



Dear Praying Friends, Shalom!

A blessed New Year to you! We hope that you have started well into 2021. Most of us are happy to leave the past year with the pandemic behind us. Although we are not out of the woods yet, we are journeying into the new year with hope. Among other things, the past year has clearly shown us that our security and regular patterns can unexpectedly and radically change within a short time. The words of James take on new gravity.

Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go into such and such a town and spend a year there and trade and make a profit"—yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring. What is your life? For you are a mist that appears for a little time and then vanishes. Instead you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that." (Jam. 4,13-15)

We like to think that we can direct our future. Of course planning is important, but self-serving goals and ambitions are problematic. As you can see below, this year particularly requires some planning on our part. We want to consciously submit our Home Assignment preparations and decisions to God. We want to enter the new year trusting that the Lord holds both world history and our personal journeys in His good hands and yet also expects us to act prayerfully and responsibly.

Our forthcoming Home Assignment (HA)

After almost ten years, we - or rather Michael - are due for a "regular" home assignment (HA). However, our current family situation & COVID 19 are posing some challenges. Due to Ayuki's education & HBI's classes, we had limited our HA to 2-3 months most of the time. This time M is planning to spend 10 months in Switzerland (June-March). Haruhi will probably not join him until autumn as she looks after her mother. Ayuki is planning to do an exchange year in Germany (Münster is a partner uni of ICU) starting in autumn. M will be based at his parents in Moosseedorf.

You might be wondering what we do during our HA. An OMF HA has several purposes. It's a time: i) to share about God's work & our ministries in Sapporo ii) to spend time with family and friends iii) to thank our prayer partners and refresh contacts iv) to mobilize new partners & potential missionaries v) to get some rest. M is also hoping to finish his longterm book project on the intercessions of the Messiah.

At this stage we do not know whether a visit to the UK is possible or not. God willing we visit Durham. We would love to see you! Meanwhile we prayerfully wish you and your family God's rich blessings for 2021!

With much gratitude and love, *Michael, Haruhi with Ayuki*

The human mind plans the way, but the LORD directs the steps. (Prov. 16:9)

Praise & Thanks for:

- A restful Christmas-New Year Break. Ayuki visited us from Tokyo. Our days were filled with family time, reading, writing, baking, and winter hikes.
- new missionaries. May they grow well into the language and culture. As H will be leaving her role as Language Advisor before our HA, we pray for a good handover to her colleague.

Please Pray for:

- HBI students, especially for those who will graduate in March and then start their ministries.
- new students. May the Lord raise a new generation of Japanese church workers.
- M's father (74). He collapsed shortly before Christmas. The examinations have shown that he has colon cancer at an advanced stage. The course of radiation and chemotherapy leading to surgery will be discussed in the coming days. May the Lord graciously assist M's parents on their difficult "journey" ahead.
- H's mother (83) continues to have health concerns. Still we thank the Lord for signs of improvement. We pray for wisdom of how H is to balance between giving care and finishing well with her LA role before HA.
- God's help in planning & preparing our home assignment.
- our witness to non-Christian friends

Sermons: Sapporo Int. Church 10.1 (M); HBI 14.1 (M); Hiragishi 7.2 (M); HBI 19.2 (M)

Contact

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