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TCKs

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Encouraging, inspiring, and equipping
the members of the JEMA community

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About the Cover

Third Culture Kids has been a way of describing children of missionaries (and other cross-cultural workers) since the 1950s.

“A Third Culture Kid (TCK) is a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside the parents’ culture. The TCK builds relationships to all of the cultures, while not having full ownership in any. Although elements from each culture are assimilated into the TCK’s life experience, the sense of belonging is in relationship to others of similar background.” David C. Pollock and Ruth E. Van Reken (Intercultural Press, Inc., 1999) *The Third Culture Kid Experience, Growing Up Among Worlds*, 19.

Ruth Van Reken and Paulette Bethel have more recently begun using a different term: Cross Cultural Kids. “A Cross-Cultural Kid (CCK) is a person who has lived in—or meaningfully interacted with—two or more cultural environments for a significant period of time during developmental years.” TCK Life. Accessed May 29, 2013. <http://www.tcklife.com/en/disclaimer-topmenu-52.html>



The theme for this issue of *Japan Harvest* is Third Culture Kids. Many of the articles are by TCKs who are growing or have grown up in Japan. Our cover was inspired by the feeling of many TCKs that airports are as familiar as some places they’ve called home. Photograph by Tamara Hershberger, of her two sons.

JEMA Datebook

Event

Date

Place

WIM Day of Prayer PLUS

October 1

Rose Town Tea Garden, Okutama

Prayer Walk

October 7

Diet Building

JEMA Writer’s Workshop

November 7 & 8

OMF Ichikawa

CPI Conference

November 12–15

Fuji Hakone Land

To stay up to date, check out the calendar at <http://www.jema.org>

Between

Whether by birth or choice, TCKs and TCAs (third culture adults) have entered plural worlds. One or more of these is usually identified by our passport(s), and another probably by our immigrant visa status. Furthermore, we tend to create intermediary zones—the so-called “third” cultures. So, we live in and between multiple worlds.

I don't know about you, but I enjoy this “between” lifestyle. The bridges between my worlds are fascinating places to live.

**I enjoy this
“between” lifestyle.**

TCAs in the Bible

The Old Testament provides glimpses of people who lived between worlds. Starting with Abraham in Genesis 12, God scattered his people among the nations so they could be a blessing to those nations. Others include Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, and Daniel. Turning to the New Testament, we read that on the day Stephen was martyred, “a great persecution broke out against the church at Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout Judea and Samaria . . . Those who had been scattered preached the word wherever they went” (Acts 8:1,4 NIV). God, at least partly, fulfilled his mission through TCKs and TCAs of the Bible.

Bridge builders

The following words are inscribed on a commemorative rock on the campus of the University of British Columbia (UBC), in Vancouver, Canada: 願わくはわれ太平洋の橋とならん。(Our desire is to become a bridge spanning the Pacific Ocean.) Japanese UBC students and staff, who wanted to be cultural bridge builders between Japan and Canada, placed it there. They had tasted the “between lifestyle,” so were able to envision the opportunities for bridge building.

JEMA attempts to provide a structure to help equip its members to make disciples of Jesus Christ.

The JEMA world spans a variety of ministry emphases. JEMA members come from all over the world and do various ministries in Japan and among Japanese people. JEMA attempts to provide a structure within this variety to help equip its members to make disciples of Jesus Christ. Multiple bridges within the JEMA world link the ministries of its membership. From its earliest days, JEMA has also made a priority of spanning the JEA (Japan Evangelical Association) and JEMA worlds. So, JEMA is like a voluntary bridge building organization, with its leaders serving in the zones between the ministries of other missionaries.

JEMA's leaders serve in the zones between the ministries of other missionaries.

Caring for members

One of our important core ministries has been the Language and Culture Commission, which might be renamed something like Personnel Care. This ministry focuses on spanning the cultural differences between the home and Japanese cultures, as well as encouraging a healthy missionary lifestyle. We are looking for someone to lead this JEMA emphasis. If you are interested and gifted in this area, and would enjoy serving in the “between zone,” please contact me. ■

We are looking for someone to lead this JEMA emphasis. Please contact me.



Serving Christ with you,

Dale Little and his wife, Ann, are planting Tokyo Multicultural Church in Sumida-ku, Tokyo (tokyochurch.org) and serving in tsunami recovery ministry in Tohoku. Dale also lectures part-time in theology at Japan Bible Seminary, Hamura-shi, Tokyo (EFCCM).

Third-Culture Kids in the Global Age and Tokyo Christian University

by Takanori Kobayashi Ph.D., Provost, Tokyo Christian University

Third Culture Kid (TCK). This term is not new to most readers of this article. As you likely know, this was a term coined to describe “a person who has spent a significant part of his or her developmental years outside their parents’ culture” (Pollock, David).

I first encountered some TCKs nearly fifteen years ago when I started teaching at Tokyo Christian University (TCU). I learned that they struggled with this new culture where their parents had been brought up. They had spent most of their lives abroad as missionaries’ kids, and this was their parents’ home turf—not theirs. As a result, they struggled to split regional and cultural identities. Yet this unusually prolonged adolescent struggle for their identity seemed indispensable for them to become the global citizens needed in this rapidly globalizing world. They also tended to develop bi/trilingual and intercultural communication skills.

At Tokyo Christian University, we are putting our energy into learning to cope with the globalizing world. Not only that, but we are also trying to make TCU cut-

ting edge in the rapidly globalizing world by giving our students chances to interact with different cultures, and diverse Christian traditions and ministries.

This past summer, we graduated the seventh class of the Asian Christian Theological Studies for English Speakers (ACTS-es). All together, forty-five people from thirteen countries have graduated and are involved in various ministries, work, and furthering their studies in various parts of the world. One popular post-graduation route is to teach English in private or public schools in Japan before making further moves. I trust that the mere existence of Christian tutors in Christian and secular schools are of great significance for the expansion of the Kingdom of Christ.

This fall we have six new ACTS-es students and five short-term students in the East Asia Institute (EAI). The EAI is aimed at inviting more international students, mostly from North America, to be immersed with Japanese culture and language during the period of a fall semester. It is notable that for the first time this fall, a

female student from Indonesia is involved. Although we now have agreements with nine Christian universities and colleges in the US, we are planning to expand our horizons for the EAI exchanges.

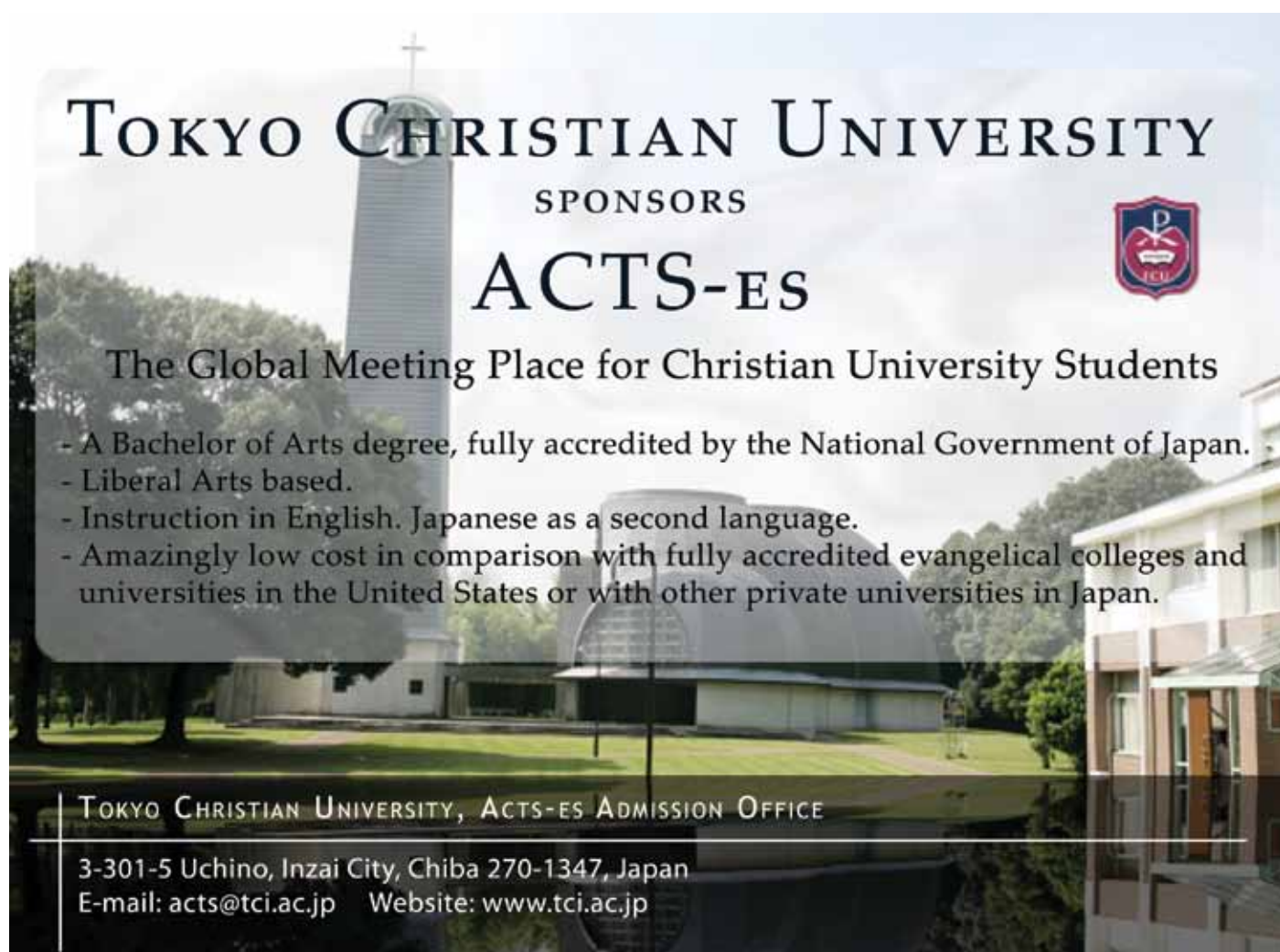
Overall, one out of four students at TCU is of a non-Japanese nationality. TCU is in a sense a microcosm of the globalizing world. At TCU, students can experience at hand the cultural and linguistic diversity of global Christianity. TCKs find that the best environment for learning is one in which they can establish their identities as global citizens of Christ. I trust that the Lord will bless TCU and what it stands for, for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ and His Kingdom. “Christ is all, and is in all” (Col. 3:11).

For ACTS-es, go to the Web site at:

<http://acts.tci.ac.jp/>

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Conflict, Culture, and Adjustment

“Your children are too noisy!” our neighbor, Mrs. Tanaka, shouted at my wife. [Ed. note: *Not her real name.*] That was the beginning of the most stressful four months we’ve ever experienced in Japan.

After that initial December knock on our door, the complaints came almost daily. We tiptoed around our apartment and delayed our return home each day as long as possible. Mrs. Tanaka’s “noise log” frequently didn’t even match up with when we were at home or awake.

Before coming to Japan, our normal impulse would have been to work out the problem on our own.

Before coming to Japan, our normal impulse would have been to work out the problem on our own. But at this point, we had been living in Japan almost a decade. Our children were growing up as TCKs. At the same time, Barbara and I were becoming TCAs (Third Culture Adults). Although we still had much to learn, our response was quite different than it would have been ten years earlier.

1. We asked more questions.
2. We were less likely to assume a problem should be resolved in a certain way.
3. We were more willing to accept help.

Conflict resolution—the Japanese way

So, what did we do? We brought the situation to our Japanese church. After much prayer and long discussion, the group decided how we should respond.

1. We would write out a formal apology letter for “however we had offended” Mrs. Tanaka (since it was clear that noise was not the root issue). This would be delivered along with an “apology gift.” (We were advised that *castella* cake [カステラ] was the proper “peace offering.”)
2. We would ask the *kaichō* (head of the building association) to act as our go-between. He would deliver our letter along with the cake.
3. We would wait for a reply.

To our dismay, Mrs. Tanaka did not accept our apology. But the *kaichō* and his wife were impressed with our proper Japanese response. At the same time, they were profoundly embarrassed by the response of Mrs. Tanaka. With consternation, he informed us there was no solution. It appeared that either we or the Tanakas

would have to move. With heavy hearts we prepared to search for a new place.

The *kaichō* and his wife were impressed with our proper Japanese response.

