



# Seeds of Grace

Reaching people, Planting churches... in Japan

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## From the Editor

Is the Japanese population growing, or shrinking? Should we pray for the children? Is there still a need for Christian mission in Japan? This month, Nick Mason uses his love of statistics to give us an overview of Japan's needs. I pray that you - and me - will be led to go and preach, or sit up and pray! *Henrietta Cozens*

## News and Prayer Points

Please pray for hope for single parents who are often struggling for money, and their children who often need to be 'latch key kids'.

Christian students (KGK) are having an evangelistic camp in Wakayama, Aug 26-29. Pray that they would invite non-Christian friends, and God may use this opportunity to help students think about the sanctity of life - as well as the gift of eternal life. A pastor actively involved in suicide intervention will speak.

Rita Feldt would like to equip two ladies in Ishiyama to lead Bible studies. Please pray that she finds the right study material.

Pray for newcomers: Kaki and Moon, both from Hong Kong, will join our Japan field team on September 5th; Lincoln & Charmaine Wee from Singapore are also starting their application process.

Praise God for Annette Cummings recently gaining her Japanese driving license - passing first time!

August is holiday time; pray that God refreshes all the missionaries spiritually, physically and emotionally through their holidays.



In Japan: The world's oldest woman (114) - and her great grandson

As someone who has always enjoyed math, statistics really resonate with me.

## Still A Need?

percentage of Christians, we will still be seeing a

The population of Japan is currently sitting around 127.5 million people – the 10<sup>th</sup> highest in the world, despite its relatively small area. Approximately 125 million of these 127.5 million people are Japanese, the others foreigners. It is estimated that less than 1% of the Japanese identify themselves as Christian. This leaves upwards of 123.75 million non-Christian Japanese people in Japan! (This statistic helped me to realize the large need for Christ here in Japan, helping me hear God's call to serve.)

Yet things don't stop there. Japan has an ageing population – currently, about 25.6% of the population is over 65 years old. Even with one of the highest life expectancies in the world (84.5 years), this would leave less than 20 years to reach 32 million people.

Japan's population is also declining. If the trends continue, the population will decrease to 87 million by 2060, at which point 40% of the population will be over 65. At which point, if we are still at a low

percentage of Christians, we will still be seeing a limited time to reach these people.

Christian workers have been serving in Japan for over 150 years. Praise God there is now a national church; however still less than 1 percent of the population are part of it. I know we serve an awesome God who can break the chains that have been holding back the Gospel. Still, we really need your prayers if we are to see the next 20 to 40 years bearing more fruit than the last 150.

Additionally, please also pray for the children of Japan. There are still over 1 million children born in Japan each year. Over 50% of these babies are brought to a Shinto shrine within the first 100 days of their birth, where a ritual is performed to 'introduce' the baby to 'the god(s)'. I do not know what kind of implications that this may have spiritually, but please pray for the the 16.25 million children of Japan. A new generation that is free to worship the Lord might be what is necessary to bring this country out of its long darkness.

*by Nick Mason*