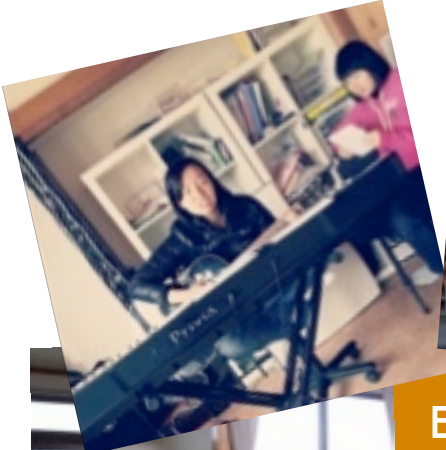




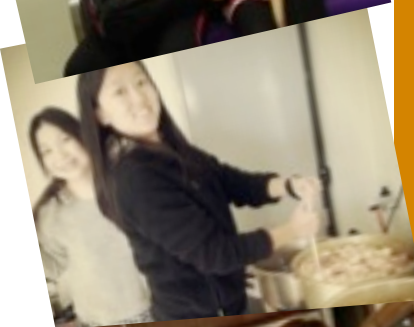
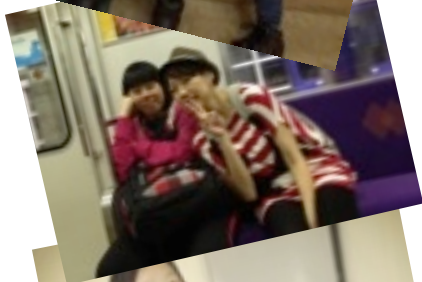
Regions of Japan





Encourage One Another

Encourage one another. Before the trip we asked each other the question, "what would you be most encouraged by?" We wanted to remember to encourage each other as much as we want to encourage those we meet in Japan. What do those words actually mean when we put it into action with our own team? It meant sleeping late together while waiting for each person to take a shower with only one bathroom. It meant praying for each other before giving our testimonies and giving each other a hug afterwards to say 'thank you for sharing'. It meant laughing at each other's quirks (and suitcases) and putting up with each other's differences. It meant deliberately remembering each other's answers to the question above and seeking to do it within the trip. It meant staying up for late night conversations and on the last night appreciating each and every single person. It meant worshipping together on our iPads and having a good laugh. It meant saying sorry and not getting angry when we are annoyed. It meant intentionally getting to know those we don't know well. There are not enough words to retell everything we shared with each other on the trip in 10 days, but one thing we know - we tried to encouraged each other daily and it was good.





I never thought that over a thousand people would turn up at an evangelistic event organised in Tokyo. In my perception and knowledge of Tokyo, it is a big metropolitan city where people are so busy working hard to survive in this big city that they wouldn't go to an evangelistic. In fact, it is the first time such a large event for the Chinese has been held in Tokyo. Over 30 different churches in Tokyo participated in this joint effort, run by a organising committee made up purely of volunteers not just from Japan, but also outside of Japan.

The event ran over two days with messages by a Chinese pastor, testimonies from a couple who is a well known Chinese actor and actress, music by local Chinese volunteers who formed a choir, a Hong Kong singer, and even a renowned worship song writer from China. It is truly a testimony of many Chinese brothers and sisters uniting to serve together.

When we were heading to Tokyo Central Church on the first day where the event is held, we already saw volunteers wearing pink shirts as their uniform greeting and directing people on the way. There were clear signage on every block of the streets. Everything was so organised. I can see that tremendous effort was made to prepare and organise the whole thing, not to mention pulling so many volunteers to help during the event. I

was very much encouraged myself by their vision to organise such an event as I could imagine the difficulties and challenges they are facing in Tokyo. It is not easy but the only reason I can think of is that all of them have a humble heart to serve God and the same vision to evangelise to the Chinese living in Japan. We know that they even fasted 40 days as a group for this!

When we first communicated to the organiser, we weren't sure what would be needed for us to help with until we arrived. Since most of us don't have experience, we are not sure what we should be doing and we were quite tired because of the heat inside the venue (Japan is still having electricity control). However, I noticed that the local volunteers were not discouraged even a bit by the physical condition. Instead, they kept being motivated and encouraged.

I realised I have so little faith that I forgot about God's existence and He can make all things possible! Witnessing the teamwork of the volunteers, their like-minded spirit, I understood that even though our presence and contribution seems so little, we could still be a part of channeling God's presence and love.