Then, on Easter Sunday, April 4, we saw a moving van in front of our building. The Tanakas had sold their apartment and were leaving. This was not the result we had hoped for, but we had to accept it as God’s resolution. Resurrection morning took on a whole new meaning. We felt we had gotten our life back. And we had successfully navigated another cultural challenge as TCAs without resorting to our own “natural” responses.

We had successfully navigated another cultural challenge.

Still adjusting

After 24 years in Japan, are we perfectly adjusted TCAs? Not by far. We still point out cultural differences more often than we should. We revert to old behaviors at inappropriate times. On the other hand, we’re more understanding, more forgiving, and less dogmatic than we would have been if we’d never come to Japan.

How is God using your situation to grow you? ■

How is God using your situation to grow you?



Yours for the Harvest,

Gary Bauman (US) has led the Japan Harvest staff since September 2005. He and his wife Barbara have been in Japan since 1988 with Asian Access.

The Extreme Tour 2013 in Japan

Excerpt translated by Tim Williams
CHRISTIAN SHIMBUN — February 22, 2013

Japanese Christian band “IMARi ToNES” joined the Extreme Tour in the US last year. Bandleader, Tak “Tone” Nakamine, said it is “an out-reach tour that uses Christian music and sports to reach youngsters.”

Last year, Canada also hosted the Extreme Tour. This year there is the opportunity to have it in Japan and other parts of Asia.

IMARi ToNES is a heavy metal band, which is quite rare in the Japanese Christian scene. They have toured the States a total of four times.

Valued as a musicianary

“Musicionary” is a term the tour coined from the words “music” and “missionary” to encapsulate the goal of the tour. The Extreme Tour began as a grass-roots project of “The Extreme,” a cultural outreach project started by Ted Bruun in 1994 to reach at-risk and counter culture youth. The tour has since produced bands that have grown to become big names, such as KJ-52 and Kutless. Nakamine said, “A secular artist might go on tour, working to perform in larger stages and aiming for success. But the Extreme Tour works to teach and equip artists, valuing being obedient to God more than success.”

There are roles for each band depending on what order they appear. “The first band is to be friendly, the second draws them closer, then gradually we have testimonies and talk of Jesus, then we end with a



IMARi ToNES. Photo contributed by Tak Nakamine.

time of worship. That is the basic structure [of the gig].”

A Facebook page has been created, and a Japanese pamphlet for “The Extreme Tour Japan” has been printed. (<http://www.facebook.com/theextremetourjapan>) They want to work not only with artists from the US, but also with Japanese Christian artists and sports evangelists, such as skateboarders.

Nakamine said, “We would be glad if people would support this tour, and help us organize an event in their town by providing accommodation, catering, and booking.” ■

Supporting Residents in Iwate

Excerpt translated by Tomoko Kato
CHRISTIAN SHIMBUN — March 10, 2013

In the disaster zone, the number of volunteers has drastically dropped in Sanriku district. However, some Christians—the members of the Iwate Church Network—have remained and are

supporting the residents who lost their houses and loved ones.

Michio Nagata visited an old lady living in temporary housing who said, “I only think of killing myself every day and actually tried to drink bleach, but was disturbed by a helper visiting me. I should have died in the tsunami but my neighbor tried to save me and he died instead.” Three months later, Nagata visited her again with his guitar to sing “Happy Birthday to You” on her 90th birthday. The lady burst into tears. She said to Nagata, “I won’t say, ‘I want to die,’ anymore. I know now that as long as I live, I can find something good.”

Nagata, cooperating with Kazuo Iwatsuka, Pastor of Miyako Community Church, is involved in various activities such as visiting temporary housing in Taro, Iwate Prefecture, and running a mobile café there. “We listen to people, give them massages, and play with children.” A woman over seventy, who was baptized on Christmas Day last year, said, “God is always

How beautiful on the mountains are the feet of those who bring good news, who proclaim peace, who bring good tidings, who proclaim salvation, who say to Zion, "Your God reigns!"



with me. I can see him through the appearance of the volunteer who has been visiting me.”

Rina Oshio went to Otsuchi-cho, Iwate Prefecture, during her summer holiday in 2011 and was shocked that there was no church there. “The area had been seriously damaged and their hearts were broken. When God saved them, how could they spiritually grow without a church?” She was given the vision to help build a church there, so she resigned from her work in Tottori and went back to Iwate in March 2012.

At first she felt lost as no one seemed to understand her vision, but finally she came across Yoshiya Kondo (Pastor of Morioka Bible Baptist Church, Coordinator of the Iwate Church Network), who had the same vision to build a church on the coast. Oshio now coordinates events for people in temporary housing, teaches them English conversation, and visits each resident to listen to them. “At the beginning I could not follow their

dialect, but soon found the people of Ofunato really warm. I will stick with them.” ■

Rieko Ando, New Headmaster of Tamasei

*Excerpt translated by Atsuko Tateishi
CHRISTIAN SHIMBUN — April 21, 2013*

In 2010, Bernard Barton, Headmaster of Tamagawa Seigakuin (Tamasei), asked Rieko Ando to succeed him. At that time, Rieko was about to leave KGK (an inter-university Christian students association) after 20 years of service to study in Scotland for two years.

“The offer scared me at first,” recalled Rieko during an interview with the Christian Shimbun in early April.

Tamasei is a Christian junior and senior high school institute for girls in Tokyo. “I understood that it was time for Tamasei to have a female headmaster for the first time. I also saw Bernard’s passion to turn it over to someone who could effectively share the gospel. But I had no experience with working in a school setting.” In the end, Rieko agreed to pray about the offer while in Scotland.

At the International Christian College in Glasgow, where she studied modern interpretation of the Bible, God began to speak to her repeatedly, telling her to have no fear. “I remembered that it had been the same when I was about to become General Secretary of KGK in 2007,” explains Rieko. “I had thousands of reasons not to take up the role. From God’s point of

view, however, none of them were legitimate. If God is inviting me to tackle a daunting task with him, I had better accept his invitation.” After a year of praying, Rieko accepted the offer to start at Tamasei in April 2013.

During the entrance ceremony on April 4, Rieko spoke from Psalm 1:1-3, the passage that led Shigehisa Taniguchi to found Tamasei in 1950. She encouraged the students to draw energy from Scripture at the daily chapel. Rieko considers it a great privilege to preach weekly in front of the school body of one thousand.

“When I began my internship here last January, I was deeply impressed by the kindness and openness that I found everywhere on campus,” says Rieko. “I must preserve this wonderful culture at Tamasei while I try to keep the school relevant to the needs of today’s society.” ■



Rieko Ando. Photo contributed by the Christian Shimbun.

Mixed Feelings

I've heard people say that I'm lucky to grow up in a different country. In some ways, that's true.

Great things

For example, speaking another language can come in handy. It might make getting in to college easier. And it can be fun, too. When I talk at home, sometimes a word doesn't pop into my head right away, so I mix both Japanese and English and it ends up as a weird sentence. English class at school is easy. Sometimes my teacher lets me be the English teacher for a while and that's fun!

Not-so-great things

But there are not-so-great things, too. For example, I have English and Japanese homework when usually you only get one or the other. I go to school at Shimizu Elementary School, where I am the only American. When the new first graders come it is awkward:

When they first see me, they stare. But they get used to me pretty fast.

I don't know many people in America besides family, so when I go to America to visit it's lonely, except when I play with cousins. And of course, the airplane rides are not fun. We usually fly on three airplanes to get to Minnesota and three back to Kumamoto. That's more than 17 hours on a plane.

But it's home

Anyway, even though there are things that are not fun or exciting, I love living in Japan. It's my home now. ■



Emilie Bencke (US) is 11 years old and lives in Kumamoto, southern Japan. She's lived in Japan for 7 years. Her parents serve with the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church.

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Two Different Schools



I was eight when I first came to Japan. Since then I have attended both a Japanese elementary school and an international school. In this article I compare my experience with these two very different schooling systems.

Japanese elementary school

When I first arrived in Japan, the best way for me to learn Japanese was to attend a public school. I started going to the local one immediately. Most students accepted me, but there were still many small bands of friends who were exclusive. This was my first experience of the “group” concept: you were “inside” the group and treated like a friend, or you were “outside” and regarded as an alien.

Most students at the Japanese school accepted me, but there were still many small bands of friends who were exclusive.

I also found many circumstances where the “class” aspect took control. Everyone was considered equal, and in no way greater than anyone else. For example, in the P.E. lesson, four students would lead the warm-up. The next week a different set of four people would do it, and so on, until everyone in the class had. Everyone was equal, and there was no alternative.

International school

Now, however, in need of an English education, I attend Hokkaido International School. My first impression of the school was completely different to the Japanese school. Unlike the Japanese school, I seemed to be noticed very little. Although people had been shy at first, when I went to talk to them, they didn't shun

me. Students were also encouraged to be creative and think in their own way. Singularity and independence were prized.

Students at the international school were encouraged to be creative and think in their own way.

The Japanese system surprised me. I was unused to it and wanted to go my own way. But one of the good effects of this system was that by the end of the year everyone knew the same things. No one was left behind the others.

However, the international school is the opposite. People who push to excel in certain areas are helped along to new heights. Teachers give more time to individuals.

I respect both ideas. However, from the angle of the student, I've generally found the international school better to learn in, because pupils are unrestricted and are given time and attention by their teachers.

Since I was a foreigner at the Japanese school, I was different and was not accepted. I was despised there, and that left me with a dislike for the system. I reflect on the Japanese school with bitter feelings, but I know that it helped me up in areas where I lacked. The international school, however, I enjoy a lot better. I have more friends and I can communicate easily. ■



Raphael Seccombe lives in Sapporo, and has just completed grade 8 at Hokkaido International School. Born in England, his parents are with OMF, and his dad is the Field Medical Advisor.

Randoseru photo contributed by Wikimedia Commons

Backpack photo contributed by Bram Van Damme

Maintaining

Friendships

Living on the other side of the planet from America is awesome—there’s absolutely no doubt about that. But while life here in Nagano has its pros, it also has its cons, like the 13 to 14 hour time difference from Florida, the isolation, and busy schedules. These all tie into why maintaining long-distance friendships is difficult.

Different time zones

I’ve always been proud of the number of hours Japan has been ahead of Florida because we’re “in the future” and therefore “more advanced” than America. I’m kidding, but unfortunately, being more than half a day ahead of my friends means that good opportunities for prolonged interaction with them are scarce. When I’m getting ready for bed, they’re sitting in the first service at church, and when I’m on lunch break at school, they’re supposed to be asleep. We can’t talk to each other as much as we want to, and I feel like our friendships can’t grow because of it.

Being more than half a day ahead of my friends means that good opportunities for prolonged interaction with them are scarce.

Different lives

Our family’s isolated. I mean, really isolated. My siblings and I go to school in a one-room log cabin in a town of 18,000 in the middle of a forest in the mountains. So, it’s hard to hold an interesting conversation with people 7,000 miles away—our daily experiences are so different and there isn’t much to tell them about our small town. In our conversations with friends in America there are awkward silences, uncomfortable conversations are cut short, and it’s not a very pleasant experience. Thus, willingness to uphold that kind of relationship is rather low. The fact that everyone is busy doesn’t help.



Photo by Flickr user oxcpxo

Everyone’s busy

It’s easy to forget that, just like my family, the majority of my friends in America are all either going to school, work, or church (or all three), and our schedules seldom have a coinciding free spot. So, the rare occasion that we are online at the same time is like chancing upon a unicorn in the forest. As harsh as it sounds, we’re not part of each other’s everyday lives anymore. We’re still part of their thoughts but not interacting within their immediate circle. I sometimes wonder if it would be better to simply give up hope of ever talking to them again and just move on without them, but then I remember why we’re still friends after all this time and think better of it.

So, maintaining relationships across time-zones is really, really hard. You’ve got the time difference, isolation, and packed schedules to juggle, and in situations like these, patience is worth more than gold. But hey, in Romans it says that “perseverance produces character,” and who doesn’t like a kid with character? ■



Ellissa Kline is a 16-year-old Chinese-American missionary kid. Her parents have been with Team Expansion for five years. Check out their family’s mission work at <http://japanacts.com>



Faking It

When I moved to England for university, one of my goals was to acquire an English accent—primarily because I admired the culture, but also to control whether or not I was identified as American. I started faking it almost as soon as I got there (as crazy as that sounds) because I knew that if I met people using my American accent, trying to switch later would be awkward. I had no idea what I was getting myself into, nor how much it would teach me about myself.

