

Nov-Dec 2012

Being His Hands

Mission Work Report & Prayer Requests for Joel Osborne



(Left) singing Christmas carols downtown; **(Above)** with Ryotaro, a seeker friend

2012: The Year In Review

It was a year where we took a significant step forward for the Kingdom by the grace of God.

Several men whom I grew up hearing stories of and admiring have passed on to receive their reward: Joe Cannon and Ray Lock, just to name a couple. As a little boy, I can remember the big towering man who seemed a little wild talk passionately about God. He had been a missionary in Japan and PNG. I have now served in churches he planted.

When I think of this last year, we fit more into a year than is humanly possible. So it is a sign that God is at work. 2012 seemed to be blessed with relationships that are growing

and maturing. Young people with whom I am walking life's journey in Mito are making significant life choices that are God-honouring, and others are closer to giving their life to Jesus. In partnership with the Bedok church in Singapore, we opened a school in Cambodia, and the 51st Asia Mission Forum was incredibly blessed. The park project in Ishinomaki is mostly complete, and hearts are still open.

Your partnership is meaningful. The kingdom of God is growing. Thank you so much for your prayers and support!

Navigating Storms

Sometimes when it rains, it pours. I prefer snow (smile). Pray for us and for the challenges we face.

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More Hands of Service

Another blessed mission to Cambodia confirms that God has led us to do what He wants us to do: how it is shaping us and others.

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Hope & Joy: Christ

There are big ways and small ways that God tries to get our attention to remember how amazing Jesus is.

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(Below) I wanted to share fun from my birthday: these are good memories with beloved people! Times like these help make up for the difficult times.



Navigating Storms: Seeking God's Wisdom & Guidance

Do you ever want to take an exacto-knife to your Bible and just cut out those few verses that seem inconvenient and uncomfortable? Here are a few I have had to struggle with recently:

“Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honor one another above yourselves... Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse... Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everybody. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.”
– **Romans 12:10, 14, 17-18**

I love those verses, and I also sigh when I read those verses because I am aware of how I fail in this way, and also how others fail too – whether it's relation to me or not.

As a leader, I am made even more aware of that as I often find myself offering counsel and guidance, or stand as a mediator in many situations. Oh how I need God's wisdom! Oh how I crave more of His love!

Honestly, I have been walking through a season like that in both the ministry with Mito church, and also with the relief work in Ishinomaki. It requires prayerful thought, emotional strength and the

guidance of the Holy Spirit through scripture and other godly leaders.

Given the nature of this subject, it would not be appropriate for me to share details about the conflicts I've been asked to mediate, or the conflicts I have personally faced, but I do seek your prayers. The saying is true: “When it rains, it pours.”

Don't get me wrong – it is not only rain. As I mentioned on the first page, there are so many good things happening. But occasionally it's healthy to let you know that there are struggles being faced for which we covet your prayerful support too.

For Mito church, I would ask that you pray for us as we continue to face the growing pains of a leadership that has been given a large learning curve, combined with a church that seems to be in constant transition. We are aware that we need to expand our leadership base, and seek His favor to prepare people without being careless.

For the relief work, please pray for the hearts of people that have deep wounds, and pasts that are damaged by sin. We seek God's healing grace in their lives, hearts, homes and families.



(Left) Our group from Singapore, Malaysia & Japan joined by Cambodian youth & children with whom we've worked together for several years; **(Above)** Telling the story of Jesus birth in English and Khmer at a local village school, with the help of Lai, one of the Cambodia youth

Growing More Hands Of Service: Cambodia

December was my 17th time to Cambodia since 2006. In all of those times, many things become routine and the “shock” tends to be replaced by a little bit of understanding. That is generally a healthy thing. However, sometimes it is good to be shocked again, and to have some reminders of what we are doing, and why we're doing it.

This last trip I felt a deeper sense of shock – the first time in a while. We made it a priority to visit the homes and families of the students at our school. We were able to visit close to 30 homes, out of the 130 students now attending BCS. When I saw the living condition, and also saw the amount of effort those kids are putting into getting back and forth to school, it was a confirmation that we are doing what we set out to do, and I felt humbled and convicted to work even harder to do so.

