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Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

First, some business to take care of. Our address has changed to that above, not due to our having moved, but due to the township of Tsukui having been incorporated into the city of Sagamihara. This means that mail addressed to the old address will continue to be delivered only for so long, and after that the Post Office will return it.

And yes, it has been a terribly long time since we wrote last. As you can tell from Pastor Carlton's letter, there has been much to keep us busy. One thing that we are really looking forward to is that in April (when the Japanese school year starts), Ray will start to school and Kanon will start to Kindergarten. That will give us "free" mornings (meaning free to work, clean, study, etc.) for the first time in, well, 10 years! And also to get more than 3 or 4 hours sleep at night! Those of you who have raised 3 kids at home with a home business, church, and no relatives living next door to look after the kids on a regular basis, will most likely appreciate this feeling.

One issue of "concern" to fill you in on is that, as I believe I have mentioned in an earlier letter, the church will most likely have to relocate within 5 years or so. The 50-year lease on the land will run out in 2012, and there is little chance that the land owner will renew. Even as of now, he has asked for a ridiculously high increase for the monthly payments, which we have not accepted, but he will not take the land money if we try to pay the "old" amount, so we have been paying into escrow at the Regional Legal Affairs Bureau. We are saving up to relocate, but we have no idea what sort of arrangement will come up. Options include renting/purchasing an old house to use as a meeting place, leasing/purchasing land to build on, renting a floor in a building as a tenant, and so forth, but all are very expensive, unless you get out where there are no people. We will use the living room in our house in Tsukui as a meeting place anyway, and may continue to do that until the Lord gives us something better.

We do remember that the Lord is always watchful over us and that He has His plans for His work through His body. Our current location in Hachioji "popped up" just as we were being evicted from the location in Kunitachi 27 years ago, a sign of His care which we have never forgotten.

Thank you so much for your continuing prayers and support, even after so long a time with no communication.

In His Love,

Nathan, Ikuko, Joe, Ray, and Kanon Elkins