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

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Feature Articles

- 10 **Effective Member Care**
by Ray Hommes
- 12 **Grace to be Physically Fit**
by Susan Driscoll
- 14 **Emotional Self-Care**
by Tomomi Wong
- 16 **Living in the Fullness of His Truth**
by Jef Linscott
- 18 **It's Time to Check the Gauges When...**
by Alan Steier
- 20 **Survival Tips**
by Janet Dallman
- 22 **The Marriage Mission**
by Tim Cole
- 24 **The Single Missionary Female**
by Karyn Zaayenga
- 26 **Surviving and Thriving in Rural Japan**
by Dawn Birkner

General Articles

- 28 **Lessons from Japanese Leaders Reproducing Churches**
Practical Implications *by John Mehn*
- 30 **Nozomi Project**
Art that connects to the world, to each other, and to God *by Roger Lowther*

Regulars

- 5 **President's Pen**
by Dale Little
- 5 **About the Cover**
- 7 **From the Editor**
by Gary Bauman
- 8 **In the News**
- 32 **Member Care**
Times, They Are A-Changing *by Eileen Nielsen*
- 33 **Pursuit of Excellence**
Help Your Team Function Well *by Michael Essenburg*
- 34 **Focus on Prayer**
In Jesus' Name *by Ken Reddington*
- 35 **Modern Tech**
MOOC and the Missionary *by Dan Rudd*
- 36 **Off the Bookshelf**
Member Care: Resource recommendations by contributor Alan Steier
- 37 **Good Writing**
Editing and Proofreading *by Wendy Marshall*

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JEMA Datebook

Event	Date	Place
JEMA WIM Day of Prayer	January 16, 2014	TEAM Center, Tokorozawa
JEMA 2014 Fellowship Evening	February 27, 2014	OCC Chapel, 8th Floor, Tokyo
JEMA Mission Leaders / Plenary Session	February 28, 2014	OCC Chapel, 8th Floor, Tokyo
JEMA Writer's Workshop	March 3–5, 2014	Nikko, Olive no Sato
JEMA WIM Retreat	March 5–7, 2014	Nikko, Olive no Sato
JEMA WIM Retreat	March 8, 2014	OMF Hokkaido Center, Sapporo

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

On-field Theological Training

I have noticed that many American and Canadian sending mission agencies no longer require much theological or leadership education for missionary candidates. These agencies often encourage their missionaries to pick up coursework while they are serving on the mission field.

There is nothing new about the importance of missionaries taking the initiative in ongoing personal development on the field. What has changed over the years, however, is that most missionaries now seem to arrive on the field with less background in theological and leadership studies than in past years. It is more important for them to upgrade their education than it was for missionaries in the previous generation.

If I have correctly read this trend, I would expect to see an increase in on-field training options offered by mission agencies or seminaries. Care for missionaries ought to include educational opportunities. People in Christian ministry need to be continually updating their understanding and knowledge of theology and ministry practice. Although the Word of God is unchanging, we need fresh perspectives on how to correctly interpret and apply it to the ever-changing world in which God has called us to make disciples for Christ. However, many missionaries are left on their own to pursue their personal development, including academic studies.

Most seminaries are more eager to train future and returning missionaries than those on the field. They prefer resident students. For example, a US seminary president recently informed me that accrediting re-

quirements limit how many courses can be offered to students outside the US. This restriction prevents them from offering degree programs overseas. His school therefore has a significant residency requirement for graduate degrees. He did mention that these accrediting requirements might be loosening up. But even if this happens, because of financial issues his school would not likely offer many study options for missionaries outside the country. US seminaries across the board are facing financial challenges. They tend to prioritize residency programs that produce more income than remote programs.

So personal development in theological and leadership studies on the field seems to be a challenge. Could JEMA be a catalyst in encouraging mission agencies or seminaries to offer courses for the JEMA community once or twice a year? Would seminaries be interested in pursuing that option? Would JEMA members be interested in the personal development options this might provide?

Your JEMA leadership team is discussing this. Drop me an email if you have some input!



Dale Little (Canada) 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.



About the Cover

In general, missionaries tend to push themselves beyond their limits in order to do the work they feel God has called them to. “Running on empty” is a metaphor that describes the danger missionaries face when they don’t take time to look after themselves and “refuel.”

This issue contains a variety of articles covering different aspects of caring for missionaries. Many articles give indicators, or “gauges,” for evaluating potential danger in one or more areas of our lives—as well as suggestions for “re-fuelling” in order to continue, steadfast in His harvest. Photograph by *Japan Harvest’s* April Mack.

Top 10 Reasons to Study at Tokyo Christian University

by Randall Short, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies

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Avoiding Ministry Disaster

If you've been in Japan for a while, you've probably seen missionaries and Japanese leaders leave their ministries prematurely. All too often it was because they ignored, weren't aware of, or refused to deal with areas in their lives that eventually destroyed their ministry.

That's one reason we've chosen this issue's theme of member care. We hope the articles, mainly focused on self-care, will encourage you to take some time for a personal check-up. If you're in mission leadership and your group hasn't adopted a member care policy, Ray Hommes' article on "Effective Member Care" can get you started.

When it comes to member care, our first struggle may be justifying care for ourselves.

It's okay to accept care

When it comes to member care, our first struggle may be justifying care for ourselves. After all, the reason we minister in Japan is because of our concern for others. Some of us grew up under the teaching that "burning out for Jesus" was the ultimate Christian experience—almost as if martyrdom was something we should seek in the course of full-time ministry. Many missionary biographies from past centuries seem to perpetuate that attitude. However, burnout can lead to ministry disaster. That's why the accountability provided by a member care system is so important.

Years ago, one of my Japanese pastor friends was forced to leave the pastoral ministry. The warning signs were there, but at the time I wasn't in Japan to see them. Without minimizing sin and personal

responsibility, what contributed to his fall? Overwork, a lack of personal boundaries at the office, inadequate marriage communication, and the "pastor-on-a-pedestal syndrome," were all factors. With no accountability structures in place, he fell into moral sin.

Care is available

Fortunately, today there is greater awareness of the need for care within the missionary community as well as within the Japanese Church. Many resources are available that weren't available just a few decades ago. The articles found in both this issue of *Japan Harvest* and the JEA's *Japan Update* in the center of the magazine only begin to touch on the vast number of potential member care issues. Additional resources are suggested in some of the articles. Others can be found in "Off the Bookshelf" and on the JEMA Web site in our member care area.

Some of our larger JEMA member missions have people assigned part- or full-time to the area of member care, so if you don't have access to care, someone in the JEMA community may be able to help. For several years professional counseling has been available at the JEMA Women in Ministry retreat in March and the biennial Church Planting Institute conference at Fuji Hakone Land.

As we highlight this topic, we hope that if you or someone you know isn't getting necessary member care, you will take active steps to seek help. ■

We hope the articles, mainly focused on self-care, will encourage you to take some time for a personal check-up.

Update from Japan Harvest

Thank you for your patience as you've waited for this issue of *Japan Harvest*. This year our staff members have encountered unavoidable difficulties in putting this magazine together. Our winter issue will also be delayed, but we hope to be back on schedule with our spring issue. We apologize for any inconvenience. We've also recently experienced a staff change, with April Mack leaving us and Greg Corey joining us as our art director and production editor. We're grateful to April for the high quality she's brought to the layout of the magazine over the last two years.



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.

Creator Version Bible

Excerpt translated by Tim Williams
CHRISTIAN SHIMBUN — May 5, 2013

The Creator Version of the Bible, the first Japanese Bible which uses “創造主 Sōzōshu (Creator)” in place of “神 Kami (god),” has been published with the hope to equip the Church for mission.

Nobuji Horikoshi, who originally proposed this idea, says “When sharing God with the Japanese, they say, ‘there are gods in trees and stones.’ We need to deny their god before we can share the true God, which can lead to the listener closing his heart. Look under 「創造主」 in a Japanese dictionary and it will say ‘Christian god.’ If there is a Bible that uses 「創造主」 for God, I hope it will help the gospel spread.”

“In my ministry there were battles with the temples and shrines concerning the name of god, but when I talk of life, no one denies it. Ancestral worship is about giving thanks to those who gave life. If you go further back, you will arrive at the Creator. The Creator Version Bible has developed a foundation for evangelism in Japan.”

Mr. Horikoshi, the son of a Shinto priest, began to think about life after losing his mother at the age of eleven. After the war, he came to know the Creator and became a pastor. In the kindergarten that was attached to the church, he taught using 創造主 instead of 神. In 1999, he started Sōai Christ Church. For the past 13 years, they have replaced 神 for 創造主, when reading from the New Japanese Bible (新改訳).

The Creator Version is not a word-for-word translation, but

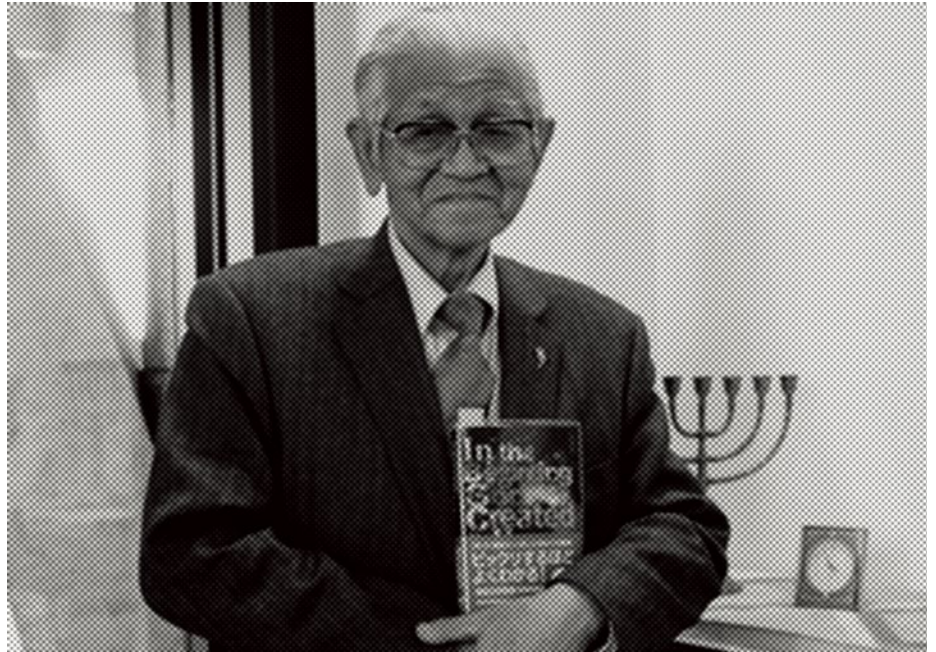


Photo contributed by the Christian Shimbun

is based on the Modern Japanese Bible, which uses the Dynamic Equivalence model, aiming to produce an equivalent effect in the reader as original words did in their original readers.

