



de Boo family
church planting Tokyo

BiJ newsletter

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Thom and a Japanese friend are competing in the traditional Dutch 'koekhappen' game. Japan is celebrating 400 years of trade relations with the Netherlands this year. The Dutch mission team added an extra dimension: celebrating unity through our Lord Jesus Christ!

Dear friends,

We greet you from Tokyo, Japan, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, we want to thank you for praying for GraceCityChurchTokyo and for our family. After an extremely busy year, we vacationed on Guam, where America's day begins, only 4 hours south of Tokyo. We decided to rent a car for a day to explore the island. We left our books and beach buckets behind and after not being able to drive for a whole year, Geert was behind a steering wheel again. That was pure joy: we had not seen so much greenery in ages! But it didn't last long; soon we couldn't see anything anymore because of sudden torrential rain and roads turned into wild rivers.

time. We had to adjust the sails continuously to keep moving as a church. The fatigue that came with that after a little less than a year was intense. We had tried many techniques and looking back we see how futile some of our efforts were. The harder we were blowing air into the sails, the less we opened ourselves up to be propelled by the Holy Spirit. That is not just a fact in church planting, but in any aspect of life. The more you try to accomplish on your own, the less you are open to God. But by God's grace we proved agile and we quickly learned to sail on heavenly winds. Sometimes these winds are so powerful that we feel like we are losing control. There are so many new contacts made, how can we possibly follow up on all of those? So many new ideas, how can we make them work? Many musicians and other artists offer their help in reaching out to Tokyo's young professionals, but how can we get all these events organized? We are being noticed or even watched: The cover of the Japan Harvest (the magazine of the Japan Evangelical Mission Association) fall 2009 edition is filled with Geert's designs of flyers and invitations for our outreach activities. The introduction to the extensive article read: *'Is Japan on the verge of a shift in the spiritual climate that will profoundly impact the culture of Japan? If so GraceCityChurch Tokyo will be in a strategic location, poised to gather influential young professionals and artists into the church of Jesus Christ.'* How will we be able to live up to these high expectations? We have to admit, it is a luxurious problem to deal with: there are so many chances in this place that cries out for meaning. God's guidance became our compass, but with so many forces around, we need to be still and pray for wisdom about what to do next. God is meeting our needs in many awesome ways, for example in adding people He called to our staff. Not only are we expecting the musically gifted Lowther family this fall, also Rev. Seima Aoyagi and his family positively answered our call to come over and help. From the summer of 2010 he will join our team, be immersed in our vision and God willingly plant our first daughter church.

Geert carefully found a high spot along the road to park the car and we waited until this tropical storm front passed. After a scary hour we cautiously proceeded to a nearby village where a local Chamorro man told us: "You'd better watch CNN tomorrow, this storm will bring disaster to Taiwan." His prediction was accurate, who does not remember the images of the hotel sinking into the river? We thank God that He protected us, not only during that storm, but also from other natural disasters. In summer Tokyo was hit by 4 major earthquakes and a strong typhoon.

heavenly winds > Fall is the time when many typhoons hit this part of Asia. Since the start of GraceCityChurch in late fall, early winter last year, the wind seemed to change direction all the

new winds > The piano concert in May was followed by a Midsummer party in June. This gave us an opportunity to get to know the people we met at the concert and earlier events better. We invited them to our seeker Bible study 'CROSSROAD', a series of 5 basic studies as an introduction to the Christian faith. The meetings



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are held in a trendy, central Tokyo lounge late Saturday afternoon. As there is a lack of appropriate material to teach these basics from a reformed perspective in Japanese, we wrote our own. This first series proved a real blessing: all participants are continuing on into CROSSROAD PLUS, a more in-depth series of studies about the Gospel of Mark. At the same time 2 new CROSSROAD groups have just started their course. Another new happening was our modest first step into youth ministry. The kids and teenagers each have their own community group now and once a month they gather for a joint meeting. Finding a driven and gifted person who can work with our rapidly increasing group of youngsters is an important prayer request. Not only human resources are needed, but in this case there is also a lack of good Japanese material to work with. In our tradition, kids are fully part of our church community, but in many Japanese churches this covenantal thinking is virtually unknown. In June we also focused on the theme of diaconate. As a church we want to serve the community. Our target group's needs are mostly spiritual and mental, so we want to be available for them by serving pastorally. We are working with a Japanese Christian counselor for the equipment of our team and in organizing stress management seminars for young professionals. But the many yuppies in central Tokyo share the streets and parks they rush through with many homeless people. How can we serve them? We 'prayer walked' through the areas where many homeless hang out. Praying, but with our eyes open for the needy people we met and not with our hands folded, but with giving hands. The kids distributed packed lunches to the homeless people we met. This meant a lot to the receivers as well as the little givers. We have not yet figured out a structural way to help, but in the team a growing desire to serve the whole city has awakened.

