

# JAPAN MISSION

Called to Serve

## SURRENDERING ALL - PART 1

Masasuke (Masa) Nakahara was born in July 1940 and raised with two brothers and one sister in Kagoshima City in the southwest of Japan.

He moved to Osaka to attend university. "While at university, I was arrogant and thought that I knew a lot about life," he shared. "I wanted to work for a trading company, so I decided to study Chinese. After a while, I realized that studying Chinese was not for me. The only bright spot on the horizon in those days was the time I spent with a friendly girl, Sayoko, whose acquaintance I made at a tooth-paste factory where I was working part-time to help pay for my studies."



Masasuke (Masa) & Sayoko Nakahara

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Sayoko was raised in a Christian home. Her mother was a third generation Christian and regularly held meetings in her home. There was a time when Sayoko rebelled against what she was taught, but she returned to her faith as she was drawn to the example of her mother who faithfully prayed for her.

After Masa befriended Sayoko, she invited him to attend church. It was an interesting diversion from the drudgery of studying Chinese, so he was happy to attend church for a few months. The job prospects were not so good and he became discouraged with his studies, so he stopped studying in his third year.

Masa soon found work at a real estate company. He quickly learned the trade, but found himself involved with colleagues who made fraudulent deals. A number of them were later arrested. Disillusioned, he decided to change jobs and found himself working for four different real estate companies over a short period of time. He had to work on Sundays, so he could not attend church. He knew that Sayoko, with her sincere beliefs, would not approve, so he stopped seeing her.

"Everybody I worked with seemed to compromise their values in order to make money," he shared. "I worked hard, but became frustrated because it seemed that I could not get ahead unless I was willing to be dishonest. I also became depressed when I thought about how I failed to finish university.

I gambled and drank to forget my problems, but the more I did this the more depressed and lonelier I became. I was making good money, but I soon found myself borrowing money from my friend at the end of the month because I had spent it all. I lived a desperate life, as I only lived for the moment.

It was Christmas Eve and I had just finished work when I thought that I might go out to have a drink. I felt lonely and disenchanted with my life-style when it hit me that I had no one to spend Christmas Eve with. I suddenly had the urge to see Sayoko again and I remembered the good times we had together, so I went over to her house. Sayoko was surprised when I showed up and invited me to church.

I realized that my life was a mess and knew that I had to do something about it. I spent the next few years attending church, as time allowed. I kept wondering why I was alive and where I was going in life, so I started to read the Bible. One Sunday, the minister spoke on the verse, "**Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.**" (Revelation 3:20).

For the first time, in 1965, I found myself seriously seeking God. I learned that the greatest problem facing mankind was sin, and that I was in rebellion against God. He had sent the Saviour to save me and I did not need to live a life of uncertainty and desperation anymore. All I needed to do was to open my heart and Jesus would come in and cleanse me. I could then be assured of a new and meaningful life, which was in accordance with the true purpose for which God created me. I then decided to confess my sin and believed in the message of the cross.

I grew as a Christian, but struggled with various temptations and failed to attend church regularly, due to my work. On 1 January 1966, the Holy Spirit convicted me of my sin and I rededicated my life to God. I wanted to start with a clean slate, so I decided to stop drinking alcohol.

I was working with 4 good friends at the time and could not get off from work on Sundays, so I was attending church on Sunday evenings. One Sunday morning, in June 1966, I told my friends I was going to take off from work so that I could get baptized. One of them reacted badly and was very angry with me. In July, we could not get along, so we all decided to go our separate ways.

During August I had no work, so I attended church regularly and studied the Bible. The Lord spoke to me through the following Bible verse: "**Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship.**" (Romans 12:1).

He was asking me to have faith and surrender my entire life to Him. I needed to honour Him in all that I did, including my work. I asked God to please show me a way that I could do this."

**Read in the next issue to see how the Lord led Masa to marry Sayoko and start a Christian real estate agency called Glory Housing. Read how they experienced various struggles and the Lord's faithfulness, as they sought to honour Him in their home and work.**

Japan Mission has had many dealings with **Glory Housing**. It has been invaluable to have a trust-worthy, Christian company represent us during some very complex real estate negotiations over the years. **Pray** for wisdom, protection and blessing as **Glory Housing** continues to serve the Christian community sacrificially.

## THE MISSION'S OUTREACH - "PRAY FOR US"

- Bibles and Literature
- Audio-Visual Outreach
- Student Outreach
- Hospital Evangelism
- English Evangelism
- Outreach to the Elderly
- Evangelistic Meetings & Counseling

**OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION** to friends who have made bank deposits and notified us, and especially also to those friends whose donations we were unable to acknowledge. We endeavour to acknowledge all donations where possible, but often the information on the bank statements is insufficient.