Included at the back of the Creator Version is a large number of color visuals including maps and charts. Archeological and biological findings are explained from the point of view of creationism.

Keigo Kosaka, Representative of Logos Publishing, who published this version, hopes that “this Bible might be used for the 99% of the Japanese population who still do not know the Creator.” ■

An Opinion on Corporal Punishment and Bullying

By Akira Okada, teacher at a Tokyo municipal high school
Translated by Tomoko Kato and Atsuko Tateishi
CHRISTIAN SHIMBUN — May 26, 2013

Corporal punishment has been a big media topic this year. Why does corporal punishment never cease? In my opinion it is because Japanese schools cultivate in their students’ minds values that are lenient toward corporal punishment. Let us look at how that has been so in the modern history of Japan.

Gakumon no Susume (An Encouragement of Learning) written by Fukuzawa Yukichi in 1872 suggested people should study hard for individual promotions. The militarism that emerged following the Sino-Japanese and the Russo-Japanese wars (1894–95, and 1904–05, respectively) gradually drove Japanese schools to raise “strong imperial citizens” for the country. During the early Showa Era (1926–1989), military officers conducted military drills at school. In those days, schools served as the preparatory stage to becoming soldiers. During the process, physical punishment that was practiced in the military became a licensed

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!"

practice also at school.

The years leading up to World War II saw the consummation of collectivism in Japan. Each household had to belong to a neighborhood group, to watch each other's conduct. All Protestant churches were integrated into the United Church of Christ in Japan in 1941 for the easier control by the government. At school the values of self-sacrifice and patriotism were most upheld. If any student showed the slightest sign of defiance, they would be severely punished. Many learned, as a survival technique, such Japanese values as yielding to the powerful, being tactful, and being sensitive to the atmosphere.

Upon Japan's defeat in 1945, the nation's social system was overturned. But did it also overturn the values in Japan?

The new constitution of 1947 drastically democratized Japanese public education. Today, however, top values at school still appear to be collectivism and conformity. Even the idea of uniqueness seems to have a certain firm boundary. If you do not fit within that boundary, you will be bullied.

The new constitution and democratization in the postwar era failed to revolutionize the Japanese value system. Children learn the Japanese values at school for 12 years, and some go on to become schoolteachers. Thus, collectivism continues to be valued, and corporal punishment remains acceptable for those who do not conform.

Christian values are sometimes counter-cultural. You cannot always follow the majority. I believe we need more Christians who dare

to be different, at the risk of exclusion and bullying, in order to start guiding the schools in Japan in the right direction. ■

New Hiroshima Film

*Excerpt translated by Atsuko Tateishi
CHRISTIAN SHIMBUN — June 23, 2013*

T*hings Left Behind* (ひろしま石内都・遺されたものたち) is an 80-minute documentary about a photo exhibit held in 2011 in Vancouver, Canada. The exhibit featured 48 photos taken at the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum, by photographer Miyako Ishiuchi, of artifacts from atomic bomb victims in Hiroshima.

The film lets each artifact, beautifully captured in Miyako's photos, speak its own story through the mouths of the exhibit visitors. Not only local Canadians, but also Mexicans, tourists from Korea and Japan, and 200 Japanese high school girls on a school trip saw the photos and expressed their thoughts. The film is showing in various cities in

Japan beginning in July 2013.

Linda Hoaglund, director of the film, grew up as an American missionary kid in Yamaguchi-ken and Ehime-ken, going to local school through junior high. Christian Shimbun interviewed Linda:

"I was inspired by Miyako's photos. Each article was shown as if it were a piece of art. We have seen enough of the horrible images of the atomic bombing. I wanted to offer people an opportunity to get to know Hiroshima through something beautiful," says Linda. "A charred blouse, for example, would lead people to think of the girl who was wearing it. Was it her best attempt to be fashionable? What was she doing right up to that fatal moment?" Linda believes that the photos connect the viewers with the voiceless owners of the things in the photos.

"The film is an attempt to preserve the victims' stories," explains Linda. "It is also a requiem for those who perished without even a family member who mourned for them, because the entire family was wiped out." ■



"It's a film about Hiroshima and redemption, from the perspective of a missionary kid," says Linda. Photo contributed by the Christian Shimbun.

Effective M

In the 1970s and '80s, when our family was living in Japan, member care was new. Many missionaries thought needing "outside help" was a sign of weakness, and a lack of faith and trust in God. Nowadays, many missionaries realize that encouragement, support, and counseling help are necessary ingredients for fruitful ministry in missions. However, the key to successfully providing this kind of member care is in how it is done by mission agencies and boards.

The overriding purpose of member care should be positive, to give support and encouragement to its members.

Importance

Serious emotional and relational problems within missionary families or their church community sap their strength, and hinders the work. Furthermore, dealing with complex relationship problems can drain the energy of mission executives, forcing them to spend valuable time in areas for which they often are not gifted. All branches of the organization can be negatively affected.

But when the members of a mission organization feel heard, and their needs are being met, then every-

one can do the work they have been called to do with the least amount of interference and stress.

Member care cannot be set up just to put out fires or in reaction to a crisis. Policies and practices have to start at the top, before problems emerge. Leaders in both home and field offices must see the value of member care and communicate that to everyone else.

Purposeful

A plan must be initiated, policies drawn up, and a structure put in place for member care to work. Obviously each organization is different, so the final written policy will look different, but the general implementation is the same. Everyone within the mission organization needs to understand and see member care policy in writing. It should be clear and straightforward.

The overriding purpose of member care should be positive, to give support and encouragement to its members. Its main purpose is not to just solve problems or send people to counselors, but rather to be a tool to create an atmosphere of understanding and care from the top down.

Structure

The basic structure depends on every missionary family being interviewed at least once a year. Therefore everyone, not just "people with problems," are recipients of member care. The purpose of this interview is to share the joys and hopes, as well as the concerns and difficulties, of missionary life. Just having someone listen to feelings and stories communicates understanding and care. To know someone from the organization's management cares about what you are doing and how you are doing is invaluable.

The interviewer, who could be the mission director in a smaller agency, does not have to be a counselor, but simply someone who is trained to be a good listener. Of course this person must be someone who can be trusted and be someone who treats people with respect and dignity.



Member Care

Practical

Further help may be needed if there are situations in the missionaries' lives that are keeping them from functioning in their work, or if some part of their life isn't healthy. If harm is being done to self or others, then the member care person can suggest that the missionary get help from a trained counselor or pastor, and give referrals.

Further help may be needed if there are situations in the missionaries' lives that are keeping them from functioning in their work, or if some part of their life isn't healthy.

It's advisable that interviewers receive some form of training. This is necessary in order to recognize symptoms of emotional problems such as depression, anxiety, and post-traumatic stress, and to know when to refer or ask for advice.

Help

When it is determined that a fellow missionary, someone in the family, or the whole family needs professional help, there are different ways the agency can deal with this. A pre-determined process needs to be clearly written down in the member care policies and guidelines.

Help can be in the form of a suggestion to seek counseling, or counseling can be made mandatory. If it is mandatory, and the person refuses to get help within a certain period of time, the mission can have the policy that the missionary needs to leave the field if harm is being done to themselves, their loved ones, or to the work of the mission.

Some missions require the counselor, after a certain amount of sessions, to give a written summary to the mission with general recommendations, (not specific details). Then the mission can make an informed decision as to what is best for the individual missionary

and family. Sometimes that means continuing counseling on the field, other times that might mean having to go back to their home country for a period of time.

When I was counseling in Africa four years ago, I learned about some missionaries who had had to leave the field for a while to take care of a family situation. They looked at this as part of their calling, and often they would return to the field, sometimes after spending years in their home country, and continue their work.

Biblical

In the Old Testament story of Job, his friends did a good job of ministering to Job by just being present with him and listening to him (Job 2: 11-13). But they messed things up when they started giving Job advice, admonition, and reasons why God was doing this to him; in the end God was displeased and angry with Job's friends for doing this (Job 42:7-9).

Listening is so helpful to people who are struggling, need direction, or are in pain. We are all human, and sometimes we need to be on the receiving end of ministry. But in order to give the care its members need, the mission agency itself has to be supportive, understanding, and non-threatening. Speaking the truth in love is also often necessary to make it work. If missionaries can be ministered to in this supportive and loving atmosphere, the work of the Kingdom will be enhanced and needless suffering will be avoided on many fronts. ■

To know someone from the organization's management cares about what you are doing and how you are doing is invaluable.

Ray Hommes served in Japan from 1970–1989. He's worked as a counselor and chaplain in the US. Since 2011, he and his wife have returned to Japan periodically to help people deal with trauma and loss.

Photo by Kevin R. Morris (OMF)

Grace to be Physically

You could be spiritually and emotionally healthy, yet flat on your back physically, not able to carry out the work God has given you. God made us finite and weak with so many limitations. I wonder if He did that on purpose, leaving us dependent His grace as we grow. I daily wrestle with this as I stumble along, striving to be a physically healthy missionary in Japan.

Most of us find we swing from one side of the spectrum to the other: either resting in grace or striving hard to grow. Yet throughout Scripture these go hand in hand. Even as we look at aspects of our physical daily life, we need God and His Word, as well as others, to speak this balance of biblical tension into our lives. We need challenges to grow, but only in the context of His cushioning grace.

It is only by His grace that we can do anything. We come before the Lord with our overflowing handful of weaknesses and limitations, trusting His grace to make something out of our mess. In our family we have a saying: “I am okay because of God’s Grace.” We need to speak that grace to ourselves and to each other.

Here are four areas of daily life where I am learning to give myself grace amidst the challenges to grow.

Sleep

God makes the world go dark at night. He also allows me to get tired. I know if I don’t get enough sleep, I get run down, sick, and cranky. It’s difficult to put work demands aside in order to wind down and fall asleep. But if I don’t, my whole family suffers. Some of us need more sleep than others. That’s okay. I need to accept my limitations and make choices accordingly. Be aware that the culture we live in is fast paced and

demanding. Many around us don’t get enough sleep. Don’t let the unhealthy norm make it normal for you to be unhealthy.

What makes it hard for you to get enough sleep? What can you do about it?

We need to prioritize, planning time to rest and recuperate, to be refreshed and renewed.

Rest

Whether it is a few hours relaxing, a whole day off, or an extended holiday time away, we all need rest. Again, don’t let guilt or comparison with others rob you of needed rest. Most mission organizations have a high work value, as does our host culture. Therefore we need to prioritize, planning time to rest and recuperate, to be refreshed and renewed. We won’t last the long haul without it.

I tend to go, go, go, and then crash. I have learned the hard way that without enough of the right kind of rest, I collapse. I need input from others to gauge how much is too much. Always ministering to people drains me. I need quiet time away, even an overnight by myself without any demands from others. Sometimes I start reading an engaging book, just to make myself sit down and put my feet up. It’s not frivolous for me; it’s mandatory. I have also found simple things like a clean room, soft lighting, or relaxing background music speaks rest into my restless world.