I have always had mixed feelings about my passport country.

Like most missionary kids, I have always had mixed feelings about my passport country. I enjoyed the one year in every five that my family spent ‘back’ in Kansas—the things I never could’ve done in Tokyo (like four-wheeling), the friends I made (even if some did ask if there were bicycles in Japan). But I also held an extreme dislike of ‘America’ as a concept, though I struggled to express it in terms beyond the usual stereotypes. Later, when asked why I didn’t stay in the US beyond one year of Bible college, I said, “It was strange to have everything outside of me saying that I belonged, and everything inside of me saying I didn’t.” But this didn’t quite capture it either.

It was only after several months in England that I began to realize it wasn’t America or even being American that I hated.

It was only after several months in England that I began to realize it wasn’t America or even being American that I hated. It was people identifying me as

a ‘typical American,’ and all that implied and denied about me, even if only as a first impression. As an MK in Japan I’d built my self-image on being both special and acculturated wherever I went. Getting the same questions repeatedly was fine, because the alternative, being unremarkable, was unbearable. I started to see my prideful attitude, and how I lived on the opinions of others. I saw how I submitted to the very stereotypes I hated, and as I did so, forfeited opportunities to counteract those stereotypes. Furthermore, not only were all my attempts to be ‘cool’ in the Japanese sense useless anywhere else, I found I didn’t want to be completely English, either—I discovered American parts of me that I liked.

If this were just about nationality, it wouldn’t be that important, because—as TCKs might know best—nationality isn’t identity, and it certainly isn’t destiny. But for one whose identity is in Christ, nationality is a God-given tool to serve him, so what seems like a hindrance could in fact be the very best tool for the job. Sometimes it takes going somewhere new to learn about where you were, and pretending to be something else to see what you actually are, and want to be.

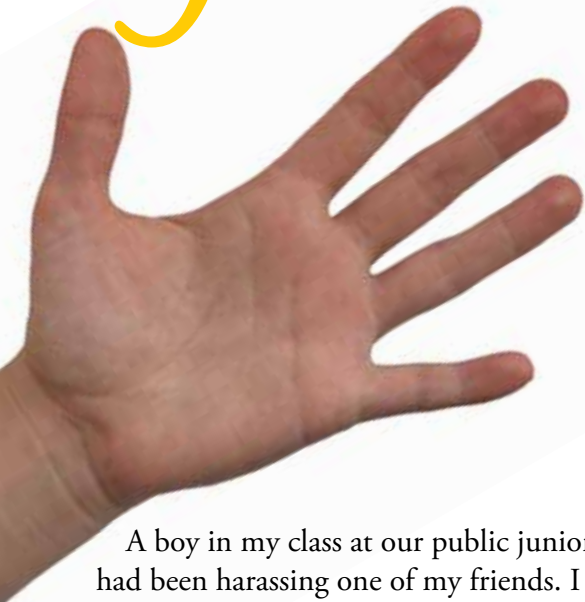
Nationality isn’t identity, and it certainly isn’t destiny.

Moving to a third country helped me to see that my binary view of the world didn’t even accommodate my own self-perception very well. I’d recommend it, though not my exact method—three years into what I thought would be a few month’s experiment, I’m stuck with no exit strategy. If anyone I know in Europe reads this, I’m in trouble. ■

Bradley Loewen is the only child of Joel and Elaine Loewen, SEND International missionaries in Japan. He is a student at the University of Bradford, though currently on exchange in France.

Photo by Roddy Mackay (OMF)

God's Culture



Smack!

A boy in my class at our public junior high school had been harassing one of my friends. I couldn't understand Japanese at the time, but she sounded distressed. The other students spoke sharply to him, but he didn't stop. So, I slapped him across the face.

I remember that day for the different responses I received. My classmates were shocked at my violence. The teachers, though probably amused by my "American" response, arranged for us to formally apologize to one another. My parents were proud of me. The boy was wary of me after that. And me? I was confused.

Different values

How could there be so many different responses to one action? Sometimes it takes a conflict to see the differences in cultures. Outside the home, I learned to value perfection and to avoid awkward situations for the sake of others. At home, I learned to take pride in my work and to always be honest. These are not incompatible values, but they do bump into each other sometimes.

Sometimes it takes a conflict to see the differences in cultures.

Later, while teaching English part-time in Japan, I brought home a paycheck that was smaller than usual. I didn't want to say anything to my boss: it would have been terribly awkward for him. But my parents couldn't stand that the pay was possibly dishonest, and wanted me to return and ask about the amount. What should I do?

Turning to God's culture

Fortunately, I learned what to do when I am caught between cultures. The two greatest gifts my parents gave me were prayer and the Bible—they prayed for me, taught me Bible stories, and encouraged me to study the Bible. When I don't know what to do, I turn to God's culture in His Word.

When I don't know what to do, I turn to God's culture in His Word.

I see now that it was right to stand up to the boy at school. Granted, slapping him was inappropriate, but I could not stand by and do nothing. It was also right to apologize. Through that, I learned respect. I returned to work to ask about my paycheck, honoring my parents. Though I received no extra pay that night, I endured the awkward situation and learned to turn the other cheek.

Grounding in God's culture comes with regularly reading the Bible. We only learn to act on a culture after we have soaked it up. To really belong to God's culture, I have to grasp my place in it. Romans 8 tells us where we stand in God's culture: "Therefore there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death" (Rom. 8:1-2, NASB).

The Old Testament Law could not save us, nor can present-day cultural systems. Our salvation is in Jesus Christ alone, and we have to trust Him. Even though I'm in the US now, I still have to work out conflict. I haven't slapped anyone lately, but I have made some serious mistakes that have hurt myself and others. Jesus alone gives me the strength to forgive, to accept forgiveness, and to feel safe.

In His culture, my true home culture, I am secure. ■

Ruth Parry (daughter of Dan and Jill Parry, see next article) spent 12 years of her childhood in Osaka, Japan. She lives in McPherson, Kansas, and is employed at her alma mater, Central Christian College of Kansas.

Photo by Andrew C.

A Parent's Perspective



Photo by Flickr user Spirit-Fire

God called us to Japan. My wife and I prayed about it, talked to one another and to Christian leaders, and made the choice to obey. Our kids had no choice in the matter. But their lives were affected more by the move than ours. Our basic personalities and outlook on life were already established—and though we adapted to the different culture and language, we didn't change at the core. However, the impact on our kids will stay with them the rest of their lives. We hope and pray, but as we look at other kids raised like ours we realize there are no guarantees.

Varied results

I remember a friend in high school who had grown up in Africa, the son of missionaries. He was a good student and a popular star on the basketball team. At the “party school” where I attended we needed more solid Christians like him. He's probably a successful doctor or college professor now.

On the other hand, I remember another girl from my Christian college days. She grew up in Ecuador, the daughter of missionaries. She never seemed at ease, and took several showers a day like people in Ecuador. She was often alone and rarely responded when people tried to talk with her. She had a hard time adjusting to life in the US.

Research about TCKs shows some interesting traits. Over 90% continue education past high school, 40% earn post graduate degrees, and 80% are in a professional or semi-professional career.¹ As a group, TCKs are high achievers. But almost a third of them admit to adjustment problems such as feeling alienated, having a general sense of anxiety, loneliness, and depression.²

Challenges while growing up

Not only is it a challenge for them when they return to their home country, but living in their “adopted” country has its own rough spots. When our youngest son entered Japanese kindergarten he didn't speak Japanese. The teachers were thoughtful and helpful, but we could see it was frustrating for him. Many days when

we picked him up after school his teacher would be waiting for us. I dreaded to hear, “You need to call Mrs. so-and-so and apologize. James bit her son today.” We worked with him, but it took almost a year for him to completely stop biting. By that time he was able to talk and play with the other kids. In the light of his initial struggles, we understood when—in his last year of kindergarten—another newly arrived foreign kid bit him!

The hard experiences produce lifelong character traits. One time when I was out on a hike with my high-school-age daughter, the topic of making friends came up. I'll never forget her saying, “Dad, you made it pretty hard for me with all the moving around.” She was right. Now that she's an adult, she says in retrospect, “I learned to deepen friendships fast. You don't know how much time you have.”

There's no question that growing up in Japan and moving frequently had a profound impact on our kids.

There is no question that growing up in Japan and moving frequently had a profound impact on our children. But growing up anywhere is a challenge. My father used to say, “We weren't perfect parents, but we've always prayed that God would help you turn out well.” I've said the same thing to my kids. The most important thing is to bathe them in prayer.

Letting our kids know they are loved

As parents we need to let them know they are more important than our work. They aren't tools, useful for ministry. They are treasures loaned to us for a time by God to establish them as persons.

We had several ways we ensured they felt treasured. Once a month I'd do something with them, one-on- ➔

one—a hike, a long bike ride, dinner and a movie, or shopping (not my favorite, but for the kids I'd do it). It was time to have fun and talk with each other, and for me to show my love. We also spent time together over dinner; talking, eating, and relaxing together. During this time we all learned to listen to one another and show support. For some families the evening hours won't work, but making the time to spend together is important.

We must demonstrate God's unconditional love for our children.

We must demonstrate God's unconditional love for our children. Sometimes there are unpleasant consequences for behavior, but never a lessening of our love. Ephesians 6:4 tells us, "Fathers, do not exasperate your children; instead bring them up in the training and instruction of the Lord" (NIV). We need to ground them in God's Word and pray with them every day. They may get scriptural teaching elsewhere, but there is no replacing what we parents teach them. And there's the old saying, "actions speak louder than words." They learn even more by watching how we live.

Dr. James Dobson wrote about a note his father sent at a busy time in his life. His father warned him, "Failure for you at this point [in raising your children well] would make mere success in your occupation a very pale and washed-out affair."³ Those words have

haunted and motivated me. If all the city of Osaka turned to Christ through my efforts, but my children grew up without knowing my love, I would have failed in my most important ministry.

Turned out okay

We've seen all our kids go through painful experiences, and yet develop in ways that make a parent proud. At times I've wished they could have grown up as "normal" kids in Indiana like their cousins. But as I look at the three older ones, living on their own now, I realize that they've turned out just fine. They see the world differently than those around them, but they are secure in who they are, and they have more or less adjusted to life in America. More importantly, they are ready for wherever the Lord leads them, be it their homeland, Japan, or some other foreign land. God called us to Japan, and in so doing He called our children to be TCKs. We see God's faithful hand in their lives, too. ■

Daniel Parry and his wife, Jill, came to Japan as Free Methodist missionaries in 1982. He is now a professor at Osaka Christian College and the father of four TCKs, including Ruth Parry (see previous article).

1. Ann Baker Cottrell and Ruth Hill Useem, "ATCKs maintain global dimensions throughout their lives," accessed April 11, 2013, <http://www.tckworld.com/useem/art5.html>
2. Dana Leigh Downey, "Identity, Mobility, and Marginality: Counseling Third Culture Kids in College" (MA Thesis, University of Texas at Austin, 2012) accessed, April 11, 2013, <http://repositories.lib.utexas.edu/handle/2152/ETD-UT-2012-05-5574>
3. James C. Dobson, *Straight Talk to Men and Their Wives* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1982), 49.

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TCK Identity

G*aijin da!* [There's a foreigner!]" I was a 10-year-old at the public pool in my hometown in Japan, when I heard the all too familiar impertinent words shouted by two Japanese boys.

"Damare! [Shut up!]" I fired back. The two boys recoiled with surprise upon being chastised in fluent Japanese by a tall, red-haired, freckle-faced Caucasian boy.

Embarrassed, they quickly apologized, *"Gomennasai* [I'm terribly sorry]."

I turned away and dove into the pool. It was just another day as a foreign kid in a Japanese city.

An accepted outsider in Japan

I grew up in Japan, living there for over 18 years. We visited the United States every three to four years for several months at a time. My hometown, Nakano, Japan, is an adjacent city to Nagano, the host city for the 1998 Winter Olympics. Prior to the Olympics, the sight of foreigners in my city was rare. I was the first foreigner to attend my local elementary school.

Therefore, understanding my identity in relation to the broader culture understandably produced some tension. Even though I spoke Japanese fluently and could write calligraphy as skillfully as my Japanese counterparts, I remained the *gaijin*. I received regular reminders of this: inquisitive stares, finger-pointing, and tactless exclamations.

And yet, I never felt ashamed of being a *gaijin*. In the midst of being conspicuously Caucasian, I also formed meaningful relationships with individuals in my neighborhood, church, and the surrounding area. This helped shape my sense of identity as an outsider with a felt sense of inclusion and acceptance.

