

Site Report: Yokota Air Base Japan

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Introduction: Yokota Air Base is a United States Air Base, located near the city of Fussa and in the suburbs of Tokyo, Japan. The base serves as the headquarters for the United States Forces, Japan. The base houses 14,000 personnel.

Need: The Yokota military base needs a Presbyterian and Reformed Church. In addition to the 14,000 personnel on base there are civilians and family members of the military personnel that reside in the area. Thus the overall number would be over 20,000 Americans in the area. These airmen are highly trained and motivated professionals. Spiritually, the community is served by chaplains in a highly pluralistic environment. There are a few Baptist churches of base that serve the community. A Presbyterian and Reformed Church can best serve this military community.

Project Description: A Church planter is needed to establish a Presbyterian and Reformed Church in the Yokota area. This church would be primarily directed at the American military community, but it could become international with so many English speakers in Japan, along with the business and diplomatic communities that live and serve in that area of Japan. 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. The church planter could also participate in raising funds for the work. Our experience, though limited to two church plants thus far, indicates that the work could in a reasonably short period of time become self-supporting. The Church planter must be a self-starter. He must be willing to work hard in his vocation. He should be a good expositor of the Word of God and have a heart for reaching the lost with the good news of Christ. He should be a disciple maker. A man strong in the faith and tender in heart is needed for this ministry. A familiarity with the military culture would be helpful, but not absolutely 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 the military is a highly mobile entity. It moves soldiers and their family members quite often. This presents challenges and opportunities. Challenges involved continuity of the work and the opportunities are that over the course of the pastor's ministry he 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 the 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 learn about the history of the people of Japan.