



June 3, 2009

News and Prayer

John and Tomoko Armagost



A JAPANESE LESSON

Dear Friends,

Language isn't just spoken words, but it is also part of the culture. In Japan, subjects are seldom approached as directly as they are in America. Here is an example.

One of the churches I preach at each month is in Nara. In April one member, Mrs. K said to me with her beautiful smile, "Oh next month is Pentecost and we always have a special service with children and adults together." I confess, my Japanese is not perfect, but I knew she was telling me I better be prepared since children don't usually attend with the adults. So I responded, "That sounds wonderful! I will need to think of the children as I prepare my message." She said, "Oh don't worry about the children, they won't be a problem." It would help our Japanese lesson if you knew that this church has a pre-school and kindergarten, so many of the children she is talking about will be 5 years old and under.

This is where knowing the culture behind the language is important. She is too polite to tell me directly that I better prepare for the children, so instead she is bringing up the subject, trusting that I will engage in this conversation and realize the point she is making. So I responded, "Well, since Tomoko is planning to come too, maybe she could have a children's story as part of the message." Mrs. K said, "Oh, if she would do that, it would be wonder!" Translation: "You understand!" Then she added, "And pastor, take all the time you want, don't shorten the message just because children will be here."

Do you understand the lesson now? "Don't shorten your message" was her polite way of telling me to please remember the attention span of a 5 year old.

John and Tomoko
Armagost

WIND, FIRE AND CHILDREN!

We had a wonderful time at Nara Saho Baptist Church on Pentecost. The church was full, and many were children from the pre-school with their parents. A few attending church for the first time ever. The message was WIND, FIRE and Life with God. Tomoko started with a message for the children. Lighting a candle she said, "The flame is like God's Holy Spirit. It gives light, and warmth, and look... it moves, it dances... it has energy and power. And that is what living with God is like."

I think she had the easy part. I had the message for the adults. WIND! Not as exciting as fire. Well, since the kids were soon ready for me to finish, and I could tell, I cut my short message even shorter. Then as the adults went out to set up the grill for "fried soba noodles", Tomoko and I stayed inside to play with the children. By the time lunch was ready, we found ourselves sitting on the church steps with the children, while most of the adults were sitting on chairs at tables.

We always give thanks for your prayers and support. We feel the fire and wind of the Holy Spirit at work through you.

Grace and Peace

John and Tomoko Armagost

PRAYER POINTS

PRAISE for you and all our partners in ministry.

You are a great encouragement to us!

Pray for the Nara Saho Baptist Church.

Pray for their ministry with children through the pre-school. Pray for the Holy Spirit to lead the right pastor to lead them.

Pray for our financial support.



Tomoko with the children of Nara Saho on Pentecost.