

PIONEERS

FUKUOKA TEAM

Skinny Team Handbook (v4.0, 5/2020)



Fukuoka is the largest city on the southernmost main island of Kyushu, and is currently the fastest growing city in all of Japan.

With a population of over 1.6 million, Fukuoka's influence in Asia continues to grow, being home to many universities and attracting students from all over the world. Japan is largely secular by lifestyle, and Buddhist and Shinto by tradition. Out of 126 million people, 0.4% are professing Christian believers.

There are about 2000 missionaries in Japan: 50% of those are in the Tokyo area, and 20% of the total is involved in church planting. Kyushu, where Fukuoka is located, has 200 missionaries working among 13 million people.

We started church planting in Fukuoka for its logistical and training advantages. Fukuoka has many language schools, and great public transportation. Our hope is to launch teams from here into the remaining Kyushu prefectures, some of the least-reached areas of Japan. Because we have recently completed our church planting partnership here in Fukuoka, we are now prayerfully seeking where to go next in Kyushu. Our plan is to relocate in April 2021.

1. Mission & Vision

The Fukuoka Team exists to multiply healthy churches throughout Kyushu by nurturing disciples and new church planting teams.

1.1 Multiplying Disciples.

Jesus taught that all of God's commands from the Old Testament can be summarized in these two things: Love God and love people. He also commanded his followers to make disciples and teach them to obey all that He commanded. Therefore, we want to make—and be—followers of Jesus who love God, love people, and are equipped to make more disciples.

1.2 Multiplying Churches.

We believe that quality discipleship will naturally result in vibrant, gospel-transformed communities that gather regularly as churches. Our goal is to leave behind healthy churches. This includes pastoral leadership, a biblical structure that includes elders and deacons/deaconesses, a culture that affirms each believer's spiritual gifts in church ministry and the local community, a local church planting effort of its own, and an active role in supporting and sending out Japanese missionaries who serve cross-culturally.

1.3 Multiplying Teams.

We hope to send out 7 new church planting teams, one for each of the remaining 7 Kyushu prefectures. These teams will be the first to enter a prefecture before additional teams arrive, and with the help of the Fukuoka Team and Japan Area, its goal will be to search for strategic cities within that prefecture, find new church planting partner possibilities, and recruit new teams once it has settled. With the Japan Area Team focused on mobilization and training, our focus will be on finding and developing partnerships as well as researching and promoting new potential areas.

1.4 What We Do, in One Simple Sentence

We share the Gospel with our community and mentor those who believe to become fruitful followers of Jesus.

2. Team Values

In addition to the Pioneers Core Values, below are a few values that define our team's unique personality—Aspirational Values, Permission-to-Play Values, and Accidental Values. We'll explain each one as we go.

2.1 Aspirational Values

These are characteristics our team wants to have, wishes it already had, and believes it must develop in

order to maximize its success. They are not natural or inherent, which is why they must be purposefully inserted into our team's culture.

- **Open House:** It's natural for us to build walls, but we recognize that forming missional communities requires hospitality and living life together.
- **Least Reached:** Some people are "easier" to reach than others, but we want to focus on areas that are less reached, and people that churches have a hard time connecting with.
- **Vulnerable Communication:** Although we prefer to guard ourselves, we believe that being transparent and honest is always a good thing, no matter who you're talking with.
- **Team Interdependence:** While it feels good to be self-reliant, we want to rely on, spend time with, be accountable to, and learn from one another.

2.2 Permission-to-Play Values

These values are the minimum behavioral standards that are required on our team. They are extremely important, but don't serve to clearly define or differentiate our team from any other.

- **Teach a Man to Fish:** We believe in methods that empower others. Like a fisherman teaching another person to fish, we want to produce disciples and churches that can mature even when we're not around and take what they've learned into their families, relationships and communities.
- **Try that Octopus and Smile:** We believe in contextualization. We love the people around us by embracing their language and culture, trying things that are important to them, and valuing things they value—even if eating an 8-legged sea monster might be scary at first.
- **Mom's Homemade Yogurt:** We believe in multiplication methods. We desire to make disciples that make more disciples, plant churches that plant more churches, and send teams that send out more teams. Like how mom makes yogurt, we stay delicious when we are scooped out for the next batch of yogurt...and go bad when we aren't.
- **All Ears:** We believe in perpetual learning and adapting. We want to always have our ears to the ground, to never be set on one method or strategy, and to have open ears to God and others. From mentors and coaches to pastors and leaders, we seek partnerships that help everyone grow as we listen to one another.

3. Our Plan for Success

With all of the above values as a foundation, we have divided our strategy into three simple sentences; They help us make purposeful and intentional decisions that align with our goal—and filter out the ones that don't. In other words, they are our way of exercising stewardship over the opportunities God has given us. While we spent a lot of time writing this Team Handbook, *"The mind of man plans his way, but the Lord directs his steps"* (Pr. 16:9, ESV). So as you read through our strategies below, know that we hold our plans lightly and ultimately believe that we are most successful when we are most obedient to God.

