

Spring

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TOKYO TIMES

ALEX, KATHRYN, ISABELLA & GABRIELLA HUMPHREYS

MISSIONARIES TO JAPAN

Blue LED lights can cure the blues?

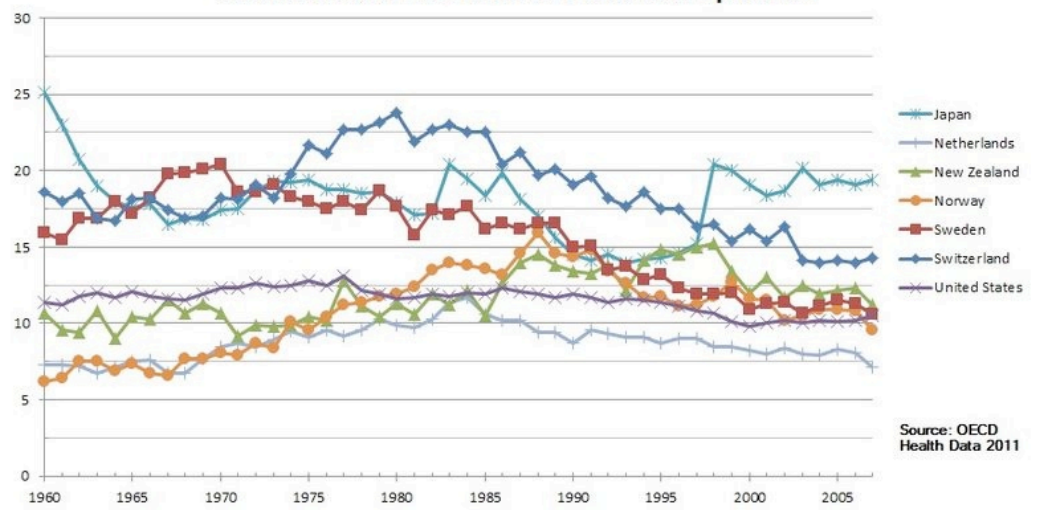
Suicide is a BIG problem in Japan. The most recent statistics show that in 2011 Japan had 30,226 reported cases of suicide making for the 15th straight year of more than 30,000 suicides a year. According to the World Health Organization that comes out to be roughly 23 people per 100,000 (compared to the US which is 11). It is a daunting problem with very complex reasons that include economics, recent family trends and cultural stigmas. But in truth the main reason is that the Japanese people DONT KNOW JESUS.

In 2010 the Japanese government allocated the equivalent of \$133 million to help aide suicide prevention efforts. One common method of suicide in big cities, especially Tokyo, is jumping in front of commuter trains. Japan Rail (JR) is constantly battling the issue and recently reported that train suicides rose from 42 in 2006 to 58 in 2007 and 68 in 2008. This may seem like an insignificant number but it works out to a suicide every five days. These suicides cause major disturbances to the vital train and subway system in Japan, affecting tens of thousands of commuters (including myself). Because of the integrated nature of the rail system



PLATFORM BARRIERS AND BLUE LED LIGHTS ARE ALL BEING USED TO TRY AND CUT DOWN ON SUICIDES IN TRAIN STATIONS.

Suicide Deaths Per Hundred Thousand Population



a disturbance on one line can effect many others. Not only does it hamper the performance of the transportation system, it takes a major toll on the train conductors and passengers who witness the terrible event. JR has been implementing various prevention measure such as chest high barriers on the edge of the platform that make it difficult for someone to jump onto the tracks, and recently they have tried something more intriguing. They are installing blue LED lights in the "danger" spots on train platforms. The picture above of the blue lights were taken by me at the train station near our church.

Blue LED lights? Really? Some recent studies have shown that they can work to calm suicidal psyches but the evidence is still sparse. It really just goes to show how desperate the Japanese are to curb this problem. Unfortunately suicide is seen by some Japanese as acceptable and honorable. Some of Japan's greatest historical figures took their lives, and even the current mayor of Tokyo has

made allusions to its "honorable" characteristics.

I am not sure about blue LED lights but I do know that Jesus Christ, the **LIGHT of the World**, is the one true answer to the hopelessness that swallows up so many of the Japanese people. He alone can heal the broken hearted and bind their wounds. While our church does not have any explicit suicide prevention we pray that we can be a lighthouse in this dark land, shining His truth to those who need help.

Recently on Japan's public television station there was a special about a Baptist church in central Japan which is busy helping people who are struggling with suicide. The church sits very near to a famous cliff that is a renowned tourist spot but is also commonly used by those who want to commit suicide. The church has helped to save many lives from the precipice and is working to lead those people to Christ. **Please pray with me that the light of Christ will shine in Japan, pushing back the darkness which pervades.**

EARTHQUAKE RELIEF CONTINUES!

*Please continue to give as the Lord enables you. Direct offerings to AG World Missions designated: **AGMF Japan Disaster Relief.***

Alex was asked to translate the JAG relief blog into English. It is updated every week so please check it out at: <http://blog.goo.ne.jp/saigaihonbu>

Current Prayer Needs

Our girls growth and protection

Kathryn can witness to many mother's in our neighborhood

Alex's work as a district youth committee member

Tokyo City Church's finances

Relief centers to change communities

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WELCOME TO THE CITY OF WAKO (wah-koh)

Since moving to Japan as missionaries in 2006 we have lived in the same city, Wako. It is a small municipality (80,000 people in 4 square miles) in the prefecture of Saitama and touches the Tokyo city limits; conveniently close to Tokyo but without the Tokyo prices. It is not a city of much import but is beautiful and a great place to raise children. Actually we choose Wako not because of its merits but instead because we were led to the city by God. It is a long and involved story but the long and short of it is that in 1992 when I was twelve years old and just feeling the call to Japan, my mother highlighted this little city on a map of Japan. I would daily pray over that map but in time forgot of its existence. Fast forward 14 years and we were stunned to find that the city where we settle in was actually a place that God had set apart for us when I was a young teenager.

A very interesting note about the name of the city is the meaning of its kanji (chinese characters). The first one 和 WA roughly translates to PEACE and the second character 光 KO means LIGHT. Thats right, we live in the city of Jesus: the Light (John 9:5) of Peace (Romans 5:1)!

Gabriella is now 4 months old!



Kathryn's mother at Brie's dedication



Isabella gets bigger everyday



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ASSEMBLIES of GOD
WORLD MISSIONS

We truly appreciate all of your support!
But recently our offerings have been down so please pray with us that our finances will be fully provided for.