Fit

Regular exercise that gets your heart pumping and your legs moving gives you more energy.

What changes could you make in your home or to your schedule to enable you to rest more?

Exercise

We've all heard the challenge. And felt the guilt. The transforming key for me was finding something I enjoy. After painstakingly trying stacks of workout videos, I found the running path near my house with its blue skies and green trees. This exercise method beckoned to me with promises of time alone to think and pray. I needed a challenge though—first a 5K, then a 10. Both of these left me winded, but got my feet trotting. I needed grace, too. When I am sick, over extended, or can't bear the heat, I give myself a grace break.

Regular exercise that gets your heart pumping and your legs moving actually gives you *more* energy, as well as helps fight off mild-depression.¹ I've felt the benefit of exercise these past years as I've literally run off heart problems. It's worth the time, the energy, and every drop of sweat.

What's keeping you from exercising like you know you could? Who can keep you accountable?

Diet

Eating healthily takes daily choices and prioritizing. We all know it takes more time and energy to make a salad at home than to buy a hamburger on your way home. I know, though, that I will feel better when I eat better. I struggle with this as the main cook in our house, because my choices don't just affect only me,

but also my family. Making an effort to make affordable, healthy food isn't easy, but I know it's worth it. Whether it's choosing to drink more water or eat less sugar, eating nourishing, sustaining food helps me physically carry out the spiritual task of ministry.

In what ways could you use a challenge concerning what you put or don't put in your mouth?

Thriving, not just surviving

Are you extending to yourself the same amazing grace that God grants to you?

Blanketed in this grace, God is growing us to be more like Him. This stretching, sanctification process sometimes hurts. Blind spots need to be addressed. We need to hear tough questions like: What lifestyle changes can I make that will bring me one step closer to thriving, rather than just surviving? ■

When Susan Driscoll (US; OMF International) isn't jogging along her favorite Tokyo canal, she is church planting with her husband Tim at Saitama International Church. They have been in Japan since 1995 and have three teenage sons. Blog: <http://MemoirsofaMissionaryMom.blogspot.jp>

1. "Benefits of exercise—reduces stress, anxiety, and helps fight depression, from Harvard Men's Health Watch." http://www.health.harvard.edu/press_releases/benefits-of-exercisereduces-stress-anxiety-and-helps-fight-depression Accessed September 24, 2013.

Photo by Sura Nualpradid (FreeDigitalPhotos.net)

Don't let guilt or comparison with others rob you of needed rest.

Emotional

Emotions are God's creation—they are necessary for physical, mental, and spiritual wholeness. They enable us to make and keep connections to the world around us. Without emotion, we could not love, we would not learn through pain, and we could not experience joy. Emotions, positive and negative, are a gift from God. They make us human, as opposed to robots. However, when emotion controls us for too long, it can be harmful for our health.

Theology of emotion

It is generally considered that expressing anger is wrong.¹ Some Christians misunderstand emotions, thinking that spiritual and mature Christians should not be emotional. These are half-truths.

A close look at the gospels provides a picture of a fully human Jesus, a real person who was tested and tempted in every way that we are (Heb. 4:15). The Bible is clear that Jesus experienced and expressed a full range of emotions: sorrow as He overlooked the city of Jerusalem (Luke 19:41), fear in the garden (Matt 26:37–44), grief at the tomb of Lazarus (John 11:35), joy in welcoming children (Mark 10:16), disappointment in Peter's denial (Luke 22:61), and anger on numerous occasions—with Peter, with Pharisees, and in the Temple.

Jesus, Son of God, did not hesitate to express his emotions, but He did it in the center of the Father's will.

Jesus, Son of God, did not hesitate to express His emotions, but He did it in the center of the Father's will.

We need to figure out the boundary between emotions that are necessary and those that are harmful. For example, we need to consider when is our anger good (anger at a wrong being done, or an injustice)

and when is our anger harmful (anger that stems from a selfish root). When we understand the difference, we can represent and express God's justice, kindness, mercy, and sadness for the lost on this earth.

Practical help

One important skill we can learn is how to deal with a negative emotion. If the emotion is denied, or not expressed and repressed, it will accumulate and cause all kinds of emotional problems.

Our struggles are real. Christ was fully human and fully divine, and he suffered and struggled like us. Therefore He can understand us completely.

"This shouldn't happen to me; I don't want to accept this." We deny our emotions when we think, "I'm okay, I'm not sad even though I was rejected or failed."

A healthy approach to emotions is to identify unhelpful emotions and their causes, and learn from the experience.

Let's do an exercise

Search your negative emotions about recent events and name the emotions. It's important to find accurate words or a few sentences about your feelings, so take your time. You can do this on paper, or just in your head.

After you name your emotions, the next step is to consider if there is another perspective. Reflect on what these emotions are telling you about your inner needs. What is God teaching you through these emotions?

When you know your emotions and describe the feelings in words, the healing process starts. Take your time to accept them, express them, and if possible

Self-Care

share with someone. Bring your emotions to the Lord in prayer, too. Repeat this as many times as you need. Do not quickly conclude, “It’s okay, because God is in control”. Take time to accept that you are actually experiencing the feeling and try to figure out what it is teaching you about yourself.

Emotions, positive and negative, are a gift from God.

Remember the positive side of your emotions. Emotions help us understand ourselves; they can tell us what we need. For example, anger at an insult is a protective emotion. If you didn’t get angry, you’d allow that person to continue to hurt you.

Continue this exercise until you feel you are controlling the negative emotion rather, than the emotion controlling you.²

Conclusion

It is good to remember that to be Christ-like is to be emotional. Rather than trying to repress or deny our emotions, we need to work at identifying and managing our emotions, and learning from what we feel. Our struggles are real. Christ was fully human and fully divine, and He suffered and struggled like us. Therefore, He can understand us completely. Our journey on this earth is with Christ, who has already won the fight through the cross for us.

Learning to express our emotions in line with the Father’s will is a life-long journey. Let us continue to seek His will in all we do and feel. ■

Ideas for maintaining emotional health

- Keep an emotional journal
- Have a healthy theology of emotion
www.missionarycare.com

Dr. Archibald D. Hart, *The Anxiety Cure*, Thomas Nelson, 2001.

Peter Brain, *Going the Distance*, The GoodBook Co., 2001.

Sue Augustine, *When Your Past is Hurting Your Present*, Harvest House Publishing, 2005.

Karla McLaren,* *The Language of Emotions*, Sounds True, 2010.

David G. Benner, *Care of Souls: Revisioning Christian Nurture and Counsel*, Baker Books, 1998.

Kay Arthur, *Lord, Heal my Hurts*, Waterbrook Press, 2000.

*Please note that McLaren isn’t a Christian. However, the book is useful.

Tomomi Wong (Japan) and her Singaporean husband have served as OMF missionaries in Japan since 2009. She has degrees in psychology and pastoral counselling. She serves Christians, Christian workers, and pre-believers in her counselling ministry.

1. Peter Brain, *Going the Distance*, The GoodBook Co., 2001, 85.

2. Please note that this article is not talking about mental illness. If you or someone you know is having serious difficulties in this area, seek professional help. See this link for information about warning signs of mental illness: <http://www.psychiatry.org/mental-health/more-topics/warning-signs-of-mental-illness>

Living in the Fullness of His Truth

A missionary colleague arrived one Sunday evening for some downtime, a coffee, and some good conversation, just as he had done many times before. He admitted, “It had been a hard day.” Then his phone rang. He talked at length with a fellow-church member regarding some misunderstandings. They prayed together and then hung up the phone. Still looking a little unsettled, he turned to me, briefly explained the situation, and asked what I thought. Not really knowing how to answer, I simply said, “Shall we ask the Holy Spirit?”

Hence began a ninety-minute encounter where my friend had, in his own words, “the most significant spiritual experience” since his conversion. The Holy Spirit gently revealed issues, mostly regarding his identity in Christ, and replaced each lie with His truth and revelation.

Getting together with other believers and being honest about life is essential to walking in the fullness and freedom that Christ has already given us.

Struggles common to all

Over the years, we have had the privilege of praying with many believers and seeing them come to a revelation of the fullness and freedom they have in Christ.

From seemingly small issues right through to destructive sinful habits, we are all aware of the temptations that are “common to mankind” (1 Corinthians 10:13, NIV). People of all ages and stature contend with bondage to sensuality and pornography. Many missionaries struggle with an overwhelming sense of having to perform,

comparison to others, and a fear of failure. More subtle strongholds of the mind like isolation, loneliness, and feelings of hopelessness sap life from countless believers.

However, sinful actions, negative thoughts, or destructive attitudes are not the issue; the root of these problems is a misunderstanding of who God is and who we are in Christ. Instead of the truth of God, somehow a lie has taken root, crushing out joy and peace.

The answer, then, is not just in stopping sinful actions, thoughts or behavior, but true biblical repentance; the changing of one’s mind and aligning it with the truth.

A pastor’s wife struggled with performance and perfectionism for many years. She believed she had to earn approval from God through all her religious activities. The Holy Spirit exposed a lie about her value and showed her that His love for her was not based on her performance in any way. God touched her deeply and taught her to rest in His love in a way that she had never experienced.

Get together and get honest

Getting together with other believers and being honest about life is essential to walking in the fullness and freedom that Christ has already given us. Too many believers, especially pastors and leaders, live at an arm’s distance from one another, remaining unable to reap the true benefit of “carry[ing] each other’s burdens” (Galatians 6:2).

Isolation is a huge enemy to the believer. Humility and openness are the antidotes. Non-judgmental, confidential, grace-filled relationships should be a non-negotiable part of our biblical church life. These need

to be number one priority over and above any ministry or service focus. These relationships are much more important than negative accountability which often just focusses on sin and outward behavior. True biblical community concentrates instead on identity and encouragement.¹

Truth

A young missionary failed terribly in the area of sexual purity. Upon confessing it to his mission leader, rather than grace, acceptance and restoration; he was condemned, judged and made to feel like a complete failure. The response of his overseer set him on a long-term path of further sin and isolation.

Getting practical

- Who do you have in your life who you trust more than yourself and has the freedom to confront you?
- Do you have relationships with people nearby with whom you can be completely honest, in a confidential setting, and know that you won't be judged harshly or condemned?

If you don't have people in your immediate area to be this "community", consider sharing regularly with someone on Skype or by telephone.

Knowing the truth and exposing the lies

But there is more to this than just having a coffee and a chat. Our gatherings must be led by the Holy Spirit and focused on the revelation of who He is, who we are in Christ and the power of God for us to walk in freedom.

We begin this process with biblical truths and promises of God. Anything that does not line up with these is obviously not of God. Romans 8:6 says: "... the mind controlled by the Spirit is life and peace" (NIRV). That means that anything in our minds and hearts that does not give life and peace is not of the Spirit and we can simply "repent" and change our minds.

