community in their apartment complex. The Brookses are excited to join in the work that God is doing in the new group of students who will arrive in March. They are also looking forward to establishing regular prayer meetings and building a team of disciple makers.



NEW STAFF!

Matt Barany
Associate staff- Mobilizer and Discipler

Matt is from Woodbridge, NJ. Matt accepted Christ at the young age of 4 and grew up in a family of 6. He has felt a call to missions and to reach people for Christ since he was 8 years old. Matt grew to love missions and getting to connect with people from others cultures, especially from East Asia. In 2007 God laid Japan on Matt's heart and since then his passion and desire to see Japanese reached for Christ has only grown. Matt took his first step into working directly with Japanese as a volunteer with Second Level Ministry in February 2016. He is now going to be Second Level Associate Staff serving in the areas of mobilization, attending conferences, social media, discipleship, and involving with the local Japanese church plant as a core member in Atlanta, Georgia.

GREETINGS
FROM THE ATLANTA STAFF TEAM



We appreciate your partnership!

Thank you very much for being a partner to make disciples and expand the kingdom of God!

1. Within Japan

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2. Within U.S.

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New Option: ZelleSM
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information.
dainidankai@secondlevel.org

3. Anywhere in the world

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www.paypal.com

Please send contributions to:
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Second Level Ministry is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization and is tax-exempt. All gifts are tax-deductible.

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