UPDATE - BIBLES & LITERATURE

We praise the Lord for many who sent gifts for Bibles. Millions of Bibles were distributed in the past year throughout Asia. Please pray for the many seeds that were sown, as new opportunities presented themselves to take in large quantities of Bibles and literature to China while the summer Olympics were in progress.

During this time, contacts of the Mission had wonderful opportunities to do volunteer work, make new contacts, witness and discreetly distribute literature. They had to be careful, under the watchful eye of authorities, not to appear to be proselytizing anyone.

There is an officially recognized church, operating legally in China. However, it was still clearly under tight control, as each person was required to show proof of identification to government officials before they could enter to worship.

According to one recent news report, it was estimated that there were about 70 million Christians and over 50,000 churches in China. Most of these believers continue to gather illegally in the underground church, under the threat of severe persecution. If discovered, officials often buldoze the buildings and torture members in order to get information about the underground network and the names of other believers and foreign contacts.

Please pray for the church in China and protection for the network of people involved in doing evangelism and distributing the Scriptures among many opressed countries in Asia.

JAPANORAMA - GLORY OF THE EMPEROR

During World War II, the Japanese suicide (Kamikaze) pilot's code was unyielding allegiance to the Emperor. In 1944, facing defeat and short of resources, the imperial army began to send off these pilots in planes; many times, having just enough fuel for a one-way trip. The call for Kamikaze pilots drew a staggering response. Three times as many applied as the number of planes available! About 6,000 suicide flights were made and 20,000 still awaited such missions at the end of the war!

It is amazing to realize how people utterly dedicated themselves for such a lost cause! How much more should we be dedicated to live for the "glory of God!"

"Call unto Me, and I will answer thee" Jer. 33:3

JAPAN MISSION

Called to Serve

November / December 2008

PURSUING THE GLORY OF GOD

Alex Verwey

It was July 25, 2004 when the doorbell rang at the crack of dawn! Neil and Peggy's three grand-children were standing at their door. "We are on our way to a youth camp," they said. "Could you please pray for us?" How good it was to pray with them that the glory of God would shine through their lives!

Most mornings our grand-sons used to 'fly' down a steep mountain road to school on their bicycles, trying to beat each other. When Alex Verwey was 12, he was racing around the curves at 'break-neck' speed when he lost control and slid under an on-coming car head first! The car stopped just as he slid under it! His helmet was so tightly wedged under the car that he first had to unfasten it before he could crawl out! Miraculously, Alex only sustained some bruises! ***For he shall give his angels charge over you, to keep you in all your ways*** *(Psalm 91:11).*

The Lord taught Alex and his brothers that life was not about beating each other to school at all costs. Rather, life was about being a witness to others and glorifying God.

The driver's wife, Mrs. Tanaka and their daughter, came with a large gift in hand to express their sincere apologies. This would be unthinkable in the West, considering that the incident was entirely Alex's fault! After exchanging gifts and apologies, they eagerly listened as we shared the gospel and invited them to church.

At 16 years of age, Alex and his brothers were cutting grass when a bee stung him. He started to sweat and felt so dizzy that he had to lie down. We rushed with him to a nearby hospital. He keeled over as we entered the hospital! His system went into shock, due to a serious allergic reaction. He floated in and out of consciousness for the next hour as they monitored his progress and administered various intravenous drugs. The doctor later

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told us that he might have died if he arrived at the hospital any later!

"This is not your time to die," Alex sensed the Lord saying to him. "I still have work for you to do on earth."

The Lord allowed events to transpire in such a way that Alex became more aware than ever before that the primary purpose of his life was to glorify God.

When Alex was 18, Tom Poole, his high school principal, unexpectedly passed away. He helplessly stood by as CPR was being administered. This was traumatic and a shock to many. At the funeral, the theme of the message, given by Neil, was "The Glory of God."

The Lord clearly showed Alex that the only way he could make sense of this tragic event was to believe that "God's ways were higher," and that Tom's death happened for the "glory of God."

One day, shortly after Alex graduated from high school, he was working at the Mission by taking apart and cleaning air conditioners. It was very hot and the work was quite dirty. As Neil walked by, in the spur of the moment, he asked, "Alex, what is the purpose of your life?" Without skipping a beat Alex answered back, "To glorify God!"

The Lord continued to use various events in Alex's life to reinforce this truth in his mind. He shared the following by e-mail while at university: "Three months ago, I noticed an elderly couple in a restaurant. They stood out because when they went to refill their drinks, they started to pant to the point where it seemed as if they were going to faint! Seeing this, I thought that they were very near death and needed to hear about God's love.

"To my shame, I began to think of excuses not to approach them. I thought of the loads of homework I had to do. Also, what would they say if a young boy started to preach to them about Christianity? So I ignored God's voice, but after they walked out of the door, I felt convicted! I felt that God would hold me responsible for the eternal damnation of this couple!

"From that day on, for three months, I prayed every day that God would have mercy on them and me. He certainly answered my prayers!

"Today, three months later, I met the very same couple at the train station near my university! I immediately talked to them and gave them a "Fountain of Joy" gospel tract.

"When I told them that I had been praying for them for three months, they were all smiles and said "Ureshikatta!" ("We are so glad!"). I am so thankful that my God is the God of second chances! Hallelujah!!" Alex.

We live in a time when people are intensely independent and selfish. If we are not careful, we can easily be swept away by the temptation to live life in such a way that we glorify ourselves.

Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God. *(1 Corinthians 10:31).* ❑

UPDATE - OUTREACH TO THE ELDERLY

Sunette Hugo & Mrs Fukunaga

There are four large retirement homes close to the Mission headquarters. We have had a number of opportunities in recent years to hold special meetings and befriend some of the residents and staff. Recently, the manager of one of the homes asked us to teach English to the elderly on a regular basis. We accepted his proposal, if in exchange we could share God's Word. They agreed to this and we have had some wonderful opportunities to witness, distribute Christian literature and share God's Word. Pray for Sunette Hugo, Mrs. Fukunaga and others who are vitally involved in this work. Pray that many would come to know the Lord.

PRAYER REQUESTS

1. Pray for Alex Verwey (23) as he currently strives to live for the "glory of God" in Los Angeles, USA, while furthering his education and working for a Japanese company. He is also very involved in the ministry of a local Japanese church.
2. Thank you for your prayers for Mrs. Takemori. She is one of our faithful office workers who was recently diagnosed with reoccurring cancer. She is now back in the office and helping us with the correspondence and counseling. We praise the Lord for answered prayer and having His healing hand upon her!
3. We praise the Lord for the funds many sent for Mr. Caballes' motorcycle. It was wonderful to see how the Lord provided so faithfully for all of his needs! Please continue to pray for this vital work in the Philippines.
4. Christmas is a special time of year when Japanese people are most open to Christianity. Our workers become very busy, participating in evangelistic Christmas meetings, concerts and parties. Please pray that many will be reached for the Lord through these opportunities.
5. We thank each person who faithfully prayed and supported the work of the Mission throughout 2008. You have played a vital role in the Lord's work! We praise the Lord for the many changed lives, protection of our workers, provision of our needs, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit!