

## Editor's Update

Welcome to our new format newsletter! Regular followers of our publications may have spotted a drop in frequency over the past year or so. We would like to apologise for this and thank you for your patience. Despite this silence from us, God has continued to be at work among the Japanese and among our partners and friends, and is ever worthy of our praise. However, the spiritually hungry nation of Japan as a whole continues to face daily trials and is ever in need of our prayers.

### There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens - Ecclesiastes 3:1

Regular followers may be aware that I chose to take a year's break from my role as editor of JCL Communications. However, due to changing personal circumstances and responsibilities, I have decided that it is the right time for the season of my leadership of the communications process at JCL to come to an end. I would like to thank the JCL staff for their understanding, and for those of you who have been supporting me through your prayers or otherwise, I remain a JCL Network Partner, and would please ask for your prayers as I continue to serve at Ealing Christian Centre Japanese Church (ECCJ) and interact with colleagues at the Japanese company I work for.

I will continue to meet with the directors and others who volunteer to support the communications process to offer advice and insight, but with no official role or responsibility over the process. Together we are considering how best to move forward with communications and for the time being we are aiming to offer a mix of newsletters and praise and prayer sheets, in lieu of the regular magazine. Please pray for us as we look to assemble a team to oversee our publications, for the Lord to provide dedicated, gifted individuals to bring these to life, for God's Holy Spirit to guide them and for the provision of content.

Joe Townsend

## Japan's Legal System

Japan has one of the most law-abiding and safe societies in the world. The crime rate is low and almost everywhere you go you feel safe and secure at all times. How many of us, during a visit to Japan, have had the experience of leaving behind a phone, wallet or purse in a restaurant or shop, only to be chased down by an anxious shop assistant or waiter who is desperate to return our lost property? Every yen will still be in the wallet or purse!

Yet behind the law-abiding exterior there are issues to be aware of and things to pray about. The conviction rate for cases which come to court in Japan is 99.9% which is astonishing (the rate in England is 81.0%). Following conviction, many cases result in a suspended sentence or the imposition of a fine, as wrongdoers admit their guilt and express remorse for their crimes. In Japan those who are arrested do not have the right to have a lawyer present during their interview by the police. The bulk of prosecutions are supported by confessions which are obtained by the police during secret interviews with suspects. Recording of these interviews is not permitted.

While judges are supposed to be impartial and to listen to prosecution and defence to ascertain the facts, the prosecution has a heavy influence over the judiciary and

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there has been evidence of judges being unwilling to acquit defendants due to prosecution pressure. Any acquittal is immediately appealed to a higher court and a reversal would involve massive loss of face by the acquitting judge, with all the negative cultural consequences this would lead to, within Japanese society.

Prosecutors are also under huge pressure to ensure that their record of securing convictions is not tarnished. Culturally, many factors are at play. Most importantly, Japanese people are very law-abiding and honest. Crime rates are low, particularly violent crimes. However please pray that everyone who is accused of

wrongdoing has access to a fair trial and that the police and prosecutors will exercise their responsibilities fairly and seek to uphold justice in all situations. Pray that all judges in Japan will presume those brought to trial are innocent until proven guilty beyond reasonable doubt.

Ian MacLennan

## Japanese Leaders' Initiatives

Japan's society has been ageing for some decades and has the highest proportion of over 65s in the world ... and this proportion is increasing. In another trend, fewer Christians have been choosing to train for church leadership roles and it's thought that over half of church pastors are now over 70 with fewer than 10% of them under 50. A steady stream of retiring pastors with few natural successors in the pipeline, along with the fact that until recently there was little emphasis on training and developing "lay" leaders, is precipitating a serious and growing lack of mature leadership



Mr. Goro Ogawa

within the Body of Christ in Japan.

Against this background, the Caleb ministry was begun some 18 years ago by Goro Ogawa, former national director of the Navigators Japan until 1992, with the aim of raising up and empowering leaders who, although more senior in years, are still willing and able to play a key role in the advance of the gospel in Japan. Goro Ogawa himself is now into his 80s and is aiming to continue his involvement in this ministry as long as God grants him health and strength. However he is passing on leadership of Caleb this September to a younger 'senior', Koji Shibusawa, who himself has served for some decades with the Navigators Japan.

Thank the Lord for raising up the Caleb ministry, for Goro Ogawa's part in that, and for raising up a new leader for it in Koji Shibusawa. Pray for him as he commences this new role, for wisdom, love, godliness, strength and vision. Pray also for both these men and others in the Caleb ministry to be fruitful to the end of their days, working to make disciples of many others.



Mr. Koji Shibusawa

**"The righteous will flourish like a palm tree, they will grow like a cedar of Lebanon; planted in the house of the LORD, they will flourish in the courts of our God. They will still bear fruit in old age, they will stay fresh and green..."**

Psalms 92:12-14

Selvan Anketell



**Overflowing with answers!** A meeting of one of the Caleb groups, who are convinced that the gospel has all the answers which are needed in Japan today and beyond.



## JCL Partners - Movements

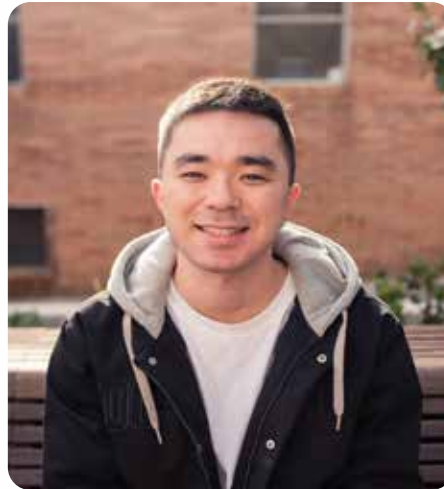
Thank the Lord for the **Glass family** (Philip & Sunny with their children Anna, Peter and baby Paul) and their safe arrival in August in the UK.