Still a *gaijin* in the US

Ironically, I felt just as much of a *gaijin* in the US as I did in Japan. Because my parents were well-known among their large network, I could not escape being known as the American-looking Japanese kid. When I moved to the US for college, I delighted in being able to disclose my background at the time and place of my own choosing. For the first time in my life, I could be known simply as Levi—not Levi the *Gaijin*.

As an adult, I have grown to cherish my identity as the *Gaijin* from Japan. In the process of understanding and embracing this identity, I feel an increasing sense of inner integration, wholeness, and belonging that I yearned for in my youth. I have come to treasure my friendships with other "*gaijins*" from around the world—Third Culture Kids. We share a special bond and sense of belonging because of our similar experiences, interests, and conflicts with culture.

Grateful to be a TCK

Ultimately, I believe every human-to-human encounter is cross-cultural in nature. I feel indebted to my cross-cultural upbringing in Japan for shaping my personal identity and equipping me to navigate cross-cultural relationships with a comfort and confidence I would not have otherwise. I feel immensely blessed and overwhelmingly grateful to have been raised as a TCK in Japan. Now the cross-cultural venue is where I literally feel most at home. ■

Levi Cole is married with three young children, and currently serves as a Captain and Clinical Psychology Resident in the United States Air Force.

Blessed to be a JCK

I was born in Tokyo to Christian missionary parents who had escaped from communism in China. The Lord led them to Japan as their new field of ministry. I had the privilege of being a missionary kid in Japan for sixteen and a half years. Then my mother died of cancer, which led to my family returning to the United States.

Growing up in Japan

Growing up in Tokyo and attending Christian Academy in Japan (CAJ) was a privilege. My brother and I often played games with our Japanese friends from the neighborhood. Having a Japanese live-in maid and watching television helped me grow up bilingual. My brother and I enjoyed fishing at the local fishpond on Saturdays, and going to watch the Yomiuri Giants and talking to some of the baseball players before the game at Korakuen.

Growing up in Tokyo and attending CAJ was a privilege.

I have many happy memories, including breaking records for catching goldfish within one hour, getting a taxi ride home with the winning pitcher of the Giants game, and spending summer holidays at Takayama near Sendai or Nojiri Lake in Nagano. Then there were the friends at CAJ, along with the joy of sports and school activities. I also enjoyed a little touch of America, as I was able to play Little League baseball and go trick-or-treating at Washington Heights in Harajuku—a US military base later used for the Tokyo Olympics.

Being bilingual and living among the Japanese, I had the privilege of appreciating Japanese culture—and yet, as a westerner being educated in an English-language school, being able to enjoy aspects of that world, too. I was not confused about who I was; I felt accepted and natural in both worlds. On Sundays my father often served in Japanese churches, but my mother always took us to the church that became Kurume Bible Fellowship. It started out in Ochanomizu and eventually moved to CAJ's campus. Growing up in an English-language church was helpful for me.

I was not confused about who I was; I felt accepted and natural in both worlds.

Life in Tokyo was safe, and my parents gave me a lot of independence. Anybody could buy cigarettes and alcohol, but I thank the Lord that He protected me from many temptations. At that time, a westerner who spoke Japanese could easily take advantage of being a foreigner and get away with things that the Japanese could not.

There was also the danger of excessive pride and selfishness as a westerner living in Japan. In recent years I've been invited to speak twice at one of the larger churches outside of Tokyo. After I gave my first message the pastor mentioned to everyone how impressed he was that a former CAJ student could give such a message. This surprised me. For some reason unknown to me, he held a low view of missionary kids from

CAJ, so he was encouraged to hear from a graduate who had been serving Christ among the Japanese.

Life-changing events

The Lord spoke to my heart in a life-changing way when I was fifteen at the summer Hi-B.A. (High school Born-Againers) camp in Chiba. The message was the parable of the sower. The Lord convicted me that I was living in a selfish way for myself. I repented and asked Jesus to forgive me. I will never forget that evening when the Lord removed the weight of all my guilt.

Through my upbringing in a Christian home, attending church, going to a Christian school, and being active in Hi-B.A., I was taught to see the importance of Christ in one's life. That evening I became aware that I needed the forgiveness of Christ, and I had faith to believe.

Six months later, my mother died of cancer. As I grieved her loss, I was greatly encouraged by Philip-
pians 1:21, "For me to live is Christ, and to die is gain" (NKJV). I had never thanked her for her sacrifice or her love for Jesus and her children, but after her death I realized how important Jesus was to her. I understood it was her gain to be in the presence of the Lord, and not have to struggle with cancer, sin, or any other problems of this world. This comforted me.

This same verse challenged me to consider what it meant to live for Jesus, and the example of my parents inspired me to serve Jesus in my own life. I had doubts and fears about being a missionary to the Japanese. Did I have what it takes to be a minister of Christ to the Japanese? With the difficulty of seeing conversions, was it worth the effort? The Lord had to work in my heart to overcome my fears and doubts.

I also learned that Jesus uses workers who admit to their weaknesses.

While attending seminary in the US, I went to Japan for a fifteen-month internship. During that time

I became convinced of the need for missionary workers among the Japanese. I also learned that Jesus uses workers who admit to their weaknesses. Paul's testimony, "My grace is sufficient for you, for My strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9a), spoke to my heart. I understood then that the Lord works through weak vessels like myself. I just needed to trust and rely on Jesus for the work to be done. My wife and I have been serving in ministry to Japanese people for 35 years now—on three different continents. Our testimony is that the Lord does His amazing work through sinful servants.

Thankful

There are many things I am thankful for as a Third Culture Kid. The first air I breathed was in Tokyo, and the Holy Spirit breathed upon my sinful heart with His regenerating and sanctifying power in the same land. It is a privilege to know more than one culture, for it broadens our view of the world. My parents taught me and showed me the importance of Jesus in their lives. They sent me to CAJ and trusted the Lord enough to allow me to grow up in a relatively independent manner. I never heard my parents criticize Japan or the Japanese, and they never pushed me to pursue a certain career.

To some Christians the Lord gives a special passion to reach the lost of a certain people group. It is God's call, and each of us is responsible to be faithful in whatever calling that may be. Having an identity in Christ, living to please Him, and desiring to glorify Him with others is of the greatest joy and eternal value. I am thankful to God for using me for that purpose among the Japanese people. In my case, the Lord blessed me as a Third Culture Kid. ■

Stephen Young and his wife, Sarah, have been planting Japanese churches since 1978. They've ministered in the US, Japan, and Australia.

Photo by Rick Seely



Saying *Sayonara* to Goodbyes?



Timeline

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How many of you own a smart phone? I picked up my first smart phone about five years ago. I wanted to be more connected to the global world in which I worked, not knowing fully the impact of my decision. I'm a firm believer in the development of technology and also using technology to help me manage my life. But let's admit it, smart phones have changed the way we communicate and also the way we do life.

No need for goodbyes?

I recently spoke to a TCK about the importance of saying goodbyes as they prepared to leave their host country and transition to their passport country for college. We were talking about how necessary it is to have good closure to the many relationships which they have enjoyed while living abroad. I was surprised when the TCK said, "I don't have to say goodbye anymore . . . I don't need to have closure. I'm always connected with my friends from around the world with my iPhone and Facebook."

"I don't have to say goodbye anymore. I'm always connected with my friends with my iPhone and Facebook."

As I thought about his response, I had to admit our world seems to be getting smaller and smaller

with the advances in technology, allowing us to move in and out of relationships more easily. So, on the one side, I had to agree that goodbyes may not be the same as 20 years ago, but on the other side, I know that good closure is crucial to the emotional adjustment of TCKs. So, I find myself living in tension with this new paradigm produced by the wealth of technology at our fingertips.

If you ask TCKs what they miss most about the cultures they grew up in, one of their top three answers will likely be related to people or relationships. These may include relationships within the family context, school friends, national friendships, dorm parents, or teachers. I don't think there is anything unusual about this response. The relationships TCKs make while living abroad are a major contributor to their overall development.

TCKs hold their "deepest relationships" close to their heart! They are willing to fly halfway around the world for their high school reunions. The relationships are important and in many cases life-long. There are people in our world who go through life with only one or maybe two significant relationships, while many TCKs are "relationship rich" because of the depth of relationship they have with the kids they grew up with.

To truly understand the world of a TCK it is necessary to understand how these relationships work. To support a TCK we need to care for and nurture these relationships. Emotionally and spiritually healthy relationships throughout their developmental years will prepare them to face the many transitions in their life journey.

So, the question remains: Do TCKs still need to process quality closure and say their goodbyes? I say, “Yes.” God has designed us as relational beings. And though they can continue to relate with their friends via smart phones and Facebook, the relationship isn’t the same once they are no longer physically present with their friends.

The value of saying goodbye

Each of us deals with goodbyes differently. Have you ever noticed? For most TCKs, goodbyes are just about the worst thing in the world. I think this is due to the depth of relationship they share with one another, but it’s also true that most of us don’t like goodbyes.

For most TCKs, goodbyes are just about the worst thing in the world.

While serving overseas in Papua New Guinea, we lived in a remote part of the country where small aircraft were used to bring people to and from our mission center. Each year after high school graduation, there were long hours at the airstrip where final goodbyes were shared.

In the 10 years we served overseas, these were the most painful moments. But as I look back on it, they were also some of the richest. We watched as TCKs who had grown up together would hug, shed tears, and hug some more. I’ve often said to TCKs we work with, “It is the goodbyes that hurt which make you realize the relationship was truly worth it and life changing.” If there is pain involved, it means you have shared your soul with one another. For this reason we need to take the time to say proper goodbyes with one another—to look each other in the eyes, and say the words and feel the emotion. Our relationships are richer because of it.

Are you saying goodbyes well?

How well you have managed the goodbyes in your life? Take the necessary time to connect emotionally with those we farewell. Don’t allow your smart phone or Facebook to get in the way of saying a proper goodbye.

Don’t allow your smart phone or Facebook to get in the way of saying a proper goodbye.

Airports are part of the life framework of global families. We come and go through terminals and gates more times than we can count. It is at an airport where you often see goodbyes being shared—but is also at airports where you see happy welcomes shared.

I believe that in order to have a meaningful welcome, a quality closure is helpful. I encourage you, in your comings and your goings, to take the time to say goodbye, do the necessary work to provide closure to the relationships you and your children have, and then look forward to the ongoing communication that technology provides.

I like what TCK James Mitchener had to say about goodbyes:

The way I see it, whether we’ll meet again or not, that goodbye isn’t the end. If you simply don’t want to see me, or perhaps no longer walk this world, the end result is always the same. I am a TCK, and I have lived my entire life in a string of relationships that last not much longer than the passing of a season.

But just because that relationship has floated on in terms of time spent face-to-face, the moments we shared have shaped me into a different person, and pieces of you will live on with me forever. In that single season, in just one tiny conversation, you changed me for the better. And even if we are never to cross paths again, I will carry you for the rest of my life, and share what you taught me with others. In the end, I will always keep you with me, and the lives of those I meet will be made better because of the time we spent together.

And that’s my TCK goodbye.¹ ■

Perry Bradford is the Executive Director of Barnabas International, a pastoral care ministry to global workers. For years Perry has been directing transitions seminars for MKs returning to North America.

Electronics photo by Sean Hobson. Hugging photo by Flickr user ob1left.

1. James R. Mitchener, “A TCK Goodbye,” May 30, 2012. <http://thirdculturekidlife.com/2012/05/30/goodbye>

On Leaving

Shelley Schmidt

LEAVE, LEAVE, so many times
We have had to LEAVE:
Homes, schools, friends,
Countries, towns, books, toys, a special friend;
“Old junk”: no one understands why we want it;
Drawings, pets, a favorite bike or doll,
A beautiful place, a special smell, familiar food,
A thoughtful caretaker, loving parents.

LEAVE, LEAVE, LEAVING behind,
(so often, over and over through the years)
Leaves little rips as we pull away,
LEAVING a piece of our numbing heart behind.

How many times did we have to
LEAVE all we knew to be familiar, and
GO—to yet another unknown place?
How many times did we say “Good-bye”?
What did we do, in our hearts, with the cry?

**The One who never changes left His Father’s throne above
And promises to stay by our side.**

Shelley Schmidt was born in the US but grew up in Brazil as an MK. She worked in a church with her Swiss husband, Dieter, in Switzerland for four years before they and their three young daughters came to serve in Japan in 1989 with OMF.

