

## Looking back, Looking forward

**This spring Mission Partners Yuki and Stephen Williams move from Edinburgh, where they have lived for nearly five years, back to Japan where they will be involved in leading a small Japanese church and in outreach to the local community. How do they feel about the change – moving from cosmopolitan Edinburgh, where there have been amazing opportunities to connect with and share their faith with Japanese - to rural Japan? Yuki reflects...**



*Yuki and Stephen Williams*

Looking back on our time in Edinburgh it certainly has been busy! I think I can safely say it has not been time wasted in any sense. We have seen God work among us. In September 2007, along with pastor Jae Hun Park and Young Sook, I helped to start a Japanese language church in Edinburgh which meets every Sunday afternoon – praise the Lord! Another highlight has been the Japanese mums and toddlers group which meets twice a month. Around twenty mothers and thirty toddlers come each time and I have fifty five mothers on my mailing list now! Whenever we meet I sing Japanese songs and tell stories from the Bible. It used to be quite hard telling the stories because the mums would chat, but as we got to know each other some of them

**We have seen God work among us**

started to come to me with their problems outside the group. It has been wonderful to be able to share the gospel with a number of them.

Another highlight – as well as a challenge – has been the opportunity to study preaching and evangelism at the Faith Mission Bible College. I studied there twenty four years ago and have been able to do another two years' part-time study. I have also been able to go to many of the college's regular open Monday lectures. It has been a real help and a blessing to learn from so many gifted and godly people and has made me want to walk even more closely with Jesus. Opportunities to preach at Japanese churches in London and to lead Bible study groups in Edinburgh, and latterly also in Manchester, have helped prepare me for the work we will be doing in Japan.



*The Japanese mums and toddlers group is thriving*

### In this edition of JCL News

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*The Japanese Youth Retreat has taken place twice in Edinburgh*

During our time in the UK it has been great getting to know the Japanese churches in Europe and taking part in six of their annual European conferences. For the last four years I have also helped with the Japanese Christians European Youth Retreat, twice arranging it in Edinburgh. Taking part in the Japanese pastors and church workers annual fellowship meetings for the last three years too has been a source of joy and encouragement. I have also felt challenged to share with as many local churches as possible the importance of trying to reach Japanese people in this country.

I am very conscious that, as Stephen and I move on, the work here will be in need of your prayers and of new helpers – particular the mums and toddlers group. We have a great Bible College student, Grace, helping out at present but she will not be there for long and the group needs a Japanese speaker who can talk to the mothers. Please pray

for the right person to come forward.

Looking ahead, Stephen and I move to Japan at the beginning of May. We will be living in Shigaraki, in Shiga prefecture where we will be working with the interim leaders of a small church, a brother and sister, children of the former pastor there. The brother is over sixty years old and the sister seventy. We will be living in a flat above the church. We are looking forward to going back as Shigaraki is where Stephen studied pottery twenty nine years ago and he also taught English at the church. He hopes to renew acquaintances and get to know many more local people and we hope the Lord will use

him in evangelism. My time is more likely to be taken up with supporting the believers and helping to lead church services. Do pray for us as we make this big change back to life in Japan, particularly for good relationships with those who are already at the church and for whom our arrival will also mean a big change.

**pray for the right person to come forward**

Thank you to all of you who have supported and prayed for us during our time in Edinburgh, and to the many people and churches in Edinburgh who have welcomed us and been so supportive in reaching out to Japanese people there. May God bless you and continue to work through you.

*Yuki Williams*

*JCL Mission Partner, Edinburgh/Shigaraki*

## A note from Dawn Bolton

As I return to Japan I want to say a heartfelt thank you to JCL friends for helping to make my four months' home assignment in the UK a time of great encouragement and blessing. I've been refreshed, renewed relationships and even begun to study New Testament Greek!

I was blessed by fellowship with many of you at JCL events in London and Edinburgh and felt they really confirmed our partnership in the gospel. It was a privilege to speak at other church meetings too, and exciting to see how lives in Britain are being transformed. I had heard in Japan that the church in Britain was losing influence and involvement in society, so it was all the more heartening to see how God is on the move.