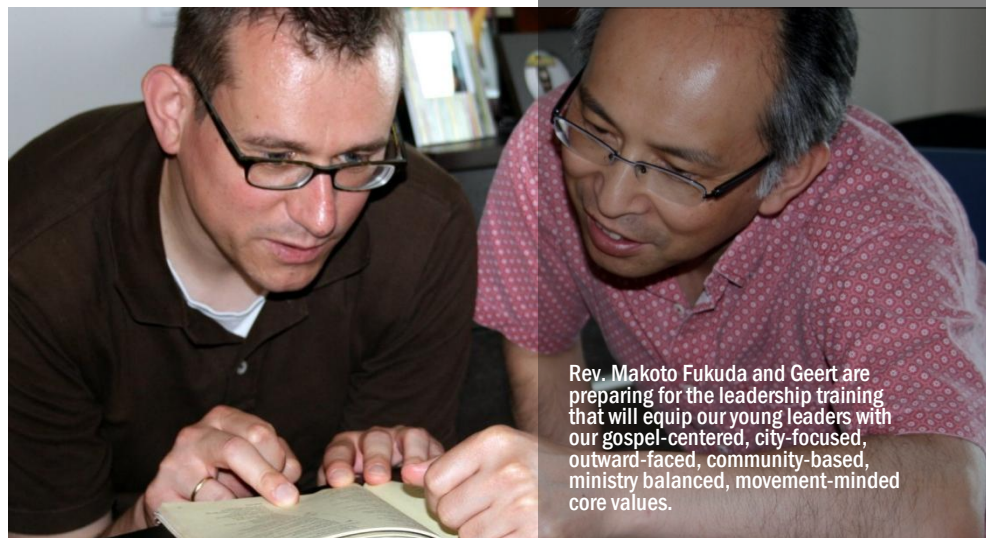
whirlwind > Many of the new contacts were made through the activities of the Dutch Mission team from our home church in Leiden. For 2 weeks in July the team buzzed through the city as a whirlwind, attracting many Japanese on their path through central Tokyo. The Launch Team was immediately impressed by the Dutch, not only because of their height and hair color. The openness and enthusiasm of the team proved to be contagious. The Japanese team members did not want to miss a thing and that caused a renewed impulse in their motivation, which is still noticeable now. The events that were held also bore fruit. New groups of seekers were reached during a Dutch kids' games event, Holland parties and a Lifestyle Seminar for young professionals. In fancy magazines there is a lot of talk about 'fusion', which means a music or culinary style in which the best elements of each are united. This short term mission trip was one big culture fusion: Japanese children trying out traditional Dutch games (see picture on front page), tall and blond Dutch ladies in kimono and an exchange of experiences of Dutch and Japanese career builders. And what we learned is that there are many differences, but even more similarities. The bridge was always the

Gospel, even if the Japanese counterparts had never heard the name of Jesus before. The kids saw Him in the helping hands during crafts and the young professionals heard about Him in the testimonies of their new Dutch friends.

worship > We have celebrated GraceCityChurchTokyo's very first tryout worship service in July. A historic moment! In a small meeting room on the 10th floor, overlooking the office buildings and fancy fashion and jewelry outlets in the heart of Tokyo, 25 people gathered. Rev. Fukuda led us in worship and preached on Romans 10:12. By 'practicing' (our worship is for real and from the heart, of course) we try to find a worship style and compose a liturgy that fits our theology, tradition and target group. Furthermore a lot of practical issues need to be addressed like location, time, welcoming seekers, etc.

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

- Praise God for many **new contacts**. We pray that God will keep our passion burning for our fellow-Tokyoites. Praise God for the current 3 CROSSROAD beginners Bible study groups. We pray that God will grant these seekers faith.
- We thank God for the anticipation of **new staff**. We pray for the Lowther family and the Aoyagi family that they will have a good time of preparation before they transfer to Tokyo.



Rev. Makoto Fukuda and Geert are preparing for the leadership training that will equip our young leaders with our gospel-centered, city-focused, outward-faced, community-based, ministry balanced, movement-minded core values.

- Our church is blessed with many children and we pray for a gifted **youth worker** to be part of their young lives.
- We praise God for the first careful steps in the direction of **worship services**. As there are still many needs in this area, please, pray with us for wisdom about the right, style, timing and affordable location.
- We praise God for our 15th **wedding anniversary** today (Oct. 21st) and for the five precious 'crowns' on our union: Thom (10), Berend (7), Julie (3) and the twins we are expecting in the latter half of November. We pray for health and strength for these last weeks of the pregnancy and for a safe delivery of these beloved babies.

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

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Please write "Geert & Eline de Boo, Japan" on the memo line. Your donations are tax-deductable.

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