At the end of the two days event, 241 people came to Christ!



Lunch with Tomomi



Tomomi is a friend we met from our first trip to Ishinomaki. She was an ex-colleague of one of our team members from our first trip, Fukuko, and her family happened to live in Ishinomaki. After meeting her and her family that first time, we had kept in touch and each time we returned to Japan, we made sure that we would visit them. Even though this trip we did not have enough time to see her parents and sister in Ishinomaki, we were able to meet up with Tomomi and her newly wed husband in Tokyo. As we enjoyed a good meal of okonomiyaki, she showed us pictures from her sister's wedding recently in Ishinomaki. It may seem strange that we could be good friends meeting under such short periods of time each time we are in Japan, but like she herself put it, it is almost like we are family - relatives coming to visit them. We know that God has blessed us with this special relationship and continue to pray for them to one day know God's love in their lives.

All of our team members ended up participating in duties we might not have even done in our home church like being an usher, offering steward, translator, and helping as counsellors to the people who accepted Christ at the event. Some of us who couldn't speak Chinese very well tried to communicate with people in Mandarin! It is not a matter of how well we do the job, but what's important is our hearts to serve together as one body in Christ!

As the first event in our trip, this was a big encouragement to us. In our past experience of Japan mission trips, evangelism in Japan is very difficult...almost like mission impossible. However, I can see that God is really at work in Japan and He has perfect timing in His plans. Not only were those 241 lives saved, our whole team was encouraged by this awesome testimony we could carry with us throughout the rest of our journey!

If you asked me what is the highlight of this trip personally, I would say it would be learning how to always put God in the center whilst you are in adverse situations, remembering what Jesus said in Matthew 6:33, "Seek first

His kingdom and righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well". During the trip, I was bombarded with work calls and got distracted along the way. I was able to put away by work as my teammates encouraged and prayed for me as we served together as one body. Just like the local Chinese volunteers we met, they served in unity and put God as their center. Without this, things could not have been possible!

"Then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourself, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of others." (Philippians 2: 2-4)





石巻

Temporary Housing Visits

By Flo Chiu

There was a familiar feeling as I walked into the temporary housing community hall. All of them look somewhat similar, as do the individual housing units that all look the same on the outside and are known as temporary housing units. This is what became home for countless thousands across Tohoku when they lost theirs. It has been 2 years and many of them still don't know when they will be able to move out. Though they can be thankful they can still have a roof over their heads, for many, living in a temporary housing is not the only thing they have had to get used to after the tsunami.

Many friends have asked me as I returned once again to Japan for the 5th time after the tsunami whether the Japanese are "ok" now and whether they have recovered. Losing your loved ones, your home, your neighbourhood, your belongings and memories is not something someone can just get over in a year or two. Even when the trash mountain is slowly reducing, roads and shops have mostly been rebuilt, when you see some homes being rebuilt, when you have made new friends with those also living in the temporary housing units, your reality is far from what it was. I am sure many of them have gotten "used" to it or simply accepted it, but many cannot forget or don't even want to remember.

We drove from Sendai to Ishinomaki and as soon as we arrived, we had to prepare to leave for our visits to two

temporary housing complexes. As we greeted each one of them with smiles and "konichiwa", we were also returned with welcoming smiles. A part of me had wondered prior to the trip whether visiting the temporary housing was something we wanted to continue doing. There would never be a guarantee that we would get to see the same people because even if we go back to the same units, different people could turn up each time since this is a purely voluntary activity they chose to participate in. Despite these thoughts, we still continued to plan the visits because I believed that it was worth it to even just be there to tell them we have not forgotten them even after 2 years and that love we have for them is from God.

As I scanned the faces in front of me, I found two of the ladies looking at me as if they wanted to say something. When I knelt down to talk to them, another feeling of familiarity hit me. I immediately realised why when they told me that they remembered me and not only that, but they remembered my story – the testimony I shared with them of my life and my family last time I visited them. I was so surprised and touched that they remembered.

At that moment, I thanked God that I came back... even if it was only to see these two ladies again.



We had prepared some thick coloured paper and stickers for them to make cards with photos from the instant camera we brought. Our hope was that they would be able to create new memories with the instant photos - that despite our short time with them, they would be able to take something back with them with our faces and our handwritten notes to remind them of the time we spent together.