Back in Japan, I will be doing a short booster language course, which I hope will give me confidence and sharpen my skills as I get to grips with what the

Lord has for me. I praise God for your love and generosity which has made this possible, and pray that the Lord will use me to take a fuller part in the discipling and "coming alongside" ministry which is so needed in the growing church in the Mission Hall. We have a new worker joining us from April. Ms Hamagaki is a young pastor who has been

leading the church at Iwade in

Wakayama prefecture. This will of course mean some changes, but it will be great to have her wonderful capabilities and experience on the team.

I return to Japan with renewed energy and enthusiasm, knowing that the work in Kobe has powerful spiritual back-up from you all. I am thankful to be part of the JCL family and pray, like Ruth (2:12), that you be richly rewarded by the Lord for all you do.

*Dawn Bolton,*

*JCL Mission Partner, Kobe*



# Slow Progress? Steady Progress!

**What is it like pioneering a new church in Japan? What approach should you take? It is eight years since Jim and Kayo Davies moved to the outskirts of Kobe to start a church there. Jim shares their experiences.**

*“He also said, ‘This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how.’” (Mark 1:26-27)*

Kayo and I have never considered ourselves ‘prayer warriors’ or especially zealous pioneers but we do identify with these words of Jesus. Starting a church from scratch has been a slow and organic experience!

I came from a very much ‘up and at ‘em’ evangelistic background, but had to lay that aside when we realised it would take time to build trust and relationship in the community - we were outsiders in a conservative semi-rural area. Resigning to a slower pace was difficult though when we thought of how much needs to be done to evangelise Japan. I was afraid my zeal would die and it was tempting to compare ourselves

**we realised it would take time to build trust and relationship**

so far. We had long prayed for a core group of believers to come together for worship, action and fellowship and this has now become a reality. Although only about ten adults gather on a Sunday morning, the spiritual growth of individuals and the effectiveness of corporate action have been notable. As we ‘keep on keeping on’ the unseen work of the Spirit is transforming us.

I used to spend a long time preparing sermons only to find that folk would barely recall messages, then last year we started an English Bible Study. We take a Bible story and break it down so that everyone can understand the narrative. Although there has been little exegesis, people have said how valuable the sessions have been to them. The Bible is a living word and slowly reading passages together has been profound. I no longer feel pressure to come up with something clever or new each



*Jim, Kayo and son Max*

week. These days I see myself more as a coach, helping others to discover and release their potential in God. Sunday mornings too are slowly becoming more of a dialogue and traditional hierarchical pastor-congregation divides are being challenged. This is great - I want our church members to feel affirmed and empowered.

Just as each of us is unique, so is our personal walk with the Lord. It has been fascinating to see that sometimes non-believers have been the first to arrive on a Sunday and the last to leave - and even been the most fervent Bible students!

God has shown me that I still have much to learn and there are some basic things I don't understand. One challenging area has been that of divine healing. One day we had a deaf lady sit in with us and the topic was about one of Christ's healings. This woman is still waiting for the outworking of her miracle and it was an awkward moment as we affirmed Christ as healer and admitted we didn't know why she hadn't received her hearing. I have the theory, but lack the consistent demonstration. This, I believe, is going to change.

**The spiritual growth of individuals has been notable**

## What next?

As a church, we want to bless the community by serving at a local childcare facility. Quite possibly all of our fellowship will be involved in some way. Later this year we hope to hold our first church camp, which would have been inconceivable a few years ago. We now meet regularly to pray with other local pastors, in itself an answer to prayer. A young Korean couple in our church are expecting their first child this summer and we are looking forward to this immensely. For all of these things we give praise to God.