This is what Jesus promised in John 8:32, "Then you will know the truth. And the truth will set you free."

Paul echoed this throughout his writings: we already have all things in Christ and any lack we feel is simply a smoke-screen of the enemy that keeps us focused on a lie and keeps us from fullness. Disturbances we feel in our hearts can be like warning lights, showing us that we need to refocus on the truths of God. He is more than willing to expose the lies that we believe so that He can replace them with His truth.

We have seen countless believers confess feeling distant from God, or feeling that God is constantly angry or displeased with them. Almost without exception the actual root of the issue is an experience of a distant, detached and often-angry human father which led them to believe the lie that God was the same. Through forgiveness, rebuking of the lies, and declaring the truth, these people come quickly to experience their heavenly daddy like never before.

A simple way to pray

If you have a known issue, take some time either alone, or with a trusted friend, and ask God the following questions:

Why am I feeling like this?

Show me any lies that I may have believed about You, or about myself.

Write down anything He shows you.

Now ask the Spirit: What is Your truth about this matter?

As He reveals His truth, simply break the lies, and declare the truth in Jesus' name.

Encounter His love

The truth is not a concept or a law, but rather the person of Christ himself. Our on-going encounter with Jesus keeps us walking in complete freedom. Many of us are busy doing stuff for Jesus, but are reluctant to sit at His feet and fellowship with Him (Luke 10:38-42).

Make it a point today to sit at His feet and enjoy His presence.

Getting Practical

- Ask God for a revelation of who He is, and who you are in Him.
- Write down the truths and promises from God's word so you can declare them daily. ■

Jef Linscott came from NZ with YWAM in 1992. He and his wife, Aya, are now independent missionaries working in discipleship, publishing, and encouragement to prepare the church in Japan for harvest: <http://www.onfire.jp>. You can contact Jef at jeflinscott@gmail.com.

1. Note how Jesus gently restored Peter after his failure through emphasizing his identity and calling in John 21:15-17.

It's Time to Check the Gauges When...

I have never been much of a mechanic, but my father taught me the importance of changing the oil and filter. Not paying attention to that simple instruction could lead to a potentially exorbitant expense.

My son was reminded of that when his car began to make strange noises. He took it to a mechanic who said it would cost \$600–800 to fix. As a college student, he didn't have that kind of money, and neither did his parents. The mechanic eventually asked my son when he had last changed the oil in the car. Change the oil? Oops! Good thing that was all that was necessary. Cost: \$62.



It is so easy to let the seemingly little things slip and go undone. But how quickly those minor things can turn into major expenses if not dealt with appropriately!

Likewise, when it comes to maintaining our own well-being and health, we need to pay attention to the built-in gauges God has provided to warn us of impending dangers. Pay attention to those gauges now, or suffer the consequences later.

There are many aspects of “health,” but I will focus on spiritual, emotional, physical and relational.

Spiritual

Missionary work is primarily spiritual work. God is passionate for his people. His desire is to be worshiped, not only corporately, but also in one's significant personal time with him. Time with the Lord ought not be mere duty or something to be checked off on a list of tasks, but rather a joyful and life-giving opportunity to reconnect with the One who knows and loves us deeply. Psalm 16:11 says, “You make known to me the path of life; in your presence there is fullness of joy; at your right hand are pleasures evermore” (ESV).

We build up our spiritual health as we intentionally pursue our relationship with our heavenly Father. Jesus regularly met his heavenly Father. His power and endurance were restored by his connection with the Father (Mark 1:35). Through that connection, the Spirit of God flowed through Jesus so that he could do the Father's will. Likewise, those who are most effective in ministry are those who serve out of the overflow of the heart. Remember: we cannot give what we do not have.

Check your spiritual gauge when:

- Your time with the Lord seems more a chore than a delight.
- Your prayer life has diminished to a few short phrases.
- You don't remember the last time you took a Sabbath rest.
- You aren't experiencing joy.

Emotional

Having a variety of emotions or feelings is part of what makes us human. While sometimes fickle, our emotions often indicate what is truly going on inside of us.

When challenging situations and circumstances confront us, we should ask, “What's going on inside me? Where is this fear, disgust, doubt, anger, or uncertainty coming from? Could there be issues from the past that have yet to be resolved?”

Check your emotional gauge when:

- You become angry or very frustrated at the slightest provocation.
- You are discouraged to point of despair and want to escape.
- You become overly sarcastic and cynical.
- Your motivation for ministry seems to have shriveled up and blown away.

Physical

God's Word tells us that we are fearfully and wonderfully made (Psalm 139:14). However, any number of factors can hinder our health, such as illness, disease, and injury. One unexpected factor that may also sap our health is stress. While most missionaries are well aware of *culture shock*, many might not fully appreciate the toll ongoing *cultural stress* has on the body.¹

Stress can take a toll on a person's body, and we often have a diminished awareness of what is going on in our bodies until significant problems develop. Studies show that physical manifestations may include ulcers, hypertension, heart disease, sleep disturbances, some cancers, thyroid problems, allergies, autoimmune diseases, weight gain, and obesity.² The development of physical problems is frequently the first indication of untreated, chronic stress.

Check your physical gauge when:

- Your sleep patterns change—you're not feeling rested or unable to get to sleep or stay asleep.
- You seem to be more prone to infections.
- You find yourself relying on "comfort food."
- Your energy level has diminished for no apparent reason.

Relational

Human beings were made for relationships. The intimate community found in the Trinity is our pattern for loving, caring relationships as believers. As the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit trust, love, and dance together in intimate relationship, we are invited to do

the same with others in our lives. We grow and find healing best as we journey through life in close connection with others.

Unresolved conflict is one of the most significant reasons missionaries give for leaving the field.³ Understanding others' different gifts, abilities, interests, and patterns for living will help diffuse potential conflicts that arise. How we handle disagreements makes all the difference in the health of all our relationships.

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Check your relational gauge when:

- You find it difficult to love the people with whom you work.
- Others irritate you over minor things.
- You increasingly want to isolate yourself from other people.
- If married, you find it difficult to relate well to your spouse.
- You have an increased amount of conflict with co-workers or family.

Check your gauges

As a missionary care facilitator, my prayer and desire is to see God's global servants become more aware of these important gauges, so that

they may live in healthy ways and better fulfill the ministry God has called them to.

If you sense that any of these gauges are at the warning level in your life, please find a trusted friend, spiritual advisor, or counselor with whom you can unpack what may be going on inside. Better to deal with the issue at the \$62 level than let it get to the \$600 level! ■

Alan Steier served as a missionary to Japan (1978–1980; 1984–1989) with North American Baptists, Inc.. He was a local church pastor (1990–2000) in the US and is currently on staff with Barnabas International with Judy, his wife, in North Dakota.

1. Culture Stress is defined here: http://www.missionarycare.com/brochures/br_culturestress.htm

2. Yeaman, Jan, "Stress and coping: Learning how to be resilient," in *Enhancing Missionary Vitality: Mental Health Professions Serving Global Mission*, ed. John R. Powell and Joyce M. Bowers, (Palmer Lake, CO: Mission Training International, 2002), 110.

3. Teague, David, *Godly Servants: Discipleship and Spiritual Formation for Missionaries*. (Mission Imprints, 2012), 167.

Photo by John Kasawa (FreeDigitalPhotos.net)

Survival Tips

Are you new to Japan? Do you host new workers? Are you in a leadership position? *Japan Harvest* asked us to suggest some survival tips for new workers.

Maintain a close walk with Jesus

If we don't have Jesus, we have nothing. However, quiet times can be a challenge when you are busy, tired, confused, and culture-shocked. What practical steps can you take to give time to Jesus?

For leaders welcoming new missionaries: How could you help and encourage them to prioritise their walk with God?

Cultivate an attitude of contentment

Are you someone for whom the "grass is always greener on the other side of the fence"? Ask God for His help to be content and thankful in your new situation. A sense of humour and commitment to joy is also vital.

Leaders: Are there people in your organisation who can come alongside new workers—to listen and pray?

Be prepared to be vulnerable

You will need to open your heart to people in order to learn the language and culture of Japan, and to get to know others in your organisation. Also be ready to accept their frailty, but don't miss out the opportunity for close friendships.

Leaders: How can you open your life and heart to new workers? Are you willing to share your struggles as well as your successes?

Don't compare

This is one of the biggest pitfalls of language learning—and of course it doesn't stop with language. Work hard, but whatever you do, do not compare yourself to other people. They have different personalities, capacities, and abilities to you. God made you. Rejoice in being fully yourself under Him.

Leaders: How can you celebrate each person's unique talents and abilities?

Language and culture learning is a ministry

It's easy to think language and culture learning is a chore to do before the real ministry happens. However, this training is also the ministry to which God has called you. Communicating this to your supporters is also important.

Leaders: How can you facilitate language and culture study so that it is viewed as ministry? How can you encourage your home-side supporters to see this training as ministry?

Whatever you do, do not compare yourself to other people.

Language and culture learning is a marathon

New workers are keen and enthusiastic, but it can lead some to rush through their studies, and attempt to zoom through their cultural adaptation and life in general. You need to pace yourself. Try to set reasonable goals and forgive yourself when you make a mistake.

Leaders: How can you encourage consistent, marathon-minded learning in every area of life?

Recognise your limitations

You may be extremely competent in your home country, but you will need to learn to accept your limitations in your new culture. This is always a humbling experience, so ask God to give you grace.

Leaders: How can you help new workers to live and work within their limitations? What structures can you put in place to make sure that your members do not overwork?

Take time off

God planned for his people to need rest, so make sure you schedule a regular day off and use it wisely. Holidays are vital, too—particularly if you can get away for a break.



Leaders: How much time does your organisation allow for holidays? Is it sufficient? Should you have recommendations about how individuals use their holiday time? How can you help your workers to take time out?

Cultivate an attitude of life-long learning

Life-long learning isn't just about Japanese language and culture, but also learning about God, others, yourself, your organisation, and colleagues. Ask God to help you develop an attitude of being willing to learn in every area of life and being humble enough to ask for help.

Leaders: How can you encourage continual learning in all areas of life?

Learning and enjoying more than one culture

If you have joined a mission, an international school, or a company, recognise that you are not only learning Japanese culture, but also the culture of your colleagues and your organisation. Your new organisation and colleagues will undoubtedly do things differently to what you've been used to. If you work at these relationships, though, you may find you develop closer friendships than you have ever known. If you find yourself in a lonely situation, how could you increase your fellowship opportunities with other missionaries or internationals?

Leaders: How can you help to integrate and befriend newcomers? How can your organisation celebrate the different cultures represented?

Assume the best of your leaders and organisation

When you are new to an organisation, it can be hard to understand why certain things happen, or to get frustrated at the way things are done. Try to assume the best of those in leadership—and even if you then ask why, be gentle.