The time we spent together was indeed precious. Two of our team members shared their testimonies that day, and even for ourselves, we have never heard them share their stories before publicly. As a friend, I was humbled by their courage and willingness to share their stories of brokenness and how God met them in it. We were able to share with them about God's love for them. We were able to pray with them and especially for a lady who came who was suffering from illness. We were able to laugh together as we played games. As we sang a song together at the end, one lady even asked me why we didn't sing "What a friend we have in Jesus" because that's a song she knows and likes.

All of these memories are still on my heart as I pray that they will look back onto that card with our photo and know that God loves them and have not abandoned them.

Life in the Temporary Housing

NHK reports over 300,000 across 8 prefectures are still in temporary housing at the beginning of this year. A lack of available housing and limited flat land to build housing units are a cause of delay even though units have been planned. No one living in a temporary housing really knows when they will be able to move out into more permanent housing. As far as they know, this "temporary" accommodation seem to be quite permanent for at least another few years.

Each unit is like a small trailer around 300-400 sq feet sometimes housing the whole family. Each block of temporary housing could have over 100 families living side by side. Due to their small sizes and close proximity to each other, many emotional and relational problems have started to arise.

Despite the obvious stress that is building in some places, there are also things to be thankful for besides having a shelter for your family. Many of them have lost their neighbours in the tsunami and living in a temporary housing have allowed them to form new friendships with their neighbours. For our team and workers on the ground, these rows of complexes represent endless needs and relationships, and people who need to know that God has not forgotten them.



Virginia's sister was in Japan when the earthquake happened and it made Virginia realise she could have lost her sister easily. She made the decision to volunteer in Tohoku and eventually stay and do ministry even though she didn't speak a single word of Japanese. She is now involved in music ministry with school students and coordinating volunteers. She learnt that it is only through God's power and grace that anything is accomplished.



Shimonishi san and Yutaka kun - the faithful carpenters who have worked tirelessly to rebuild sheds for fishermen. As carpenters, they have the choice to find work in other areas of Japan but have chosen to work in Tohoku because of their hearts for those who have lost so much.

Rimpei and Akemi Kozawa came to know Jesus in Beijing while Rimpei was still working as a businessman and was befriended by their Christian neighbour. After the tsunami and after taking several teams from Hong Kong and individual trips, they decided to move back to Japan to serve in the disaster area long term. Like others, they have worked tirelessly over the past two years to build relationships, mudout homes, build sheds, host volunteers, and anything that would bring someone closer to Jesus. Even though Akemi unfortunately lost her right eye in an accident last year, it has not stopped her from continuing ministering to those in need. They are currently spending half of their time in Ishinomaki and half of their time in Minamisanriku.



Richard and Mickie
Previously served in Samaritan's Purse, Richard and Mickie have a strong calling for supporting local ministries in Ishinomaki. They devoted themselves in the volunteer coordination of GMT, discipleship training and helping other ministries in Ishinomaki.



Satoshi
Involved in building relationships with temporary housing shelters, basketball ministry, and Christian Surfers International. His servant heart is evident in his willingness to serve in many areas. He loves to surf and use it as a bridge to share the gospel with surfers.



Left: The Grace Mission Tohoku base in Ishinomaki. The home that we helped to mud out during our first trip, slept in during our second trip, and is now both an office and accommodation for staff. Feels like home.

Right: A dinner with friends from different ministries gathering together for a good time of fellowship. For Ann particularly, this was a night of reuniting with those she has worked with in the past in Samaritans Purse.



Abe-san is a lady some of our team members met on the street last March and was invited to her home. They sent her a package after returning to HK and she has remembered them ever since. At this lunch that was put together last minute, she met them again and reconnected. God is a God of divine appointments.

We first met Sumiko when our team was volunteering as cooks for the weekly takidashi (cook-outs) to foster community relationships in the area. Even though there are no more cook-outs, when she knew we were coming, she came especially to see us. We will always remember her big smiles, her playfulness and her eagerness to help.



Tohoku is generally known as a relatively unchurched area of Japan. We spent most of our time in Ishinomaki in an area called Watanoha. There was no church in the area when the tsunami came and as volunteers came, some Christians decided to call this their home base where they would serve the local people. Last year we went to a church that was held in a home that could only hold up to 25 people squashed together. This year when we returned, we were excited to see that Watanoha Christ Church has moved to a newly built building, and has now grown to 50 people with kids sunday school as well as groups that meet during the day.