*Around ten adults gather for worship on Sundays*

*Jim Davies,*

*JCL Network Partner, Kobe*

# Japan's Earthquake and Tsunami

"The buildings shook hard and most people took cover under the tables. There was a sense that this was going to be serious, but no one imagined a disaster on the scale we have seen"

Over 28,000 people dead or missing, a quarter of a million living in refuge shelters, thousands of homes destroyed.

The headlines from Japan shocked the world as news of Japan's "triple tragedy" – earthquake, tsunami and nuclear crisis - grew worse by the day. The three prefectures of Iwate, Miyagi and Fukushima in Japan's north-east were worst hit, although the earthquake, Japan's strongest recorded quake, was felt hundreds of miles away. Ten days after the quake significant aftershocks were still being felt.



Thankfully all JCL Mission and Network Partners in Japan are safe, the only damage being to the roof of Network Partner Morien James's house in Ibaraki.

Morien was in Tokyo at the time - "for me the realisation of how serious it was came through the unusual scenes following the quake. Firstly no buses, then, after walking to the station, no trains, traffic at a virtual standstill, so many people walking on the roads too, my mobile phone not working, queues outside phone boxes, then a ten kilometre walk to the hotel where I was due to meet my friend to find the lobby looking like a refugee camp". Network Partner Dave Skipper was at home in Tokyo



when the earthquake struck, his wife Heidi at the supermarket and young daughter Kira at nursery. "It was pretty scary, far stronger than anything we'd experienced previously" said Dave. The apartment where Mission Partners Thierry and Antonia Richards live "swayed a lot with the earthquake . . . from our window, we could see a big fire at some kind of gas storage facility an hour's walk from us here in Tokyo". At the seminary where Network Partner Richard Brash was studying most of the students took cover under tables.

In the days following the disaster food supplies ran low even in Tokyo and there were long queues for petrol. Public transport and telephone lines were affected, with many unable to get home or contact loved ones. But it was of course Japan's north-east that was most badly hit. God's family all over the world - including the JCL family - has been responding.

## Love letters to Japan

Indeed, from our perspective in the JCL office, where we heard of the response in Japan but also from Christians in many countries offering help, there has been a real sense of family, with so many caring, sharing grief, giving practical support and lifting up others in prayer. People all over the UK have sent their sympathy and asked what they can pray for, including people we had never heard from before. Two different families in Germany offered accommodation to any Japanese who wanted to get away for a while. A French couple asked how they could give to support the Church in Japan. A teenager in Colombia wrote to ask how she could help and to assure us of her prayers. Churches asked how they could send money from special collections to Japan. Others have posted cheques, asked after people they know and sent messages of support.

**To each one who has responded in any way, thank you.**

In Japan churches were quick to respond. JEB\* churches have been gathering donations and Kansai Bible College has

\* See box at the bottom of page 7 for more on JEB



Tokyo commuters were stranded as trains were cancelled



Supplies ran out after the earthquake

offered to house people affected by the disaster. Grace City Church in Tokyo, attended by Thierry and Antonia Richards, partnered with churches in Fukushima and Sendai to distribute food and water. Thierry and others from the church took hired lorries filled with food, clothing, toiletries and water to churches in the area to distribute to those in need. Only around 2,700 of the over two million people living in Fukushima attend church, with average attendance standing at just eighteen people per church,<sup>#</sup> but churches like Gospel Mission Chapel in Iwaki have become distribution centres for the community, supported by churches like Grace City Church and JEB churches. Returning from a trip, Thierry said “It is encouraging to see the ways this work is helping the church’s witness in the area. The leader of the local council said he has started coming to see the pastor each morning in order for him to pray for him. Please pray for this man, and for many others to come to Jesus Christ through this time”.

In Tokyo many Christians have volunteered with CRASH – Christian Relief, Assistance, Support and Hope (<http://crashjapan.com/>) – including Dave and Heidi Skipper and Richard Brash. CRASH was established to support Christians in relief work in Japan and elsewhere and to equip and prepare churches to help their communities in times of crisis. They have been playing a key role in leading and coordinating volunteers responding to the crisis. Dave says “CRASH seems to be growing exponentially, it’s becoming a pretty major operation. I’m helping with book-keeping, and Heidi will probably be helping with some of the emotional care of volunteers which involves talking and listening to volunteers share their experiences and watching for signs of emotional trauma or fatigue and burnout”. The couple also hope to use their musical gifts to aid recovery of those affected by trauma.

