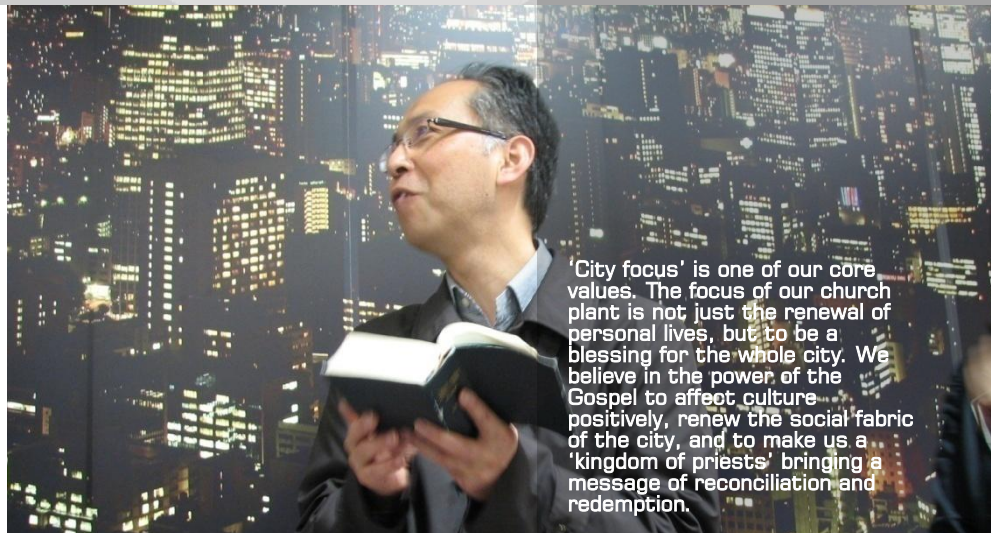


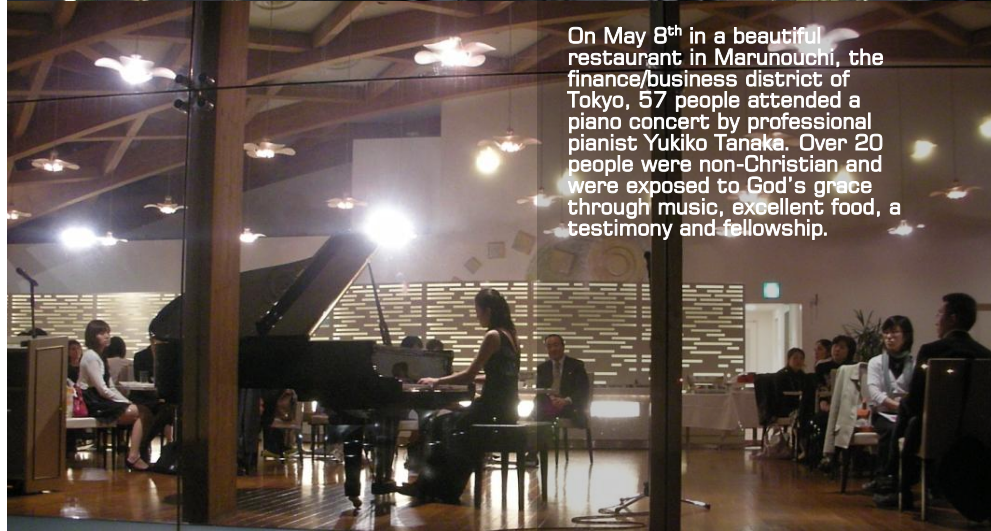
'You yourselves have seen what I did to Egypt, and how I carried you on eagles' wings and brought you to myself. Now if you obey me fully and keep my covenant, then out of all nations you will be my treasured possession. Although the whole earth is mine, you will be for me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' [Exodus 19:4-6]

We greet you from Tokyo, Japan, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ. First of all, we want to thank you from our hearts for praying for and contributing towards this new venture in the heart of Tokyo! In Tokyo spring has already passed and summer is heralded in by increasingly humid weather. At the start of a new season we are pleased to give you an update on the ministry of Grace City Church Tokyo as we enter a new phase in our church planting ministry.

fishing net > Grace City Church Tokyo's vision is the renewal of people's lives and the transformation of the city socially, culturally and spiritually. In other words we look for the Gospel of Jesus Christ, his grace to affect this society. By his grace we are a 'kingdom of priests' (Ex.19:6) that teaches and preaches a message of forgiveness and redemption. But how do we get to this point of teaching and preaching the Gospel in the heart of Tokyo where only so few know of Christ? Sometimes we compare what we do with being fishermen, just like the disciples in the New Testament. But our fishing methods were unimaginable for the disciples when Jesus called them and made them 'fishers of men' (Matt. 4:19). We are throwing our nets out trying to reach many. Some may be saved; others are at least exposed to the Gospel and the community of the church before they slip through the meshes of the net. Even though the timing might not have been right for them yet, we hope they will look back and remember the warm community of the church whenever they long for that again. For that reason we always make sure that everybody had our contact information. Other 'fish' stay around in the net for a while and lavish themselves to what the church has to offer. But after some time the tide proves to be too strong: work, pressure from society or other religions suck them out of the net. As a church we try to keep in touch with these people actively by inviting them to activities that suit them. Or by just meeting up with them at Starbucks and talk about life over a cup of coffee.



'City focus' is one of our core values. The focus of our church plant is not just the renewal of personal lives, but to be a blessing for the whole city. We believe in the power of the Gospel to affect culture positively, renew the social fabric of the city, and to make us a 'kingdom of priests' bringing a message of reconciliation and redemption.



