

The Christmas season seemed to rush by, as churches throughout Japan were busy sharing the Gospel. Because Japan has been increasingly permeated by western culture since World War II, Christmas decorations found their way into this non-Christian land, together with Coca Cola and hamburgers. Today, walking along Japanese streets in December, one can find illuminated Christmas decorations and gift-wrapped chocolate everywhere. Christmas songs fill the air, even at service areas of highways. Although this was our fifth Christmas in Japan, it was still thought provoking. How can strange decorations and traditions be so well loved by a nation having no Christian roots? I then thought of Europe or America, and realized there was no difference. How many people actually celebrate Jesus, compared to those who just enjoy nostalgic and sentimental tradition?



Michael & Esther Stock with Ricarda & Leonie

For churches in Japan it is a real challenge to fill the meaningless Christmas ornamentation of the streets with the true meaning of the Gospel of Christ. There are many approaches, and we deem Christmas a unique and great opportunity for evangelism. At our *Karuizawa Fellowship Bible Camp*, we are still exploring ways to best minister at Christmas. Karuizawa has grown into a famous summer resort, and now it's trying to brand itself as a captivating winter resort also. Skiing and ice skating for the sportsman and major Christmas illumination for tourism has increased. Hotels specializing in winter weddings abound. These "wedding chapels" also offer hand bell concerts with a Christmas theme. Masses come, especially young couples. Authentic candlelight, Christmas carols, reading of the nativity story, and a few words similar to a sermon are offered. It seems too little in comparison to the great story of God coming to earth to redeem mankind. But it proves how open and eager people are to enter church at Christmas!

Though our Camp is on the outskirts of town, please pray that God will show us how to use our facility, also, to take the opportunities this season offers. Thank you for sharing with us in the proclamation of the love of Christ through your prayer and gifts! 🙏

Michael and Esther Stock, in Japan since 2007, are involved in managing *Karuizawa Fellowship Bible Camp*, our retreat center northwest of Tokyo. Their daughters, Ricarda and Leonie, attend boarding school in Yokohama.

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Liberty Corner Mission
Building Bridges between God and Man



Dear praying friends,

Back in the early 1980's, Pastor Fran Ueda and I attended church-planting seminars in preparation for our own church plant in Tokyo. Although we recognized that it's only with the Lord's guidance and through

the power of His Holy Spirit that any church can be planted and grown, we sought ways to gain insight into the Japanese mentality and strategy of such a project. In doing so, we became acquainted with the mission organization, *White Fields*.

The *White Fields* ministry-concept involves mentoring national church planters (Japanese in Japan, Chinese in Taiwan, etc.) to do the work of evangelism, discipleship, and the growing of a strong, reproducing church. Foreign missionaries help these indigenous church planters on-site, and sponsors from the missionaries' homelands support them through prayer and financial aid. Indigenous church planters already know the heart-language and culture of their own people, and can usually gain acceptance more easily among those they seek to reach. Furthermore, they can live more economically. The task of world evangelism looms large before us, and our resources of time, personnel and finances are limited. It therefore behooves *LCM* to follow the direction Christ is outlining, by adding national church planters to our foreign missionary body in our approach to church planting.

It is with joyful anticipation that *Liberty Corner Mission* is taking this new step of faith! Do read the report by Fran Ueda regarding our latest church-plant in Fukui. May your own heart be stirred as you read about what God is doing through those who serve with *LCM*. Thank you, dear faithful prayer warriors and donors, for your commitment to world evangelism through your partnership with *LCM* in Japan and Taiwan!

In Christ and for Christ,

Sister Maria

Sister Maria Baha
Director of Liberty Corner Mission

Liberty Corner Mission is the foreign mission arm of Fellowship Deaconry Ministries, Liberty Corner, New Jersey. Serving in cooperation with Marburger Mission of Germany, we preach the Gospel of Jesus Christ, hold high the Cross, make disciples and plant churches, that God might be glorified among the nations. Presently Liberty Corner Mission serves in Taiwan and Japan.

Japan



Dirk & Erika Grabowski with Julia & Sophia

individuals in steps and a “key experience” is a necessary step forward to the next experience.

One such key experience occurred with my Japanese language teacher as we were sitting in a coffee shop. I had the privilege of choosing the topic of the conversation lesson. It was about “Obon,” one of the two most important influential Buddhist holiday events of the year. It focuses on the worship of deceased ancestors. It is a must for each member of the family to come together and participate in traditional ceremonies and celebrations. In Japan it is widely held that missing this event puts one in danger of misfortune!

As my teacher spoke, the more interested I became, wanting to know every detail. Our conversation revealed the cultural pressure and burdens on the individual lives of the Japanese. Even after the paid lesson was over, my teacher insisted on continuing our discussion. She was very curious to hear *why* I demonstrate a peaceful life, based on faith. I hadn’t spoken very long when she very openly and honestly shared about a major conflict in her family that had just come up at “Obon.” She agreed to let me pray for her about that concern.