### What can you do?

- Keep up your prayers for Japan! The earthquake and tsunami led to a big increase in prayer for Japan. Churches throughout Japan now have new opportunities to serve and connect with their communities. Please pray fervently for good to come from this tragedy and for many to come to faith in Jesus.
- Get your friends to pray. If they don’t yet subscribe to JCL News or prayer letters encourage them to do so so they have fresh prayer material. In particular pray for:
  - ▶ Christians involved in ongoing relief and reconstruction work, particularly CRASH and churches in the areas most affected. It will be a long time before full utilities are restored to all areas and before people find permanent new homes. Ask that all their needs will be met, for good cooperation with local authorities and for love and wisdom as they minister to the bereaved.
  - ▶ For all those who have suffered loss, especially those who have lost loved ones.



- ▶ For wisdom for JCL partners in Japan as they continue to share Christ’s love with the Japanese in the aftermath of this disaster.
- ▶ For the government of Japan to show good leadership and make wise decisions as they lead the recovery.
- Donate. You can give money to support relief work by clicking on the “Donate online now” button on the Get Involved - Giving page on the JCL website at <http://www.jclglobal.org/get-involved/giving/> and letting us know you would like the money to go towards earthquake relief work, or by sending us a cheque. Money will go to CRASH Japan or to other relief work JCL Partners are involved in. You can also give directly to CRASH via their website.

### may we not forget them as Japan slips out of the news **An ongoing prayer**

Many in Japan – even those who have not lost loved ones or property – have experienced great sadness, fear and insecurity as they hear of huge loss and get worrying messages about nuclear safety and potentially contaminated food and water. It will take a long time to recover, and for many things will never be the same again. As Christians, we know that God’s love for us remains firm through all things and that good will ultimately triumph, but the overwhelming majority of Japanese do not have this hope. More of them committed suicide last year than are believed lost in the tsunami. May we not forget them as Japan slips out of the news once more.



■ Pictures, except for Tokyo commuters, from CRASH Japan website.

<sup>#</sup> Church Information Service 2009

# New area, New church, New opportunities



Perhaps you remember reading an article by Network Partners Akio and Noriko Kawamura two years ago in which they talked about their vision to move from their old, cramped church building near the train station in Fujisawa in Kanagawa prefecture to somewhere more suitable? Last year their vision was realised. The Kawamuras, along with American missionaries Gary and Pauline Carlson, now lead a new church in an expanding suburb of Fujisawa, and it has led to many opportunities to meet young families in the area. Noriko tells us more . . .

It was back in April 2006 that we first had the vision to build a new church in a different part of town and started praying to this end. We wanted to sell our old church property near the station and, using that money, to move into a new and growing residential area. We envisaged a bright, lively congregation to serve as a witness to the area. In 2007 we met missionaries Gary and Pauline, who shared our vision, and in 2009 were given permission by the church group we belong to to sell the old building. It wasn't until April 2010 that we were finally able to complete the sale and purchase a plot in the new residential area. But we didn't waste any time – July saw a ground breaking ceremony and by

so many young families live here - the response has been so much better

with our new neighbours. We've found it easier to attract children than adults. Thirteen children came to a Christmas party last December, but only three adults to our Christmas concert. Each time we hold an event we print and distribute hundreds of leaflets inviting people to come. Twelve children came to a Valentine's party and thirteen to our "Happy Kids & Parents" event in February – along with five adults!

Despite being a small church we've enjoyed welcoming guests – an outreach team from nearby Odawara came to give a performance in February and in March a group of ten from California come to hold a special "English Café". The new building has given us many opportunities and from April we will be moving our Kangaroo English Class (for toddlers) into the church building, and holding further English classes.

