

## Dear Friends,

Greetings from Japan's hot and humid summer! We pray as we write this that all of you are well and growing in your relationship to the Lord.

Our work continues at both Osaka International Church (OIC) and Grapevine Cell Church, and although there are stressful moments, it is great to see the Lord using us in so many people's lives. At OIC, Dan is taking steps to move the congregation forward toward more lay leadership and ministry - having started a small group ministry a year ago, all the ongoing groups are now either lay-led or rotating leaders. In addition, two new prayer ministries started recently which are led by others, and Dan is training interested people in the skills needed for preaching, leading Bible studies, and evangelism through a new program he is developing called Bible Communicators.

We are also seeing more unity among Christians and churches. One example was this year's "Prayer Summit" for western Japan - for the first time it was conducted entirely in Japanese, and there were as many Japanese pastors as missionaries. Though from many denominations, they displayed wonderful unity in seeking the Lord together.



*Prayer Summit: Karen sharing communion with two pastors*

A ministry area that seems to be growing for us is the deaf. We have always had one faithful deaf member of OIC and a couple more who come from time to time, and now that we are on the Japan board of Deaf Ministries International, that has led to more contact. We recently met a missionary couple who have been doing deaf ministry for years, and now a deaf prayer group of theirs is meeting at Grapevine Cell Church's Abeno Room. Karen also met a deaf pastor whose church is not far from us, and she has gotten a renewed interest in studying Japanese sign language. This seems to be an area in which the Lord is preparing us for more involvement.

We pray that the Lord is blessing you also, and we would love to hear from you!

*In Jesus' love, Dan and Karen*

We also have a more frequent email update called **Osaka Direct** - feel free to sign up for it on our web site or by email, and you can read back issues on our web site.

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We hope you like our new prayer card - a bit of a different style!

Personal letters can be sent to us in Japan, but financial support should be sent to the MUP address

## More Baptisms

We rejoice as we see the Lord moving on more and more hearts! This year we have had three baptisms so far, and each one is a special story.



Tomoko (above) had come to some events at both OIC and the cell church, and after taking Alpha she joined Aukje's "Beta" class, which is a twice-a-month ongoing Bible study for people who have been through Alpha and want more. As is typical for Japanese, it took some time for her to get to the point of commitment, but last Christmas she was able to whole-heartedly say yes to Jesus and proclaim that commitment through baptism. Her husband and son also attended the baptism - please pray that her husband also would become interested in coming to Alpha or something else and learning about Jesus.

Miyuki was working in Korea and attending Korean language classes when a topic in class caused her to begin to think about religion and a relationship with God. Through circumstances in her life and encouragement of a classmate, she came to faith in Christ and eventually even married the classmate and brought him (an American) back to Japan - their OIC friends think it's fascinating that they can talk to Miyuki in Japanese and Todd in English but the two talk to each other in Korean! After getting some questions about baptism and other topics sorted out while attending Alpha, she realized she should make this outer proclamation of her inner faith. She shed tears of joy as she shared her testimony.



Hanako is 87 years old, and has been senile for some time - most discussions of current reality do not proceed along normal lines. When her daughter started coming to an Alpha course, Dan visited their home and, when the topic of Christianity came up, Hanako surprised her daughter by telling her that she had gone to a Chris-

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## TRIP TO THE HOLY LAND

Yes, God made the whole earth so everywhere is "holy land", but in February, as a way of celebrating our 20th wedding anniversary, we took our first ever trip to Israel. We flew to Tel Aviv where we joined a ten-day Bible-based tour from Calvary Chapel of Spokane, Washington under the leadership of Pastor Ken Ortize, and then after the group went home we stayed three more days on our own to see more at a slower pace. On our web site there are lots of photos from our trip, images from a Powerpoint presentation with Scriptures and photos, and even a little video - feel free to take a look. If you have never been to Israel, we highly recommend it - it is an unforgettable experience that will change the way you read both your Bible and today's news!



*Karen by the aquaduct in Caesarea*

Seeing many family members and friends on the tour together gave Dan an idea: many Japanese people love to travel, especially on group tours, so if OIC conducted a bilingual tour, it might be an opportunity for church people to invite family members or friends who would not be interested in coming to church. Please pray with us about this possibility.

### *More Baptisms (continued from front page)*

tian school when she was a young girl and prayed to Jesus, and all these years she had believed that He was with her but never told anyone because her family would not approve. Shortly after that, she had a stroke and we went to see her at the hospital. She had been very disoriented, so her daughter did not expect us to have any meaningful conversation. But God blessed her with a miraculously lucid day, and she surprised all of us with her clear statements about how Jesus is with her and comforting her. This was the second time that she had clearly expressed her faith in Jesus, and Dan felt led to ask her if she wanted to be baptized. After Hanako had clearly indicated three times that she wanted to be baptised, knowing that this might be the only chance, we got some water and baptized her on the spot!

## Our Little Girl is All Grown Up!

I'm talking about Janekeela (Jane), our Thai "daughter" who we sponsored through Compassion International since she was a little thing. While coming from a poor farm family, through Compassion's educational programs not only did she beat the odds and graduate from high school (only 40% of Thai children even finish elementary school) but we were able to get special permission to continue sponsoring her through college and provide her tuition while keeping in touch. Twice when in Thailand for MUP conferences we were also able to visit her and her family, and it was a real joy to see her come to know Christ and grow in her faith. But after college we lost touch due to the language barrier, until this January when a translated email came from her, saying that she was working with Compassion, ministering in her home village with the same Compassion project of about 100 kids that she grew up in, and was going to marry the leader of the project in two weeks! By a small miracle Karen was able to get a mileage award ticket on short notice, and she ended up an honored part of the wedding ceremony,



leading the processional, signing the wedding certificate as one of two witnesses, and praying for the couple. The total immersion into rural Thai/Lao culture (their village is near the Laos border and is a cultural blend) was also quite an experience - even the raw buffalo meat was tasty! Congratulations to Jane and Santee!



## Prayer Points

1. Pray for the Lord's wisdom as both of us have recently been faced with very challenging counseling situations with a number of people at OIC.
2. Pray for our growing involvement in deaf ministries, and for Karen's attempt to learn Japanese sign language. She has bought books and a DVD, has joined a twice-a-month "sign language circle", and will probably enroll in a weekly course starting in September.
3. Pray for the Lord to help us resolve problems from Identity Theft. While we have been serving in Japan, someone has been impersonating Dan, obtaining identification in his name, and borrowing money and obtaining services fraudulently. We have reported it to the police, but even if they find the perpetrator it will take a lot of work (and probably money and time in the U.S.) to resolve, as there are dozens of creditors involved and fraudulent debts amounting to tens of thousands of dollars.
4. As always, pray for the people of Japan!

### A Final Word from the Word

*"I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in Me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from Me you can do nothing."*

John 15:5 (NIV)