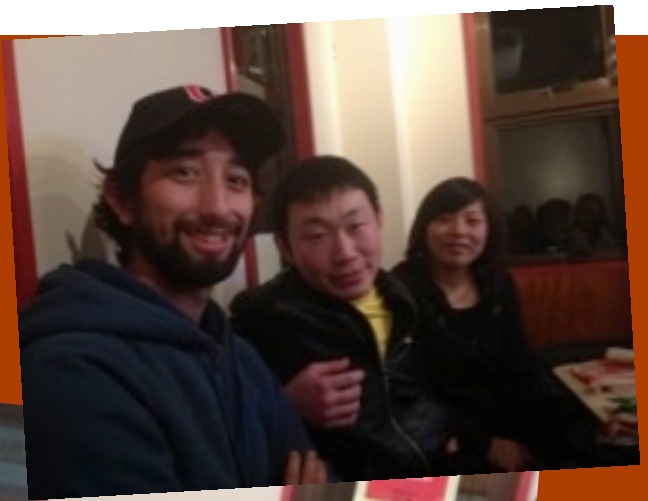
Chinese Gospel Night By Ann Lin

**Dear Heavenly Father,
Thank you for the Chinese Gospel Night.
You have made everything so beautiful in
your time.**

It has been almost six months since I left Ishinomaki, a place where I lived and worked for a year with Samaritan's Purse. A place where I tremendously miss every relationship you have blessed me with. Especially for the Chinese ladies you have put a burden on my heart to reach out to them. The moment you gave me the vision of a bold Chinese evangelical gathering for this mission trip, I asked myself: how? I am no longer in Ishinomaki to coordinate and invite people, nor do we have a band or a pastor who can speak mandarin to come along with us... would people come? Again, God you've shown me that only one thing is needed: faith.

How little faith I had expecting only 20 people would come. Lord, not only did you bring all the Chinese friends I had invited, you even multiplied the number with new Chinese friends, people from local Japanese ministries, pastors from America and Korea, a Taiwanese missionary...together we had 40 people celebrating and witnessing your love for the Chinese people tonight.

Lord, thank you for your love and mercy for the Chinese people in Ishinomaki. You heard their cries, you saw their loneliness and hardship in having to leave their families, kids and everything behind in order to work for better money. From making dumplings & pizza to praying for them and singing worship songs together, you have opened door after door for us to reach out and to care for them. Tonight, I could feel your strong desire to reap the seeds you have sown in their hearts. Thank you Lord, that three young Chinese ladies accepted you as their Lord and Saviour. Hallelujah!



Your presence and provision was abundant. You gave strength to Florence and Carole to share their testimonies of your faithfulness in mandarin for the first time; your love and hope became musical notes sinking into their hearts when we sang; your tongue was upon our broken Chinese throughout the night; you anointed me and Josephine with courage to pray and make an altar call for the first time; you multiplied food and workers to help us when there weren't enough; you provided us with a translator for the Japanese people when we did not prepare one.

My heart was moved when I saw the joy and smiles the young Chinese ladies carried home. Thank you for their willingness to stay behind so we could have deeper conversations and personal prayers with them.

Another thing that moved my heart was seeing your faithful servants working together in unity for You. I am so thankful I got to work with a dedicated team who do their part best. I also wanted to thank you for my ex-colleagues who came to support and prayed with us. Most of them did not know Chinese but they offered themselves to help serve and supported the team in a big way. Their presence and prayers strengthened me.

Lord, thank you for your abundant love and grace. You have manifested to us your great way for your will to be done. I lift up the three young chinese ladies who wanted to be your children. May you protect them from evil, minister to them with your words and Spirit. Lord, may you continue to send workers for the Chinese people in Ishinomaki. We thank you for your abundant blessings. In Jesus name, Amen.



Journey of Love

By Carole Tam



The Japan mission trip in May is the second time to Ishinomaki city in Tohoku after my last (and the first) mission trip to Japan in March last year. People asked, “Why do you return to the same place for mission?” The answer is simple, “I love the people there and want to visit them again.” So the journey was sparked off with LOVE.

