

Site Report: Sasebo, Japan

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Introduction: Sasebo is located in Nagasaki which is located in southern Japan. The city has a population of approximately 260,000. The area is famed for its scenic beauty, including mountains, beaches, coastal islands and rolling hills. Its primary mission is to provide logistical support to the 7th Fleet. The 7th Fleet continues to ensure peace and security in the Pacific region.

Need: Sasebo needs a Presbyterian and Reformed Church to serve the American Military community. The American military consists of approximately 6,000 military personnel. When family members and civilians are included, the population swells to over 10,000 Americans in need of spiritual support. These service members are highly trained and motivated professionals. Spiritually, the Sasebo community is served by chaplains in a highly pluralistic environment. There is an Independent Baptist Church off base.

Project Description: A church planter is needed to establish a Presbyterian and Reformed witness in the Sasebo area. This church will be primarily directed at the American military community. This is a pioneering effort. Funding for the work will be initially borne by the sending presbytery that adopts this location. Churches outside the geographical bounds of the sending presbytery could also partner in this effort to expand the Kingdom of God and His Church. The church planter could also participate in raising funds for the effort. Becoming self-supporting will be a bit more challenging because of a smaller target population. The Church planter could implement an ongoing support effort by getting commitments from those who rotate through the church to continue to support the work when they move on to new locations. The church planter should be a self-starter. He must be willing to work hard. He should be a good expositor of the Word of God and he should have a heart to reach the lost with the good news of Christ. He should be a disciple maker. A man of strong faith and tender of heart is needed in this ministry. A familiarity with the military culture would be helpful, but not essential. A brief training period could be provided for a man without military experience so as to get him up to speed on the culture of the military. He should understand that the military community is a highly mobile entity. It moves soldiers and their family members quite often. This presents challenges and opportunities for the church planter. Challenges because of the loss of members on a regular basis as they move on and opportunities because there is a constant influx of new people for ministry. The pastor, during the course of his ministry, will literally impact thousands of lives with the Gospel. Additionally, the church planter must be prepared to live and work in an environment where there are few like-minded, if any, pastors around him.

Conclusion: The military community is a wonderful community that could benefit greatly from a doctrines of grace ministry. In addition to the opportunities for life changing ministry, the minister and his family in their free time, can explore a great culture and beautiful country.