

encourage and support the local churches in Japan. This resonated with my spirit, since this is what I had been praying about.

“I then started reading David Verwey’s book, *Meeting the Challenge in Japan*. I couldn’t put it down. My spirit was stirred!

“With fresh impetus I finished the TEFL course and started telling friends and family that I was going to apply to serve with Japan Mission.

“In September 2020, I started the process of applying to Japan Mission. I was accepted, but all international travel was then shut down due to COVID. I was unsure of when I was going to make it to Japan, but my heart was ready to serve and be obedient to His call.”

MINISTRY UPDATE - ALISON QUINLAN

It took 5 years for Alison to come to Japan — from April 2017 when God first called her to Japan, to April 2022 when she finally arrived in Japan.

Although Alison was accepted by Japan Mission in Nov 2020, she was not able to travel from the UK to Japan until April 2022, due to the COVID travel restrictions.

The Lord used this time to help her come to terms with the death of her husband and heal her heart. She was able to spend some precious time with her family and four grown children during the pandemic.

As Alison waited to enter Japan, she was also able to connect with many Japanese people via *HelloTalk* — a language learning social media app. God used these connections to sow seeds into the hearts of the unsaved in various parts of Japan. Alison has since been able to visit and share the Gospel with a number of these friends.

Alison has been serving in the English Evangelism ministry. She is a retired school teacher and has a heart to share Christ with her students. **Pray** for wisdom and strength, as Alison continues to have the opportunity to befriend and sow the seeds of the Gospel in the hearts of many.



JAPAN MISSION

CALLED TO SERVE

July / August 2023

MY JOURNEY WITH GOD

Alison Quinlan was born in the UK in August 1962. “I was not brought up in a Christian home,” Alison shared.

“When I was 14, my friends who were attending a local church invited me to a youth club. Included in the fun activities of this club was a regular Bible study. God used this time to sow precious and timeless seeds of God’s Word into my heart.

“I was soon asked if I wanted to accept Jesus Christ into my heart and I agreed, so I made a profession of faith in 1977. However, my primary reason for deciding to embrace Christianity at this time was so that I could be with my friends, so I was not very serious about my faith. I stopped going to the youth club and church after a couple of years.

“It wasn’t until my late twenties when I was studying for my teaching degree that I started searching for meaning and purpose in my life. I was happily married and somewhat content by this stage, but deep down I knew there had to be more to life.

“From a very young age I had a fear of death. Even as an adult, the thought of there being nothing after death filled me with great anxiety. I started to look for answers in different places. I read books on philosophy and other religions, but deep down inside I knew that I had to go back to church.



Alison Quinlan

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“However, I felt I could not go to church because I would be judged. I felt unclean and unworthy. I had done so many things that I was ashamed of, but I really wanted to find a way back.

“I remember saying to myself during Christmas in 1988, ‘By next Christmas, I hope to find my way back to church, so that I can take part in celebrating the true meaning of Christmas.’

“In December 1989, a friend asked me to attend a church service that was held in a village church. She was thinking of getting married there and wanted to find out what it was like inside. I became excited as I thought that this was my *way in*.

“I showed up at the church, but my friend did not! I decided to go in anyway and remember shaking with fear, while thinking that everyone could see how sinful I was.

“It was a communion service and the minister invited everyone to participate and repent of their sins. As I confessed my sins, I felt a great weight had been removed. As I participated, the Lord filled me with a joy and peace that was indescribable! The fear of death completely left me. I was a changed person and couldn’t wait to go back to church the next week.

“I started studying the Bible and was hungry for knowledge. I couldn’t afford to buy lots of books, so I asked permission to set up a church library. People donated their Christian books and I could read them. I later joined the Sunday school and leadership teams.

“In 1994, I was invited to join an evangelistic Bible study group, so I took my mother along. God used this Bible course to speak to her heart and she made a decision to receive Jesus as her personal Savior!

“God also used this Bible study to teach me about the Holy Spirit and how I could have a deeper and more personal relationship with God. I then rededicated my life and committed to be faithful to Him.”

MY MISSIONARY CALL TO JAPAN

“I first received a call to be a missionary to Japan at a conference in April 2017.” Alison shared. “As I was praying about the Lord’s will to do missionary work, I heard an audible voice: *Japan*.

“I was puzzled and my immediate reaction was, ‘No, you’ve got it wrong. It’s my daughter who is called to Japan.’ At the age of 14 my daughter, Elizabeth, had the nation of Japan put on her heart at a Christian camp. She was then studying at university for a degree in Japanese and was due to spend a year in Japan later that year.

“The voice came to me again: *Japan*. I then started to pray for Japan, and as I did, the Lord strongly impressed upon me to pray for His church in Japan.

“In 2017, my daughter went to study in Japan at Akita International University. I asked my husband if we could visit her for Christmas. I thought that if I went to Japan, then maybe God would speak to me about His call. We spent the Christmas holiday in Okinawa and Tokyo. It was a lovely holiday, but God was silent.

“In August 2018, my daughter was due to return from Akita. My husband had just started a new job, so he could not take time off, so I asked him if I could meet up with my daughter and help bring her luggage home. He agreed, so I travelled to Japan.

“While in Japan, I learned that my husband’s health had deteriorated. My daughter and I went to a viewing place where we could see Mount Fuji. It was at this place where we sat on a bench and gazed at the mountain, waiting for a small patch of cloud to move so that we could see the summit. I asked God about what He would say to me about my husband and immediately I heard these words: *Niall is safe, but would you give your life for Japan?*

“I returned from Japan and within a week I took my husband to hospital where they found

tumors in his bowel and liver. He was told the cancer was terminal and he died in January 2019.

“It might sound strange, but God’s call on my life to Japan actually sustained me during this dark and trying time. I knew that God had a plan for my life beyond the devastation of my husband’s illness and death. It was difficult and my faith was tested and stretched.

“After the funeral I went away to pray and reflect. I then felt God encouraging me to sign up to take a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) course. I started the course, but I began to doubt myself because it was more difficult than I had anticipated.

“During this time, I started looking for teaching jobs in Japan. I had assumed this was how I was going to follow God’s call. I was discouraged, because it seemed that they were looking for younger people for the teaching positions.

“I then thought of looking for some mission organizations in Japan. I Googled the words Japan and Mission and guess what came up? I went to the Japan Mission website and discovered that there were indeed English teachers who were also missionaries!

“I avidly read the information on the Japan Mission website. I was particularly struck by the fact that Japan Mission was called to serve,