

ESAKIS IN OSAKA

Bible Study Member's Baptism | Designing a 360 Coaching Tool

Marcia's Health

Marcia had surgery on December 21, at the Osaka International Cancer Center to remove melanoma from her arm, along with four sentinel lymph nodes. The biopsies revealed no metastasis from the original site. The doctor said it had progressed to Stage 2 cancer, but she needs no further treatment other than CT scans every three months for the next year.

For those not receiving our online updates, we apologize for informing you after the fact. We praise God for his goodness to us and for answering our prayer in this way.

360 Coaching Tool

I have mentioned the 360 Christian Leadership Framework Survey, which was used to screen church planter candidates prior to attending the gospel intensive training. Now we want to adapt this survey of character traits to help coaches to coach these church planters. The six new coaches are already beginning, so we'd like to give each one a one-page report on their coachee, showing the areas that need development.

Please pray that we could create a coaching tool and corresponding reports by this spring.



The Healing of S-san

You have heard about S-san from previous newsletters. He was a friend of Koji's from 44 years ago in Philadelphia graduate school. When Marcia and I moved to Osaka in 2015, we found we lived just five blocks from his company. He and I met at a local diner, and S-san brought his Christian businessman friend along. Unexpectedly, we agreed to start a monthly Bible Study: We three men, our wives, and later another couple met in our apartment. (S-san is pictured far right, August 2017). I led our Buddhist, Atheist, Protestant, Catholic group in study. It was a safe place for questions, and is one of the two seeker Bible studies we have. We looked at the beauty and brokenness of life, which led to looking for reasons and solutions, which led to Jesus.

In February, 2020, Covid forced us to stop our study. What S-san didn't tell us was that later that year he was diagnosed with mouth cancer. He told his Christian wife that he wanted to be baptized. He kept it a secret, because he is the oldest son in a strongly Buddhist family and his mother was still alive. When we re-started the group online, in 2021, we noticed that something had changed. S-san sounded like a Christian. Then in February 2022, his cancer returned and he joined the Bible study from his hospital room. I visited when he went home, but I was still not sure of his spiritual state. He was barely conscious with pain medications, and had difficulty speaking. It was then that his wife told me he had been baptized in her church in August 2020.

The upper-left photo, with S-san center, was taken in December 2022. He felt strong enough leave his room, and wanted to go to church. By now, he had written his will and told his mother he wanted to be buried as a Christian. His family gathered, as did most of our Bible study (circled in yellow) and together we celebrated his new life in Christ. We had prayed for his healing from cancer. It looks like he won't be healed in this life, but S-san will be completely healed when he meets Jesus.