

## Love Japan (2-11 Oct 2015) Mission Trip Report

### Sep 2015

Official team meeting with Esther commenced in Sep 2015. We understood the overall mission requirements from Esther and started the preparation proper. Sarah was nominated to be the team leader who then efficiently tasked the different roles to the rest of the team. Sumei with her finance background was tasked to be in charge of managing the team's finance; Peggy who has music/worshipping experience and is an avid baker was tasked with worship and cooking for Singapore Night. Theresa was the programme IC and Yi Ling was the purchaser and photographer. FCBC Sendai will help in advertising of our programme through giving out self-designed flyer and word-of-mouth marketing.



### Day 1: 2 Oct 2015

The team met up at Changi Airport Terminal 1 in the early morning 0400H for our flight at 0635H via Delta Airline. We re-organised some of the foodstuff and materials for the programme and re-packed into Sarah's extra luggage. Esther prayed for us before we crossed the immigration.



Reached Narita Airport at 1455H and we bought the pre-paid cards and data plans before we board the Narita Express to Tokyo for transfer to Sendai. At Tokyo Station, we bought a few bento lunch sets to be consumed during the train ride. During the train ride, we felt God's goodness on the land of Japan as we see the beautiful landscape and the people God has created. As this was the first mission trip for most of us, we were eager to see what God has put in place and how He would lead us through the 11 days.





After more than 10 hours of travelling, with 3 hours of lugging 7 heavy luggages, we finally saw Ps Caleb at 1900H! Praise God the team arrived safely and didn't get lost. Knowing that we were famished, Ps Caleb quickly dropped our luggages at the apartment before bring us to a nice Japanese sushi restaurant. It was a great prelude to many more days of awesome meals.



## Day 2: 3 Oct 2015

Started the day with a prayer for God to empower us in all we do and to communicate with the Japanese despite any language barriers during Kids Brown, adult English Circle (E-circle) and during service. Together with Tai-San (Kids Brown's Teacher), FCBC Sendai team (Ps Caleb, Ps Christina and Yuko-San), Love Japan Oct team helped out in Kids Brown. We participated in the teaching of English through English Song, taught them a Christian song (Jesus Loves Me) in English and conducted an Arts & Craft session. Though these activities, we got to know Ichika, Rin, Yu Na and their mothers better.



After the Kids Brown's lesson, Ps C & C, Yuko- San, Tai- San and the Love Japan team had an alfresco luncheon at Sendai Food Convention.



After lunch, we proceeded back to Church to prepare for Sat church service. During Service, we sang (Jiang Tian Chang Kai) for them and Sarah shared her testimony of how God saved her during a tough time in school and family and how she found strength to carry on. Many were moved and we believed her testimony had planted a seed in the hearts of those who heard it. The fellowship continued after service at a Chinese Restaurant. Even while having dinner, Ps Christina's did not stop serving others; she asked the waitress regarding job opportunities for an acquaintance who needed a job. Through the simple act, the

team saw a faithful heart of a servant in Ps Christina who will seize every opportunity to help others.



### **Day 3: 4 Oct 2015**

The team woke up early to head down to Kesenuma First Bible Baptist church (KFBBC) for service. We practised the two songs (Jiang Tian Chang Kai and Hanamo) we were going to sing at the church while travelling there. After worship and our performance, Pastor Hiroshi Minegishi preached on Luke 10: 38 -42, reminding us to fix our eyes on Jesus and not worry about other things unduly. We had a good Japanese Lunch in KFBBC before heading to our next destination. Over lunch, we got to know the ladies better and understood their circumstances. Before we left, a few of them asked for prayers – healing, job opportunities. It was very heart-warming for the Love Japan Team to see the believers earnestly seeking God’s power/blessings over their circumstances. We trust that their faith has healed them/overcame their circumstances.



After lunch, we set off for Goenmohara Temporary Housing Units (THU), which is home to survivors of the 2011 earthquake and tsunami. Together with other volunteers from KFBBC, Reiko-San, Choi-San, and Inoru-San, we started the food preparation and packing of fruits for the survivors prior to the start of the event.

Our emcee, Theresa and translator Yuko-San started the event by doing an introduction about Singapore and teaching them the Singapore Neighbourhood Dance. You can tell they enjoyed the dance very much from their happy faces! The Love Japan team conducted a game (Picking marbles with chopsticks) for the group and we realised that the elderly were very spontaneous and competitive. The programme continued where the Love Japan Team sang them two songs (Furusato & Hanamo) and got them to sing along.



*Songs, Dance & Games* ✨



Thereafter, the delicious teabreak set consisted of Korean Kimchi, Korean Pancake, Singapore Malay Cake, Herbal Tea egg and Kacang Puteh were served. Towards the end of the programme, Pastor Christina explained the souvenirs brought by the Love Japan Singapore Team which consists of a good quality canvas bag with bible verse, Tiger Balm, milo pack and key chain while the team distributed it out to the residents and blessing them through prayers and shoulder massages.