Throughout the journey, we see the fullness of God’s amazing work to shower us with His love and use us to bring people blessings of His love.

1. When I first learned of having a chance to help out at the local ministry to Chinese workers/students/residents in this trip, I was excited and surprised with God’s amazing plan of opening up a new challenge to us on top of ministry to the local Japanese people. Who would imagine sharing gospel in Mandarin (but not Japanese) and to Chinese (but not Japanese) in Japan?
2. Nonetheless, God’s surprises kept flowing beyond our

limit of thoughts. What is most beyond my imagination is that God had called upon me to share my bitter past (never been told before publicly) in front of a group of over 40 Chinese workers/residents and local Japanese ministries at a dinner gathering in Ishinomaki city to testify His faithfulness and glorify His never-failing love to His children. No matter how far, how long, how lost I had gone astray from Him, yet He never gave up on me and found every way to bring the lost sheep home.

What is more overwhelming is for a Cantonese speaker like me to testify on such deep issue fluently in Mandarin (non-mother tongue) and in a limited time of 15-20 minutes that could touch the hearts of native Mandarin speaking Chinese people and bring tears to the eyes of audience. It could only be by the power of Holy Spirit who dwells inside me to make all this happen. Three people came to Christ when our team members called upon the audience for response after we sang the songs of “我們愛“ and “有一位神”.



We had a joyful night sharing more and praying with the audience. God is good and HE is merciful enough to choose me to let His glory be displayed through my brokenness. God is love and He loves us so much that HE lets us see and reap harvest despite how little we are (not any prominent or renowned evangelist) and with so little work that we had done in local ministry. But God is lavish in love and rewards us generously with overwhelming joy and satisfaction only if we have a heart to seek His kingdom, the courage to surrender ourselves in the almighty hands of God and just need to take one step out of our comfort zone to follow Jesus Christ to lose ourselves to gain life.

“Love one another” (John 13:34) and “Encourage one another daily” (Hebrews 3:13) are the themes and principles that the team upheld since the beginning of the trip. Be it in team sharing at preparatory meetings, prayers in private or public, daily devotions, serving and giving testimony to local people at the temporary housing, ministry to Chinese workers and residents, we encouraged

one another, cared for and supported each another in prayers and actions with LOVE. “Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself.” (Philippians 2-3) We acted as one body in Christ as we served at each event and accomplished each task. It is by the love of God overflowing inside us to let all these things happened so that “By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.” (John 13:35).

I am grateful to God for showering me with blessings of His lavish love and for God’s grace of using a weak and little me to show His abundance of love to the people and point them to salvation through faith and the love in Christ among brothers and sisters through this journey of amazing love.

“A new commandment I give you, that you have one another: just as I have loved you, you are to love one another.” (John 13:34)



南三陸

Sato-san: Community leader of Asahigaoka By Ann Lin

We visited Sato san, a dear friend of mine on our way to next mission in Minamisanriku. Sato is the community leader of Asahigaoka in Minamisanriku. I got to know him through Pastor Nakazawa, the head of Minamisanriku Christian Centre. They knew each other through relief item distributions and takidashi (cook-out).

He shared with us his special encounter with Jesus:

His grandson who was a high school first grader one day got upset at home, so he took on his bicycle and decided to pay a visit to his grandpa Sato, who lives 120km from him. When Sato heard that his grandson was coming on his bicycle, he started to get worried because his grandson had never ridden on the road by himself before so Sato san went out to look for him.

Strangely Sato drove all the way from his house to almost where his grandson lives but he couldn't see any trace of his grandson, so he drove back to Minamisanriku hoping to find him on the way before the day starts to get dark. When Sato came close to a split road, one was the main road leading back to the town, the other one was a shortcut that is less travelled and unknown by many people. Feeling clueless in which road to take, somehow he felt he needed to ask Jesus for help "which way did my grandson take?" "Jesus, which way?" he spoke out. Without consciously knowing, he found himself turned into the road less travelled. After driving 2km, there was still no sign of his grandson. Sato started to murmur why he had turned into this road. Soon after he had the thought, there in front of him he saw a kid riding on a bicycle- his grandson.

