

東京駅
TOKYO STATION

de Boo family
church planting Tokyo

BiJ newsletter

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#25 2009.06

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We would like to keep you informed about our church planting ministry in Japan. Please help us to keep our mailing list up to date and let us know when you move or would like to receive this newsletter on a different mail address: deboo@believinginjapan.com

Over the last couple of months our neighborhood was cleaned up. Not that there is any dirt or trash anywhere to be found on Japanese streets, but everything was polished anyway. Hundreds of colorful flowerpots filled up the sidewalks. Japanese people can make a fantastic first impression and the International Olympic Committee completely agreed with that. Their reason to visit was checking out Tokyo's bid for having the Olympics here in 2016. At the same time we also made a first impression as new church in central Tokyo. We did not present a polished Gospel to make it look better, but we did try to present it in a way that makes it relevant to the needs and interests of our target group. The responses have been encouraging!

that teaches and preaches a message of forgiveness and redemption. But how do we get to this point of teaching and preaching the Gospel in the heart of Tokyo where only so few know of Christ? Sometimes we compare what we do with being fishermen, just like the disciples in the New Testament. But our fishing methods were unimaginable for the disciples when Jesus called them and made them 'fishers of men' (Matt. 4:19). We are throwing our nets out trying to reach many. Some may be saved; others are at least exposed to the Gospel and the community of the church before they slip through the meshes of the net. Even though the timing might not have been right for them yet, we hope they will look back and remember the warm community of the church whenever they long for that again. For that reason we always make sure that everybody had our contact information. Other 'fish' stay around in the net for a while and lavish themselves to what the church has to offer. But after some time the tide proves to be too strong: work, pressure from society or other religions suck them out of the net. As a church we try to keep in touch with these people actively by inviting them to activities that suit them. Or by just meeting up with them at Starbucks and talk about life over a cup of coffee.



The Piano Concert in the financial district Marunouchi was a great success: Many new contacts were made, both with non-Christians and Christians working in the area. Several visitors signed up for the CROSSROAD introduction to Christianity for seekers.

networking events > You might wonder what we are using as 'bait' when we go out fishing. Well, first of all we operate on the fishing grounds where the target group is. Right there we organize networking events in which the young professionals working and sometimes living in central Tokyo show interest, like the most recent piano concert. On May 8th in a beautiful restaurant in Marunouchi, the finance/business district of Tokyo, 57 people attended a piano concert by professional pianist Yukiko Tanaka. Over 20 people were non-Christian and were exposed to God's grace through music, excellent food, a testimony and fellowship. After the concert we invited all the guests to keep in touch by attending the follow up Summer Party in June or by participating in a seeker Bible study (named CROSSROAD) or in one of the new community groups. Other examples of networking events were a Valentine party in a sky lounge on the 54th floor of a tower overlooking the central Tokyo skyline. More than 50 people (half non-Christians) enjoyed the chamber orchestra, sweets and talk about love from a Biblical perspective. We also try to connect to Japanese traditions by inviting people to a Sakura Picnic

We greet you from Tokyo, Japan, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, we want to thank you from our hearts for praying for and contributing towards this new venture in the heart of Tokyo! In Tokyo spring has already passed and summer is heralded in by increasingly humid weather. At the start of a new season we are pleased to give you an update on the ministry of Grace City Church Tokyo as we enter a new phase in our church planting ministry.

fishing net > Grace City Church Tokyo's vision is the renewal of people's lives and the transformation of the city socially, culturally and spiritually. In other words we look for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, his grace to affect this society. By his grace we are a 'kingdom of priests' (Ex.19:6)



Geert and Eline de Boo are sent by the GZB (Reformed Mission League of the Protestant Church in The Netherlands) to Japan. They work as church planters in Central Tokyo.

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underneath the blossoming cherry trees. Some events are quite informal like a movie night which provides a relaxed atmosphere, good snacks and an opportunity to discuss the movie and deepen relationships. For art lovers there was an opportunity to listen to famous NY artist Makoto Fujimura as he showed and explained about his work in a gallery in Aoyama.

