

MINISTRY UPDATE

Edward Zimmerman arrived in Japan from South Africa in March 2022. He is gifted with music, relating to young people, and working with computers and media. He started by serving in the English Evangelism and Café ministries.

A few months after Edward started ministry with Japan Mission, a position opened up at Kyoto International University Academy for a Computer Science teacher. This is a Christian school where Japan Mission often sponsors teachers.

Edward was most suited for this position because of his knowledge and experience with computers. This ministry has given Edward the opportunity to share God's love with the non-Christian student and parent community. It is amazing how the Lord brought Edward all the way from SA to serve in this capacity.

Edward was indeed ***fearfully and wonderfully made*** by God, to fulfill a special purpose — to impact those around him in his own unique way, for God's Kingdom (Psalm 139:14).

Pray for wisdom and strength for Edward, as he strives to share God's love and the message of hope with the unsaved.

CHERRY BLOSSOMS

The beautiful cherry blossoms of Japan herald the arrival of Spring and have come to symbolize ***renewal*** and ***hope***. This season coincides with Easter, so it is even more meaningful.

Most Japanese know very little about Easter and the Gospel message, but each year our Creator God reveals Himself afresh to them through His wonderful and spectacular creation. For a short season, everybody is fascinated by the stunningly beautiful and ornate blossoms.

Pray that many Japanese would come to realize that it is only through the unfathomable and gracious work of Jesus — dying on the cross and rising on the third day — that we can celebrate a truly renewed life and be filled with an eternal hope.



JAPAN MISSION

CALLED TO SERVE

March / April 2023

FEARFULLY AND WONDERFULLY MADE

Edward and Josephine Zimmerman were happily married in Japan on May 2, 2022, and are now both serving with Japan Mission. The Lord has enabled Edward to reach out to people from all walks of life, due in part to his wealth of life experiences, which has given him a mature outlook on life.

Edward was born in Bloemfontein, South Africa in March 1982. At birth, one of his legs was not properly formed and noticeably shorter. When other toddlers started to walk, Edward did not walk.

Edward was raised as an only child in a Christian home where his parents faithfully took him to church. The thought that their child may never walk seriously tested their faith. One day during a prayer meeting, his father was moved to pray and the members joined him as he desperately cried out to the Lord, "Dear Lord, please enable my son to walk, so that he may be of service to you in the future!"

The next day, his father put his faith into action by encouraging Edward to stand and practice walking. It was then that he started to walk! As he developed, it became necessary for the doctors to treat him, since one leg was growing faster than the other. He consequently underwent two surgeries (in 1992 and 1993) where the doctors were able to restrain the healthy leg from growing so fast.



Edward Zimmerman

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As he grew older, he was able to run and play with his friends, with the aid of special shoes. Being considerably shorter than his classmates bothered him at first, but then Edward found comfort in these Bible verses in John:

His disciples asked him, "Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" "Neither this man nor his parents sinned," said Jesus, "but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him" (John 9:2-3).

Edward learned to accept the idea that God made him this way, so that he may bring glory to God and one day fulfill a special purpose. It was during this time that Edward's father bought him a computer and he started to take some computer courses.

"When I was 17," Edward shared, "my Bible teacher shared John 3:16 with me and I realized how easy it was to become a child of God. I accepted Jesus as my Savior, but my lifestyle did not show it.

"After I graduated from high school, I started to work and later joined the police department, where I was asked to help with data management of criminal records and design applications to improve the workflow in the office.

"I started to become self-sufficient and stopped going to church. I had everything a young man could want. A great job, a

beautiful girlfriend, lots of friends and my own car.

"In 2001, my mother went to be with the Lord. A few years later, when I turned 22, my life started to fall apart. I remember going to my mother's grave and crying my heart out to God. I asked Him to help me and forgive me for living an indulgent life that was independent of God.

"I was so unhappy. I still had my dad, but my relationship with him was strained. I did not like my job anymore and my relationships with my friends were also deteriorating. I then hit rock bottom when my girlfriend broke up with me. I felt like my whole world was crashing down on me, but God was busy in the background.

"I attended church regularly again and rededicated my life to God. I started to serve at Sunday School by volunteering to play a character in a puppet show, which taught kids about Jesus.

"I was later given the opportunity to teach the Bible to 9-year-olds. I then began to study the Bible, because I was afraid that they would ask me some difficult questions. This led me to develop a hunger for God's Word, and I studied it from cover to cover.

"I was then asked to teach the Bible to 13-year-olds and I enjoyed it, because they would ask me questions that were more difficult. I also challenged them as to why they believed in God and together

we grew in the Lord. My goal was to relate to them on their level and make the classes fun.

"I found myself praying about everything and depending more and more on God. As I developed a close relationship with Him, He also drew closer to me (James 4:8).

"In 2012, I went on my first mission trip to Botswana, a country neighboring South Africa. With my knowledge of computers, I helped the missionaries set up a few computers and also helped to paint their buildings. I later became involved in a prison ministry and started to lead worship with my guitar.

"In 2015, I went on a second mission trip to a rural village in the country of Zambia. I taught the Bible to high school kids and played with them. I enjoy it, but was uncertain why God wanted me there, since many in our group of missionaries were so much more qualified.

"One day I overheard these missionaries disagreeing about who should be tasked to fetch water at the well, which was located about 50 meters from the camp. It was hot, but I made the decision to go and get water every time the containers were empty.

"The atmosphere of the camp changed, since there was water for cooking, coffee and washing up. I carried a lot of water during those two weeks, but I did it for the Lord. This enabled the group to focus on doing the Lord's work.

God taught me through this that even in the small things, such as getting water, I can make a difference for the His Kingdom!

"In 2019, I went on a mission trip to Japan to help Japan Mission with an English Outreach Camp. It was a great experience to see how God's love was being shared. While in Japan, I met Josephine, who was a missionary with Japan Mission.

"After I returned to SA, we started to communicate by social media. Our relationship developed over the next year, and after much prayer the Lord confirmed in our hearts that we were to be married.

"I then applied and was accepted by Japan Mission as a missionary, but this was just as the COVID-19 pandemic started and the borders were closed to overseas travelers. It was not until March 2022 that international travel started to open up and I was able to travel to Japan.

"Two years after the Lord first led Josephine and I to get married, we were finally united in matrimony on May 2, 2022. God used this precious time of separation to help us grow in Him and to grow in love for one another. The day we were married, we were more certain than ever that we were in the center of His will."

Pray that the Lord would use Edward and Josephine to reach many of the unsaved for the Lord.