Leaders: How well does your organisation explain its structures and goals to new workers? How can you foster greater understanding?

Hold disputable opinions loosely

If you work in an interdenominational and/or international workplace, you will know that although your colleagues may be Christians, they may hold different opinions to you. Try to hold disputable opinions gently and with humility.

Leaders: How does your organisation deal with differing opinions in matters of doctrine? How can you encourage fellowship across denominational lines?

Serve one another and be considerate of colleagues

If you are part of an organisation, you have joined a new community. Be prepared to serve the community in any way that you can—whether that means drying dishes or leading a meeting. You may need to lay your own interests on one side, in order for others to flourish.

Leaders: How can your organisation encourage an attitude of self-sacrifice amongst your members?

As you learn, adapt, and grow into life in Japan, here's a prayer:

“Now may the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen” Hebrews 13:20-21 (NIVUK). ■

Janet Dallman (UK) works with her husband at OMF's Japanese Language Center in Sapporo, welcoming new OMF missionaries to Japan. Over five years they have welcomed over 40 new workers.

Photo by Kevin R. Morris (OMF)



The Marriage

“Marriage is all about finding the partner of our dreams, a storybook wedding, and living happily ever after.”

How do you feel about that statement?

You’ve probably already discovered, the statement is not true. And yet society continues to perpetuate the myth and most of us go into marriage with some variation on these expectations. As we plan the wedding, with its decorations and photo moments, it’s all about us, and our own happiness “stories.”

The Scriptures present a different viewpoint. They make it clear that we are not necessarily the focal points of our marriages. Marriage is about God and His great story, the ultimate focus of which is the Lord Jesus Christ (Eph. 1:10). As a child of God, every aspect of our lives—especially our marriages—have to be seen in that context. Our marriages cannot be separated from our missions, especially as missionaries. But on a practical level, this may mean we are in for some big surprises...

Marriages God used for His mission

Jacob thought he’d married the girl of his dreams only to wake up the next morning with her homely older sister. He then spent the rest of his married life in the middle of a no-holds-barred rivalry between his four

jealous wives. Out of that nightmare, however, came Joseph—whose equally eventful life led to salvation and blessing for many, and the 12 patriarchs and the 12 tribes of Israel!

Missionaries face the same unique stresses that pastors face in our homelands.

Esther, the most gorgeous woman in the land, was chosen to be King Xerxes’ trophy bride during the Exile. While some scholars question why a Jewish girl would agree to marry a Gentile king, the account makes clear that God had orchestrated her marriage “for such a time as this” (Esth. 4:14, NASB). It was her marriage and her willingness to put her personal happiness (and life!) on the line that saved the Jews from genocide at the hands of their enemies.

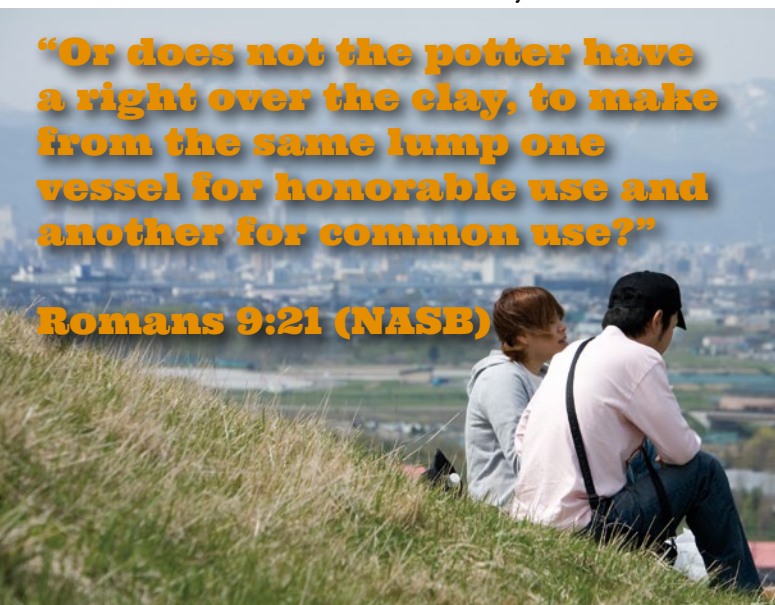
Hosea was commanded by God to “go take to yourself a wife of harlotry” (Hos. 1:2). It is not clear whether Hosea’s wife, Gomer, was already a prostitute when he married her or whether he knew she would leave him later to become one. Either way, Hosea had no expectations of a fairytale marriage. He knew from the outset that his marriage was to be a living parable by which God would speak to the people of his age, calling them to repentance in the midst of their spiritual adultery. For that purpose, God specifically led Hosea into a marriage filled with uncertainty and pain.

In each of these marriages, God ordained or allowed extremely challenging factors in order to accomplish His mission through them.

Likewise today, we see marriages God has ordained to fulfill a mission. Consider Jim Elliot, whose marriage to Elizabeth was cut short by martyrdom at the hands of the Waodani Indians. Jim was called to be a martyr while Elizabeth was called to be a widow. And yet her gifting as a writer provides a story of dedication and commitment that inspires us half a century later.

“Or does not the potter have a right over the clay, to make from the same lump one vessel for honorable use and another for common use?”

Romans 9:21 (NASB)



Big Mission

One of Jim Elliot's famous lines still resonates throughout the Christian world: "He is no fool who gives what he cannot keep to gain that which he cannot lose."

Or consider Sachiko in Aomori, Japan, who felt led to marry a young evangelist named Kazutoshi Mitsuhashi to literally support his ministry. Pastor Mitsuhashi was paralyzed in one arm and both legs. Sachiko, who was a nurse, would pull him to his various preaching points in rural Japan in a cart behind her bicycle. Before elevators became common, she carried him on her back up and down the station stairways when he traveled by train. Their marriage illustrated Jesus' words, "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Lk. 9:23).

Ministry marriages

Missionaries face the same unique stresses that pastors face in our homelands: lack of privacy, overly high expectations, always being on call, financial pressures. Add to that cultural and language differences that complicate both ministry and daily living. Tack on distance from one's homeland, which makes it difficult to attend family gatherings and celebrations, to care for elderly parents, to be there for kids struggling in college, and to enjoy the many benefits of belonging to a larger church. These factors may force missionary couples to pull together and strengthen their marriages, or, they pull marriages apart. Either way the struggles are both real and normal, so don't be dismayed or ashamed.

As a missionary, God has a special purpose and mission for your marriage.

Preventative steps

At the same time, few things are more devastating to a ministry than a disintegrating marriage. There are

specific steps you can and should take to avoid marital shipwreck:

1. Be on the alert against sexual temptation and emotional entanglements outside of marriage. Avoid one-on-one time with members of the opposite sex. Have an accountability partner to help you control what you view online and in the media.
2. Plan regular dates with your spouse just to have fun. Also plan regular times to share your heart needs and to pray together.
3. Be intentional about constantly affirming your spouse and expressing appreciation for all they do, both for you personally and for your ministry. Be each other's most enthusiastic cheering squads. Your spouse can never receive too much praise from you.
4. Make marriage counseling a part of your routine (whether you think you need it or not!). There are many options: find a nearby counselor, or one further away via Skype; yearly attend a couples' retreat, or visit a counseling center such as Cornerstone Counseling Center in Thailand or Link Care in Fresno, California. This will help diffuse issues before they damage your marriage.
5. If your marriage is truly in crisis, consult with your mission or sending church about taking a leave of absence to focus on restoration and healing. Don't let ministry priorities or financial factors allow your most important human relationship to collapse.

As a missionary, God has a special purpose and mission for your marriage. He intends your marriage to be a living parable of perseverance, unconditional love, grace, forgiveness, and intimacy. As the people you minister to see you working through your own marriage struggles, it will give them hope and positive examples for their own marriages. You may or may not come to understand the purpose of your marriage struggles in this life, but you can be sure that they are not in vain. ■

Tim Cole (US) and his wife, Katie, have ministered in Japan with TEAM since 1984. Tim helped found Family Forum Japan in 1996 and served as its director from 2002 to 2012.

Photo by Kevin R. Morris (OMF)

The Single Missionary Female

A friend once said, “I have an ambivalent relationship with my singleness. I don’t want it to define me and yet it does.”

Although single missionaries comprise a significant portion of the missionary population, focus in member care remains on couples, children, and families. Some people mistakenly believe only singles can minister effectively to singles. Providing good member care is not dictated by marital status but does require awareness and empathy. In this article, I will provide some foundational information for those providing member care for single female missionaries.¹

Stages of Singleness

Most single women, like married women, experience different life stages. These are observations that I have ascertained from my own personal experience and years of attending seminars, giving seminars, reading articles, writing articles, participating in surveys, giving surveys, as well as counseling other singles. In my experience, singles generally can be divided into stages by decade.

Twenty- to thirty-year-olds often don’t consider themselves singles; they are “pre-marrieds”: a preparatory interlude before their married lives begin.

Thirty- to forty-year-olds are more likely to consider themselves “single” and it is not usually a desired label. The already miniscule pool of eligible Christian men has diminished greatly, especially on the mission field. For me, to choose to leave the field felt like disobedi-

ties are more freeing and focused. They are more comfortable and confident in themselves and what they want to accomplish. This is a time when, if they have stayed on the field, missionary women accomplish much and begin to mentor younger women.

Emotionally, the fifties seem to be the second most difficult time for the single women I have known. On top of the challenges of menopause and hormonal changes, friends’ children are graduating, getting married, and having children. This past home assignment has been especially difficult for me as I look to the concerns of aging relatives. Realizing I have no children of my own, fears and worries arise about retirement and finances. However, on the work front, it is a rewarding and fruitful time, and a time to continue mentoring others.

The sixties bring retirement and those concerns, but in general, I see my single friends in this stage as happy and eager to finish well.

Although the stages of singleness might be different for each person, the single missionaries I have known have several common issues we struggle with at different times in our lives.

Loneliness

The number one issue we contend with is loneliness. This does not just mean needing more friends, but it means desiring someone with whom to process the banalities and stresses of life and ministry. It means desiring family time and physical touch, and wanting one-on-one time. It means yearning for someone who

The thirties are the most difficult years for the singles I’ve known and the time when depression is most likely to begin, especially with a growing awareness that the biological clock is ticking.

ence to God but to choose to stay felt like an eternity doomed to loneliness. These are the most difficult years for the singles I’ve known and the time when depression is most likely to begin, especially with a growing awareness that the biological clock is ticking.

Most women I’ve been in contact with find the for-

cares more about us than anyone else.

Many of us don’t take vacation because we don’t know who to go with and don’t want to go alone. In my twelve years as a career missionary, I’ve taken three vacations: one alone for a week to Thailand, one with another single for a few days and another for a week to



Guam. Every other “holiday” was work- or medical-related. Holidays are also a difficult time, but again the struggles differ from person to person and seasons of life.