On May 8th in a beautiful restaurant in Marunouchi, the finance/business district of Tokyo, 57 people attended a piano concert by professional pianist Yukiko Tanaka. Over 20 people were non-Christian and were exposed to God's grace through music, excellent food, a testimony and fellowship.

networking events > You might wonder what we are using as 'bait' when we go out fishing. Well, first of all we operate on the fishing grounds where the target group is. Right there we organize networking events in which the young professionals working and sometimes living in central Tokyo show interest, like the most recent piano concert. On May 8th in a beautiful restaurant in Marunouchi, the finance/business district of Tokyo, 57 people attended a piano concert by professional pianist Yukiko Tanaka. Over 20 people were non-Christian and were exposed to God's grace through music, excellent food, a testimony and fellowship. After the concert we invited all the guests to keep in touch by attending the follow up Summer Party in June or by participating in a seeker Bible study (named CROSSROAD) or in one

prayer walk > Every other month we make a prayer walk through a specific area of central Tokyo. February 28th we prayed for the government of Japan, while walking the streets of Kasumigaseki. This area of Tokyo is famous for the Diet (the Japanese parliament) and all the government ministries. It is a concentration of power and influence, yet tainted by scandals and search for personal gain. We prayed for the Gospel to affect the people working here to make it a place of true public servanthood. On April 25th our voices joined the sound of pouring rain as we prayed for the mass media in Shiodome and entertainment industry in Roppongi and Akasaka.

upcoming events > The 2 Launch Team Bible Study groups have been transformed into 4 community groups which meet weekly after work in central Tokyo. And they are growing already! For seekers wanting to know more about Christianity a series of 5 basic studies named **CROSSROAD** starts at the end of May. As a follow-up event for the piano concert we will have a **Summer Party** with living singing at the sky lounge on the 49th floor of a sky scraper overlooking Tokyo Bay on June 6th. In July a **Mission Team** of 10 Dutch young professionals will come to assist us in making new contacts. This will give a new meaning to 400 years of relationship between the Netherlands and Japan, which is celebrated this year.

of the new community groups. Other examples of networking events were a Valentine party in a sky lounge on the 54th floor of a tower overlooking the central Tokyo skyline. More than 50 people (half non-Christians) enjoyed the chamber orchestra, sweets and talk about love from a Biblical perspective. We also try to connect to Japanese traditions by inviting people to a Sakura Picnic underneath the blossoming cherry trees. Some events are quite informal like a movie night which provides a relaxed atmosphere, good snacks and an opportunity to discuss the movie and deepen relationships. For art lovers there was an

sessions about aspects of our church's grace identity were discussed: the teaching of Sola Gratia (just by grace), the meaning of our church being a reformed covenant community and the implementation of servant leadership. The kids, as very important little members of our church community, enjoyed their own program during our study sessions and discovered things about their own identity in Christ through the Bible, discussion and crafts. But most of all they enjoyed helping out and eating during our barbeque night! Through all these efforts the Launch Team has become more equipped and more united, even though some rough times lie behind us, too. As in any community, not everybody always agrees with the course set out. Many hours of talking spent and many tears were shed when the conclusion was drawn that three Launch Team members needed to go their separate ways because of differences in vision and ministry design. In the midst of excitement of laying a strong foundation for Grace City Church, this was a painful process. It forced us to define our theology and philosophy of ministry more precisely. We are thankful for the grace experienced: an even clearer vision, personal growth and more unity in the team. We are also happy to report that new Christians joined the Launch Team and are committed to help.

We prayed for people working in the arts and media at the National Art Center, Tokyo in Roppongi. They have a major influence on Japanese culture and we long for the Gospel to permeate this sphere of influence.

Community groups have started! Christians meet up every week for a meal, short Bible Study, sharing and encouraging after work in a Tokyo restaurant or at somebody's home. Members are encouraged to care for each other and bring their non-Christian friends.

opportunity to listen to famous NY artist Makoto Fujimura as he showed and explained about his work in a gallery in Aoyama.

launch team > The so-called 'Launch Team', a group of evangelistic 'bringers' assisting in the first stage of the founding of the church has been actively involved in Bible Study and thinking with the staff in how to build up the church and reach out to their fellow-Tokyoites. Through vision meetings, prayer walks in the target area and the church's first retreat Rev. Fukuda has been transferring the vision and DNA of the church. The theme of the retreat held in the mountainous area west of Tokyo (Okutama) was 'grace identity'. In a relaxed setting there was time to talk, to play, to enjoy food and fellowship, but also to study. Three

coaching > We are not on our own in setting out a course for Grace City Church Tokyo! We believe God is guiding us, many people around the world are praying and we were also privileged to receive four days of valuable coaching in March by Gary Watanabe from the Redeemer Church Planting Center in New York. In April the Asia Director from the Reformed Mission League in the Netherlands, Wim Poldervaart, came to visit for a week which meant a great encouragement.

praise and prayer > Please, join us in prayer as we praise God for:

- **grace, in more ways than we could imagine!**
- **high attendance at the Valentine Party and piano concert**
- **providing financial resources needed to launch the church**
- **prayer and support from around the world**
- **natural church growth through God's gift of two pregnancies in the team (incl. twins!)**

We pray if God would grant the church:

- **grace, to work through our weakness**
- **health, (spiritual) growth for the GCCT kids**
- **growing leadership able to transfer the vision and DNA of the church**
- **a clear vision for the Launch Team members of how God wants to use their gifts**
- **(spiritual and numerical) growth of the four community groups**
- **follow up for the many new contacts made through our outreach events**
- **seekers to attend CROSSROAD Bible Study**
- **a good time of fellowship at the Tokyo 09 Summer Party on June 6th**
- **a fruitful time with the Dutch mission team**

If you would like to receive this Grace City Church Tokyo newsletter regularly, register by sending an e-mail to: makoto@gracecitychurch.jp.

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