**Philip, Sunny, Anna and Peter (sorry Paul is so new we don't yet have his photo - to follow!)**

Praise the Lord for provision of suitable accommodation and that the process of settling in is well under way. Up to now Philip & Sunny have been helping Tim & Ai Williams in growing a new church fellowship in south west Tokyo (Christ Church Riverside). They have just come to the UK for Philip to do a year of practical Bible training, after which their plan is to return to Tokyo and Christ Church Riverside. While working alongside Tim and Ai Williams, Philip is planning to continue further distance study with a theological college based in Singapore. Please join us in asking the Lord to help the family settle into life in London and to bless Philip's training and the family's experience here, and to grant them also to be a blessing to others.

**Makito Miyashita** is our newest JCL partner. He grew up in Japan and became a JCL partner earlier this year after living for many years in Australia. He is now serving as Associate Director of the Samurai Projects in Tokyo, read



**Makito Miyashita, our latest JCL partner**

more about him at <https://www.jclglobal.org/news/makito-in-japan>. Give thanks that Makito has found a well-located, suitable apartment and that he has been settling in. Please pray for continuing adjustment to his new role and to the reverse-culture shock of living in Japan again after many years away. Ask the Lord to grow Makito's team of prayerful supporters and for his remaining financial needs to be covered.

**Dawn Bolton**, who spent 20 years in Japan as a JCL partner before returning to the UK to care for her family, is now serving as a JCL Council member. Thank the Lord for Dawn's ministry in Japan and ask him to bless and make her fruitful during this next phase of life in the UK. Give thanks and pray too for all JCL's Council

## Japan Christian Link UK Office/Bookshop

Japan Christian Link, PO Box 68, Sevenoaks, TN13 2ZY  
Telephone: 01732 455453  
E-mail: [info@jclglobal.org](mailto:info@jclglobal.org)  
Web: [www.jclglobal.org](http://www.jclglobal.org)

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members, who serve as volunteers, giving of their time, wisdom and love for the sake of the advance of the Lord's kingdom among the Japanese people.



**Dawn Bolton, JCL Council member**

## Who are we?

**JCL** was founded in 1903 as the Japan Evangelistic Band (JEB). Since then, through God's grace, that work led to the establishment of over 150 churches in Japan and the Kansai Bible College in Kobe. In 1999 the old JEB evolved into its current form as two independent sister-organisations known as "JCL" and "JEB". 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 at [www.jclglobal.org](http://www.jclglobal.org).

**Will you pray more for Japan?** If you have not yet seen a copy of our handy Prayer Calendar booklet, please let us know and we'd be delighted to send you a copy. Or, if you would like another copy or two for friends, please ask – we printed extra. If you already have that but would like to pray more for any of our JCL Partners, please ask us about receiving their personal news and prayer updates.

## Why Japan?

Did you know that the Joshua Project identifies the Japanese people as the world's second neediest ethno-linguistic people group in terms of the number of pioneer gospel workers needed to reach them? And did you know that Operation World identifies Japan among all countries of the world as showing the fourth fastest declining evangelical Christian population? In God's strength we want to help change these things.

# Japan Weekend Conference 2023

## Our focus - intercessory prayer

This year, once again, the Japan Weekend Conference took place on the third weekend in July in person at All Nations Christian College near Ware in Hertfordshire.

Rather than inviting a visiting speaker from Japan, we asked the leaders of various ministries, churches and gospel works across the world to share with us their points for praise and prayer.



We heard from many participants, under the watchful eye of our session leaders!

It was a joy to welcome 35 friends to this varied and challenging event. We enjoyed hearing from pastors in Japan, our Mission and Network Partners who were able to join us in person and also from other varied works which the Lord has brought into existence and is prospering among the Japanese.

We considered what it is like to be returning to Japan as a Christian and we prayed for these saints to be salt and light where God has placed them.

We rejoiced in the work which the Lord is doing among students in Japan, through the work of KGK (Kirisutosha Gakuin Kai) which is a student outreach and support organisation reaching around 20% of all further education campuses.

We were encouraged to hear about what the Lord is doing in the United States, through the work of Reaching Japanese for Christ.

The most challenging part of the weekend was the hard work involved

as we grappled and prayed over the many and varied works which the Lord is prospering as his gospel goes out to Japanese people everywhere. Our prayer times were at the same time hard work but also very rewarding.

If you were there, thank you for joining us. If you weren't, do please join us at a future conference. There were many opportunities to meet others with a heart for Japan and to

hear their stories. It was great to hear from Meg, David & Angela, Loïc and Alex as they finalise their plans to go to Japan or consider options which the Lord may be calling them to explore, as the gospel goes out to Japanese people everywhere!

**The most challenging part was the hard work involved as we grappled and prayed....**

If you don't already receive notices about conferences please email [info@jclglobal.org](mailto:info@jclglobal.org) and we would be happy to add your name to the mailing list. We typically notify you of the event around 2 - 3 months ahead of time and send one or two reminders, along with a link to our website so you can make a booking.

Ian MacLennan



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