We want to be invited to dinner and to family events and holidays but are afraid of invading families at this special time. However, sometimes, those family events can also be unbearable; attending baby showers or even visiting homes with babies, for me, when I was in my late-30’s was extremely painful. Some of us want to invite families over but feel overwhelmed by what kids will or will not eat and/or the expense of inviting a family out to dinner.

Time Issues

Some of us feel burdened by the need to do everything couples have to do (laundry, shopping, paperwork, cleaning, etc.) but having only one person to do them. When we face certain areas such as computers, cars, or finances where we feel incapable, many of us feel especially strained. Not having someone to keep us accountable in the ways we spend our time is also a struggle for some.

Gender Identity Issues

We encounter gender identity issues as well. Once a little girl asked me, “Are you a mother?” No. “Are you a wife?” No. “Are you a grandmother?” No. In desperation, she asked, “Well, what ARE you?” As a 35-year-old woman, that was a tough question. But I knew the “right” answer and was able to say, “A daughter, a sister, a friend, a missionary, a teacher, an aunt, a niece . . .” but there were tears in my eyes as I responded. Men identify themselves through what they do; but women often identify themselves through relationships, which is a challenge for single women.

In work settings, as women who are called to function in a male-dominated culture of pastors and mis-

sionaries, pastors and assistant pastors, we find ourselves “hiding” or “denying” our femininity in order not to tempt or distract our co-workers. We find the need to become “asexual” or “androgynous” and yet struggle with the feeling of being the “work wife” of the missionary or the pastor. There are also the dilemmas of car rides or travel to meetings or camps with married co-workers.

We minister in churches that have *sōnennkai* (men’s groups), *fujinkai* (wives’ groups) and *seinenkai* (young peoples’ groups) and nothing else! Where does a 40-year old single fit?

And, in our personal lives, some of us feel anger towards God for giving us a natural desire for sexuality and yet giving us no appropriate way to express this God-given desire.

In ministering to single women missionaries, understanding all of the above is important. But in the end, we are all individuals and we desire relationship and understanding.

Recommendations

I recommend getting to know each single person in your mission or organisation and providing a forum for singles and marrieds to discuss their struggles, desires, and needs. Although similar issues and life stages exist, singles are all individuals and can’t be lumped together. One-on-one time with each single person, getting to know her, is fundamental to caring for that person.

Listening is important. We also often feel we aren’t heard. Once, at a two-week member care seminar I attended, no sessions were offered on singleness. When we asked, the leaders (not singles!) squeezed one in. When they asked if we would like to include married people or not, we asked for two sessions but were told there wasn’t enough time for both. Such dismissive experiences cause us to feel we are not valued. Listening to us individually and giving us an opportunity to be heard are vital for the emotional health of the singles in your organization and the first step in essential member care. ■

*Karyn Zaayenga, a 40-something single from the US, published a book for Japanese Christian singles titled *Hitoribocchi de Akenai Yoru Ni* in 2003. Contact Karyn directly if you would like to purchase copies.*

1. Although a few single male missionaries serve in Japan, and widows and divorcees also carry their own struggles, this article is written from the perspective of a never-married, single female missionary.

Photo by Flickr user tafari.anthony

Few serve on Japan's final frontier: 1,800 rural areas lack their first church.¹ One reason is member care. Some organizations hesitate to place missionaries in a rural setting because of the isolation. Yet sending big teams to each unchurched area is rarely viable initially, nor sustainable long-term. It's also missiologically inefficient. A more realistic goal is one missionary or family committed to a cluster of 1 to 5 towns for 20 years, with intermittent help. Effective member care of rural workers doesn't protect workers from isolated settings, but equips and supports them to survive and thrive in those settings. Here are some tips for rural worker support and self care.

Effective member care of rural workers doesn't protect workers from isolated settings, but equips and supports them to survive and thrive in those settings.

Rural worker support

Placement

- Most suited for rural ministry are those between 35 and 55 without children, or who have no children between 8 and 18 at the time they begin.
- Qualities in a good rural worker: someone who relates to a broad age range, not prone to depression, has perseverance and commitment.
- First termers should serve with someone experienced, whether someone from your agency or another.
- Foster realistic expectations (slower harvest, less fruit), yet with faith.
- Calling is key. Honor calling, trusting God to empower.

Member care

- Pray. Help rural workers find a phone prayer partner.
- Affirm. Ministry in rural areas holds many sources of discouragement (e.g. slow fruit, deeply-entrenched gospel barriers, zero feedback environment), even for the strongest worker. Affirmation reassures and encourages.
- Listen. The same worker will struggle more in a rural setting than they would in urban Japan. Expect mild depression, loneliness, discouragement, or insecurity. A tendency to be especially sensitive to criticism,



unsolicited advice, or imposed help is common. They will often be wary of big/outside groups. Avoid overreacting to what you hear. Instead, listen, providing a non-judgmental affirming environment to process struggles.

- Coach. Provide first termers with an experienced rural worker coach. Rural Japan is at a different stage missiologically. Conventional wisdom from urban settings (and even rural tsunami zones) rarely directly applies. It takes years in rural Japan to grasp ministry realities.

Provide fellowship

- With urban workers or Christians. Plan fellowship opportunities to include them. Welcome them when they come to the city, and visit them. Build deep relationships—let them talk about things that can't be said to locals, bounce ideas off you, or use you as an outlet to release months of unshared things.
- Among rural workers. Help them find or interact virtually with others who understand rural ministry—informally, as prayer partners, or via retreats. Check out RJCPN (Rural Japan Church Planting Network) www.rjcpn.upgjapanmissions.com.
- For families. Getting together with other MKs (missionary kids) is important. Regional social MK activities or joint retreats also help. Help MKs master enough Japanese for deep communication with rural peers.

Pragmatic help

- Adapt policies for rural needs—car, distance-based conference transport scholarships, short frequent furloughs, coverage of responsibilities while away from their area.



Thriving in Rural Japan

- Assist. For example: pulpit supply, furlough coverage, short-term teams from Japan/abroad, flyer distribution, maintenance, IT, secretarial, translation, musicians. Offer help humbly in a sensitive non-threatening way. Do not presume and don't impose yourself or your help on your rural colleague.
- Become a "backup church." Churches in the region could commit to specific help on a weekly or monthly basis. Take care the help does not overwhelm or create discontentment with what is locally sustainable.
- Let a rural worker bless you back! Though counter-intuitive, busy rural workers benefit from occasional "outside opportunities" like speaking in another church/ outreach/conference.

Self care

Know:

- Your calling—this sustains and brings assurance that challenges are part of fulfilling God's will.
- Your mission is to be the aroma of both life and death.
- In God's eyes, ministry success is faithful obedience, not numbers.
- God's character empowers following at any cost.
- His faithfulness lets you just follow, leaving results with Him, knowing your labor is not in vain.
- You can't do what God has called you to do; God can through you. Trust God's empowerment. If others don't, they doubt God, not you.
- You are not alone. Other rural workers are out there too. Jesus is always with you. Within God's will, Jesus plus one equals a majority.
- God alone is enough. Let Him—not success, results, acceptance, or work—be your source of identity, af-

firmation, guidance, fellowship, and comfort. Fight idols of success, acceptance, approval, reputation, and accomplishments with the gospel.

- You will encounter spiritual warfare. Learn to recognize it and be prepared.

Cultivate:

- Heart-level, direct accountability to God.
- God-dependence in all things.
- Spirit-led initiative and grace-inspired hard work.
- Perseverance. Focus on the positive, and the not yet seen.
- Contentment in ministry. Remember the basics: you have enough to eat and drink, and God by your side.

Learn to:

- See His big picture plan
- Boast in weaknesses and in Christ
- Be intentional about self-care, including "time away".
- Invest time for a healthy family
- Relate to people of all ages
- Teach church members to depend on God

Consider:

- Being for others (or finding for yourself) a mentor, virtual prayer partners, etc.

**Remember the basics:
you have enough to
eat and drink, and God
by your side.**

Pioneer ministry is exciting yet isolating, and includes discouraging seasons. One light is better than none in a place of total darkness yet can easily flicker or be snuffed out by a strong wind. The innately isolating nature of work in rural Japan is windy. Encouragement and God-reliance are powerful windbreaks. ■

Dawn Birkner (US) leads Reaching Japan Together Association, and is planting a church and doing relief work in rural coastal Iwate (Iwaizumi/Tanohata/Fudai/Noda). She coordinated the Rural Japan Church Planting Network (RJCPN).

Tips contributed by Heather Nelson and John Mehn.

1. RJCPN statistic based on pre-merger CIS data [note, post-merger data is not representative of the missiological needs in rural Japan].

Lessons from Japanese Leaders

Practical Implications

Imagine, 6 churches starting 62 churches! This is what is happening in Japan. Why do some churches reproduce and others do not? Over the last several issues we have been looking at six characteristics of Japanese leaders reproducing churches.¹

The church is reproducing in Japan.

The six characteristics we have reviewed are closely interrelated: receive ministry vision from God, exercise risk-taking faith, envision the church as a dynamic sending community, develop lay people for ministry, lead relationally through encouragement, and implement aggressively through practical ministry. These all work in concert; any one of these characteristics, though exemplary, would not necessarily indicate a reproducing leader.

I will look at just three implications from what we've learned.

Expanding hope for the Japanese church

Celebrate that church reproduction is currently happening. This gives us hope that it is possible. We do not have to react like one Japanese pastor who insisted I must be talking about another country. The church is reproducing in Japan.

For this research project, at least sixty Japanese churches were discovered to have reproduced no fewer than three times in a twenty-year period. This figure is

not as high as many would prefer but, nearly one-percent of Japanese churches appear to have an extreme measure of reproductive health.

Yes, there are churches struggling, but there are also churches with incredible stories of evangelism, discipleship, leadership development, and church reproduction.

Checkpoint #1: Share the good news that church reproduction is happening. Many will be encouraged and will want to know how to reproduce their own churches.

Addressing foundational issues

Early in my research I received a letter from a leader who has reproduced his church to the fourth generation! This pastor stated that the church in Japan usually does not reproduce because the mission of the church is not grasped, lay people are not released into ministry, and churches are pastor-centered.

Several church-reproducing leaders I studied revealed they had undergone a change or a paradigm shift in their thinking of the church, leadership, and their role as pastor. I've discussed these changes under three specific foundational areas:

1. They viewed the church more organically and as a dynamic sending community, affecting their vision and faith.
2. They moved to a theology of empowering authority to the laity.
3. They developed a role not as the center of the church but like an encouraging coach or father.



In each of these foundational areas a change in perspective meant a change in how the pastors led and conducted their ministry.

Like the church-reproducing leaders we studied, there is a distinct need for the Japanese church to undergo a paradigm shift from being a pastor-centered church, to equipping lay people, empowering them, and sending them out.