I Am a Leaf

Hannah Schmidt

There is the ocean, the sky, the tree:
Each knows its purpose and its place.
I am a leaf who floats on the wind,
With no place yet to land.

If I land in this place, the wind
Strong as it is, forces me up
Through currents of air,
Takes me to lands unknown.

The grasses I meet stay rooted,
Curious why I must move.
They stay and grow deep,
Expecting, like them, I’ll root.

But—a leaf—I float!
I may have come from a tree,
But I cannot go back to the tree and stay:
My life is the wind and I go where it goes.

Hannah Schmidt, Shelley’s second daughter, was born in Switzerland but grew up in Japan. She now works as an ALT (Assistant Language Teacher) in Sapporo.

Photo by D. Sharon Pruitt



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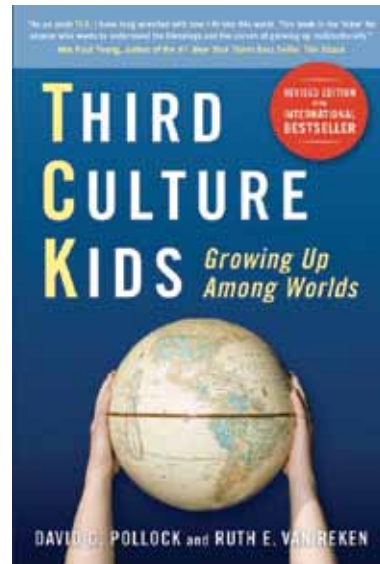
For registration and information see our website www.Conf.JCPI.Net or write us at JapanCPI@gmail.com

TCK Resources

The ultimate book on TCKs

For more than a decade, *Third Culture Kids* has been the authority on “TCKs”—children of those who live and work abroad. With a significant part of their developmental years spent outside of their passport countries, TCKs create their own, unique “third” cultures. Authors Pollock and Van Reken pioneered the TCK profile, which brought to light the emotional and psychological realities that come with the TCK journey. Through inter-

views and personal writings, this new, expanded edition explores the challenges and benefits that TCKs encounter. Highlighting dramatic changes brought about by instant communication and ever-evolving mobility patterns, *Third Culture Kids* reveals the hidden diversity in our world, and challenges our traditional notions of identity and “home”—and shows us how the TCK experience is becoming increasingly common and valuable.



Becca McMartin's TCK Seminars

CAJ's Web site hosts four videos from McMartin's workshops in 2010 at <http://caj.or.jp/pta/resources.php>. You can also find an annotated bibliography of TCK resources there, which includes books, videos, and links.

TCK Basics Part 1 & 2

A lecture on TCK basics, in English with Japanese translation. (About an hour each.)

TCK Identity Parts 1 & 2

An interactive session in which McMartin answers many questions from parents. This is very helpful, but is in English only. (About an hour each.)

Helping children appreciate bicultural living

In our Fall 2011 issue, on page 36, Flossie Epley wrote about ways to help kids appreciate their bicultural lifestyles. To read it, either you can view it on her blog at (shortened URL) <http://goo.gl/dIISwZ>, or you can go to <http://jema.org> and use the button on the righthand column marked “Japan Harvest Magazine: Click here to view back issues” to find the Fall 2011 issue (Vol. 63 No. 2). Viewing back issues of Japan Harvest is a free benefit for registered members of JEMA.

Raising Resilient MKs: Resources for Caregivers, Parents, and Teachers

This book contains the collected wisdom of 38 authors who wrote the 56 chapters. It was the collaborative effort of ACSI; Interaction, Inc.; and Mission Training International (MTI); and provides resources for people who have responsibility for MKs and other TCKs. You can download it for free at http://www.missionarycare.com/ebook.htm#resilient_mks

Helping Children Appreciate Bicultural Living
By Flossie Epley

Jennifer is bicultural. She feels she missed out by not growing up in her passport country. Ruth, on the other hand, appreciates her upbringing in Japan and as an adult has chosen to live in several different countries. What makes one child both a bicultural childhood and another cherish it?

Each parent is responsible for his or her own choices, but as parents we can create a climate that encourages our children to eagerly embrace the bicultural experience. I have a U.S. passport, but have lived most of my life in Japan. Over the years I have seen thousands of children respond in contentment or regret, but seldom with indifference as being raised in a country other than one's passport country. Here are characteristics I have observed that foster appreciation.

Children generally appreciate their bicultural upbringing when parents...

- Are positive about cultural differences and living circumstances.
- Consistently show respect for people of all nations.
- Acknowledge the hardships, but are not overcome by them.
- Are genuine in their faith and attitudes towards others.
- Prepare their children before returning to their passport country for difficult questions (i.e. Where are you from?) or ignorant inquiries (i.e. Do you have Internet in Japan?).
- Role-play before returning to one's passport country so help children know how to respond. When parents answer graciously rather than with smart remarks that point out ignorance, children are more apt to do so as well.
- Prepare children for independence in areas such as travel, time management, money management, and entertainment choices before leaving home.
- Make learning both languages a priority for themselves and their children, but don't make bilingualism a goal.
- Ensure that their children have a solid command of at least one language rather than partial understanding of several.
- Take time to listen to their children.
- Invite their children to be part of the ministry so that the whole family values what they are trying to accomplish by being here (notice the word "invite" as opposed to "force").

Our children are privileged to be well acquainted with more than one language and culture. I pray that you'll have the wisdom you need to help your children appreciate their bicultural upbringing.

See more from Flossie's Blog at <http://flossie.org/blog/>

Flossie serves at the Christian Academy in Japan as TEAM missionary with her husband Russ.

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Interaction International

Interaction International is a resource of programs, services, and publications that provide and contribute to the care of TCKs and internationally mobile families.

They host seminars, such as:

Transition Seminar

Help for high school and college students transitioning to North America and to life beyond.

Pre-field Educational Planning Seminar

Equipping parents to understand, plan for, and meet the educational needs of their children.

MK Caregiver Seminar

An interactive training seminar that examines the basic issues related to Missionary Kid (MK) care,

and helps one assess where one's agency is at and develop a clear vision for MK care.

Re-Entry Refresher

A seminar for adults focusing on the transition back "home."

Interaction International publish a magazine called Among Worlds, which addresses issues that many adult TCKs face: relationships, grief, transitions, home, values, and more.

They also have a list of books for children about TCK issues, as well as a significant list of books for internationally mobile adults.

You can visit their Web site to learn more about these and other resources they have to offer at <http://www.interactionintl.org>

Want even more?

You can find many more resources at <http://www.ywamnexia.org/membercare/tck.html>, though some of the links are out of date.

All of the links mentioned in this article are listed online at <http://www.jema.org/tck-resources.html> for your ease of use.

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Lessons from Japanese Leaders

Characteristic Six: Implementing Ministry Aggressively and Practically

For a leader to reproduce a church at least three times, what does it take? Over the last several articles we've examined five key characteristics of leadership that contribute to reproducing churches in Japan (see Fall 2011 issue for the background to this research). The final characteristic identified in my research was that they all implement ministry aggressively, achieve ministry objectives practically and realistically, and lead the church into new directions.

Implement aggressively

To fulfill a God-given vision (Winter 2012), these leaders aggressively engage in ministry. As the church is on the offense, they are determined to mobilize lay people in ministry. They are burdened with the implementation of the vision—not merely to think or talk about it, but also to do it. When Pastor Tanaka¹ was asked for practical advice on starting new churches, he simply replied, “Just do it. Please do it.” These leaders are serious about ministry accomplishment—they are action-oriented. One secondary leader portrayed his pastor simply as “effectual” (実効的 *jikkōteki*).

They are burdened with the implementation of the vision—not merely to think or talk about it, but also to do it.

These courageous leaders, in risk-taking faith (Summer 2012), do not let obstacles stand in their way. One leader said of his pastor, “He does not give up, has strong tenacity, and continues engaging.” They are not afraid of experimenting with new approaches to overcome hindrances to church reproduction.

Courageous leadership also means change. Pastor Watanabe completely revolutionized his church from a traditional ministry. Another church discontinued a large expensive ministry, because it was not working to accomplish their purposes.

They also exhibit tenacity with achieving objectives. Misumi's study of Japanese leadership has found that goal-oriented leadership is a very positive trait, especially when the leader couples it with caring for the team.²

Checkpoint #1: In your leadership, what hinders you from being decisive and aggressive in your ministry? What makes you timid? What makes you tenacious?

Achieve practically and realistically

Leaders of reproducing churches are practical and realistic. These leaders are not interested in theory alone, but also in real-world results. As practical doers (実行 *jikkō* and 実践 *jissen*), their behavior emphasizes doing, not just knowing. When asked for reasons why other churches don't reproduce, Pastor Abe replied that leaders have not been taught how to do it practically.

These reproducing leaders are incredibly realistic (現実主義 *genjitsu shugi*). Pastor Kubo gave advice to those interested in starting churches: “Just do it and find out . . . You do not know until you do it. I am a realist.” Practicality is used to overcome obstacles and remove unproductive efforts. This characteristic is the basis for their hands-on training for lay mobilization.

To these leaders, flexibility (柔軟 *jūnan*) is necessary to be practical. Having a dynamic church with a simple relational structure (Autumn 2012) allows easy mid-course corrections. Flexibility allows appropriate changes to surmount obstacles. Pastor Abe suggested including strategies in your original plan to overcome barriers. One secondary leader said of his pastor, “He is flexible because he carefully thinks about . . . the current needs without sticking to old [patterns].” Studies of church planters in Japan have proven that flexibility is essential, and flexible ministry plans are usually more effective.³

Being practical also means being creative (創造的 *sōzōteki*). Creativity is a characteristic not normally praised in Japanese leadership.⁴ These reproducing leaders find creative ways of applying ministry in different settings. New ideas and attractive (魅力 *miriyoku*) ways of ministry are introduced. Several pastors use technology like DVDs and video streaming to overcome the difficulties of distance between churches. They utilize anything in the cause of starting new churches.

Being practical also means being creative, a characteristic not normally praised in Japanese leadership.

Checkpoint #2: Is your leadership realistic and practical? Why or why not? How could your leadership practices be more flexible or creative?

Lead into new directions

These church-reproducing leaders boldly lead in new directions rather than defending or protecting (守り *mamori*) what already exists. These leaders do not believe stability to be the true nature of the church and ministry. Pastor Shimizu asserted, “The church is always wanting stability, but it cannot reproduce without instability.” Leaders must do what is necessary, and the goal of aggressive leaders is not security or stability.

These leaders do not believe stability to be the true nature of the church and ministry.

A mark of growing churches is leaders who primarily lead rather than manage.⁵ By leading in new directions, these leaders place less importance on management (管理 *kanri* or 経営 *keiei*). These leaders oversee others with the gifts and abilities to administer many ministry responsibilities. They coordinate people in ministry, which, inspired by faith, does not undermine personal initiative or creativity.

Due to its dynamic and living nature, they believe a leader cannot control or manage the church. Detailed planning prevents the leader, as Pastor Kubo says, from “going with [the] flow.” Based on vision, their planning and strategy is practical for overcoming obstacles by following simple leadership structure and decision-making.

Checkpoint #3: Is your leadership goal to protect and manage stability, or to lead in new directions? How can you develop those skills? Do you primarily lead or manage?

Final thoughts

These reproducing leaders are people of action. They know reality and they confront it. They overcome; they do not worry about obstacles, they expect them. Because they are aggressive implementers, these leaders achieve goals by being flexible and creative. Being realistic and down-to-earth, they do not talk about doing it—they do it. They start new things by leading in new directions. Through this determined focus, they see their visions for the church fulfilled through church reproduction.