One great thing about this new area is that so many young families live here. The response when we hand out leaflets inviting people to events has been so much better than before. The new building is bright and easy to access and use and, what's more, we were able to cover our building costs using the money from the sale of the old building. Donations from the church helped us buy furniture and air conditioners, so, despite being only a very small flock with few financial resources, all our needs have been met. The ongoing running of the church will be a financial challenge, but we are receiving some help from another church.

Please pray that we will continue tirelessly to reach out to others and that the Lord will save many here.

Noriko Kawamura, JCL Network Partner, Fujisawa

Noriko Kawamura, JCL Network Partner, Fujisawa



Ground breaking service



Moving day at last

October we had a new church building, complete with church hall on the ground floor and a flat for us to live in on the second floor!

Our first service in the new premises was on 31 October with ten people attending. Since then we have been working to build relationships



Our dedication service



One of our children's events

# What's new?

**Mission Partner Tim Williams**, son of Stephen and Yuki Williams, has been working with a church in Hiratsuka, Kanagawa prefecture, for the last 18 months where he has been helping with the church's youth work and studying at the denomination's Bible College. Tim has now returned to the UK for a few months to raise support that will help him to continue and expand his role in Japan. He hopes to develop youth work and outreach at the church further. He is in the UK until mid July and will be visiting different parts of the country, speaking about the need of the Japanese and his work. Please get in touch with us if you might be able to invite Tim to your church or Christian group.



**We welcome Joseph Townsend** as JCL's latest Network Partner, Joe is currently a PhD student in Exeter and is planning to lead a short-term mission team to Japan in late summer this year to help at Network Partner Morien James' small English school in Ibaraki prefecture, where Joe worked last year between studies



**JCL's Japan Conference, 15-17 July 2011** We hope that more of you than ever will join us for this year's conference at All Nations Christian College! It's a great opportunity to find out more about Japan, meet JCL Partners, hear from people experienced in Japanese outreach and make new friends. Read about what some past participants said over the page. You can also listen to talks from last year's conference at [www.jclglobal.org/news/conference/](http://www.jclglobal.org/news/conference/) where information about this year's conference will also appear soon. Contact us if you are thinking of coming but do not normally receive our invitations.

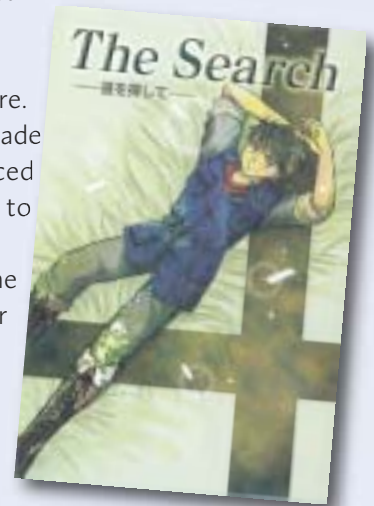
## JCL Mission Partners Stephen & Yuki Williams

return to Japan in May in order to help lead a church in Shigaraki, a small town known for its pottery industry, in Shiga prefecture - see front page article.

## Earthquake response -

you can read on pages 4 & 5 how different JCL Partners have been involved in the Christian relief effort. JCL has also been channelling overseas donations to Japan and will continue doing so while the need and opportunity for a practical Christian response remains. If you are sending special gifts towards the relief effort through JCL, please clearly mark them accordingly.

**The Search** The latest addition to the JCL bookshop, this is a great manga-style tract which vividly explains the gospel using examples relevant to Japanese culture. Published by Campus Crusade for Christ in Japan and priced just 60p this would appeal to students and other adults. Perhaps you know someone who would like a copy? For information on this and other books see the bookshop page on our website at [www.jclglobal.org](http://www.jclglobal.org)



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## JCL – Who are we?