The Love Japan Team was privileged to be invited to visit one of the housing units after the programme. While the unit is small, the furnishings were complete and nicely done up. It was indeed a humbling experience for the Love Japan Team to serve the community in Goenmohara THU. Though their possessions were mostly destroyed/washed off by the natural disaster and what had happened seemed like a very bad nightmare, the residents were resilient and surviving well. Before we head back to Sendai, we went up to a hill where we prayed and interceded for the whole area. May God's blessings be poured out on the Japanese through the 2011 Tsunami and make them whole.



#### **Day 4: 5 Oct 15**

After a weekend of serving the community, the Love Japan Team set off for Yamagata for a day of prayer walk and sightseeing. Yamagata is the capital city of Yamagata Prefecture located in the Tōhoku region of Japan. Seeing the rice fields along the way reminded us of the bible verse - Luke 10: 2 He told them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field. We stopped by the rice field and prayed for a plentiful harvest for FCBC Sendai and Ps C & C. Japan shall no longer be a hard ground for the gospel but be ready for harvest just like the rice fields.



### **Day 5: 6 Oct 15**

Love Japan Team woke up early to prepare breakfast for all. What was on the menu? Salad, Calbee Cereal, French toast, coffee and fruits! After breakfast, we set off for Sendai Musuem. The team understood more about the history of Sendai and its early encounter with Christianity. Date Masamune, the first lord of the Sendai Clan, established the foundation of Sendai. In 1600, he built his castle in Sendai, developed the city and introduced governance in the society. In 1613, during the Keicho era, Date Masamune sent his trusted retainer - Hasekura Tsunenaga for a mission to Europe to establish trade and invite Christians missionaries to Sendai. The mission was granted an audience with Pope Paul V after arriving in Italy and it took almost seven years to complete the journey. However, a change of leadership resulted in the persecution of Christians in the

area. It was inspirational though sad to hear about the persecution that Tsunenaga and other Christians suffered on their return, and provided much ground for reflection.

After lunch at Ippudo, we headed to the observatory tower to pray over Sendai. It was a day well spent in the museum, understanding the history of Sendai. The Love Japan Team felt God's immense love over this country and despite all her failed attempts in returning, God still love her very much. For dinner, the Love Japan team was very blessed by Masahiro-San (a Japanese dentist, contact of Pastor Caleb) and staff who brought us to Izakaya Restaurant (Japanese Styled Pub). We had a unique Japanese dining experience; we sat on tatami mats and dine from low tables in the traditional Japanese style. Small dishes and drinks were served while we chatted with him and his staff. It was a good follow up as some of the LJ team had met Masahiro-san and his staff when they had visited Singapore for their company trip.







### **Day 6: 7 Oct 15**

After breakfast, the Love Japan team was split into two. Sarah and Sumei followed Ps Christina to the elderly E-circle over lunch. The elderlies were very serious about learning English and had their English dictionary with them throughout the lesson. They even prepared the English Materials for Ps Christina to teach them. It was sobering but also inspiring to hear about how some of the members were inspired and motivated to carry on learning English even after the tsunami. One man, Suzuki-san, shared about how his English Dictionary was the only thing besides his wife and a few other possessions that had survived the tsunami; and after he put the dictionary out in the sun to dry, it started working again! We walked though an English handout on staying healthy and talked about various ways that each of us maintained our own health, over a sumptuous lunch.



On the other hand, Theresa, Peggy and Yi Ling followed Yuko-San to the local community centre for the children E-Circle. It was fascinating how Yuko-San could manage 14 children with some of her class rules – Silence Clap, stand behind the green line etc. The class started with some songs and dance to teach some Basic English vocabulary before proceeding to crafts making. The children had fun playing with cotton wool and they coloured Jesus in Snow White Outfit colour scheme. The Love Japan Team felt that these children, the future of Japan, are crucial to the revival of Christianity in Sendai. What FCBC Sendai is doing now will have far-reaching impact ultimately. Praise the Lord for Ps C&C and their team who are serving this nation.



The evening started with fellowship over dinner before cell group commenced. God's presence was in our midst as Su Mei shared her testimony with the cell. Our God, the creator of Heaven and Earth can do all the impossible things. May the Japanese learn to trust God for healing and job opportunities, like Su Mei.

**Day 7: 8 Oct 2015**

Singapore Cooking Class! The time was finally here for the Love Japan to conduct the cooking class. As amateurs for cooking, the team was quite worried that the food might not turn out well. Praise God that all dishes turned out much better than all our previous practices and we had a good lunch. Peggy also had an opportunity to share her testimony with the ladies who came for the cooking class. It was a joy for the Love Japan Team to share our recipes with the



Japanese and we hope there will be more fellowships amongst the mothers and Ps Christina over cooking class. May the Lord bless these ladies!



At night, Peggy, Sarah, Yuko and Joshua ( FCBC Sendai member) practiced worship for Saturday's service at church. It was a fun and fulfilling time of worship practice as Joshua led us. Even though only Yuko had Japanese as a first language, we still had a lot of fun and were united by Spirit even as we navigated the language and harmonising our different voices and instruments together.



