SEEKING A SECOND CHANCE

“Can you explain to me the Christian concept of redemption?” This was the question Yuki asked over lunch after worshipping with us for the first time. He’s 27 and single. An Indian friend had introduced him to our English group. Although Yuki doesn’t speak English, he loves American culture and has shown a keen interest in Christianity.

Surprised by the direct question regarding the central message of the Scriptures, I began to share about the meaning of the cross while attempting not to betray my excitement. Yuki was taking it in. He was listening, he was genuinely curious, and he wanted to understand. This seemed important to him, as we talked for over an hour.

The entire time I was perplexed. Why did Yuki want to know about redemption? Why was this concept so important to him? As we continued talking, I learned that in Japan, fitting in is very important. For some people it comes naturally, for others less so. Those to whom it does not come so easily pay the price—and it is a hefty one. It can take the form of social bullying or ostracism, but usually it involves getting “knocked off” the rails that lead to a respectable, successful life. Once that happens, it’s hard to get back on and start over. There’s no reset button. No second chances. No redemption.

Yuki noticed that in American culture, people have second chances (and thirds and fourths!) and can restart despite massive failures. He also had eyes to see that this is not simply coincidental but somehow linked to the Christian teaching of redemption. He observed this in many American movies, particularly his favorite one, Shawshank Redemption.

I realized that Yuki is attracted to American culture because of its Christian backdrop of redemption. And he is attracted to the Christian backdrop of redemption because he himself is longing for a restart, a do-over, and he is exploring whether Christianity will provide that.

I met with Yuki recently on Zoom, and he wants to read the entire New Testament. Will he follow through? It’s hard to tell, but I believe he’s on the right track. Please pray that Yuki will encounter Jesus in the Scriptures and experience the redemption he so desperately longs for.

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| by an Alliance worker serving in Japan

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PRAYING OVER HEADLINES
You can probably imagine that for Alliance workers like us who serve in creative-access locations, reading the news headlines from our corner of the world isn’t our favorite activity. Doing so can quickly stir up stress, uncertainty, and worry. It is a great temptation to feed the fires of fear instead of faith in our hearts during troubling circumstances. So, we turn to you with a request today—please intercede for us and for other Alliance workers in high-risk areas around the globe.

When you see a headline or hear a news report about a troubled area of the world, would you consider making a commitment to use that as an opportunity to cry out to God for His will to be done there? And would you please ask for His peace to reign in the hearts of Alliance workers in those regions? We would be so grateful!

Pray also for angelic protection around those who serve in sensitive areas, for favor with God and men, and that the Lord will open a door for their message so they may proclaim the mystery of Christ (see Colossians 4:3).

adapted from an update by an Alliance worker couple serving in the North and Central Asia Region

TRAGEDY OPENS DOORS FOR THE GOSPEL
This past year, God worked through a horrific accident to reach the hearts of a Vili family group in the Congo. Benjamin, a core member of the Alliance orality team, lost one brother in the accident. His other brother went into a coma. When the extended family gathered from villages all over southern Congo, they expected to attend a traditional funeral—one that usually involves a sorcerer. But Benjamin and his uncle shared the gospel as they cared for the brother who came out of the coma and buried the brother who had passed.

Paralyzed from the waist down, Benjamin had been considered cursed by his family, some of whom planned to sacrifice him to the gods. But while he and his uncle shared God’s Word, the family recognized that he was full of wisdom and a power that was stronger than family curses. Praise God for how He is working through Benjamin and the orality program to declare His truth to families among the unreached Vili people! Pray also that Alliance ministries to oral learners in the Congo and other places around the world will continue to bear lasting fruit for the Kingdom.

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Thank you for praying for Alliance workers and for the people with whom they share the gospel.
To receive the Call to Prayer and weekly prayer requests via email, subscribe at cmalliance.org/pray.
Alliance ministries are supported by gifts to the Great Commission Fund and CAMA.