Japan remains one of the world's least-reached nations, but we want to help change that. We were founded as the Japan Evangelistic Band (JEB) in 1903. Since then, through God's grace, JEB's work has led to the establishment of over 150 churches and the Kansai Bible College in Japan. In 1999 the mission evolved into its current form, adopting the new name of Japan Christian Link. JEB work in Japan is now directed independently by our Japanese colleagues, supported by JCL missionaries as required, and we have partners elsewhere in Japan too.

JCL equips, mentors and encourages individual Christians in this country and in others to reach

Japanese around them. Our partners and volunteers also share the gospel with Japanese through full-time church work, "tent-making" mission work or informally with friends and colleagues.

We are Interdenominational, with many of the main Christian traditions represented, and we are International, with workers from several different countries. We are also Inclusive, seeking to work with other organisations too. Our aim is to see a significant difference in the progress of the gospel among the Japanese people over the first half of this century. Find out more about JCL from our website at [www.jclglobal.org](http://www.jclglobal.org)

Each year JCL holds a Japan Conference. Who is it for and what can you expect if you come? We asked past participants to share why they come - and why we hope you will too!



### **Rachel Endersby**

I first made some Japanese friends while I was a student. As I got to know more about Japan, I wished I could go there and tell more Japanese students about Jesus. After graduating I spent one year in a Japanese university, studying Japanese and trying to help the spread of the gospel there. Now I'm working in London.

#### **What made you decide to go to the conference?**

I'm wondering whether and in what capacity to go back to Japan and I thought I could pick up lots of ideas and meet people at the conference. Also, I love to hear about God's work in Japan and I want to understand more about the country and its church situation.

#### **What have you got out of attending?**

I met so many people who share the same concern and energy for reaching Japan with the gospel, which really encouraged me. I also met some missionaries who I'm planning to visit in Japan later this year. I especially enjoyed meeting Japanese Christians who shared their testimonies and stories from their churches that helped my understanding of Japan's Church and the issues it faces.

#### **Would you recommend the conference to others?**

Yes, I can't imagine anyone not enjoying it. The sessions are really varied, and people's involvement with Japan ranged from "I've lived in Japan all my life" to "I know a Japanese person"!



### **Katsutoshi Shimizu**

I come from Okazaki near Nagoya and I became a Christian in 1996 while posted to the USA by my company, Toyota. I was transferred to London in January last year and I now lead the London VIP Club, a Christian fellowship which aims to reach Japanese business people. I also

help lead the Little Lamb Club, a fellowship for Japanese mothers and children.

#### **How many times have you been to the conference?**

Last year was my first time. It was wonderful to meet such devoted Christians working for the salvation of Japanese people. It was so encouraging to get to know so many co-workers for the Lord and to have fellowship together.

#### **Would you recommend it for other Japanese people?**

Yes, I want many Japanese to know about this work. I think it is so important as many Japanese become Christians while living outside Japan – as I know from my own experience!



### **Christine Walker**

I am married and currently a volunteer worker in my local church where I am a youth group leader and PA to the pastor. I am never happier than when sharing about the work of JCL and the desperate need of the Japanese people for the gospel, and teaching the Bible. I have

had a burden for Japan since the 1990s when former JEB missionary and friend Marjorie Waller was still in Japan. Over the years my focus has been on Japanese women, particularly pastors' and church workers' wives.

#### **How many times have you been to the JCL Japan conference?**

I have been attending the conferences for sixteen years and I think in that time I have only missed three! What I love is the opportunity to hear of mission work in Japan, England, and elsewhere. I enjoy catching up with people I have met over the years and getting updates to fuel my prayers and to share in the churches I speak at.

#### **What have been some of the highlights for you over the years?**

Meeting JCL Network Partners Ayako and Jan-Dirk Schmöcker, who lived in the same area of London as I did. We were able to meet regularly, pray together, share meals, and join in the JCL monthly prayer meeting held in my home. I also love praying with those preparing to serve the Lord in Japan and singing worship songs in Japanese!

**This year's conference takes place from 15-17 July at All Nations Christian College, Hertfordshire – we'd love to see you there!**