I am so happy to share that we were able to raise enough funds to purchase a school van, thanks to individuals from Mito and Bedok churches, and to the Ontario St. church in St.

Catharines, Ontario. We also hired a fulltime driver. On this last trip, I joined two vice principals and the owner of a childcare to provide excellent training for the teaching staff at our school over two days. The Singaporeans planned two days of activities that allowed us to grow relationships in a meaningful, and incredibly fun way with the students, and our group from Japan organized a day of teaching at two of the local schools we serve each time.

Perhaps the highlight of this trip for me, though, was seeing the ongoing maturation of the youth (I can't call them kids anymore – and they are now calling me “Uncle Joel”!) in Cambodia. As Hiro said, it is no longer a team of just Singaporeans and Japanese, but also Cambodians. Of course, there are ups and downs, growing pains, and several “loving correction” conversations to be had, but these youth are growing into what we have prayed and hoped for: a people with hearts cultivated to serve and love others. My prayer is that they will know the best servant: Jesus Christ.

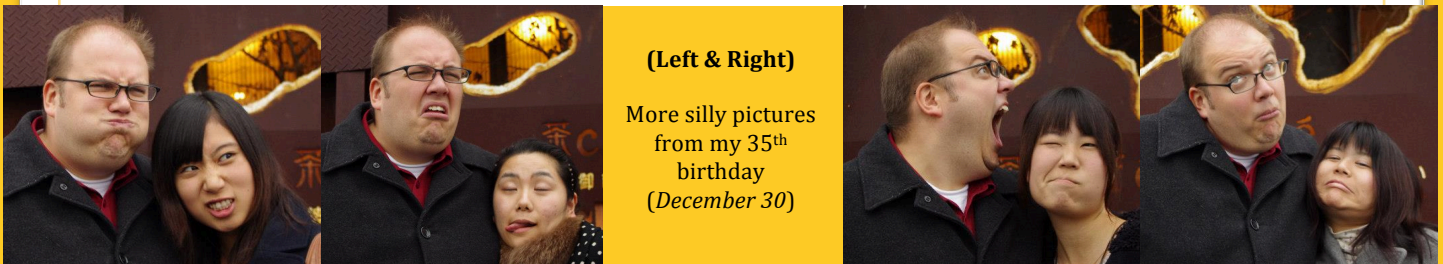
Hope In The Christ & Joy At His Birth

Ways God Has Been Reminded Us Again Of Jesus' Significance In This World & In Our Lives

November and December were busy months – when is it not busy? In November, we were invited to a play that W-san, one of the ladies we have walked most closely with since the disaster, was helping as stage crew. It was a big step for this reclusive lady to audition and be a part of the community theatre. We went as her “family” (since she is completely alone) to support her and cheer her on in this brave step. Four Christians in Sendai went along with us, and we enjoyed a time of worship, communion and a meal together with them also. The church in Sendai is struggling, so it was good to have this time of encouragement together. It was around that table that my thoughts turned to how significant Jesus’ birth is to this world.

In December, standing with Hiro and Emiko at Changi Chapel museum, a place that stands as a memory of the Japanese occupation of Singapore during WWII December, and discussing the paintings of Jesus’ birth and death displayed on the walls and how they represented the prayers of an imprisoned man, we were all moved by how Christ brings peace between people. Again, I was reminded of this as we read Isaiah’s prophecy and the angels’ song of glory that declared the birth of the Christ, the Prince of Peace.

I don’t care so much about the accuracy of when Jesus was born. I care more about the significance of what his birth means, and what it brings to this world: hope, peace, joy. There is so much bad news...it was good to be reminded again as a community of the good news. We had a blessed Christmas and New Year’s celebration, and I pray that you and your loved ones did too. May God richly bless each one of you in 2013!



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Being His Hands is a mission report and prayer list for Joel Osborne in his work in Japan.

Partnering together with the leadership of Mito Church of Christ, my work is primarily overseen by the Bramalea Church of Christ in Brampton, Ontario, Canada; and hoping to establish a foundation for receiving future American funds.

Thank you for your partnership. If you know someone who wants to receive this, or if you want to be removed from this report list, I can be contacted at the following address:

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