■ Please notify us if you did not receive an acknowledgement and also if your address has changed.

It will be a great help if the NAME as well as the TELEPHONE NUMBER is clearly written on the Bank Deposit slip or Debit order or Internet Transfer.

■ We gratefully acknowledge the following deposits and transfers for which unfortunately insufficient information appears on our bank statements:

**STANDARD BANK:-** 28/2/2017, 2/3, 13/3, 16/3, 20/3, 22/3, 29/3, 30/3 Windhoek, 31/3, 3/4, 4/4 Woodlands Bibles.

**ABSA BANK:-** 25/2, 26/2, 28/2 Bibles, 1/3, 2/3 NLM, 6/3 Bela-Bela, 6/3 Pretoria, 8/3, 15/3, 16/3, 18/3, 26/3, 28/3 Bibles, 30/3, 1/4, 2/4 NLM, 4/4 Hartenbos Bibles, 5/4/2017 Kleinmond.

■ Cheques can be made payable to JAPAN MISSION and crossed. It is however not safe to send cash by post. A deposit can be made directly into the Mission's banking account at any branch of the STANDARD BANK or ABSA BANK, or a debit order may be used.

**MANY THANKS** once again dear friends. May God bless you.

Name of account: JAPAN MISSION

STANDARD BANK, Acc No 010 333 126, Branch No 014-845

ABSA BANK, Acc No 090 161 334, Branch No 334-645

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(Art 21) Reg No 2006 /019264 /08

## UPDATE - SAMANTHA SHONER

Samantha Shoner (24) joined JM in September 2015 from Florida in the USA. She is serving as an English Evangelism teacher and has been given numerous opportunities to sow the seed. She has befriended her students and shared her testimony with many who would not normally come to church, but come to learn English. She has been involved in evangelistic meetings and camps. She has also helped local churches arrange parties and events, which have also proven to be opportunities for the Gospel.

"I have been inviting more of my students to come to church," Samantha recently shared. "I now have a number of students who come regularly to the service. Many of my students are elderly and the church members have been very welcoming. Friendships have started to form, as my students are frequently invited to various church functions. **Pray** that I will be bold when sharing Christ with my students and friends. **Pray** that the Light of Jesus will shine brightly in Japan."

**Pray** that the Lord will give Samantha wisdom and strength, as she seeks to reach many in the surrounding communities for Christ.



Samantha Shoner

## PRAYER REQUESTS - PERSONNEL

1. Due to personal reasons, **Melanie Nishioka (Peter)**, **Annie Richardson** and **Kim Ayars** will be departing JM at the end of July. **Pray** for them as they seek the Lord's will regarding the future.
2. **Daniel Cho** (24) joined JM in May 2017 from Los Angeles in the USA. **Pray** for wisdom and protection, as he befriends many students, while working as an English Evangelism teacher in various churches.

3. As of January 2017, **Meljun Picardal (Mel)** has been working full-time on media development. There is a real need for JM and many churches to develop effective and relevant media content. **Pray** for direction and discernment as **Alex Verwey** and **Mel** are busy at work in this capacity. Our most recent video about Kids Club can be viewed on YouTube at: <https://www.youtube.com/user/TheJapanmission/>

## NEED FOR PERSONNEL

**VOLUNTEER WORKERS** - We are currently in search of short-term volunteers who will be able to help us with our property – **carpentry, painting and maintenance**. This work is planned to take place in September, October and November 2017. If you are willing to help and pay your own airfare - please contact **David Verwey** by letter or e-mail at: [jm@japanmission.org](mailto:jm@japanmission.org)

**ENGLISH TEACHERS** - We are currently in need of well-qualified personnel to serve as English Evangelism teachers. This program presents workers with the unique opportunity to befriend and influence people for Christ. **Pray** that the Lord will continue to provide effective workers of His choice.

## JAPANORAMA - ESCALATOR ETIQUETTE

In Japan, people pay attention to where they stand on an escalator. One side is for standing and the other side is for walking up or down the steps.

Tokyo and Osaka have different rules of etiquette. In Tokyo, people stand on the left and walk on the right. In Osaka, people stand on the right and walk on the left. The Osaka protocol persists in areas of Japan that are southwest of Osaka. Tokyo rules apply to areas northeast of Tokyo.

A common explanation for this difference is that during the Tokugawa Period, Edo (now Tokyo), was a city of samurai who preferred to walk on the left so they could draw their swords more easily. Osaka was a city of rich merchants who preferred to walk on the right so they could protect their money and valuables.