Checkpoint #2: Have these paradigm shifts happened to you? Do you view the church differently theologically and practically? How is your view of leadership? You can be a catalyst to encourage leaders to be more biblical in their thinking about the church and their role.

Developing more leaders

What excited me about this research was networking with real Japanese pastors who were leading reproducing churches. I wish we had many more of these types of pastors in the Japanese church. Not just 60, but 6,000 just like them. But where would these leaders come from?

One of the dreams driving this research was the possibility of developing many more who could pastor reproducing churches. This will require dedicated prayer for harvest workers, care in selecting leaders, and hard work. I believe each of these six characteristics can be developed. Church leaders mentioning their own and other's growth in these characteristics proves this.

Leaders need to learn how to seize God's vision, clarify it, and share it. Leaders can be challenged to understand the Biblical view of the church more fully.

Developing leaders who focus on church reproduction is a great need.

Through practical training, they can learn to empower others, and work in an aggressive and practical manner.

Developing leaders who focus on church reproduction is a great need. In 1991, in his presentation at the Third Congress on Evangelism, Pastor Kaoru Kishida appealed for every church to birth another in a period of 10 years. He also cautioned the audience, declaring that for each Japanese church to become a church that

births churches (教会を生み出す教会 *kyokai o umidasu kyokai*), the nature (体質 *honshitsu*) of the church must change. Pastor Kishida also shared that churches are not reproduced often because of ineffectual leadership.² His cautions were 22 years ago. Every church leader must have a renewed commitment to church reproduction.

Checkpoint #3: What are you doing to develop better leaders? How can you grow in these key six characteristics and a commitment to reproduction?

Wrapping up

One lesson for all of us is to emulate these Japanese leaders. First, have God-given vision. Lead with risk-taking faith, dream of a healthy reproducing church, train lay people for ministry, encourage and empower people, lead aggressively and practically.

Like these church-reproducing leaders each one of us must develop leaders around us. Be on the lookout for potential leaders. Just like Jesus, spend time with them: help them personally and in ministry, empower them, pray with and for them, instruct them in truths of the church and leadership, foster vision and faith in them.

You might have to stop doing some things to see this happen. I have been focusing more on people I believe have great hearts for God and a real potential for leadership and church reproduction. I have also been working hard at developing lay people in several churches and producing materials for training leaders.

I love Pastor Tanaka's words: "Just do it." All this we can do. Go out and have an adventure.

Checkpoint #4: What are your next steps in this adventure of seeing the church reproducing 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.

1. This series has run in every issue of Japan Harvest since Fall 2011, except for Spring 2012.
2. Kaoru Kishida. *Nihon no Senkyo Senryaku ni Tsuite* (Concerning Japan Mission Strategy). In *Nihon, Ajia Soshite Sekai e* (Japan, Asia then to the World) (Tokyo: Third Japan Congress on Evangelism Publications Committee, 1992) 43-48.

Photos by Kevin Morris (OMF)

Nozomi Project

Art that connects to the world, to each other, and to God

What is art in relation to the church? A painting on a wall? Special music during worship? An evangelistic event? Yes, but art is so much more! It is a language, indeed a very powerful language for connecting us to the world, to each other, and to God.

Nozomi Project is an outstanding story of art enabling people to wrestle with the world in the aftermath of the tsunami, connect with others in spite of hardship, and draw near to God as the Wonderful Counselor.

Nozomi is helping the women reconnect and find a place to belong amidst the devastation.

A broken world

On March 11, 2011 the world changed. It became a black and white world, like the old photographs found amidst the debris. Gray mud from the ocean floor covered and stained everything, while white masks protected our lungs from the resulting dust that blew through the air. Even the sun itself hid behind the dull clouds of winter, refusing to penetrate the gray abyss.

The world became two-dimensional and vacant. Buildings, power lines, and trees lay flattened or washed away, leaving nothing but empty concrete foundations and amorphous piles of debris.

The world became hard and inhuman. Robot-like survival instincts took over to meet basic needs of food and shelter. Roads were cleared in the hope that more help would come. Food distribution felt like prison lines absent of smiles, conversation or laughter. Waiting became the new normal.

Nozomi artisan and manager, Yuko Sasaki recalled, “We couldn’t laugh. We didn’t know what we were living for day after day. We ate without tasting the food. There was no thought for the future, even a year after the earthquake.”

Connecting to the world

How could people relate to this new world? At Nozomi, the women literally “picked up the pieces” of their lives to rebuild through making jewelry. Something symbolically powerful pervaded the act of collecting

wave-washed broken pottery, cleaning it, and transforming it into something of value and beauty.

Yuri, another Nozomi artisan, was with her three-year-old son when the earthquake struck. Bearing the responsibility to guide all of the senior citizens where she worked to a safer place, Yuri asked a friend to watch her son, but the boy drowned in the tsunami. Afterwards, guilt and despair tore Yuri apart. “Now at Nozomi I am making key chains named after my son Kosei. I am glad that his name will be remembered this way . . . I didn’t know that creating something could bring so much healing.”

“Matsuri” Yuko, Internet sales manager for Nozomi, lost her mother and seven-months-pregnant older sister in the tsunami. After the earthquake, she was separated from her husband, lived with her father who did not want her in the house, and had no money. “I was at a loss. I just wanted to die, but I knew I couldn’t leave my children . . . But now, it’s amazing. It’s mysterious to me how this place soothed my heart.”

Nozomi is helping the women reconnect and find a place to belong amidst the devastation. “It became a home for our heart,” said Yuko.

Connecting to each other

Broken shards redeemed as valuable, sought-after pieces of jewelry served as a powerful symbol, but not only a symbol. “God was working in multiple layers in our midst that we couldn’t have thought of ourselves,” said Sue Takamoto, founder of Nozomi Project. The jewelry also embodied the DNA of gospel-based healing community.

“I thought to make jewelry you had to do the whole process yourself,” Yuko said. “But one person cleans the pieces, one person grinds the pottery, one person weaves the bands . . . everybody is involved. I was really surprised by this at first. Women new to Nozomi hesitate to join us because they don’t know how to make jewelry, but we can always find a job for them to do. We tell them, ‘Just come and see!’”

“I didn’t know that creating something could bring so much healing.”



Nozomi Project members at work, along with examples of their jewelry. Photos courtesy of Project Nozomi.

Women started working at Nozomi as a way to help others, but in the process ended up helping themselves. “In the beginning,” Yuko remembered, “I thought I had to keep going all by myself. But when I was about to break down, people were there to support me and pull me back up. Oh, I thought, this is what community is for . . . Because we experienced this pain together, we were able to be there for one another and encourage one another. Perhaps that is part of the strength of Nozomi.”

Connecting to God

Jewelry became a way to gainfully employ women in a region sorely in need of jobs and economic development. At the same time, it has also become a powerful tool for communicating the gospel.

Nozomi has become a powerful tool for communicating the gospel.

Most days after lunch, the women gather for a time of reading the Bible together, discussion, and prayer. “One time I went to the library with my big Bible, and I sat there and read,” said “Matsuri” Yuko. “I didn’t understand a thing! So, I think it’s definitely easier to understand when we’re together and able to share.” In July, she was baptized in the same ocean that had taken her mother, sister, and nephew just two years before.

Recently, several other women have prayed to trust Jesus and are studying the Bible.

“God will send hope around the world through our brokenness and through the beauty he creates out of our brokenness.”

Chad Huddleston, one of the leaders of the Be One house church network overseeing Nozomi Project, shared “God will send hope around the world through our brokenness and through the beauty he creates out of our brokenness.” Sue later remarked, “That just really crystallized to me the hope of what we’re trying to do.”

What is the gospel? We are broken but have been redeemed by the One who found us. We were dead but have been made alive. We were a people “without *nozomi* (hope)” (Ephesians 2:12), but are now a people with hope. In the gospel, we find the unraveled woven together and wholeness out of brokenness. Nozomi Project is boldly proclaiming and living out these truths one piece of jewelry at a time.

You can learn more about Nozomi Project and order their jewelry online at www.nozomiproject.com. ■

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Times, They Are A-Changing

The biographies of great missionaries are inspiring: Amy Carmichael holding off fanatical religious priests to protect orphans, William Carey packing all his belongings in a coffin, and Adoniram Judson's 20-months imprisonment for his faith. The sacrifices and hardships were immense. It is hard to imagine what they would have thought of the concept of member care.

Missionaries began to be more honest about their struggles.

"Member care" emerged in the 1970s. As the Christian subculture became influenced by the mental health profession, so too missionaries began to be more honest about their struggles.¹ In the 1950s and 1960s, Link Care and Wycliffe set up counseling centers for the purpose of missionary care. *Evangelical Mission Quarterly* published its first articles on missionary stress and culture shock in the 1960s. The term "member care" was brought into the vernacular in the late 1980s from the business world.²

Member care encourages missionaries to "finish the race well."

Some missionaries "thought that we were being unspiritual or weak, and not trusting the Lord enough," if they needed help.³ But member care professionals are quick to clarify: "It is not about creating a comfortable lifestyle. Nor is it about trusting people instead of trusting the Lord. Rather, it is about developing the resilience and godliness to do our work well."⁴

The purpose of member care, instead of being at odds with the traditional view of missionary life of "no reserves, no retreats, no regrets,"⁵ is one that encourages missionaries to "finish the race well." Many missionary organizations have begun developing a "theology" of member care. One group writes, "A theology of care reflects the relationship between the

members of the Trinity, the care of God for us, and the expectation that we will care for one another."⁶

In the past, missionaries often stood alone. The present day model teaches that missionaries need encouragement to function well—not only from their own devotional life, other missionaries, and field administration, but from specialists and sending groups as well. Rather than rigid or structured roles, there should be a fluidity of care that flows from one to the other. This view, rather than encouraging dependency, promotes a proactive approach by offering tools and support so missionaries can take care of themselves emotionally, physically, and spiritually.

The present day model teaches that missionaries need encouragement to function well.

The call of missions to "expect great things from God . . . attempt great things for God"⁷ hasn't changed much over the years. The difference is that now when things get tough, missionaries no longer need to suffer in silence. And in spite of the fact that member care is sometimes misunderstood, it's doubtful that even the missionary heroes of past would have any problems with the idea of member care. They might have even welcomed some help themselves. ■



Eileen Nielsen and her husband, Jim, are church planters who have been working in Toboku doing survivor care. They are currently stateside. Eileen has a masters in counseling and is available for Skype counseling. Contact her at eileenpnelsen@gmail.com.

1. Kelly O'Donnell, "Global Member Care: Exploring and Celebrating our History, International Journal of Frontier Missions," 2012, <http://membercareassociates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/07/ODonnell-Global-MC-History-for-India-MC-book-26-January-2012-2.pdf>.

