

UNITED STATES

300 East Beltline Avenue NE P (616) 726-1144
 Grand Rapids, MI 49506-1208 P (877) 272-6205



Larry & Ruth Spalink
 1315 Calvin Ave SE
 Grand Rapids, Michigan
 49506-3211 U.S.A.
 <LSpalink@aol.com>
 support acc't #802133
 January 10, 2025

FROM 27 TO 72

I was 27 years old, my seminary studies were ending, when kind of out of the blue I said to Ruth one day, “What would you think of going to talk to the people at Christian Reformed World Missions?” Though up until then we hadn’t considered the possibility of overseas work, one thing led to another, and Ruth, soon to be giving birth to our first child, was game for adventure, for 5 years anyway, and so our career began. 5 years wasn’t enough, and now we are in our 45th year! Now I am 72, and for a number of reasons, we are back in the USA. Mission work in Japan is certainly not over for the church (or for us)! But we thought it best to retire at this time. It has indeed been an adventure, with setbacks and victories along the way, and we thank God and you for allowing and empowering us to serve his kingdom in this way! We are presently located in NE



Pennsylvania-Ruth’s mother’s home, but we’re using our daughter’s mailing address. There’s 29.5 cubic meters of freight on the way there right now, hopefully arriving in February, but as we don’t have a place to unload it all, the destination for now is storage! (Along with our new address, note also the [new address for Resonate Global Mission.](#))

HAPPY MINISTRY DEVELOPMENTS

I have mentioned before that one of my main ministries the past 7 years has been helping a couple of churches develop better evangelism capacity and go from decline to growth. Along with plummeting population in society, the church is aging and shrinking too. One such congregation was Kawagoe Reformed Church, where I had monthly ministry. The church has two elders, both of whom turned 80 last year. Deploying new leaders is at a “now or never” point. I have always focused on the Gospel, the way of salvation, as the theme of my messages, declaring that this is the key thing to keep in front of us, believing that here is the open secret needed to move ahead. I stated along with that, my conviction that Jesus will indeed call those he has appointed to serve his church and mission, and my faith that among those in the room were some in whose heart the Spirit of Christ was already calling to offer themselves to serve his church. I recently heard from Pastor Kimura the joyful report that one new elder and two new deacons were being prepared to join the church’s council! It is perhaps a small victory, and great challenges remain for this church and many others like it. But it declares to us that our faith that Jesus’ promise that he will build his church in indeed what he intends to do. Perhaps this case will encourage other groups to have hope and courage, and conviction too to offer themselves, to serve according to their gifts and the Lord’s call!

MORE ANSWERS TO YOUR PRAYERS!

I have been very excited to hear of and witness many baptisms in the churches I have been visiting in order to bid farewell. Last week Pastor Tamai of Tokorozawa New Life Church let me know that two of my former Sunday school students were preparing to make profession of their faith and present a child for baptism. “Reaching the next generation” was their theme in 2024, so the Lord has worked as they had been praying!

AN EVEN BIGGER ANSWER!

Many of you have prayed with us for a new generation of those who will carry on the mission work in Japan. Perrin and Jodi Werner joined us in Japan in 2022 and are making progress in language study, with Perrin taking over a good chunk of my job description. Recently we have been delighted to hear that Charles and Hensel Oh, presently serving in the Philippines, will transfer to Japan this year! There will be one or two new church plants launched soon, and part of these new initiatives will include outreach and ministry to the skyrocketing number of non-Japanese, including Filipinos. The Oh’s will deploy to Japan with gifts and abilities to give significant input here! Both the Werners and Ohs face great fund-raising hurdles to overcome, and as my service and funding needs will end in May this year, I would be pleased if those individuals and churches who have been designating support for the Spalinks could adopt these “next generation” recruits and give them the boost they need to be fully funded! You can learn more about the Werners and Ohs on Resonate’s web pages. Go to the site: <https://www.resonateglobalmission.org/missionaries> and enter their name to see their info and make a support commitment!

ENDING WELL AND SAYING THANK YOU

Ruth and I desire to try to visit our partners one more time as we embark on a new stage of life. If you would like to play “schedule bingo” with us to try to nail down some dates, please email us or phone me at 616-500-2312. We are in NE Pennsylvania right now, but we expect to travel to Western Michigan in mid-February, then maybe back to the East Coast again to finish up our work with Resonate by the end of May.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTNERSHIP! We hope we can say that in person to as many of you as possible!



Saying goodbye with a modest sendoff at Haneda Airport on December 12, 2024

Gratefully yours, *Larry and Ruth Spalink*