Sato was completely stunned by what just happened when he called on the name of Jesus. He heard about Jesus from his Christian friends when he was serving in the Japan Self Defence Forces. He knew Jesus performed a lot of miracles on earth and did many good deeds. He told me that this is a "kiseki" (Miracle) and couldn't believe that a miracle had happened to him. Unlike many Japanese hiding their true feelings, he openly shared his testimony to his community and his wife. Though many have told him this is nothing but a mere coincidence, but Sato knew it was more than a coincidence: it was Jesus who helped him. Sato is not a Christian yet, there are many people in Tohoku like him who have experienced Jesus after the tsunami. Please continue to pray for breakthrough for these people.

Nakazawa Sensei: Minamisanriku Christian Centre By Ann Lin

Pastor Nakazawa and his ministry devoted themselves for the people of Minamisanriku. They were one of the very first groups to enter Minamisanriku for relief support. They are also one of the last few remaining groups in Minamisanriku to help rebuilding the communities. This earned them a lot of respect and trust among the communities. His ministry established Minamisanriku Christian Centre after the tsunami, the first Christian church built in Shizugawa after a few decades. They focus in local children ministry & temporary housing shelter ministry.

Pastor Nakazawa showed us his vision and construction plans of a second Christian centre in Minamisanriku. This centre is a multi-purpose Christian community centre with disciple training and church service facility, bigger volunteer centre, larger space for community services and facility for disabled people. It is a visionary project Pastor Nakazawa has been planning for the last two years. I was fortunate to be part of the initial landscape planning. This project has been undergoing constant changes and challenges on land, structural and financial issues. It's a project that requires tremendous amount of determination, persistency and faith in the Lord, trusting He will carry them through. As I go back to visit pastor Nakazawa this time, I am glad to see his continual passion and desire for this second Christian Centre. More importantly is his cheerful attitude despite of all these challenges. A big salute to Pastor Nakazawa and his team!

Please continue to pray for Christian ministries like Pastor Nakazawa's in the Tohoku area, for God's leadership and wisdom be upon them day and night. Many of them are facing various challenges in permanent staffing and finance on the field, may God's providence be upon them.





Ahn Sensei Agape Volunteer Centre By Phoebe Cheung

It is five o' clock in the morning, and my natural body alarm clock had awakened my cold and stiff body, while my spirit still resists the freezing cold air outside. I struggled and stumbled out of bed reluctantly, half dreaming and only half aware that I am now in Minamisanrku, a town about an hour away from Ishinomaki. How on earth could it be so cold in May, I mumbled to myself, thinking it must be only five degrees since I needed to wear my down jacket to sleep the night before. As I moved gingerly to the washroom downstairs to wash up, the light from the brightly lit kitchen pierced through my eyes, and my feet came to a sudden halt - The sight in front of me was so shocking that it took away the drowsiness completely. There they are, Ahn Sensei and his wife, fully dressed, studying and reading the Bible so intensely that, they barely noticed my presence.

'Ohaiyo! Ahn Sensei', I bowed slightly and stuttered out basic words of courtesy. 'Ohaiyo, Phoebe Ssi, would you like a cup of coffee?', Ahn Sensei's wife greeted me with her usual warm

smile. 'Oh I am okay,' I uttered some words, embarrassed that I had already intruded their morning quiet time, and moved hurriedly towards the washroom. 'Did they sleep at all? Weren't they the last ones to retire to bed last night?', I wondered to myself, and felt guilty for having complained to a 7am devotion the night before.

Ahn Joong Shik Sensei and Ahn Sensei's wife, the amazing and most devoted pastor couple we encountered in this trip. For the brief two-day stay, we became awestruck by how their are living as God's devoted servants and followers in Minamisanrku. The incident above was only a small glimpse of their disciplined and devoted Christian life, (there were also the Korean Ginseng soup incident and car washing incident, but those can be told in the Japan trip sharing). Surprisingly we didn't know much about them personally at all. So for the sake of our team members and myself, I had written back to interview him so that their story can be heard and shared!

Above: Cutting Vines with Ang Sensei

Below: Ahn Sensei's wife defrosting chicken, working with a smile and a joyful spirit that was infectious.





Interview of Korean Pastor Ahn Joong Shik: (Q: Phoebe the interviewer, A: Ahn Sensei)

Q: Ahn Sensei, can you tell us more about yourself? What is your background before you became a pastor?

