



TOMOYUKI AND JESSICA ABE

Tomoyuki Abe grew up in the greater Tokyo area of Japan. He was raised in a Christian home and is the son of a pastor. Christians make up less than 1% of the population of Japan, so that makes Tomoyuki's childhood very unusual. He was the only Christian at his school, so he didn't have any other Christian friends there which was hard.

Tomoyuki's parents, Rev. Nobuo and Keiko Abe, pastor at the Sagamihara Grace Chapel. The building used to be the home of a U.S. armed forces officer, so it is quite large by Japanese standards. The first floor is used for the church and a daycare, and the second floor is where Tomoyuki's family lives. There are two younger sisters, Mamiko and Kaori. Mamiko is married to an American, Tom Lewis. They live in Japan with their two sons. Kaori is a day care teacher and lives with her parents.

Tomoyuki studied social welfare in college and worked for three years in the government social services office. However, he was frustrated to see people who were struggling, but he wasn't allowed to share the gospel with them. He felt the financial help the government offered was not enough to restore their lives; they needed Jesus. In 2003, Tomoyuki met the director of the Torchbearers schools, who invited him to consider coming to Colorado to study there. Tomoyuki quit his job and went to Torchbearers, where he responded to God's call to become a pastor. After discussing his call with the leadership of the EC church of Japan, he decided to enroll at Evangelical Theological Seminary in fall of 2005.

Jessica Poirier Abe is from Lyons, France. She is the oldest of three children and has two younger brothers, Jonathan and Stephane. Her parents, Alain and Danielle, work in the medical field. Jessica also grew up in a Christian family and accepted the Lord at age 11. When she was in high school, her pastor, who was a missionary from Colorado,

recommended that she study for a year at the Torchbearers Bible School located there. She went to college in France for two years, and then went to Colorado.

Tomoyuki and Jessica met when they were both attending Torchbearer's Institute, a Bible college in Colorado. A number of international students attend this school. Jessica returned to France to go to business school for three years, and Tomoyuki came to Pennsylvania to attend seminary. He and Jessica continued to be in contact with each other by email, and visited each other on holidays. Soon after, Tomoyuki proposed and Jessica accepted. They were married June 30, 2007 in France.

Tomoyuki and Jessica returned to PA and Jessica also enrolled at Evangelical. Both of them graduated in May of 2009; Tomoyuki with an M.Div. concentrating in Marriage and Family Therapy, and Jessica with an M.A.R. in Old Testament Studies.

Tomoyuki and Jessica returned to Japan in June of 2009. They are now living near the Fuchinobe train station, which is in the district of Sagamihara, a city of 700,000 residents in a western suburb of Tokyo. The station, which is part of the Yokohama line, is gaining popularity because a famous university has just relocated to the area. Tomoyuki and Jessica's prayer and goal are to start a church plant in this area. The doctor of a local pediatric clinic is already referring mothers with non-medical issues (such as problems with child raising, relationships, etc.) to a Bible study held monthly at the clinic and led by Tomoyuki's father, Rev. Nobuo Abe. Although this doctor is not a Christian, his receptionist is a member of our Sagamihara Grace Chapel. The mothers who attend this monthly Bible study are then invited to the church.

Please pray for Tomoyuki and Jessica as they try to build relationships with neighbors and their community, so they can reach their neighborhood for Jesus.