



Davidson Missionary Partnership Network January 2010 Newsletter

“Equipping the Saints”

One of our directives as American Baptist missionaries is to help equip local Christian leaders for service here in Japan. One of our most visible leaders in the Japan Baptist Union is Rev. Dr. Kazunori Matsuda. In this photo, he's shown along with a few of our Kanto Gakuin Church Sunday School students at a fall picnic.

Rev. Matsuda has an unbelievable number of roles. He's the Director of Religious Activities of Kanto Gakuin University which (at 12,000 students) is the biggest of the three universities associated with the Japan Baptist Union. He's also a full-time professor of Christian Studies at the College of Engineering, a teacher at the Japan Baptist Theological Seminary, the principal of the Kanto Gakuin Nova Preschool, *and* the pastor of the campus church — Kanto Gakuin (Baptist) Church — as well as serving on multiple boards and committees. You can imagine that he might not have much time for rest, relaxation or reflection!



Recently we worked together to arrange a sabbatical for Rev. Matsuda. This January, he'll be traveling to America to participate in Duke Divinity School's Faith and Leadership Study Leave Program. He's slated to meet with the Dean of the University Chapel as well as the pastor of the campus church that meets in the chapel, and to do some study regarding trends in campus and campus-church ministry in the U.S. He'll have a week to use the campus library and to meet with various Duke faculty members. If all goes well, he may also have the chance to buzz over to Wake Forest Divinity School to interview similar leaders working in a Baptist context a few miles away.

Please pray for Rev. Matsuda that this will be a time of rest, but also a time to reflect on new possibilities for ministry. Kanto Gakuin Church has long struggled with the issue of how to reach out to students and faculty. Our chaplaincy at the University as well faces many challenges. Our office is understaffed and most of the chaplains are overworked — every one of us needing to fill multiple roles simultaneously (as you can see by just reading Rev. Matsuda's job titles!). So please pray that this would be a week of refreshment and insight for this important leader in our Japan Baptist Union.

2010 is bound to bring many changes, challenges and opportunities for us all. May God bless us as we try to make the most of these! And may God bless you as you endeavor to extend God's kingdom of love and justice in your own “mission field.”

Grace & Peace,

Dwight & Kari Davidson

ABC/USA Missionaries in Residence
Kanto Gakuin University, Yokohama, Japan
IM Website Profile: www.internationalministries.org/missionaries/61
MPT Website: www.davidsonjapan.org