3.1 We abide in God

Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing (Jn. 15:5,

ESV). Our ability to succeed—and ultimately please God—is rooted in how we abide in Him.

“Instead of asserting ourselves, we crucify ourselves. Instead of imagining all the things we can accomplish, we ask God to do what only he can accomplish. Yes, we work, we plan, we organize, and we create, but we do it all while we fast, while we pray, and while we constantly confess our need for the provision of God. Instead of dependence on ourselves, we express radical desperation for the power of his Spirit, and we trust that Jesus stands ready to give us everything we ask for so that he might make much of our Father in the world.” (Platt, Radical ch3)

Examples of how we live this out:

- We meditate on and obey (shema) God’s Word and bring everything to him in prayer.
- We rely on him for all of our needs to accomplish the mission he has given us.
- We prioritize God’s Word above any other authority, God’s Kingdom above any other culture, and God’s plans above the wisdom of man.

3.2 We make opportunities for evangelism through building relationships in our community.

We were ready to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you had become very dear to us (1 Thess. 2:8, ESV).

“We must realize that since all our social problems stem from alienation from God (Gen. 3:1-17), the most radical and loving thing you can do for a person is to see him or her reconciled to God.” (Keller, The Prodigal Prophet, p196)

Examples of how we live this out:

- We invest in personal relationships, taking the gospel to where we live, work, and play.
- We encourage those we disciple to make disciples in their own circles.
- We endeavor to understand the needs specific to our community and work toward meeting them.
- We live with transparency, readily inviting others into our lives and homes to show what a life with Christ is like.

3.3 Equipping ourselves and others with simple, reproducible, and contextualized discipleship methods.

What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also (2 Tim. 2:2, ESV).

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and the teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ (Ephesians 4:11-12, ESV)

“Your goal should be to train up other followers of Jesus who are even more committed, talented, and equipped than you are.” (Chan, Multiply, p15)

Examples of how we live this out:

- We adapt simple CPM/DMM methods and principles to our context.
- We try to avoid ministries that cannot be reproduced by the people around us.
- We seek ministries that people can easily join in, enjoy, and add as a part of their daily lives
- We move quickly into coaching roles, walking alongside Japanese believers as they live out their faith
- We aim for JLPT N2 Japanese proficiency and study Japanese culture.
- We organize short term mission trips and plan Edge and Venture programs.

4. Our Current Team Members



Brian (TL), Nozomi, Shiemi, and Miori Tom

I'm from foggy San Francisco. I took my first trip to Japan through Edge in 2007, came back in 2010 through Venture to Fukuoka, and joined Long Term starting in 2011. I partnered with Fukuoka Bible Church from 2013 to 2020. Nozomi is from Miyazaki. She moved to Fukuoka to work at a Christian junior high school called Seinan. Brian and Nozomi met at Fukuoka Bible Church, got to know each other on the worship team, and got married in 2013. Shiemi was born in 2015, and Miori in 2017.



Nick Ebner

I grew up in Austin, Texas, where we live by the mottos "Everything's bigger in Texas" and "Keep Austin Weird"! I studied Industrial Engineering at Texas A&M University and worked in the oil industry for a few years before feeling that God was calling me to Japan. I joined the Pioneers Japan Launch team in 2017, and after graduating at the end of 2019 I joined the Fukuoka team. I want to tell every person I can about the good news of the Gospel, to care for those who are neglected or rejected, and to see every believer become more like Jesus every day.



Sean Cryan

I'm from a small town in Southern New Jersey where we love the simple things in life: cheesesteaks and rooting for the Eagles. Although I started in the scientific research field, God brought me to Japan for the first time in 2013, and again a year later to Yamaguchi. God was calling me out of science and into His fields of harvest here in Japan. I enjoy connecting with people through the joys that God gives us in our daily lives, such as hobbies, sports, and food. I'm praying that the forgiveness, joy, and grace that only God offers become what the believers in this country are known for; and that those very same qualities become a transformative blessing for this nation.

5. Security

Japan is a very safe place to live. However, natural disasters such as earthquakes and typhoons, and our near proximity to North Korea require us to consider safety protocol. Please refer to our team's [RACP \(Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning\) document](#). We review the RACP as a team every time a new member joins us, and once a year in the spring in accordance with Pioneers protocol.

6. Before Joining Us

We recommend anyone wanting to join our team to first go through the 2-year Launch training program. For more info, see pioneersjapan.org/launch. We'll schedule an interview after your graduation from the program. Support schedules, prerequisites, and acceptance into the Launch program are all through communication with the Launch Team.

7. Opportunities: Edge, Venture, Long Term

- **Church planters:** Those with a passion and gift for evangelism and discipleship.
- **People magnets:** Outgoing, friendly people with a heart for campus ministry and community relationships.
- **Short-term (Edge/Venture) English teachers:** Some experience teaching foreigners is helpful.
- **Land surveyors:** People interested in finding and researching potential spots for new church plants.
- **Leaders:** Those who want to start and lead new teams into unreached areas of Kyushu.