

June 14, 2004

Dear Friend,

Rochelle and I love and appreciate you so much as our partners in helping the Japanese hear the good news of Jesus! We could not be here to share in God's harvest without you! Thank you so much.

I want to share this report with you of what God has done through The Passion of the Christ, Mel Gibson's film, here in Japan. It is exciting to think that over 1,000,000 Japanese have seen a movie about Jesus Christ! (Since May 1, over 170 theaters all over Japan and \$12 million gross boxoffice!) Praise God!

We asked you to be praying that Japanese churches would organize to use the film for evangelism. I can't say fully how many did, but it is clear that many churches used the film well by organizing groups to go see the film, or helping get tickets into the hands of their interested seekers, so that people did view the film and then believe.

For example:

The pastor at Ibaraki Church near Osaka said that when their church group went, one young man who was not a believer when he went, believed on Jesus during the movie. He has been coming to church faithfully since then. PTL!

We also asked you to pray for the websites. After the first week of the showings Yahoo Japan picked up our site as one of their "hot pics" for the week, which introduced it to many more people. We also made it into their directory for the film, where there were 3 sites, ours, the official Japanese film site, and a "read before you see" site done by a Japanese pastor we have worked with on Jesus film translations, who has a wonderful team of young people working with him. The official Japanese film site listed both of our sites as top links on their site as well, so perhaps most of the people who searched for Passion film sites in Japanese had a strong likelihood of visiting our sites.

Our site, [passionforum.jp](http://passionforum.jp), was designed to help create a public community around the film and people's responses. So the central focus is a BBS, or bulletin board, where people can freely leave their comments and reactions to the film, and write comments to those people leaving their thoughts too. Since April 25 there have been over 36,000 visitors viewing our site, and over 1000 comments posted to the BBS. Christians and non-Cns both are leaving lots of messages, many of them quite well written, and thousands are reading them! Many Christians have been using the BBS and finding interested non-Christians to share with, mostly in a Q & A format. This is developing an interesting community of people who are checking in every day, so that even though the film has finished showing in most of the theaters, there are still 400 visitors to the site each day! Also, through an internet and postcard promotion, over 80 people have requested a special priced Jesus DVD or video.

Between New Life League, Word of Life/Every Home for Christ, and Japan Campus Crusade for Christ, over 500,000 tracts have been distributed, mostly targetted to those who are visiting theaters, or church related outreaches.

### Responses to Passion:

One woman on the BBS wrote that Passion had given her confidence to ask forgiveness of someone she had offended rudely 4 years before. She could not imagine herself doing this thing, so it seemed a miracle to her.

One man's son went to see the film and this led him to repent of his self-centered lifestyle and return to the Lord and restore his relationship with his father!

One person saw a preview showing and went to church, and asked for baptism already.

Thank you so much for your prayers for us and this special outreach in Japan. The impact will go on for a long while I think, and we will continue to use our connections and work with those responding to see more fruit through this, so please continue to pray for impact!

In His love,

Steve, Rochelle, Andy, Ben, Melissa and Joshua

P.S. Andy is off for two weeks here in June to work with Hi-BA's (a high school ministry) Gospel Teams mission trip. He is travelling down to the Osaka area and also in the Tokyo area, helping with rally evangelism for Japanese high schoolers, near a different high school every day. We are excited and pleased for him! PTL!

A newsy update on the Passion Outreaches in Japan.

When Jesus film Orlando originally contacted me about the Passion, I wondered how we could cope!

First person to come to mind was Keiko Okano, to meet the request for someone to supervise the subtitles with the Japanese distributor of The Passion of the Christ film, Nippon Herald Films.

Keiko was willing, and since she works in Arts and Entertainers ministry, it seemed good for contacts for her.

Now her name shows on screens all over Japan as the subtitles supervisor.

She made some good connections in the Nippon Herald Films company.

Through those connections she later helped organize the preview showing for Christian leaders, held on Mar 18th. At that showing there were about 50 leaders from many missions and Catholic church and Protestant denominations both evangelical and liberal. Nippon Herald people were worried that so many different religious groups might start fighting in the theater! But at the end we all were led in prayer for the film and its success in Japan.

Later Keiko was asked for an interview by a weekly newsmagazine in Japan, Sunday Mainichi. She was able to share a lot of the gospel in the parts of the article that related to her.

On May 1 the film opened in Japan, and Keiko was helping Tim Chey, an Indie Christian film director, who was in Japan doing filming for parts of a documentary on the worldwide impact of the Passion film. Keiko helped translate as he interviewed the people at the flagship theater in downtown Tokyo, Shinjuku's Takashimaya Teatoru Times Square. They interviewed Kazu and myself, as well as many viewers. Tim was also briefly featured in a morning news program on Fuji TV on May 5. The news program took up only his comment that Mel Gibson would go to Iraq to show his film to soldiers, but the commentators doubted the helpfulness of that.

May 1st was a Saturday, a 1000 yen only ticket day, and a Golden Week holiday in Japan. No other film was competing to open on this day in Japan. Almost all of the 150 theaters showing the film nationwide on this day reported sold out showings for the day. Most of them continued to have sold out showings through the end of Golden Week on May 5. The flagship theater had never before given out number cards for helping organize the people trying to get tickets, so this is a historically strong film for them! They have placed our Jesus DVDs and videos there for sale at special pricing in the small shop along with Bibles and booklets about the Passion for sale to theater-goers. They and other theaters have taken our Passion Postcards and are handing them out to thousands of theater goers. We are still working on relationships to more theaters for that purpose.

Passion opened as the number 2 film in Japan for the weekend. Nippon Herald is very pleased, and with some areas of the country opening the film during June, they expect the film will be showing in Japan into July, with over 1 million total viewers. PTL!

There seems to be basically 2 sides of the responses, those who were moved by the film, which includes most all of the Christians seeing it, but many others. People really cry a lot in the theaters, and typically sit through the credits just sort of recovering from the impact of the film. There are also those who dislike the film for its violence, one calling it a Christ themed slasher film. Many are commenting on the difficulty for Japanese of understanding the background of the film. This leads many to want to read some parts of the bible to find out what the story was about.

Our campus ministry is working through a plan that targets 20 universities, and 20 students at each of those universities to receive free tickets through surveying. Those surveyed have a chance at the ticket drawing, which happens at a Passion Lunch, held in or near their university. The students are interviewed to try and make sure they will actually use the ticket to see the Passion, and asked to return to a later Passion lunch to share their comments. They will be asked if they want to be in a discussion group on the Passion. We have the Japanese version of a 6 session bible study on the characters of the film available as a pdf file online in our outreach info site [www.japanccc.org/passion](http://www.japanccc.org/passion)

We are still hoping to get the official permission from Icon for images to make this into a booklet, and to make a postcard tract for use at the theaters.

Many Christian groups organized tract distributions at theaters or in neighborhoods, using tracts by our partners such as New Life League or Word of Life Press/Every Home for Christ. Many also helped hand out film promotion flyers provided by the Nippon Herald films.

There is a growing excitement in the Christian community now that people are getting to see the film. Pray that these may be very fruitful days in the time we have for this project!

Later update as of May 12, 13300 people have visited the site with over 200 messages left by many people.

The long-time top J-pop music group SMAP promoted the film on their Saturday May 8 TV show, and many fans will now go to see the film because of their enthusiastic interest in it.

Pray for us to be able to follow up on any specific responses we get, and for the 40 people average a day who are checking out the Jesus film site [www.jesuseiga.com](http://www.jesuseiga.com) and the gospel presentation there, too.

Blessings,

Steve Clark