A: I graduated from Gyeonggi Yangpyung Inha Technical College in Korea in 1983. Then I worked for Samsung Electronics from 1987 to 1990. After that I went to two different seminary schools for eight years and got my Master's in Theology. In year 2000 I went on a graduate mission in Japan and have been with the Pentagon Ministry and stayed in Sendai since. In year 2012 I joined the Tohoku Mission Center and came to Minamisanrku.

Q: How old are you and how did you and your wife meet? We really want to know!

A: I was born in 1963 so I am 49 years old. My hometown is Yangpyung at Gyeonggi-do (the province where Seoul is). My wife and I met at Samsung Electronics. We also served together at the church at Suwon (capital of Gyeonggi-do) where I was the Youth Director and she was the assistant. We have two children. The older daughter is now in her second year of studying theology in Korea, while the younger son is in 10th grade at a Sendai high school.

Q: How did you become a pastor?

A: Who am I? I am a man of God, a Christian. While working at Samsung Electronics one of the managers in charge of product safety died. At the time, Samsung Electronics had just started making mobile phones. I was also in the same team particularly focused on injection mould design and industrial safety. So when he died I realised while physical safety was important, it is much more meaningful to save our spirit and soul and

to receive the gospel. I meditated on God's word and when I came across 2 Timothy 4:9 'Do your best to come to me quickly,' I had decided to become a pastor. It was not an easy decision to leave a good and prestigious company such as Samsung, but I needed to commit fully to God. There was no way I can attend seminary school part time while working there.

Q: What made you come to Japan?

A: I already learned Japanese at university. Then while working at Samsung Electronic Production Technology and Molding division I often worked alongside advisers from Japan. I also realised that there are mostly Buddhists but only very few Christians in Japan. I felt that God had given me the calling so I went ahead to attend Japan Missionary seminary. I also attended the International Disciples Training Seminar. Even so, I wasn't much of a preacher at first. I was happy to do the background work, prayers meetings, coordinating, etc. Then one day the Holy Spirit sent someone at church to ask me to preach the next day. I reluctantly obeyed and prepared a sermon. Next day at church after the sermon a lady missionary working in Sendai came up to me and told me that Sendai needed people to do church planting. So this is how I was guided by God to serve in Japan.

So here it is, the story of a wonderful servant of God. It was an eye opening experience to witness his humility and ironclad faith. It is true that those we meet in our life can change us, so profoundly that we are not the same afterwards. I shall work harder as a Christian and a follower of Christ. Out of respect for Ahn Sensei and his amazing, uplifting life. Out of respect for Ahn Sensei's wife and what she has taught me on how to be a good wife. Out of respect for myself and Our Lord Jesus Christ.



Filling the mud slope outside Ahn Sensei's home with gravel so that cars can be driven up.



Ahn Sensei's wife teaching us how to stuff chickens to make ginseng chicken for the temporary housing outreach. We were amazed at the amount of effort they were willing to put it and the joy they have in even preparing the food.



Devotion time with Ahn Sensei. He explained to us that he wanted to give one of those cut vines to each household in the temporary housing to let them know that Jesus is the vine and we are the branches. We helped him cut the vines afterwards and prayed for these households to know Him.



京都

The Hallam's
By Lyann and Andy Low

Our team of eight members first met Ben Hallam at the lobby of K's House Kyoto. Ben is an Australian is currently serving as a WEC (an international missions organisation) missionary in Japan alongside with his wife – Jessica and two daughters. We were overawed by Ben's indomitable spirit in spite of both the adversity and setbacks he faced in the community. We felt his conviction and resilience knowing that the number of local Japanese who turn their lives to Christ were far and few between. Ben provided us a deeper insight of how a family unit with young children is able to be a witness for Christ in Japan. He took great efforts in connecting and sharing his passion for Japan with short-term trippers.

Jessica supports Ben's ministry by opening their home to the short-term team to get to know them better. In doing so, she invariably made us feel welcomed, even though she was physically and emotionally fatigued caring for her two young daughters. Ben and wife seized the unique opportunity in forming what they affectionately term "Park Ministry", the phenomenon of local park-goers drawn to the cherubic daughters who are clearly foreign. This helps them initiate dialogue with the locals, share how they assimilate into their community and provide a platform for deeper sharing of the family's faith. After lunch, our team split into three groups to cover the neighbourhood in our now-informed prayer walk. We prayed that God would break the enemy's strongholds and that His gift of salvation would permeate into schools, community centres, shopping malls and even temples.

