

## Juan Esteban Vasquez's Missionary Project to Japan

Thank you for your interest in my mission project. This document summarizes the entire project, but you can find all the detailed information on my website: <https://www.juan4japan.com>

**Calling:** Why is God sending me to Japan? It's a long story, so here's a brief summary. Japanese culture has fascinated me since I was a teenager, and I've wanted to experience it firsthand for many years. I believe I came to know God through art and through suffering, and now that I've received this calling, I realize that much of the art that led me to God is Japanese art. During my year as a missionary in England, I realized that I've already invested thousands of hours in learning about Japanese culture through its art, and I've noticed that many Japanese people, even without formal Christian knowledge, are searching for God. In England, I had the honor of meeting many Japanese and East Asians in general, and I was able to experience their culture and their search for God first hand. A Japanese student who had never read the Bible before told me this after reading the parable of the prodigal son: "I realize that Christianity has a lot to do with forgiveness, and in Japan, forgiveness doesn't exist. If someone does something wrong, they must be punished and have no chance to restart their life." This was one of many meaningful interactions where I learned more from them than they learned from me. I learned that their value comes from their accomplishments and work, rest is unthinkable, and things like disinheriting children still happen. I had the honor of working with a local church in England to create a Bible study for international students, and several students who had never read the Bible participated regularly. We had many meaningful conversations about how their Japanese culture (among others) differed from Christianity. This was a valuable time learning how to communicate the gospel with such different cultures. Throughout my year in England, I realized that God had been preparing me my whole life for the mission in Japan and that my participation in various ministries since adolescence had trained me in many ways for this very complex mission. Finally, since this calling became clear to me, I have been investing my time in preparing for the mission. I have already learned about 250 hours of Japanese. Also, I have contacted several missionaries and people with experience in ministry in Japan. I have also had the opportunity to meet multiple times with Japanese people who converted to Christianity when they were young, with newly converted Japanese people, and even with non-Christian Japanese people, to whom I have asked all kinds of questions about beliefs, cultures, perspectives, etc. All of this has helped me prepare for the mission.

### **Justification:**

- Less than 0.5% of the Japanese population is Christian. The church and Christianity are very diluted there.
- The church is currently declining. There are fewer and fewer members. Almost all churches in Japan are small and lack a stable pastoral team.
- Japan, in general, is a society that appears good on the surface, but it faces several very serious social problems, such as an epidemic of loneliness, one of the highest suicide rates in the world, and a highly toxic and exploitative work culture. People are valued for their work and success, and forgiveness is nonexistent.
- 99% of all missionaries go to "already reached" areas, and churches report more stolen offerings than the ones sent to missions in unreached areas. In other words,

this mission, the general mission in Japan, and financial support are desperately needed.

**General Objective:** To help Reaching Japan grow its church and plant more churches in the city of Nagoya.

**Specific Objectives:**

- To learn Japanese to the point of being able to speak easily with locals.
- To gain a deep and personal understanding of the culture.
- To work in the general ministry of the church. Help plant more churches in the city of Nagoya.
- Help Reaching Japan create a team of missionaries to work on long-term church and ministry planning.

**Project Timeline:**

- Initial mission time: 2 years, meaning it is a short-term mission, but the intention is to make it a long-term one.
- Periods starting in April (these periods are tentative):
  - Four months for consolidation: this includes creating a support team in my local church, promotion, and mobilization.
  - In July, move to Japan.
  - For one to one and a half years, I will study Japanese at an academy until I achieve fluency and effective communication with locals.
  - From the beginning, I will be integrating into the local church and assisting with the ministry in general.
  - In addition, we will be working to establish a network of churches and Christian ministries to organize the church throughout Japan.
  - Once I become fluent in the language, I will dedicate myself fully to the church and ministry in general, including planting churches in Nagoya and helping Reaching Japan build a team of missionaries and local Christians for this purpose.

**Accountability:** It is very important for me to keep my local church and supporters informed about my daily activities in the mission and what is being done, so I will be posting monthly updates and prayer requests, in addition to working with a supervisor from Reaching Japan in Japan.

**Costs:** The project costs were determined with the help of Reaching Japan, who are familiar with the economic realities of Nagoya and the ministry in Japan. The costs are broken down as follows:

- Initial costs: \$5,650. This includes airfare and visa, real estate agent fees and deposit, and furnishing the apartment.
- Monthly costs: \$2,700. This includes all usual expenses, including Japanese health insurance, life insurance, rent, Japanese language classes, and an emergency fund.
- All costs, fund management, and accountability are detailed on my website: <https://www.juan4japan.com/quiero-apoyar> I am committed to publishing monthly income and expenses for transparency with supporters.

**Funds raised:**

- To date, \$787 has been raised in one-time donations, and \$530 is currently coming in monthly. The total I have received from both types of donations is \$1,922.
- In addition, several individuals and churches that have not yet begun donating but have already indicated their intended monthly donation amounts. Including those, I would have \$830/month, and I estimate an additional \$270/month from those who haven't yet expressed their donation amount.
- To raise funds, I've been requesting monthly donations, but one-time donations are also welcome. I always add that people can start donating right away because I need a couple months' worth of donations to cover initial expenses.
- I'm currently in discussions with the missions department of the Alliance of God and the Church of God at the national level. Additionally, the organization Agua Viva, with which I volunteered in my teens, has offered to present my project to all their supporters. From these organizations and various other contacts, I hope to secure a significant amount of the necessary funds.

**My Local Church:** My local church is Levi Iñaquito, which will be the official representative when I go to Japan. Here, I'm also building a support team to maintain the connection between church members and my mission in Japan. I joined Levi about eight years ago and participated in C3 (university students group) leadership team for several years.