

Prayer Letter for the St Helen's Tokyo 2010 Short Term Mission Team partnering with Grace City Church, Tokyo



Who is going and what are we doing?

We are a team* of eleven adults, mainly involved with City ministry at St Helen's Church, Bishopsgate, London, going to Japan from **26 March to 5 April** to partner with a new church in the centre of Tokyo.

Whilst there, we plan to:

- spend both Sundays 28 March and 4 April (Easter Day evangelistic service) encouraging the church and learning from them;
- meet up with Christians to hear what it's like following Jesus in Japan and to encourage one another;
- venture into "cold-contact" evangelism in one of Tokyo's main business districts;
- help the church's mid-week small groups run their first ever evangelistic dialogue suppers;
- run an evangelistic business seminar (teaching English language and culture) on the Saturday;
- spend time as a team in prayer, Bible study and learning about cross-cultural mission generally and the Gospel in Japan specifically.

Which church?

Grace City Church, Tokyo is a new church plant in the central business, political and cultural district of Tokyo and has close links with Redeemer Presbyterian Church in New York City. Around 25 people are involved with the church and there is a full-time team of four people - a Japanese pastor and his wife (Makoto and Michiru Fukuda) and a Dutch missionary couple (Geert and Eline de Boo). In addition, an American missionary couple, who also work as professional musicians, form part of the leadership team.

The church currently has mid-week small group Bible studies and will be starting weekly Sunday meetings from 4 April, following several months of trial Sunday services.

For more information see <http://www.believinginjapan.com/>.

Why Japan?

Japan has a large population (127 million people) and is a global economic heavyweight. However less than 1% of the population is Christian and only around **0.33% are professing Bible-believing Christians**.

The country is struggling with many social, economic and psychological issues and the overwhelming majority of the population is Buddhist and Shinto (Japanese animistic religion). There is religious freedom in Japan but, as the Japanese proverb says, "a nail that sticks out needs to be hammered down". Christians, being a very small minority group, face repression within communities and in the workplace. Young professionals are an especially

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unreached group within Japanese society. Japanese people desperately need to hear the Gospel message – to turn to Jesus and be forgiven.

We are really looking forward to the trip and pray that God will open doors for us to explain his amazing Gospel to Japanese people. However it will be extremely challenging – especially for those with little prior knowledge of Japanese language and culture.

Please join us in praying for:

The team

- Teachable hearts and a willingness to learn – both about Japan and also mission more generally;
- A spirit of unity within the team and excitement at the opportunity to share the Gospel with people who have never heard it before, which will allow us to be effective for Christ in Tokyo;
- Boldness and clarity (in spite of the communication barrier), and for a desire to take risks for the sake of the Gospel;
- Wisdom for those speaking at various events (mainly the dialogue suppers and the seminar): that they would faithfully proclaim God's Word and be culturally sensitive.

The church and the people we meet

- Members of the church to be bold in inviting friends, colleagues and relatives to the evangelistic events and that people will be able to come;
- Open hearts for the Japanese Christians; for them to develop a firm conviction of the Bible's power as Jesus and His Word are talked about and applied by the Holy Spirit and for courage for them to proclaim their faith among co-workers;
- Those we meet to take one step closer to Jesus – whether they've already started following Him or not – and to go back to Grace City Church after we have left to attend follow-up evangelistic courses and come under the sound of the Gospel through regular preaching.

Logistics

- Members of the group to be able to meet up with work colleagues and friends who are in Tokyo. Pray for these people to be open to the Gospel and willing to take time in a busy working week to come to one or more of the events;
- Good health, sleep and eating patterns and stamina, especially for getting over jet lag very quickly (and that we don't get lost too often...);
- No last minute events such as illness and airline strikes which might prevent people from coming.

Thank you very much for your partnership with us in prayer. We are keenly aware this is God's work by his power.

"For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea." Habakkuk 2:14

"People will come from east and west and north and south, and will take their places at the feast in the kingdom of God." Luke 13:29

With love in Jesus

The St Helen's Tokyo 2010 Short Term Mission Team