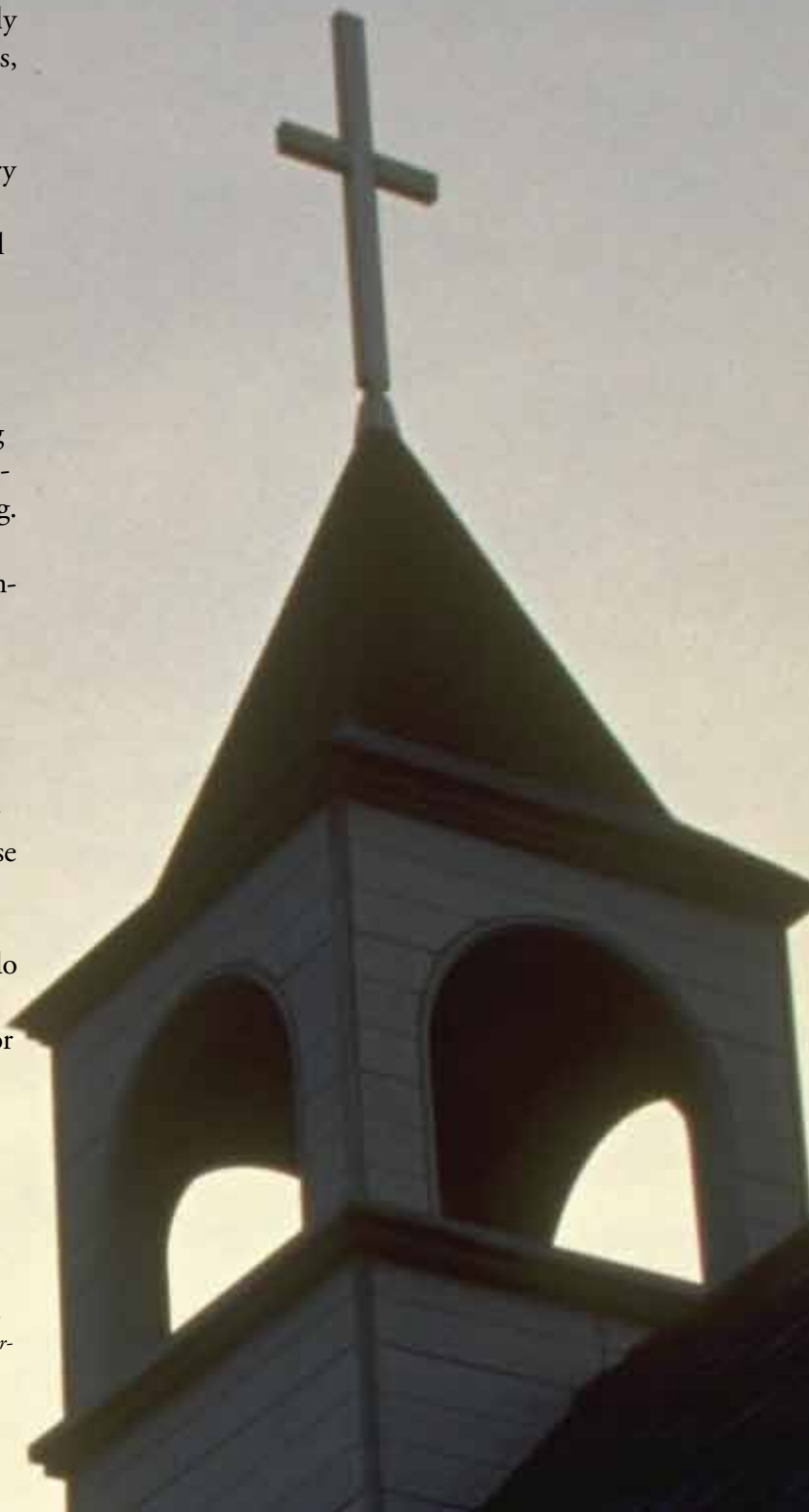
The next and final article will review all six characteristics of Japanese leaders reproducing churches. I will expound how these characteristics interrelate and will discuss more implications for ministry in the church in Japan. ■

John Mehn and his wife, Elaine, have served in Japan with the US agency Converge Worldwide (BGC) since 1985. John's ministry has been in church planting and leadership development, and he has served as the chairman of the leadership team of the

JEMA Church Planting Institute (CPI). He has a Doctor of Ministry in Missiology from Trinity International University.

Photo by Kevin Morris (OMF)

1. The names used in these articles are pseudonyms. Due to the personal nature of this research, the true name of these leaders cannot be identified.
2. Jyuji Misumi, *The Behavioral Science of Leadership*. An Interdisciplinary Japanese Research Program. English ed. M. F. Peterson (ed.). (Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 1986).
3. JEA Church Planting Survey Committee. Church Planting Survey: Interim Report. JEA Consultation on Evangelism. Karuizawa, Japan. (Tokyo: Japan Evangelical Association, 1988), 1–10; 国内開拓伝道会 [KDK] (National Pioneer Evangelism Association). 開拓伝道者への贈り物 (A Present to Church Planters). (Tokyo: 国内開拓伝道会 [KDK] (National Evangelism Association), 1998).
4. Darius K.-S. Chan, Michele J. Gelfand, Harry Triandis, and Oliver Tzeng, “Tightness-looseness Revisited: Some Preliminary Analyses in Japan and the United States,” *International Journal of Psychology* 31 (1996): 9–10.
5. C. Peter Wagner, *Leading Your Church to Growth*. (Ventura, CA: Regal Books, 1984), 44–63.



Fragmented Identity

I once asked a Japanese Christian why she didn't invite work friends to church. She replied, "Church is my place, and I don't want work friends to invade my space."

I asked, "Is it okay that your work friends are going to hell?"

"Yes," she answered.

I was shocked. At first I assumed that her theology and discipleship were inadequate, but as the years go by, I think she was articulating a powerful cultural dichotomy.

In my previous article about evangelism (Spring 2013), I looked at young adults' (YAs) challenges with communication and how that has affected their ability to reach out to others. In this article I will discuss an issue that not only affects YAs, but all Japanese people as well, which profoundly undermines their ability to evangelize: fragmented identity.

In Japanese culture, the group is very significant. Yet, Japanese people are highly skilled at not allowing their groups to mingle. A wife will go her whole life without meeting anyone from her husband's office. A young man doesn't introduce his girlfriend to his parents until they are engaged. A wife may never bring her husband to church. A father doesn't know who is in his daughter's club. Although the group is significant, separate groups do not mix.

Japanese people are highly skilled at not allowing their groups to mingle.

Cultural and historical background

Many cultural and historical realities cause this fragmented identity.

During the Tokugawa era, families were required to register at the temple and were assigned to five-household groups, or *gonin gumi*. These families held each other mutually accountable to the government. For example, if one person in the group became a Christian and someone told on them, the Christian would be killed. But if one person became a Christian and no one informed the government, and it was later discovered that he was a Christian, everyone in the five households would be killed.

The shame-based culture, which

comes from the power of the group, also contributes to this segmented self.¹ The power of the group and the need for secrets from others in the group is deeply rooted in Japanese culture and history.

Fragmented identity and Christian identity

The fragmented approach to life easily leads Japanese people to divide their spiritual lives from their everyday life. I believe this is one reason that many churches are so lenient about Christians marrying non-Christians. Married life and church life are two separate groups.

The fragmented approach to life easily leads Japanese people to divide their spiritual lives from their everyday life.

If Japanese people keep their spiritual lives separate from the rest of their lives, how can we bring new people into the church? Where and whom can they evangelize?

If a Japanese YA can't bring their Christian self to other groups they are a part of, perhaps the answer is to invite their non-Christian friends to church and get their friends to conform to the Christian group. But, as I've said before, no matter how much they love and enjoy their own church, most don't invite their non-Christian friends to church.

YAs tell me that if you invite a friend to church and that person doesn't enjoy it, then it is difficult to remain friends. To many YAs, the risk of rejection of the "church" part of self is too great, so it is better to keep the parts of their lives separate and do nothing to risk "sticking out" in their non-church groups.

YAs tell me that if you invite a friend to church and that person doesn't enjoy it, then it is difficult to remain friends.

Dinner rolls vs. French loaf

To help YAs understand how the Lord should permeate all our relationships, I use a visual aid. I start with

six dinner rolls and stick one toothpick in each. The toothpicks are labeled: “church,” “family,” “friend,” “school,” “work,” and “club.” I describe how Japanese people often have different personalities for each group that they are part of. Then, I take a loaf of French bread and transfer all the toothpicks to it, explaining that our relationship with God should be part of all these relationships. Cognitively, they agree; in reality, they don’t know how to accomplish it.

How do we overcome this fragmentation?

We need to help our YAs learn better communication skills for evangelism, but we also need to help them overcome the ingrained cultural practices that contribute to fragmented identities. Somehow, we need to redeem these cultural values in order to help them to evangelize. As a foreigner, I do not know what that looks like. Often I feel that as foreigners, we can point out the problem, but the solution must come from the Japanese people themselves.

However, Japanese people need to recognize this issue first. I am not aware of anyone writing or discussing this identity problem, whether Japanese or foreign, Christian or not. When I discussed this issue with pastors, they all agreed that it exists but none had ever articulated it this way.

My pastor suggested that this fragmentation is the cause of so much depression and other mental illness in Japan.

After recognizing the problem, Japanese people need to want to change. My pastor suggested that this fragmentation is the cause of so much depres-

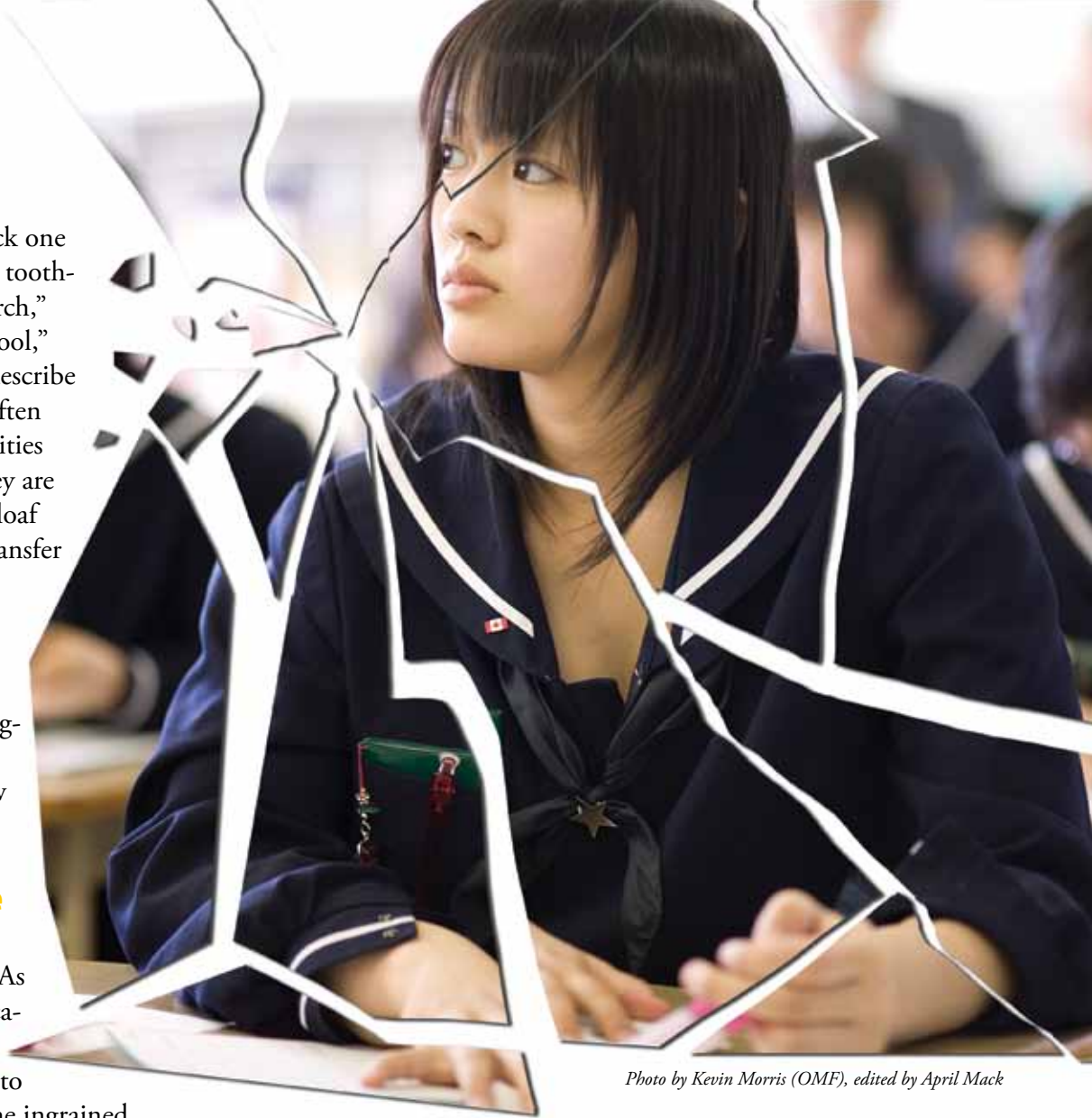


Photo by Kevin Morris (OMF), edited by April Mack

sion and other mental illness in Japan. It is tiring to keep all these parts separate and in order. Perhaps the emotional pain of fragmented identities will push the church to work toward more integrated identities, and thereby help people to be better evangelists in their various groups.