Our mission team also visited Izumi Christian House (ICH) where we met Pastor Lee Chungyu for the first time. At Sunday service, we found that our members actually doubled the size of the congregation, which was an encouragement for those in attendance. This was a glimpse of how the church could potentially look like in future. We began to appreciate how ICH is making concerted efforts in reaching out to the community as part of their local outreach initiative.



It made us realise that although we were challenged to take part in the Great Commission, it doesn't take going to the 'ends of the earth' for us to do our job. What Ben and his family as well as the rest of the WEC units in Izumi strive to do at its most basic is to connect with their community so that there would be opportunity to relate to them and speak about Jesus into their lives - whether in Park Ministry, serving the Japanese high school down the street and the Pharmaceutical university in the vicinity. Personally, since we had also recently moved homes in Hong Kong, it was a personal challenge for us to do likewise by building up relationships with our neighbours, grocers, shopkeepers and perhaps even the local schools one day. There's a thought!

The team spent the last evening together with WEC Japan around yakitori dinner. We heard stories of salvation and personal challenges. Both Ly-ann and I feel even more compelled to be involved in praying and walking alongside with the fellow warriors for Christ, because we share the same vision of seeing lives transformed whether in Hong Kong or in Japan.



Urban Ministry

There are many churches that may not have considered sending mission teams to Japan until the tsunami happened, including ours. Two years after the tsunami, many people are already beginning to assume that Japan is returning back to "normal" and that neither volunteers nor teams are necessary. However, it is not a well known fact that Japan is one of the largest unreached country in the developed world, with only 0.5% Christian. The reason why our team chose to go to Tokyo and Kyoto this time as well as back to Tohoku is so that we can understand better how to support and encourage those who are serving in the cities in Japan - where most of the population is, and where relationships are even harder to build than in the disaster area.

Why are we still returning after two years?

Looking back on the photos from two years ago, we are thankful that when we return to Tohoku, we no longer see many empty and broken homes and shops, mountains of trash and littered roads. Instead, we see homes being rebuilt, roads repaired, new shops, new homes, and signs of life returning. There are friends who would ask us why we are still returning after two years and whether things have returned to normal for the Japanese people. The answer to the first question is quite easy - we are returning for the people. We are returning to see friends and to meet new ones. Now more than ever, the Japanese people are open to hearing about God. Seeds still need to be sown and the harvest is only beginning. The answer to the second question is simply that life is not "back to normal" - there are thousands still in temporary housing, people are still unemployed, homes still have not been rebuilt and in many areas, entire plots of land is still empty. However, there is hope and open doors, and much more work to do. This trip we also started visiting ministries in Tokyo and Kyoto so that we can better understand urban ministries and how to partner with local churches there. May God continue to bring people to Japan to share His love - a people who may seem materially rich, yet spiritually and emotionally poor.



Tohoku Chinese Community

Long term Chinese christian workers to care for and reach the Chinese community in Tohoku.

Pastor Nakazawa

God's leadership and wisdom on the second Christian Centre in Minamisanriku. Pray for God's providence to be upon his ministry.

Tokyo Chinese Community

Continual unity of Chinese churches in Tokyo and follow up of those who accepted Christ. May the fruit of His work among the Chinese community be a blessings to the nation of Japan.

Pastor Ahn & wife

God's strength for Pastor Ahn and his wife as they build relationships with the people in the temporary housing. May these relationships bring life transformation, hope and salvation.

Izumi Christian House

Wisdom and open doors for local outreach and more field workers. May the aroma of Christ be evident in their neighbourhood.

Ben & Jessica Hallem

Unprecedented favour upon their park and English ministry. Remove any language barrier. Protection of their physical, emotional and spiritual health.

Pastor Lee Chungyu & Eonmee Lee

Protection of their physical, emotional and spiritual health. Perseverance and love in developing relationships with Japanese mothers and families in the area.

Grace Mission Tohoku

Smooth transition as they wrap up the ministry. Guidance and direction for staff for their next steps as most of them continue serving in Ishinomaki.



**“Encourage each other daily, as long as it is called
Today so that none of you may be deceived by sin’s
deceitfulness”**

Hebrews 3:13

Florence Chiu
Lyann Tan
Andy Low
Phoebe Cheung
Carole Tam
Ann Lin
Josephine Tiu
Fanny Su