Two weeks later I started explaining the basics of my hope and faith in Christ in Japanese. I later learned that my serious and compassionate attention to my teacher turned into a key experience! It seems that, because I didn’t interrupt her speech or impatiently push my knowledge about the basics of Christian faith, the door of her heart opened. After that I was allowed to speak frankly about biblical truths, without hesitation. Continue to pray for steps forward via key experiences. 

Dirk and Erika Grabowski, with Julia and Sophia, arrived in Japan in May 2010. Dirk is now doing an internship at an established Japanese church near Osaka, as he continues studying the difficult Japanese language.

Key Experiences in Japan

To effectively reach the Japanese community for Christ, every missionary needs “Key Experiences.” We need a “key” for communication, and a “key” to the heart of the Japanese, in order to successfully share the Gospel. In the Japanese culture we interact with

Taiwan

I was in prison and you came to me.
Matthew 25:39 ESV

Many of you know the main focus of our ministry is evangelism among the mainstream population in Taiwan, but there are groups within society who cannot be a part of a traditionally structured church. Reaching them requires a different approach. Over the past few months I have begun to get involved with one such group, a prison ministry.

Through an organization called *Prison Fellowship Taiwan* I came in contact with Pastor Yieh, who leads groups of believers in the evangelism and discipleship of convicted felons. Pastor Yieh had visited our church and shared about his ministry last summer. He asked if I would be willing to occasionally preach at a local prison. I didn’t know exactly what to expect, but I was willing to try.

Going through security and having to leave keys, money and cameras in a locker made me feel the seriousness of the situation. But once inside, the well-manicured grounds and the high walls with barbed wire impressed me. Our team consisted of about 8 people, and we were led to a large

room where over 170 men were already waiting to hear what we had to say. Nearly all of them were Taiwanese, but there were a few western faces, as well as some Africans.

Our meeting consisted of a mixture of songs, testimonies, preaching, and a call to commitment. Two men on our team were ex-cons themselves, so their testimonies were very much what these men needed to hear. I was then given about 25 minutes to preach on the text of the day. As of this writing I have only attended twice, but both times I was told by Pastor Yieh that at least 6 men

filled out cards saying they desired to be baptized, and others indicated that they wanted to believe in Jesus or know more about Him. I am grateful to God for the salvation of these men, and pray their faith will be grounded in the Word. Thank you for praying with us! And thank you for your continued support! 

Karl and Kathy Schulz, with Benjamin, David and Aurora work in Taoyuan, Taiwan, near Taipei. Karl is a church planter, serving in Taiwan since 1993.



Karl & Kathy Schulz with Benjamin, David & Aurora

Japan

Today I’d like to introduce to you Miss Rie Miura.

Rie is a member of our church here in Tokyo, who recently graduated from seminary. She then returned to her hometown in Fukui to plant a church....because there are no churches nearby.

How clearly I remember the day I first met Rie in 1996. While passing our church building, she saw the cross. It evoked fond memories of attending Sunday School as a child and she came inside. I strongly felt her deep spiritual hunger and that the Holy Spirit had led her to us. When she heard of Jesus’ cross, she seemed receptive to God’s love. After sharing we prayed together, and she wept. I had hoped that she would soon come back. But she didn’t. It was six months later that suddenly she

reappeared, this time with a clean-shaven head! She was a rock singer by profession. What a surprise! That day she really began her search for truth. She enjoyed studying God’s Word. With a clear conviction that Jesus had died for her sins and had forgiven her completely, she was baptized at Christmas in 1997.

Her vibrant Christian life was soon beset by her first trial. She became ill. Abandoning her desire to become a famous rock singer, she was forced to return to her hometown for treatment and rest. And there her eyes were opened. She saw how few churches there were in

rural areas. Besides healing her illness, the Lord gave her a vision. Returning to Tokyo in 2008, she entered seminary to study God’s Word in preparation for church planting.

Today Rie is preparing this new ministry. We rented a house near her parents’ home, cleaned, painted and furnished it. Tracts and fliers were prepared. Our Tokyo church members partner with Rie in prayer, occasionally making the 5-hour trip to help. We wait on the Lord in faith and expectation.

Through this church, we desire to hear many in this rural area say:

**“We no longer believe just because of what you said;
now we have heard for ourselves,
and we know that this man really is the Savior of the world.”**

John 4:42

How awesome the leading of our God is! Thank you for your prayers and financial support for Rie and others ministering in Japan. 

Fran Ueda served with our missionaries in Tokyo since 1981. Since April 2010, she is a missionary of LCM serving as field leader. She remains senior pastor of Kotake Mukaihara Christian Church in Tokyo.



Fran Ueda

