

3. David and Sue will be taking a number of meetings in South Africa during April and May. Please pray for their protection and the ability to be effective in communicating the vision of the work.
4. Marilyn Zorinpuii (age 30) joined the Mission in January and is a dedicated Christian teacher from India. She is working as a high school English teacher at Kansai Christian School. Missionary teachers at KCS have unique opportunities to encourage missionary children, witness to non-Christian students and parents, and influence the surrounding community for the Lord. Please pray for Marilyn and Crystal Wilson, who works on behalf of the Mission at Kyoto International University Academy.
5. Thank you for your prayers for Neil and Peggy Verwey. Peggy broke her leg and underwent hip replacement surgery shortly afterwards on October 14. She is making progress with her rehabilitation. Neil continues to be energetic - taking meetings, doing a lot of writing and being very active in the prison ministry. He hopes to have a new book in print next month called, "Strong Shoes for Rough Roads." Please pray that the Lord would continue to grant them His wisdom, strength and protection.

JAPANORAMA - 90 SUICIDES PER DAY

In 1993 Wataru Tsurumi wrote and published "The Complete Manual of Suicide." One million copies were sold! Japan has long been known as a "nation of suicides" and has one of the highest suicide rates among industrialized nations.

Phenomena such as "web suicides," in which several strangers – usually in their twenties – meet on the Internet and arrange to die together, are on the increase, but are only a tiny fraction of the problem. Some take their lives so that surviving family members can collect life insurance, which has led insurance firms to defer payments for two or three years as a deterrent.

Suicide is sometimes even met with approval, as facing one's fate and not shirking it.

In 2001 railway stations in Japan introduced mirrors to deter suicide attempts by showing victims their own face before they jump and railways started to charge suicide victims' families for the cost of the inconvenience and clean-up.

The Japanese Government is now calling for the nation to rethink its attitude regarding suicide in an effort to unravel centuries of social pressure and tradition. They purport that, "The practice, should no longer be seen as 'the honorable way out' but as an act of desperation!" They want to bring the suicide rate down by 20%!

Please pray for those in financial trouble and contemplating suicide – that the Christians in this country might be an example and encouragement to many who are in desperate need.



January / February 2009

COMMITTED TO THE GOLDEN RULE

One night, while still in middle school, I felt so disillusioned that I cut my wrist. My friends rejected me, I felt hurt and miserable, and started to question the reason for living.

"What would happen to me if I die?" was the thought that struck my mind as I saw the blood dripping from my hand. The realization that I had no answer to that question suddenly made me very much afraid of death! I cried out to my mother for help and she rushed me to a nearby hospital.



Eri Verwey (Jigami)

Some time later I faced a turning-point in my life, while riding a bus. A friendly-looking, English-speaking family sat right behind me. I had always wanted to learn English and hoped that they would talk to me. Then I heard a voice behind me say, "Hi!" As I turned around, I nervously said, "Hi!" I was embarrassed when I realized the foreign man behind me was talking on his cell phone! He was equally surprised to see my response and started to talk to me afterwards. He turned out to be a minister of a local church and invited me to join them on Sunday mornings to learn English!

I was warmly welcomed at church and the people were very friendly, but I was determined not to become a Christian. I heard a different message each week after English class, but slept through most of them.

As time passed, I noticed that Christians had something desirable. They seemed to be happy, even when the going was tough. The more I longed to have their sense of peace, the more I realized that I couldn't have it while I was living in sin; so in His mercy the Lord settled the matter for me! ***"Come now, and let us reason together," says the Lord, "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like***

JAPAN MISSION
7-40 Monzen Cho, Ikoma, Nara,
Japan 630-0266
Tel. +81-743-73-1754
Fax. +81-743-73-1681
E-mail: jm@japanmission.org
Web-site: www.japanmission.org

U.K. ADDRESS
Sybil Oliver, 56 Warrenside Close
Blackburn, Lancs BB1 9PF
Tel. 01254 720269
E-mail: uk@japanmission.org

AUSTRALIAN ADDRESS:
Neil Young, 23 Carbine Court,
Drouin VIC 3818.
Tel. (03) 5625 4703
E-mail: aus@japanmission.org

crimson, they shall be as wool" (Isaiah 1:18).

