

Updates from Ray and Shelley Kwan - please add us to your safe senders list. Thank you!

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**Kwan**  
*Quarterly*



*Updates from Ray and Shelley Kwan*



**"Missions is very simple. There are only two ministries in missions. You're either called to go down into the well or you're called to hold the rope for those that go down. Either way, there should be scars on your hands. Where are your scars? What has it cost you to be a Christian?"**

- Paul Washer, missionary leader

*At Expo '70 Memorial Park in Osaka*

## Konnichiwa!

*Dear Family and Friends,*

Happy Valentine's Day! It feels like time has been flying since the last time we updated you. Our biggest news of 2019 is that, with the support of both our home church, Immanuel Bible Church, and Hatta Nishi Christ Church in Osaka, we are in the process of helping a native Japanese pastor and long-time friend plant a church in central Tokyo! The church's name is Megumi Bible Church and we plan to have our first service on April 7. God willing, we hope to secure a new visa and move to Tokyo as soon as possible.

Here are some more updates:

### TRAVELS AND TRANSITION

Last October, Shelley and Masanobu were able to spend some valuable time with family in Los Angeles. We hope to visit again as soon as possible with all three of us, but cannot make plans yet since our Tokyo move is still up in the air. We will keep you posted!

Our family made a couple of trips to the Tokyo area, once for the Japan



*Map from [www.japanunveiled.com](http://www.japanunveiled.com)*

## Highlights



In October, Shelley and Masanobu spent some time in Los Angeles to support Shelley's family in caregiving for her mom (who has dementia). Ray's family also visited!

Bible Academy (JBA) Proclaim Conference in November, and once for a pre-meeting for the church plant. We will be traveling to Tokyo again the last weekend in February. Please pray for safe travels, productive meetings, and most of all, that we would grow and trust the Lord wholeheartedly in this period of transition.

### **ENGLISH CLASSES**

Recently, a couple of young moms have begun participating in Ray's English outreach classes at Hatta Nishi. Please continue to pray for wisdom and clear communication for Ray as he leads the classes; faithfulness of the church members in planting and watering seeds of faith; and for the salvation of unbelievers who may attend the classes.

### **CHILDREN'S OUTREACH**

Hatta Nishi hosted several children's outreach events, including a Christmas party and a carnival game-type event. Praise God that some children from the neighborhood came, and one continues to come on Sundays. Please pray that through these gospel-sharing, relationship-building events, many would grow in faith.

### **MEGUMI BIBLE CHURCH IN TOKYO**

As we mentioned above, we are planning to help launch Megumi Bible Church in Tokyo on April 7! Ray will serve as an elder alongside Daisuke Okada. If you know anyone in the greater Tokyo area who



At the JBA Proclaim Conference in Tokyo with some Hatta Nishi members in November.



Sharing a meal and precious fellowship with some IBC friends who visited us in December.

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might be looking for a Christ-centered church that faithfully expounds the Word of God, please let us know! You can also check out our website at [www.megumibc.jp](http://www.megumibc.jp).

We are excited about this next chapter in our lives and appreciate your ongoing prayers and support of God's work in Japan!

By His grace,

*Ray, Shelley, and Masanobu Kwan*

#### PARTNERSHIP AND SUPPORT

We thank God for your partnership in making disciples in Japan!

For those interested in giving online or using a credit card, here's an easy way for you to do that on the IBC website: <http://www.ibcbible.org/missions/kwan-missions/>

We appreciate your support!

#### *Book Review*

## **Church Planting Is For Wimps: How God Uses Messed-up People to Plant Ordinary**



Children watched a gospel-sharing video at a Christmas outreach event at Hatta Nishi Christ Church.



# Churches That Do Extraordinary Things

Mike McKinley

*Reflections by Ray*

It is said that you should not judge a book by its cover. It should also be said that you should not judge a book by its title. From the title of this book, you might think that some joker who doesn't know what he's talking about wrote it. While it's true that the author is a bit of a joker, this is actually a very insightful book that I believe is worth reading.

## Who Wrote This?

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You may not have heard of him but Mike McKinley is a church planter sent out by Capitol Hill Baptist Church (pastored by Mark Dever who is also known for 9Marks). The reason he gave the book this title is not because he really believes that church planting is for wimps but because instead of planting a new church, he chose to revitalize a pre-existing church. He by no means thinks church planting is easy but between the two, revitalization is arguably the more difficult. This is because with church revitalization you are not starting from a clean slate as you would with a fresh church plant but probably with a broken system that needs to be revamped.

## Church Planting vs. Church Revitalization

Masanobu enjoyed a candlelight Christmas service during Mommy and Me class.

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Ray preached on Psalm 51 in December.

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Christmas dinner with Hatta Nishi friends.



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Also, before I go any further, I just want to clarify that we don't need to be overly technical with the terms "church planting" and "church revitalization." There are plenty of common points between the two and I don't think we need to make a sharp distinction between the two. It might even be better to think of church revitalization as a subset of church planting. The main difference is that with church revitalization you found some raw materials with which to start.

### **The Mission Hasn't Changed**

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While this book is mainly the story of how he revitalized a church in Sterling, Virginia, and not strictly a "how-to" kind of book, he gives plenty of helpful insights regarding starting a new church. One example that sticks out is the section where the author talks about scrapping the whole idea of vision and mission statements. McKinley says, "Look, if you don't know what you're supposed to be doing as a church planter, if you need to write out a statement in order to remember that your church is supposed to evangelize the lost and help Christians grow in Christ, friend, you shouldn't be a church planter." Now, I don't think it's wrong to have vision and mission statements (and neither does McKinley) but the point is, the vision and mission is what it's always been as Christ initially gave it when He gave the Great Commission. We shouldn't complicate it or possibly even distort it by adding our own ideas and nuances to it.

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#### **PRAYER REQUESTS:**

**1. Visa:** That we would have patience and trust the Lord wholeheartedly regarding our visa situation.

**2. Transition:** That we would make the most of the time we have left in Osaka even as we prepare for future ministry in Tokyo.

**3. Megumi Bible Church in Tokyo:** That through the faithful preaching of the Word, Christ would be glorified, His church in Japan would be edified, and those who do not yet know Christ would be saved.

**Did You Know?**

There are also many other helpful insights, principles, and perspectives found in this book. Some of these include: when the gospel is central to a ministry, the demographics will probably be diverse; don't plant unless you have at least another elder with you; don't assign shepherding duties to deacons; don't neglect your family; and spend more time on training new leaders than assimilating new people into the church. Also, as an added bonus, in the appendix, the author included the official memo that Mark Dever prepared for the CHBC elders regarding the church plant as well as a discipleship training syllabus.

### Final Thoughts

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If you are interested in learning about church planting and appreciate millennial humor, this would definitely be an enjoyable read for you. Like all the other 9Marks books, it is not overly technical or very long. You can probably read it in a day if you have a few spare hours. But, yes, as I already indicated in the beginning, I think this a good book and should be read by anyone who's considering church planting or is currently church planting.



The largest ferris wheel in Japan is in Osaka.

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The red on this traffic light doesn't

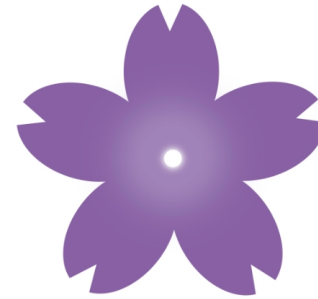
mean "stop," but rather tells us that we can turn right without fear of oncoming traffic.

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