launch team > The so-called 'Launch Team', a group of evangelistic 'bringers' assisting in the first stage of the founding of the church has been actively involved in Bible Study and thinking with the staff in how to build up the church and reach out to their fellow-Tokyoites. Through vision meetings, prayer walks in the target area and the church's first retreat Rev. Fukuda has been transferring the vision and DNA of the church. The theme of the retreat held in the mountainous area west of Tokyo (Okutama) was 'grace identity'. In a relaxed setting there was time to talk, to play, to enjoy food and fellowship, but also to study. Three sessions about aspects of our church's grace identity were discussed: the teaching of Sola Gratia (just by grace), the meaning of our church being a reformed covenant community and the implementation of servant leadership. The kids, as very important little members of our church community, enjoyed their own program during our study sessions and discovered things about their own identity in Christ through the Bible, discussion and crafts. But most of all they enjoyed helping out and eating during our barbeque night! Through all these efforts the Launch Team has become more equipped and more united, even though some rough times lie behind us, too. As in any community, not everybody always agrees with the course set out. Many hours of talking spent and many tears were shed when the conclusion was drawn that three Launch Team members needed to go their separate ways because of differences in vision and ministry design. In the midst of excitement of laying a strong foundation for Grace City Church, this was a painful process. It forced us to define our theology and philosophy of ministry more precisely. We are thankful for the grace experienced: an even clearer vision, personal growth and more unity in the team. We are also happy to report that new Christians joined the Launch Team and are committed to help.

coaching > We are not on our own in setting out a course for Grace City Church Tokyo! We believe God is guiding us, many people around the world are praying and we were also privileged to receive four days of valuable coaching in March by Gary Watanabe from the Redeemer Church Planting Center in New York. In April the Asia Director from the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands came to visit for a week which meant a great encouragement.

growth > More growth can be announced! Some people refer to this type of growth as 'Dutch evangelism' or natural church growth'... we are expecting new life! Eline felt unusually tired and sick during the early weeks of pregnancy and that was enough reason to visit the OB/GYN earlier

than planned. We were relieved seeing the baby's heartbeat on the ultrasound screen. The doctor decided to check Eline out a little more thoroughly to see if everything was really all right. It did not take long for him to call out: "wait a minute, wait a minute... there is something else... it is another heartbeat... there is another one!" Double joy and a double shock: twins! Again God is showing us how abundant his grace is. Thom, Berend and Julie are very excited and curious to get to know these little de Boo-people. We will have to wait till November; will you pray with us for health and growth for all five kids, but especially for the (fraternal) twins in the tummy?

praise and prayer > Please, join us in prayer as we praise God for:

- **grace, in more ways than we could imagine!**
- **high attendance at the Valentine Party and City Piano Concert**
- **providing financial resources needed to launch the church**
- **prayer and support from around the world**
- **natural church growth through God's gift of two pregnancies in the team (including our twins!)**

We pray if God would grant the church:

- **grace, to work through our weakness**
- **health and spiritual growth for the GCCT kids**
- **growing leadership able to transfer the vision and DNA of the church**



Growth! New life on the trees, new life in the tummy. Berend and Julie celebrate their 7th and 3rd birthday these weeks. Thom is also getting tall at 9 years old.

- **a clear vision for the Launch Team members of how God wants to use their gifts**
- **(spiritual and numerical) growth of the five community groups**
- **follow up for the many new contacts made through our outreach events**
- **seekers to attend CROSSROAD Bible Study**
- **a good time of fellowship at the Tokyo 09 Summer Party in June**
- **a fruitful time with the Dutch mission team in July (10 young professionals giving 2 weeks of their time and energy to serve our church through many outreach activities).**

Blessings,
Geert & Eline
Thom, Berend and Julie de Boo

help >> Church planting in Tokyo is very much needed, yet very expensive. We are building a new community, called to glorify God by loving and serving this city through being fishers of men. This will undoubtedly impact Japanese culture and herald the coming of the new Kingdom. However, this takes great efforts, much prayer, time, and money. Our mission sends us as human resources to this first new church plant, but to continually do so we need your help as we are short of several thousands of dollars pledged towards our annual budget.

We are grateful for your sacrificial giving especially in this time of economic uncertainty. But the financial crisis makes us all think of how we invest our money. Investing in a church planting movement in Tokyo is a great investment. It will not yield interest on your bank account, but it will change lives of Japanese and have eternal impact. Yes, missions in Japan are expensive, especially urban missions. But if Christians in the most affluent nations will not support missions in Japan, who else can? We would greatly appreciate your willingness to prayerfully consider supporting us financially. May God continue to bless you to be a blessing to many!



We value your ongoing support towards our ministry in Japan. You can send your donations to:

Riverside CRC
604 Comstock Blvd. NE
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Please write "Geert & Eline de Boo, Japan" on the memo line. Your donations are tax-deductable.

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