## **Day 8: 9 Oct 2015**

One last day before our grand finale – Singapore Night! After a huge breakfast at a new Japanese breakfast joint with reflection on the previous days' events, the Love Japan Team spent the whole day preparing for Singapore Night. We went out to the supermarket to buy all the ingredients needed and headed home to prepare.

Sarah, Yuko, Esther Imai, and Tai also attended Youth Night- at the new wing of FCBC Sendai aptly named 'Chillax'. Esther Imai, despite not feeling well, managed to engage the youth (about 7 in number, ranging from 11 to 17, Micah, Haruki, Shion and a few other girls) played Uno(in English!) , listened to the theme song of Big Hero 6 (Story) and jammed on the musical instruments. It was a fruitful time of getting to know the youth and their mothers. It was also encouraging to see some of the mothers open up to Ps Christina about their children's issues and seek her counsel. The youth enjoyed themselves and a commitment was made to sing 'Story' in English at the next session. Esther had also planned to show the first episode of 'You Can' ( youth version), and discuss it, but there was no time. Nevertheless, it was a very lively and encouraging first session of Youth Night! Cheers to the success of the inaugural Youth Night.



## Day 9: 10 Oct 2015

### Singapore Night

The day started with a great Japanese breakfast prepared by Yuko-san.

Grilled salmon, rice, salad, miso soup, fruit and coffee provided an awesome start to the day. Pastor Caleb also led an impromptu time of sharing where he and Pastor Christina asked some of us about our personal prayer needs and prayed for us.

We spent the rest of the day cooking feverishly. Pastor Christina came down to help us several times and did some cooking in her own flat as well. We left the house mid afternoon to prepare the church for service and do some final preparations for Singapore Night. We had a final meal in the soba shop below

church and rehearsed the songs to be sung during Singapore Night ( Hanamo, Home) again.

Service was at 5pm, and the presence of God was strong throughout. The worship team thoroughly enjoyed the experience and Pastor Caleb continued his series of messages about the praise and worship of God. After the service, we reconfigured the area for Singapore Night. Guests started arriving at 730pm. We did the Singapore Dance and Pastor Ichio Kishinami of Kurihara Bible Baptist Church shared a couple of songs and a testimony. We played two games ( the marbles/ chopsticks game and a shifting cups game) and the people were enthusiastic and competitive. The team shared a couple of songs and got the crowd to clap along, and Theresa shared her testimony. Food was served ( Malay Cake,Singapore Chicken Curry Udon and Muah Chee, as well as Kacang Puteh) and every one enjoyed it tremendously. After dinner, around 2130H, the gift bags were given out to the guests. For Singapore night, our gift bags contained a fan, keychain and milo pack. The children's packs contained stationary sets, stickers for the girls and styrofoam aeroplanes and parachuting soldiers for the boys. The guests continued to hang out and socialise until nearly 2300H, and it was good to see many of our guests from E circle, Kids Brown and Youth Night come, as well as Gospel Choir members. It was a good opportunity to consolidate friendships and say farewell to some of the people as the LJ team would be leaving the next morning. We also were able to pray for some of our new friends before leaving.

One of Masahiro-san's colleagues, Katayama-san, also gave Peggy and Sarah yukata ( casual summer kimono) as a thank you gift for entertaining the group during their company trip in June. We were surprised and delighted and took turns to try the yukata at home in the apartment after Singapore night. Esther and Yuko-san helped to ensure that we wore and kept the yukata properly.

Pastor Christina was also very sporting and joined us in taking photos in the yukata.





### **Day 10: 11 Oct 2015**

It's time to bid farewell. The Love Japan Team woke up early, wrote appreciation notes for Ps C & C and Yuko-San before we left to catch the Shinkansen to Tokyo.

#### **Pointers/Insights/Suggestions for future teams:**

- JR pass: The JR pass can be purchased in Singapore prior to departure. It will be slightly cheaper

- E-circle takes place every Wed (Children and Elderly) and Sat (Adults).
- Youth night is on Friday Evening. This time round, the full Love Japan Team didn't manage to be involved in it due to preparation for Singapore Night. Propose to split the future Love Japan Team to reach out to these youths.
- Ideal to have someone in the team to speak Japanese. It was a blessing to the team that Sarah could speak Japanese and she helped lightened the responsibilities of Yuko-san who was our main translator.

## **Prayers**

### **Pray for FCBC Sendai**

- To be a lighthouse in Sendai where more Japanese will come to know the Lord
- To be a blessing to the community
- To raise up a group of strong Japanese Christians

### **Pray for Ps C & C**

- Form their 12 by 2016
- God's protection to upon Ps C & C against any possible effects of radiation
- To know God even more intimately like never before as they serve in Japan
- Favour with the Japanese
- Supernatural ability to learn Japanese language

### **Pray for future Love Japan Team**

- To have good programmes and activities for the Japanese
- To encounter God as they serve