THINK POSSIBLE.

Andy & June Meeko



March 2022

Operation Lapis

Lapis, or Lapis Lazuli, is that beautiful indigo gemstone that has been coming out of Afghanistan for over 6,000 years...but the real treasure coming out of that country now is people, especially it's kids. A month ago we would never have anticipated an effort to reach Afghan kids, but the Treasure Hunt material is perfect for this opportunity in these young lives. The main characters in the pocket-manga are struggling with trauma, grief, anger, and displacement; not unlike what most of these young lives are probably dealing with.

Close to 50,000 Afghan refugees are planned to arrive in Europe in around 16 countries and we hope to meet all of them with the Treasure Hunt in Dari. What is really exciting is that the effort will be run through the NPO we established in Albania last April. Yes, traveling twice to Albania last year during the craziness is paying off! So, we are reaching a basically Muslim population of Afghans from the dominantly Muslim country of Albania—that really blows our mind! And that, originating from Japan, who would have imagined.



Meanwhile, these kids need your prayers. Growing up in Afghanistan has not been easy. According to Save the Children last year, one child is killed or maimed every five hours in Afghanistan, and one out of every 16 children dies before reaching the age of five—one only wonders how many might suffer this year? According to a UNICEF spokesman; "Afghanistan remains one of the world's most difficult and dangerous places to be a child." On top of this, a Christian relief organization rates Afghanistan as "the most dangerous place in the world to be a Christian"...now these young lives have an opportunity to do so without that danger.



The theme I established when leading survivor care for relief work in Japan's mega-disaster aftermath was <u>Minimize emotional suffering and maximize spiritual blessing</u>. What I found is that usually the greatest efforts in disasters are spent in the beginning phase; the shock-phase, but later comes the vacuum phase—when people are seeking and spiritually wide open—I am grateful we are able to have something for that moment. Getting life back to semi-normal life without ever meeting God would actually be the even greater tragedy...please pray.

Following Jesus in the Nuclear Zone

Do you remember the name Fukushima? Hint; it has a lot in common with Chernobyl, in Ukraine...

Seems like forever, we have been planning to start discipleship orientations nationwide, but of course, the last two years have not been helpful toward that goal! Now, finally things are shifting!

So, this month we are thrilled to be launching our "Following Jesus" discipleship workshops and the first will be in Fukushima. Having served there in many ways the last decade, it is a place very close to our hearts. Since that region has been avoided and scrutinized so much, we thought it a perfect gesture to begin our efforts there, before anywhere else.

Why these workshops? I wrote in a recent magazine article...

"My estimate is that 1.26 million people die each year in Japan without Jesus. In pre-Covid years we were seeing about 8,000 baptisms in Japan each year. That's a mere one baptism per church... It's like a boat sinking in Tokyo Bay with 158 people on board and in all of our efforts, we rescue only 1. Those odds for any rescue organization are totally unthinkable.

Meanwhile, all too many believers and leaders here are ac-



customed to those kinds of numbers. Year after year the dreary trend continues, the sense of urgency lays limp, and with the

Church here in decline; we are flatly in a crisis. Japanese believers have not entered their call or their identity. But when they do, when it finally happens, everything will change."

It is our true conviction that the core of the core in the Kingdom is discipleship—oddly it is often absent. Now that we have a dynamite system for it, this is our newest effort in encouraging it to spark and ignite. Getting people back to the Cross, and then loving, following, and obeying the Master.

This first event will mean a lot of learning and refining... Mornings focus on adult discipleship, and afternoons focus on kids discipleship (thus two fliers) Please pray for March 26, that we find the best approach for Japan, and that we get off to a great start!

WE PRAISE GOD FOR YOU!!!

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