

Elective Report from Cambodia and Japan

Background

My name is Sabrina and I am a final-year dental student at the University of Dundee. With the support from CDF, I was able to do my dental elective in Cambodia and Japan over the summer. I spent my first week in Phnom Penh, Cambodia, where I volunteered with a Christian non-profit organisation, One-2-One, to provide dental service in a prison. I then spent two weeks in Japan doing my elective, where I had my first experience attending a Japanese church service at Praise Community Church (PCC) in Sendai.

Where it all began

I want to go back to the basics of how I came to be who I am and where God is calling me. Before I started dental school, I always knew that an elective programme would be a great opportunity to have a taste of what a Christian dental mission trip is like. I believe that God has always been preparing me for something bigger than myself - to actively participate in His plans and expand His kingdom by sharing the gospel through the act of service, with dentistry as an entry point. On the other hand, knowing that only 1% of the Japanese population identified themselves as Christians, I wanted to visit this country again to explore the work that God has been doing there.

Prison Dental Service in Cambodia

Without a doubt, serving in a rural prison is a new experience for me. Since there was a language barrier between myself and the patients, the local dentist and students carried the majority of the communication load while I concentrated on completing the treatments. This has made me realise how much I appreciate soft skills as a clinician. If I have to be honest with you, there were multiple times when I struggled with feeling inadequate because of how hard it was to maintain high-quality dental care when



Group photo with the dental team in Cambodia

the resources were few and the working environment was not ideal. Looking back, I found myself falling into the prideful trap of trying to do things right with my own strength. Slowly, it became a pressure that I had to maintain, and it felt like I was operating to be loved and accepted rather than operating from already being loved and accepted, where God has already done so by sending Jesus Christ on the cross. Now whenever I feel inadequate or weak, I know where to seek help because, as the Lord states, "My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness." (2 Corinthians 12:9).

Christianity in Japan

I spent 2 weeks doing a hospital attachment in Japan and I attended a Sunday service at PCC in the meantime. I was lucky enough to join them for a potluck-style meal after church. Since PCC is a bilingual church, I was able to communicate with some of the locals there and hear them share about their testimonies and their lives living as Christians in Japan. During my time there, I realised that hopelessness is a major issue that Japanese people of all ages and backgrounds struggle with. Many are chasing for worldly success but often

struggle with the feeling of emptiness that only God can solve. Interestingly, the God of the Bible often does not call the equipped but equips the called. He calls those who have a willing heart to make themselves available to Him, not based on their achievements and qualifications as the world does. As Jesus says, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners." (Mark 2:17). In fact, none of us are righteous before God and no one can measure up to God's standards. Thanks be to God that His grace is our



Church service at PCC

hope and we don't have to earn it because it has been given freely through Jesus.

Prayers for One-2-One and Praise Community Church

One of the Bible verses that I really like is from Ephesians 3:17-19 — “I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit... May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.” I keep forgetting that God is sovereign and He has always been preparing me in advance to do His works. By the grace of God, we will be made complete according to His will. We are like “jars of clay” - simple and unimpressive. But when we submit our lives to God, we become containers that demonstrate His love and grace to those around us.

Praise God for all that One-2-One and PCC do to serve and display the love of Christ to their local community. Pray for the One-2-One team as well as for the people that



Last dinner with the students and the staff in One-2-One

they are serving to continue receiving revelations of God's truth and grace. Pray also for PCC for their ministry and financial challenges as they expand their community, that God will supply their needs accordingly.

I want to express my gratitude to everyone at CDF who has supported me on this journey, be it in prayers or with financial support. I do not know what the

future holds for me regarding dental mission, but I do know who holds the future. May I continue to live out my time as a foreigner here in reverent fear and be missional wherever God has placed me.

Sabrina Wong

Final Year Dental Student,
University of Dundee

Country Focus: Cambodia

Spiritual darkness persists in Cambodia, from the many spirit shrines, the powerful grip of Buddhism that opposes Truth, and the widespread loss of morals.

Only prayer will lift it. The enemy of souls makes people suffer under terrible abuses and oppressive poverty. The drug

and sex trades hold power over many people. Criminals exploit the high number of unprotected children and young people. Land grabs by people with wealth and power enrich a few at the expense of the majority. Pray for the light of the gospel to shine on individual lives and all social structures in Cambodia. Christians

can make a difference in the areas of justice, rehabilitation, orphanages, healthcare, and development. Cambodia also needs outside help with projects in agriculture, fisheries, water management, and education

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Country Focus: Japan

Japan faces many crises. Even its leaders called it “a superpower without a moral compass”. Many lack hope or confidence in the future.

Young people struggle the most, in particular with problems such as a suicide epidemic (over 30,000/year),

mistreatment by peers, and teenage prostitution. High suicide and divorce rates in other age groups confirm the crisis. The constant threats of earthquakes, economic decline, and social isolation leave many people open to spiritual matters. The government

alone cannot solve Japan's social problems. This gives the Church a chance to engage with society. Pray that the Church might become prominent in Japan through ministries of compassion, kindness, and love.

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