I changed a lot after becoming a Christian. This was later confirmed to me when my non-Christian sister gave me a letter and a present, even though it was not my birthday! She wrote: "Dear Eri, I thought that you were the person I hated the most, but you changed and are now showing true concern for me. My feelings have changed from hating you to you really loving you!"

As a young Christian, I still had to learn a lot about how to maintain good relationships with others. One night I wrote the following e-mail to Neil and Peggy Verwey at Japan Mission:

"Tonight, I was spending time with my grandparents at their house. As I was talking to my grandma, who was already in bed, my grandpa suddenly came into the room.

'How old are you now?' he asked me. 'I am 23.' I replied.

'I see,' he said, rubbing a piece of paper against my arm. The room was semi-dark, so I could hardly figure out what was happening.

'What are you doing?' I asked him while pointing to the piece of paper.

'This is a talisman for you from the Uzigami-god,' my grandfather said. 'He will protect you from illness and injury. I just need to have your name and age to make this charm valid.'

I was very upset! 'I do not need that kind of protection!' I responded. 'You are involving me in idolatry and I want nothing to do with it!' We argued to and fro, but later on I thought that I should have been much more respectful to my grandfather in my attitude and words.

He was offended at my indignation and asked me to leave. He felt that I had rudely rejected his kindness and concern for me.

I realized through this incident how much my grandparents were involved in darkness and what a deep relationship they had with evil spirits.

Please pray for them! Eri"

Neil and Peggy immediately e-mailed me back, strongly advising me not to compromise with idolatry, but to apologize to my grandfather for my disrespect. A few days later I answered their e-mail:

"Thank you for your prayers and advice!

I went to my grandpa to apologize to him while he was washing his car. We were facing each other in the hot summer sun with a very uncomfortable tension in our hearts.

'I want to apologize for being so rude to you last night.' I said to him. His face was serious and he did not know what to say.

'You can help me wash the car,' he replied. Then his somber face turned into a smile. I knew I was forgiven.

After we washed the car, he invited me to go with him to his garden to pick some vegetables. 'I want to share the vegetables with you,' he said.

Can I come visit you at the Japan Mission this evening? Eri"

That night, while visiting Neil and Peggy, I not only committed the golden rule of Christ to memory, but I committed my future behavior to Him!

"Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them" (Mat 7:12). □

UPDATE - ROBERT AND MAI MACKENZIE



Robert & Mai Mackenzie

Robert Mackenzie joined Japan Mission from Northern Ireland in August 2006. He has since worked as an English Evangelism teacher and interacted with hundreds of students, friends and contacts each month. He recently said, "More students have begun to ask questions and take an interest in the Word of God. One class in particular is thriving with children. This is good because the parents often come along and also hear the Word. It is such a joy to reach out to the lost and be in service for the Lord!"

Each English class ends with a Bible Time and a time of discussion. This often presents a wonderful opportunity to witness and learn about the struggles faced by many of the students. Robert has had numerous opportunities to share his testimony of how God healed his broken family and heart. Many have been moved by his honest and intensely personal story.

Robert married a lovely Japanese Christian girl called Mai on October 6, 2007.

They are working wonderfully as a team. They regularly go together to the Sunday morning services to minister to the students. Mai often translates Robert's English testimonies and messages.

Before they were married, Mai's family was very bitter, anti-religious and held that religion was a crutch for the weak. It took many months for the Lord to change their hearts and accept Robert as part of their family. They are still opposed to Christianity, but they are recently showing signs that the Light is slipping through the cracks of their hearts. Her mother recently told Mai's sister, "You should go to church. It will heal your heart like Mai's." Please pray for this family that is full of hate and dark secrets. Please pray that the Lord would continue to enable Robert and Mai to shine the Light of the Lord to all around.

PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Eri was married to Alex Verwey on July 21, 2008 and now lives in Los Angeles, California. Please pray for them as they are very involved in the ministry of a local Japanese church. Eri is also working on a Masters degree in Counseling. Please pray for the salvation of Eri's family members - her father, sister, grandparents and extended family.
2. Because the Japanese are very family-oriented, it tends to be much harder for them to follow their beliefs, independent of others at work or at home. Please pray for the Christians in Japan, who often face intense personal struggles as they strive to refuse to compromise with idolatry. Pray that they would have the wisdom and grace to know how to show God's love.