I pray that we missionaries working with the Japanese church can come up with ways to help Japanese, both young and old, to become free to evangelize. I would welcome ideas, or helpful books or links on this topic.² ■

Karyn Zaayenga, a TEAM missionary, serves in the Lighthouse Young Adults' Ministry at Tama Church (Domei). She is currently on home assignment in the US, and is learning about counseling and related topics.

1. I highly recommend *Honor and Shame* by Roland Muller as an excellent introduction to shame-based cultures. Muller is experienced with Muslims, but much of what he writes also applies to the Japanese.
2. During my home assignment I have been studying counseling, and learning about PTSD, DID, and other identity related topics. My studies have led me to this theory of fragmented identity in the Japanese.

Hanging On, Or Forging On?



Two years ago, the north-east coast of Honshu was devastated by the triple disaster. In a matter of hours, decades of community development were reduced to rubble.

On the north-west coast, we were almost unaffected. But a different disaster—economic and demographic decline—has gutted our communities just as effectively as a tsunami, only more slowly.

In 50 years, the population in our town, Ajigasawa, has dropped by half. The number of elementary school children is one sixth what it was. We have ministered here since 1985, and our numbers in church are the same now as they were then.

Why do we stay?

What future is there for a church in this place?

Well, the town has not yet disappeared. While there is no way of knowing when the slide will slow, the town will remain. At this time, it is still home to 11,000 people, and with the 10,000 in the churchless town next to us, there is a sufficient number of people to warrant making a continued effort at evangelism. Mission literature is always talking about “reaching the unreached”. Well, here they are, all around us. Why leave now? Where could we go that would be better?

Yes, there are only a handful of Christians. Do they

warrant the attention of a missionary couple? A better question is, “Who will care for them if we don’t?” It’s hard for them to make it to church as it is, with crazy shift-work schedules. How will they manage if they have to drive 50 minutes to the next nearest church? And, if they are just left to make out as best they can with TV (one weekly program at 5:00 am on Saturday) or Internet church, how will they grow in Christ and reach the people around them? They need a place to meet, to rally and encourage one another. They need a place from which they can visibly demonstrate their faith to the rest of town.

They need a place from which they can visibly demonstrate their faith to the rest of town.

But how long can we be expected to stay? What if the church *has* to be closed? Many rural churches are in danger of just that.

The closing of Ajigasawa Church would delight the many who dislike having a Christian presence here. It would serve to strengthen their belief that no one can be a Christian openly in rural areas and survive, and the attendant belief that no Christian worker can hack it here.

“You’ll just leave, like the rest of them.”

Six different OMF missionaries served in Ajigasawa from 1961 to 1965. At that time, Japanese were flocking to the cities to take part in the nation’s rapid economic recovery. Missionaries who had been in small towns followed. Care of the small Ajigasawa congregation was taken over by the JECA (then Tanritsu Renmei) church in Goshogawara, 50 minutes away. Worship services were held in the afternoon, in the home of a single woman of the Ajigasawa congregation. She was very active and vocal for the faith, and took on the Sunday school for several years. Everyone in town knew she was a believer.

Six different OMF missionaries served in Ajigasawa from 1961 to 1965.

Elders of the Goshogawara church offered to help her find a Christian husband. She declined, saying she was happy to be single. Then, out of the blue, she announced to the group that they would have to find a different place to meet, as she was marrying the non-Christian widower next door—that week! Apparently she was confident that she could convert him, while he, a businessman well-known in town, vowed to his friends he would “knock that Christian nonsense out of her”. Guess who won?

Twenty years later my wife and I arrived in Ajigasawa to re-open the work. Our first baptism was of a young woman who had been one of the girls in that Sunday school. This young woman remembers that, at the time of the above story, she found one of the older girls by the railroad tracks, crying and saying, “If our teacher can’t make it as a Christian here, how can we?”

“If our teacher can’t make it as a Christian here, how can we?”

The woman herself actually showed up at our first meetings, but seldom attended, because her husband and his family (who lived close by) would make serious trouble for her if they caught her. When we were introduced to her, we were stunned when she remarked,

“I’m not going to bother learning your names. You’ll just leave, like the rest of them.”

The challenges of rural ministry

There are other small-town congregations with similar stories of being assigned to the care of nearby urban churches because there was no one to minister to them. Inevitably, despite the best efforts and intentions of the larger congregations, they ended up being sidelined, and eventually closed.

The fear of abandonment is very real to rural Japanese Christians. Not only is local witness lost, but the perceived failure of Christianity to prove itself viable to rural Japanese results in a setback much more significant than just the closing of a so-called “tiny church”. Is God the God of the urbanites only? Is He not God of the countryside as well? How can we speak of “reaching the unreached” if we work only in urban settings, and ignore the 14 million (that’s equal to the population of Cambodia) living in rural Japan?

The demographics are daunting. Did you know that “tiny” Japan is bigger in area than three-quarters of the world’s nations? These millions of unreached people are spread out along the coasts and mountain roads of the nation. Being near enough to reach them effectively means the missionary or pastor is isolated from other Christians and Christian workers. How can we ever find enough people for the 1,800 towns and villages with no church? Well, ask the Lord of the Harvest to send out workers. And what will you do if He says, “You go for me?”

There are 99 lost sheep for every 1 in the fold, here. We have the privilege of being their shepherds.

God’s economy is different

As a part of the universal church, the Body of Christ, Ajigasawa Church has a place and a purpose in *God’s* economy that goes beyond anything thrown at us by the nation’s economy, or by trends in mission, or dismal looking charts and graphs. In a reversal of Christ’s parable, there are 99 lost sheep for every 1 in the fold, here. We have the privilege of being their shepherds. ■

John Elliot grew up on a dairy farm in Canada. He and his wife Laurie have served in Japan with OMF since 1979. They’ve been church planting in Ajigasawa, Aomori, since 1985.

Photo by Kevin Morris (OMF)

How to Pray for Missionaries

Perhaps too often, our prayer supporters only see one side of being a missionary, that we are “called to go.” They can forget about the other side: the harsh realities of being far away from family and friends, the children attending school away from their parents, and the years of ministry before a breakthrough. Not to mention the missionaries who burn out emotionally and spiritually. I’ve heard that, each year, more than 12,000 missionaries return from the field prematurely, permanently, and for preventable reasons. But prayer can make a difference.

Prayer can make a difference.

As missionaries, we know the power of prayer. Here are some ways to help our supporters pray.

Suggestions for helping supporters pray

- Mention specific needs to encourage specific prayer for each missionary family and individual family members.
- Suggest supporting churches select a “missionary of the month” or “missionary of the week” and pray for them in each church service, at children’s church, prayer meetings, Sunday school, etc.
- Suggest that your specific needs could be mentioned in the church bulletin/newsletter/email. Remind them that personal or sensitive issues must be handled confidentially and thus not be shared with the church at large without your permission.
- Encourage individuals and families to pray at home for you.
- Identify with your supporters. Remind them that missionaries become lonely, feel hurt, and get discouraged. Suggest that when they are lonely or feel hurt, they can pray for missionaries who feel the same way at times.
- Suggest that when supporters are encouraged, they could rejoice in your successes.
- Encourage them to communicate with you. Suggest you’d be encouraged if they tell you they are praying for you.
- Let them know about your special days: birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc.

Remind your supporters that missionaries become lonely, feel hurt, and get discouraged.

Get specific

Share these things with your supporters:

- Spiritual: protection, personal relationship with the Lord
- Emotional: frustrations, low points, burnout, etc.
- Mental: adaptation to culture and language, perseverance to learn the language
- Physical: health, protection
- Role: for God’s assurance that we are doing what He has called us to, whatever that may be
- Children: that they will have good friends in the host culture, that they adapt to schools or home schooling; pray against loneliness, and that they will feel part of their parents’ calling
- Ministry: growth, breakthrough, perseverance (even though fruit might not be seen)
- Practical: vehicle, finances, visa/work permits
- Relational: good relationships with fellow missionaries (we are often isolated or under a lot of pressure, therefore pray that conflicts and differences would be handled well)
- Cultural: information about Japan; prayer for the government, least reached people groups, and cultural challenges

Emphasize that supporters could be a friend to you.

Most of all, emphasize that supporters could be a friend to you. Sometimes all we need is an ear to listen to our hearts and a touch on our shoulder, assuring us that we are prayed for and cared about. ■



Ken Reddington and his wife, Toshiko, are church-planting missionaries in Kochi-ken. Ken is an MK who returned to Japan as a missionary from the US more than 33 years ago.

The history of missions is the history of answered prayer. ... It is the key to the whole missionary problem. All human means are secondary.

**Samuel M. Zwemer
The Apostle to Islam**

Stick to Your Main Point

Whether you're writing an article, an email, or a prayer letter, you need a main point. You should be able to summarise the subject in a short phrase. If you can't, then your writing is not focused enough. Your reader will walk away wondering, "What was that all about?"

You should be able to summarise the subject in a short phrase.

Once you've figured out what the main point of your writing is, reread it and delete what doesn't relate to your main point.

Most writers naturally go off on rabbit trails in their first draft. This is how we talk and think, but it isn't appropriate in a written piece, particularly a short one. If a movie includes a rabbit trail that's not directly related to the story, viewers are tempted to take a snack break.

If there is a rabbit trail in your writing, readers will often skim over it, or

worse: they will lose interest altogether because of the confusing, extraneous information. For example, someone picks up your prayer letter to read about what you've been doing in your ministry in the last month. They first read about new seekers you've met, but in the middle you mention a good book, or a conference. You may lose your reader. Yes, they may be interested in all these things, but maybe not when combined together like this.



Wendy Marshall is the managing editor of Japan Harvest. She's learnt most of what she knows about writing from her international critique group, Truth Talk. She's Australian and works with OMF International.

In a prayer letter that covers several topics, use subheadings or bullet points, and give each sub-section a main focus. You should still be able to summarise the purpose of your prayer letter in a short phrase, such as, "Inform supporters, so they can pray."

Remember, after writing something, ask yourself: "What is my goal in writing this? Have I achieved it?" ■

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Praying in Japanese

When culture stress has wiped me out, I retreat to the familiar. What can I do well? What worked at home in America and therefore must work here? What can I make for dinner that will soothe my fraying spirit?

On one occasion, I pulled out my go-to stroganoff recipe. I couldn't find the called-for cayenne pepper at our closest grocer, but I thought the habanero powder they did stock would probably work. It turns out habanero powder is much, much spicier than cayenne pepper. Not exactly the soul-settling mouthful I had planned for supper! No amount of milk or yogurt could tame the burn.

I also thought praying in Japanese would be enriching and heart-warming. But I learned quickly that Japanese prayer isn't a one-for-one substitution, either. So much specialized vocabulary! Is the prayer formula in the textbook the only way to pray, or can I change the order? How polite should I be? If I panic in the middle of reciting "in Jesus' name," can I wrap up with a simple "amen"? Does it still count?

Now I know how unchurched nonbelievers feel when they enter Sunday worship for the first time, or when new Christians are asked to pray aloud in a group. Everyday conversational skills don't help. I expected struggles with new grammar patterns. But feeling as though I'm learning for the first time who God is and how to approach Him has blindsided me.

Praying in Japanese takes the humbling process of language learning to a more spiritual level. I get distracted listening to others pray aloud in English. I may marvel at an especially insightful turn of phrase, or someone's ability to weave Scripture into

their prayers. I may sigh at vague requests, such as "help them" or "bless them." When I pray aloud in a group setting, I often forget that I've come before the throne of God, and instead think about my impression on those who are listening.

But there's no impressing anyone with my Japanese prayers. Those simple pleadings, "please help" and "please bless" become a refuge when I'm on the spot, head bowed, face flushed red, searching for "comfort" and "encourage" in Japanese. I don't understand enough yet to be impressed by others when they pray aloud. If I'm expected to pray in turn, I'm torn between listening intently to understand those who pray before me and planning my own halting attempts.

Of course, the Lord knows my heart and the Holy Spirit intercedes despite my best efforts and questionable intentions. I want to learn to pray aloud in Japanese because it will encourage Japanese believers to pray aloud. I want to pray in a way that is accessible and relevant to my Japanese friends who have never been to church.

