

Esakis in Osaka

“Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;” Psalm 130:1



Already, but not yet.

Burying Pain is a Way to Survive
but Not a Way to Grow

Jeffrey Munroe's new book, Reading Buechner, has been encouraging for us. Munroe says, *Frederick Buechner reframes the parable in Matthew 25 to suggest it could be about pain and not money. The third servant takes what he is given and buries it: "I was afraid." We, all of us, have good reason to be afraid...So we dig the hole in the ground, in ourselves or in our busyness. When we bury pain we bury all manner of things, including joy. Pain is universal, and giving ourselves permission to feel and acknowledge pain is liberating. Our stories of pain are among the most intimate gifts we can give each other.*

“Soft” Emergency Measures End in Osaka

On April 7, Japan adopted Emergency Measures. One factor that shook the country was when a well-loved comedian, Ken Shimura, died of Covid19 on March 29. Everyone felt they knew him. The Tokyo Mayor pleaded in his name to initiate measures.

The Emergency Measures were met with relief, but remained mostly voluntary. Eventually, train and subway travel dropped by 70%, and business and restaurant activity slowed.

The results have been largely successful to contain deaths, and to keep the health system from being overwhelmed.

The country was not prepared to do public schools online, and businesses scrambled but succeeded in making online work viable.

Now things are beginning to cautiously open up.

Praise:

- Ministry opportunities grew with online preaching. Discussion groups afterward included 40 or more, broken into groups with many more men participating,
- Koji is able to coach nine church planters during this difficult season.
- Requests for trained counselors have risen; praise that we have a good Japanese counselor to recommend.

Pray:

- That work culture would change in Japan.
- Best ways to manage the fatigue that comes with ministry in a new season.
- That connection with old friends can naturally continue.

Online Preaching

We are preaching once a month as a ministry partner with Mustard Seed Christ Church Osaka. Instead of reaching 100 people on a Sunday, Facebook and youtube add many hundreds more viewers, and 70% of the viewers are within Japan!



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Worship Service

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