

ESTABLISHING A LONG-TERM PRESENCE

Japan Mission has been called to share the Gospel by using various methods that the Lord indicated, while establishing a long-term presence — in a country where the people's minds have been blinded. ***The god of this age has blinded the minds of unbelievers, so that they cannot see the light of the Gospel that displays the glory of Christ, who is the image of God*** (2 Cor. 4:4).

Some have asked, "Since Japan is a difficult mission field where results are so few, why don't you work elsewhere where people are more receptive to the Gospel?"

We can relate to Paul, who experienced many hardships when he said, ***Therefore, since through God's mercy we have this ministry, we do not lose heart*** (2 Cor. 4:1). We strive to follow the method put forth by Paul when he said, ***By setting forth the Truth plainly we commend ourselves to everyone's conscience in the sight of God*** (2 Cor. 4:2).

Many have been saved and much fruit has been realized as a result of our vision to establish a long-term presence in Japan.

Another benefit derived from maintaining a long-term presence has been that we have been able to build a good rapport with numerous churches across Japan. As a result, it has been easy for workers of Japan Mission to go into most regions to do evangelism and offer disaster relief, while working in close cooperation with local churches.

As the coronavirus pandemic has played out, the Lord reminded us once again of how important it is to continue this long-term presence. COVID-19 was not the kind of disaster where aid agencies could mobilize and travel to Japan to offer help. Most were forced into a lock-down and international travel became next to impossible.

It was during this time that workers of Japan Mission had the opportunity to interact with hundreds of unsaved students, with whom they already had a good rapport. Ministers were also heartened as they participated in the process of sharing the Gospel and inspiring students in their communities.

Many who faced loneliness and isolation have been influenced for the Lord. **Pray** with us for the seeds that have been sown and the salvation of souls!



JAPAN MISSION

CALLED TO SERVE

May to Aug 2020

CORONAVIRUS OPPORTUNITIES

Japan Mission has faced many challenges over the years. However, the global coronavirus pandemic presented us with extraordinary challenges.

Many of the methods used to reach people through social interaction suddenly ground to a halt, as the entire population of Japan was encouraged to self-isolate. Efforts to reach and befriend non-Christians through meetings, English classes and the Cafe ministry were all affected. However, the ***Fountain of Joy tract*** continued to be published and distributed to many thousands each month.

The needs of those who surrounded us have been great. Telephone counselors were overwhelmed, as people phoned in and spoke of committing suicide because they had lost their jobs and could not pay their bills. Some were even talking of family suicide. People were reminded of how fragile life is, as they witnessed the collapse of the material things they had placed their hopes in. We have seen the Lord at work in the hearts of many who were forced to reevaluate the things that they placed their confidence in. As a result, some decided to accept the Lord Jesus as Savior and others rededicated their lives to the Lord!

God has been showing us that He is sovereign and can accomplish His work, despite the difficult circumstances. When social gatherings were restricted because people were asked to shelter-in-place, the Lord led our workers to stay in touch with many through online Bible lessons and English classes.

Many unsaved students gathered to see and speak to each other through their devices. The minister of the church in their community also joined in to interact with the students and give a short Bible talk.

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These online classes helped ministers stay connected with students during the months they were isolated.

One encouraging outcome has been that many churches started to stream their messages over the internet. This has enabled people to listen and participate in the privacy of their homes — thereby reaching many who would otherwise not have attended church.

One English student has been attending class at a church for over 10 years, but only attended one worship service in all that time. Due to COVID-19, this church started to livestream their worship services and he started to listen each week! While talking with one of our workers this elderly man shared, “I am Buddhist, but ever since I started listening online it’s really made me think . . .”

Another elderly Christian lady was bedridden and could not attend church for several years. She was overjoyed when the services started to be streamed online. Now she can regularly take part in many of the church services!

DEDICATED WORKERS

Key factors have enabling Japan Mission to meet the needs of those in surrounding communities during the pandemic. Those who prayed faithfully and gave sacrificial financial contributions during this critical time were a great encouragement to us. The Holy Spirit also granted wisdom and a steadfast resolve to our dedicated team of workers, as they were faced with some extraordinary decisions.

As embassies encouraged their citizens to return to their home countries and air travel was about to be shut down, we asked workers if they felt the need to return to their home countries. We warned them that we were entering an unprecedented time, and that Japan Mission may even experience a severe shortage of funds in the coming months, as banking and mail services were likely to be disrupted.

After prayerful consideration, each worker communicated their intent to stay and serve — even if there may be a shortage of funds to pay salaries. The Lord has since faithfully provided for the finances and the work continues! We praise the Lord for dedicated workers and the many faithful supporters who stood with us!

Initially, COVID-19 made it difficult to hold any type of gathering. Lock-down requirements severely hampered the normal Easter celebrations. Easter was a valuable time for all of us to silently reflect on God at work in the hearts of those around us. ***Be still, and know that I am God*** (Psalm 46:10).

As we prayerfully sought the Lord for guidance, He moved in the hearts of our workers to combine their efforts to develop a new way to reach out. Our media team used their technical knowledge to set up the computers and cameras, and coach teachers, pastors and students through the process of how to connect and interact while online. Our English teachers also adapted their lesson plans and teaching styles to fit the situation.

Together, the Lord enabled us to seize this opportunity, which provided some unique chances to influence and encourage those who were feeling lonely and overwhelmed by many uncertainties.

Some may ask, “Why is Japan Mission involved in so many areas of outreach?” Each outreach has come about as we have perceived a need, and prayerfully followed the Lord’s guidance as to how best meet this need.

In the case of COVID-19, it was amazing to see how the Lord led our workers in the media and English ministries to come together to develop a new way to reach the unsaved.

At the beginning of the pandemic, we were perplexed and driven to prayer. As we look back, we stand amazed at God’s faithfulness and how He has opened up the way before us!

We are keenly aware that the faithful prayers and support of many have played a vital role in helping us meet this challenge in an effective way. **Thank you for the part you played!**

THE FUTURE

Japan has been experiencing record rainfall and flooding during this typhoon season. COVID-19 has made it more challenging for those who are forced to evacuate their homes. Municipalities have been scrambling to implement new measures in evacuation centers, where young and old were normally thrown together in crowded spaces.

As Christians, it is wonderful to know that we need not worry about the future, but that the Lord assures us of His peace during troubled times. ***“You will keep in perfect peace those whose minds are steadfast, because they trust in you”*** (Isaiah 26:3).

We anticipate that as concerns of the coronavirus diminish and restrictions lift, we will again be able to hold small gatherings and resume some of our normal activities, with new hygiene and social distancing measures in place. **Pray** that God would continue to guide and protect us.