In prayer and in cooking, there is no such thing as seamless transition from home to host culture. But in both, the Lord nourishes us and gives us what we need to continue with His Kingdom work. ■

Audrey Eusey and her husband, Evan, have served with OMF International since November 2011. Having a two-year-old and a newborn keeps them "praying without ceasing," in whatever language comes to mind. The Euseys are from Kansas, US.

Photo by Anna Gutermuth

New Voices is a feature by missionaries who have been in Japan for less than five years.

Japan Harvest aims to support and encourage new missionaries as well as those who've been here a while. We welcome your submissions for future issues.



Email: Work Smart, Not Hard

When did I start using email? I can't remember. I know that I started using the Internet back in 1992, but that is a different story. Around that time, JEMA sponsored an email service called JEMAnet. It was great. It was slow. It was clunky. But it worked. It was a great way to communicate through the Internet.

Since that time the Internet has grown and matured. There are now many different email services and most of our missions and other organizations have their own email services. The majority of us have multiple email accounts, which we use for many different things.

One of the most important uses for missionaries is to communicate with our partners and supporters back home. Since email is such an important means of supporter communication, here are a few tips to help you use email more effectively.

Email is an important means of supporter communication.

Less is better than more

Some of us like to write a book when we send updates to our supporters. Others are much more terse. Remember that it seems people's attention spans have decreased. I know that mine has. It is more difficult for people to concentrate on any one thing for a long time. I know that when I receive email updates from missionary friends that seem to go on and on, I skip a great deal of what is written. I may read what comes up on the first screen and then skim the rest of the message to see if there is anything else important. Keep this in mind. Fewer words are better than more.

Don't overwhelm people

I don't like to receive messages from people every day. You should limit the number of messages you send out. Maybe you should think of only sending something once a week or a couple of times a month (and even that might be too much for some supporters). You don't want to overwhelm your supporters with messages.

Send a photo

It is nice to send a photo. However, be careful that you do not send a full size photo. Most countries don't enjoy broadband as fast as we do in Japan. Photos should be reduced to a size that can be easily emailed to other countries. For communicating with supporters, aim for photos under 500KB. Try to keep emails under 1MB in size.

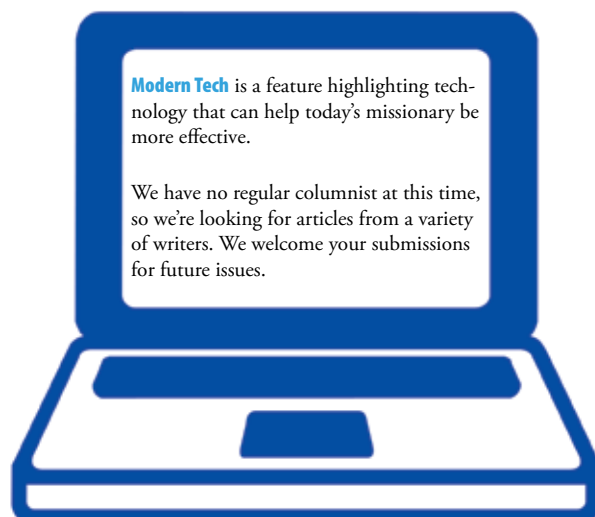
Use a bulk email service

Many email services do not allow you to send bulk or batch email. They are trying to help fight spam. There are email services available that will help you send out your email without worrying about you personally sending bulk or batch email. One such is MailChimp <<http://mailchimp.com>>. MailChimp is a full-featured service. They have a number of plans, free or subscription. If you want something more local and visible you can contact my nephew, Nate Rudd <webmaster@naterudd.com>, who offers a bare bones service.

Email continues to be an important part of our communications with our partners and supporters. Make sure that you use it well and effectively. ■

Dan Rudd (TEAM), a technology coordinator at Christian Academy in Japan, came from the US with his family in 1988 to work with missionary kids.

Photo by Ariel da Silva Parreira



Red Sun Blue Earth

Sayaka Sato is an ordinary fifteen-year-old—until 3:46 pm on March 11, when an earthquake and tsunami strike Japan and rip her life into shreds. Will Sayaka be able to reunite with her family, earn their forgiveness, and forge a new life for herself, or will she be too late?

About the author

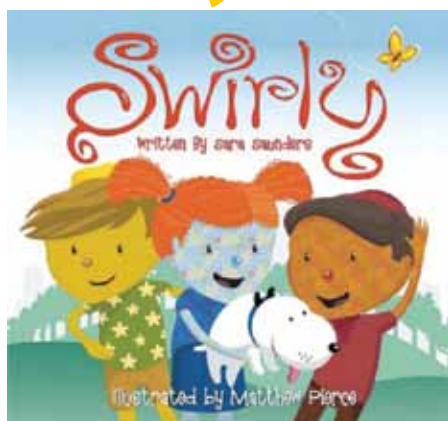
Sienna North was born and raised in Japan until age twelve, and has visited Japan during and after the 2011 tsunami. She blogs at <http://www.siennanorth.com>. *Red Sun Blue Earth* is her debut novel.



This fictional narrative could be the true-life account of a teenager caught in Japan's 2011 catastrophe. I found it hard to put down as I entered Sayaka's world and experienced her anger, bitterness, hope, and healing. The loss of loved ones is handled carefully, but sensitive preteens may find this book too intense to handle. A fine novel from an up-and-coming author. ■

– Barbara Bauman

Swirly



Lila is born in the Blue Country, but moves with her parents to the Yellow Country when she is a little girl. As she gets older she discovers that she isn't all blue—she has swirls of yellow from growing up in the Yellow Country!

Lila isn't just like her yellow friends or her blue cousins, so she feels as though she doesn't fit in anywhere. But when she meets another swirly kid and his swirly mom, she finds out that she does belong somewhere . . . with a very special swirly Someone.

Swirly, by Sara Saunders, is an awesome book that I recommend for little MKs who don't think they fit in the countries they live in. This book will encourage your little kids that even if you don't think you fit in your country, Jesus thinks you are special however you are! ■



Illustration by Megumi Nakazawa

– Megumi Nakazawa (11 years old)

This reviewer rates this book as



5 out of 5 stars

7 Ways to Lead Meetings Effectively

What do you like in meetings you attend? Do that when you lead meetings and you'll lead more effectively. Two things I like are a white board and a consent agenda.¹ Having someone take notes on a whiteboard helps me follow what is happening, particularly when motions are being wordsmithed. Using a consent agenda means more time for discussion because reports aren't read during meetings.

Want some additional suggestions? Here are seven:

1. Cultivate the idea that meetings are ministry

Meetings are not irrelevant time wasters. Meetings are not necessary evils. Meetings are opportunities for the body of Christ to encourage each other, deepen shared understanding, and make decisions that move ministry forward.

Meetings are opportunities for the body of Christ to encourage each other, deepen shared understanding, and make decisions that move ministry forward.

2. Schedule a meeting only when necessary

Schedule a meeting to address substantive goals that cannot effectively be addressed without talking face-to-face. If the goals of the meeting aren't substantive, don't schedule the meeting. If the goals of the meeting can be easily accomplished through email, shared documents, and conversation, don't schedule the meeting.

3. Write agenda items as goals, not topics

Doing this will help meeting participants understand what needs to be accomplished. Instead of "Leadership development," write, "Decide on program for Sunday school teacher training." Instead of "Member care," write, "Respond to proposal to implement coaching throughout our mission."

4. Group similar agenda items together

Different types of agenda items require dif-

ferent types of thinking. Grouping similar agenda items together increases the likelihood that people will think effectively. Types of agenda items include big-picture tasks (reviewing the mission and current trends), strategy-related tasks (considering key issues and finding better ways to achieve the mission), and tactical tasks (sharing information and giving progress reports on assigned tasks).

5. Help meeting participants to come prepared

Send the agenda and all supporting documents to meeting participants in one email. This will help people stay organized. Send the email enough ahead of time so people have time to prepare. (You will need to set a submission deadline for documents to be used in the meeting. Setting a deadline is reasonable because the goal is to have people come prepared.)

6. Establish meeting guidelines

For example: Have only one person talk at a time, take five-minute breaks every hour to keep everyone fresh, send out the meeting minutes within 24 hours of the meeting, and make sure everyone knows what they are responsible to do. Establishing meeting guidelines will help everyone know what is expected and work together effectively.

7. Start and end each meeting on a positive note

Don't start a meeting with a challenging agenda item—for example, developing a strategic plan. Instead, start with an easy agenda item like approving the agenda. Don't end a meeting with a potentially contentious agenda item, possibly resulting in people leaving with negative feelings. Instead, end the meeting with a reflection time on what went well during the meeting.



Michael Essenburg (US; Christian Reformed Japan Mission) serves at Christian Academy in Japan. Time permitting, Michael provides coaching, consulting, and training for missionaries.

What about you?

1. What is one meeting you lead?
2. What is satisfying/unsatisfying about leading meetings?
3. How could you lead meetings even more effectively?
4. What will you do? ■

1. A consent agenda is a single item on an agenda that encompasses all the things that would normally be approved with little comment. See http://www.help4nonprofits.com/UseItToday/UseItToday-Consent_Agenda.htm

Giri: Give and Take



Winter was almost over in snowy northern Japan, and despite all our driving to do relief work along the coast, there hadn't been one car accident. It was disappointing, then, when one staffer's car slid on a small patch of ice and hit a wall. The car was badly damaged, but we were thankful the driver was fine. The real shock came when we received the estimate to repair the car, which was almost the same as the cost of the car itself. But, when we returned to collect the car the cost was one-tenth of what was expected. The repair man, explained, "You volunteers do so much for us."

Giri means "obligation" or "duty," which arises from a social interaction with another person.

This is an example of the Japanese custom of *giri*. Translated loosely, *giri* means "obligation" or "duty," which "arises from a social interaction with another person."¹ Other nuances include "consideration for another person," "exchange of favors," or "moral indebtedness."² In Japan, any service, gift, or help, is not only returned in kind, but it must entail some sacrifice on the part of the returnee. The custom was introduced by Confucius to Japan around 500 BC.

In Japan, any service, gift, or help, is not only returned in kind, but it must entail some sacrifice on the part of the returnee.

Confucius taught that *giri* was performed for the "good" of society.³ Living one's life well meant "performing actions that serve to enhance the greater good, rather than pursuing a path of self-interest."⁴ *Giri* is part of all relationships in Japan, and considered "its most valued standard."⁵ This custom fit well with life in early Japan, where the economy was based on growing rice. The short rice harvest season required the whole community to work together to get everyone's rice harvested in time.



Eileen Nielsen (US) and her husband Jim are doing relief with TEAM in Tohoku. She has a masters in counseling and is available to do counseling by Skype (contact: eileennielsen@gmail.com).

The custom has changed over the years. Rather than displaying the highest regard for human relationships, it has become "mundane."⁶ This shows in the Japanese calendar, where twice a year people are expected to give gifts to those to whom they are obligated. Consumable gifts such as canned ham or vegetable oil are common. Valentine's Day, though imported from the West, also has a *giri* flavor. In this case, chocolates are given by females to their male coworkers, boyfriends, and husbands as "appreciation." The chocolate given between coworkers is even called *giri choco*.⁷

Though some of the meaning is lost, Japanese still value *giri* to help keep relationships harmonious.

Though some of the meaning is lost, Japanese still value *giri* to help keep relationships harmonious. The man at the garage was under no obligation to us. But in typical *giri* style, he gave back to those he felt had helped his country. Knowing firsthand our own response to his gift giving, one can understand why Japanese still value and participate in this practice. ■

1. Masayuki Yoshida, "Giri: A Japanese Indigenous Concept," <http://academic.csuohio.edu/makelaa/history/courses/his373/giri.html>, Oct. 8, 1996.

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3. Jeffery Hays, "Japanese Society" (Subheading: Duty and Following Rules in Japan) Last modified October 2011. <http://factsanddetails.com/japan.php?itemid=642&catid=19&subcatid=120#13>.

4. Jacqueline Kurio, "Japan—Through the Looking Glass: The Concept of Giri." Last modified 2013. <http://www.daijob.com/en/columns/terrie/article/1604>.

5. Roger J. Davies & Osamu Ikeno, "The Japanese Mind: Understanding Contemporary Japanese Culture," (Tuttle Publishing, Tokyo/Rutland, Vermont/Singapore, 2002), 95–100.

6. Kurio, 2013.

7. Davies & Ikeno, 2002.

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