

JOE CONGDON

Serving in Tokyo, Japan

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CAMPUS CRUSADE FOR CHRIST

Making Tokyo Our New Home

We're finally settled in here in Tokyo! Our three weeks here so far have been long and hectic, but I think all nine of us on our team are finally feeling like Tokyo is "home" now. Moving internationally can be hard and frustrating. Please praise the Lord with us, that He gave us the strength and patience to complete the process without killing each other. We're now set up to concentrate on ministry for the rest of the year.

I love my team! It is such a privilege to lead and serve with them all. I wish you could meet them, and I'm sure you'll be hearing a ton about them this year through my updates. I live in an apartment with the two other guys on the team, Kermit and Daniel. Daniel is



A shot of my team taken at our briefing in Colorado right before leaving for Tokyo. Back row: Kermit, Daniel, Emily & Jessica
Front row: Me, Kelly, Winnie, SooJin and Jody

from Orlando and is wild about studying Japanese. He can never be found without his vocab flash cards. Kermit is from Las Vegas and we were both excited to find out that we like some of the same Bible teachers. For fun we like to talk about the Word and watch Mark Driscoll sermons we've downloaded on our computers. They are both amazing guys and we all share the same passion for sharing Jesus with Japanese students. We are especially excited about starting a special series of outreach events aimed at specifically training college guys to be men of God.

Pictured Below (left) A shot of Kabukicho (right) A picture of me taken from a skyscraper in the business district of Tokyo

The Lord's Vision for the City

Our first few weeks in country were spent getting adjusted to the culture, meeting the Japanese Crusade (JCCC) staff, and cultivating our vision for the hundreds of thousands of college students here in Tokyo. I was really loved shepherding our team with Jessica during this time and helping them navigate through city life here. One morning we ventured up one of the hundreds of skyscrapers here to get a full view of the city. It was amazing to see the never-ending, sprawling buildings, streets, people and trains. We prayed over the city- that in time it would be known as a place close to the Lord's heart.

Last Saturday night we took our team to Kabukicho, a



party district of the city for many college students. We each spent over an hour alone in the streets observing students in their weekend routine. God spoke to us about the many distractions the Enemy has placed in this city that keep the students far from God. We also observed many aspects of the culture, like their desire to fellowship, that we hope to embrace and use in ministry.



Please pray that:

- We'd be bold and clear in sharing our faith at Waseda and that we'd meet future student leaders.
- I'd find a good church here in Tokyo.
- God would show us how to expand our ministry in the future.
- God would give us an exciting, new idea for outreach at Waseda next month!

Beginning Our Ministry at Waseda University

We were able to get our ministry into full swing last week, which means we started our regular staff meetings and we also began going to the Waseda University campus.

We are in the process of “decoding” the campus, doing research, talking to students, sharing our faith, and learning about the history of the school, so that we can better minister to them this year. It was awesome to finally get to meet with the students. As we went out in pairs, we met many students and shared the Gospel



A Japanese man taking praying at a Shinto shrine near Waseda.

with over twenty of them! I plan on meeting up with one guy, Yuta, this week who seemed interested in knowing Jesus. He grew up going to church with his mom, but stopped when he left for college. He said he was interested in learning more about why going to church doesn't necessarily mean that you know

Jesus. Please pray that he would be available to meet and that the Holy Spirit would speak Truth through me when I tell him how exciting it is to know the Lord.

We will be stepping out in faith in November with a yet-to-be determined outreach event. Please pray that the Lord would give us a glimpse of His creativity and beauty as we brainstorm for ideas this week. Please pray that the Lord's hand would be with us and that a great number of people would believe and turn to the Lord. (Acts 11:21)

Personal News

On a personal note, it is a great joy for me to be back in Tokyo. It has been amazing to be able to see many of my old friends and go to my favorite places in the city again. When I was an exchange student here in Tokyo I spent a lot of my time playing guitar in a band with some of my Japanese friends. Last Friday I was able to practice with my old band. It was so fun to play with them again! But even cooler was the opportunity that I had to share the Gospel with my friends, Rikiya, Yusuke, and Nozomi after practice! It was the first time I had ever given my testimony in Japanese. They asked me why I was so excited about my faith and it was a perfect chance to tell them how cool Jesus is and about how he be-

came sin so that we don't have to die for ours. They were shocked to hear the truth about Christ. Please pray that I will have many opportunities to share my life and faith with them as we play music together this year.

It grieves me to tell you about my grandfather, Papa Vic, whose health is quickly growing worse. It is looking like he may not be with us much longer. Please pray that my family (my mom, her mother and sisters especially) would be comforted in this hard time. It is hard for me to be here in Tokyo during this trial.

It is an honor to be serving here with you all in Tokyo. Thanks so much for your prayers and support.

Joe



Here is a shot of one of our average STINT staff team meetings in our apartment kitchen. It's a bit cramped (*Japanese Style*), but just the right size for all of us to meet, plan, study and pray!

I'd love to hear from you!

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