2. O'Donnell, *Ibid.*

3. Kelly O'Donnell, "Some Historical Perspectives on Member Care," last modified September 2006. <http://www.ethne.net/wp-content/uploads/2008/07/ethne-mc-web-historical-perspectives-on-member-care-revised-dec-06.pdf>.

4. Kelly O'Donnell, *Doing Member Care Well: Perspectives and Practices from Around the World*, William Carey Library, 2002, 165.

5. Mrs. Howard Taylor, "No Reserves. No Retreats. No Regrets." Last updated February 27, 2013. <http://home.snu.edu/~hculbert/regret.htm>.

6. G. C. Taylor, "A Theological Perspective on Missionary Care," *Enhancing Missionary Vitality*, 2002.

7. William Carey Quotes, accessed September 13, 2013. <http://christian-quotes.ochristian.com/William-Carey-Quotes>.

Help Your Team Function Well

“Why doesn’t this ministry team function well?” Carla asks herself at the end of the Evangelism Team’s Tuesday meeting. “We do good things in meetings, like sharing what we’re doing. But there’s little synergy. We rarely learn from each other or share resources. And it feels more like we’re a gathering of individuals than a team. Why is that?”

“That team has synergy. It feels like we’re a real team. Why is that?”

Then Carla thinks about the Discipleship Team she’s on. “That team has synergy. We learn from each other, we focus on the team’s priorities, and we work together. It feels like we’re a real team. Why is that?” Then it hits her. The Discipleship Team has a documented purpose statement; the Evangelism Team does not.

“Why didn’t I notice this before?” she asks herself. “This explains so much. Every member of the Discipleship Team really understands the team’s purpose statement, regularly refers to it in meetings, and uses it to determine which ministry activities to pursue. If you asked a Discipleship Team member what the team does, he or she could readily tell you what the team does and doesn’t do.

“Because we aren’t clear on our purpose, we aren’t clear on what ministry activities to pursue.”

“That’s so different from the Evangelism Team. We aren’t clear on our specific purpose, so we talk in general terms—which we then sometimes debate because of the wording. And that gets in the way of getting work done. Because we aren’t clear on our purpose, we aren’t clear on what ministry activities to pursue—so discussions on ministry activities take longer than they should and meetings get bogged down.

“My guess is that if I asked an Evangelism Team member what the team does, I wouldn’t get a clear answer—I know I couldn’t give a good one. Certainly not as coherent an answer as I could give for the Discipleship Team.”

Carla then muses, “If the Evangelism Team had a purpose statement that each member could explain, that would really help us function better. I think we’d make more effective decisions, be better able to capitalize on each other’s strengths, and be a real team. Our meetings would be more focused. We’d have less unhelpful debate and more synergy.

“I think at the next Evangelism Team meeting, I’ll share my thoughts about this. It shouldn’t be too hard to document our purpose statement. If we develop the purpose together, that should help each team member understand it. Once we get a statement, I’ll model using it in meetings. That should help.”

“If the Evangelism Team had a purpose statement that each member could explain, that would really help us function better.”

The point?

To help your ministry team function well, ensure your team shares and articulates a common purpose.

What about you?

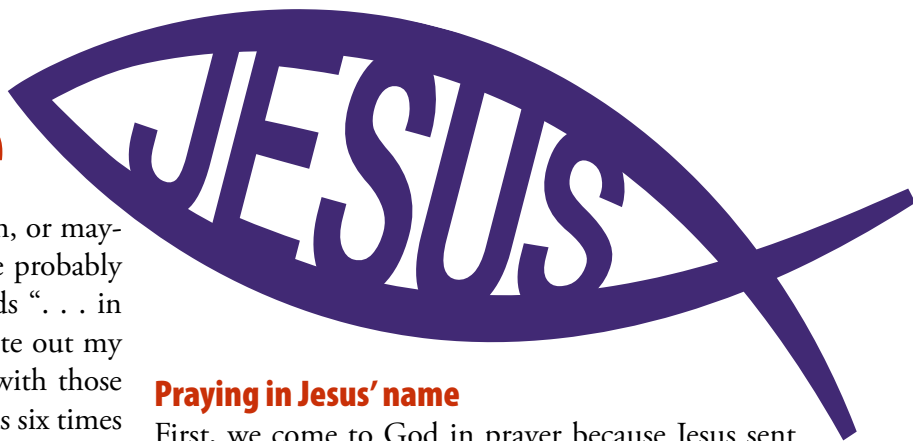
1. What’s one ministry team you are on?
2. What’s satisfying/unsatisfying about that team?
3. To what extent do team members share and articulate a common purpose?
4. To what extent do you want them to?
5. What will you do? ■



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This article is part of a 4-part series, based on the following: Members of a ministry team that functions well (1) share and articulate a common purpose, (2) know how each team member contributes to the purpose, (3) know how they work together, and (4) talk effectively about difficult issues.

In Jesus' Name



From the first day you walked into a church, or maybe from the day you were born, you have probably heard people end their prayers with the words “. . . in Jesus' name, amen,” or similar wording. I write out my prayers during devotions, and I usually end with those words. On His last night on earth, Jesus told us six times to pray in His name: John 14:13, 14; 15:16; 16:23, 24, 26. But what does it mean to pray in Jesus' name?

What's in a name?

Your name identifies you. It distinguishes you from others. But it goes deeper. In Scripture, your name represents who you are—your personality, character, reputation, and authority—your very essence. That is why a good name is to be valued above all (cf. Proverbs 22:1).

And that explains why God's name is exalted so much in Scripture. His name is excellent (Ps. 148:13). That's the reason we start the Lord's Prayer with “Hallowed be Your name” (Matt. 6:9, NASB). His name leads us to worship and praise.

By praying in Jesus' name, you are acknowledging that your only right to come to the Father is because Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins and has sent you personally to His Father.

What does it mean to come in the name of another?

First, it means to come in the authority of that person. When David fought Goliath, he came “in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom you have taunted” (I Sam. 17:45). He did not come in his own strength and authority, but in God's. That's why he could beat the giant.

Second, it means to come in someone's stead. When you go to someone “in the name” of another, they are to respond to you, not based on who you are, but as if you were the person who sent you. It's like an ambassador who is not there on his own, but in the place of the leader of his country. It is also like someone who has the power of attorney. They can make decisions in place of the one who sent them.



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.

Praying in Jesus' name

First, we come to God in prayer because Jesus sent us. We don't just decide to come to God, the Creator of heaven and earth. God's Son sends us. That is why we come before Him with boldness (Hebrews 4:16). Isn't that wonderful? Jesus has sent us to come to His Father!

Second, we come to God in Jesus' stead. That sounds like a bold statement, but it's true. Look at Ephesians 1:5, 6. God accepts us as He does His own Son because we have been adopted into His family! We are in the Beloved! Not only that, we are joint-heirs with Jesus (Romans 8:16-17). When God looks at us, He sees His Son, Jesus Christ. It's amazing, but it's true!

But does praying in Jesus' name mean just tacking the right words to the end of our prayers? No, it's much more. It means that by praying in Jesus' name, you are acknowledging that your only right to come to the Father is because Jesus Christ died on the cross for your sins and has sent you personally to His Father. The only reason you can come to God is that you come in Jesus' name, in His authority and in His stead. It's not a magic formula, but an attitude of the heart. We can even go further and tell God exactly what we feel—that we are unworthy, but that we come in the name of His Son, Jesus Christ.

But this is not a blank check. By praying in His name, we need to make sure to pray in a way that is consistent with His character and according to His will (I John 5:14, 15). We need to ask for and desire what Jesus delights in. How do we do that? By delighting in Him, making Him the center of our lives—our joy (Ps. 37:4). In doing so, we know that He will give us what we ask, because we will only ask for what He wants. ■

Prayer is not overcoming God's reluctance, but laying hold of His willingness.

Martin Luther

MOOC and the Missionary

MOOC, or Massively Open Online Classes, have become a hot topic in educational technology. These courses are offered by a number of major universities and professors to students all over the world. Thousands of students will enroll in a MOOC to learn about topics from professors from Stanford University, Harvard University, or many others. The MOOC I enrolled in recently started out with 39,000 students from all over the world.

MOOC are free, despite being offered by professors at major universities, and delivered by commercial Web sites such as Coursera, Udacity, or edX. Of course, there is still required course work. For the MOOC I took (Introduction to Jazz Improvisation from Berklee College of Music, through Coursera) there were videos to watch, quizzes, and assignments each week.

Understandably, this workload leads to a large dropout rate. The friend who enrolled with me decided not to continue as the work became too much for him. Though thousands of students enroll, a good percentage will not continue. But with 39,000 students enrolling, if 50% or even 75% drop out, there are still a lot of students completing the class. Because it hasn't cost them any money, it is understandable that many people will not continue once they realize all the work they need to do.

MOOC are free, despite being offered by professors at major universities.

Another complaint about MOOC is that, while there is no cost for the class, there is no course credit either. You may receive a certificate that states that you completed and passed the class but it will not count as credit at the university that offered the course. But people do not enroll in a MOOC for the credits. They enroll because they want to learn about the topic. For my MOOC, you could have enrolled in the same class at Berklee College of Music and received more attention from the professor and received college credit. But that would have cost



Massive Open Online Classes (MOOC)

Coursera

<https://www.coursera.org>

Udacity

<https://www.udacity.com>

edX

<https://www.edx.org>

Review of the above

<http://www.skilledup.com/blog/the-best-mooc-provider-a-review-of-coursera-udacity-and-edx/>

Christian MOOC

Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary

http://www.sebts.edu/distance/mooc_at_sebts.aspx

New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary

<http://www.nobts.edu/OnlineSeminary/free-online-course.html>

Ligonier Connect (The world's largest Christian MOOC?)

<http://www.ligonier.org/blog/ligonier-connect-worlds-largest-christian-mooc/>

money and required actually showing up for the classes in Boston, the latter being impossible for most people.

MOOC that would be of most interest to missionaries are just beginning. Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary and New Orleans Baptist Theological Seminary are among those that have begun to offer MOOC. I see the future of MOOC growing and expanding. Christian colleges, universities, and seminaries are

exploring options such as MOOC to make university-level Christian education available to a broad range of people all over the world.

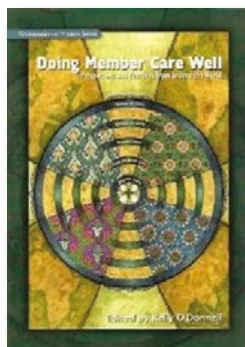
This is a great opportunity for missionaries to continue learning and growing, without large financial layouts or having to geographically relocate. ■

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.

Off the Bookshelf: Member Care

Resource recommendations from contributor Alan Steier

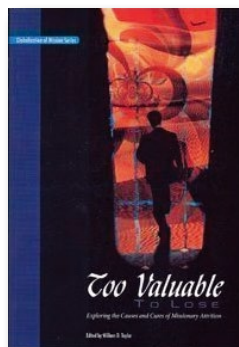
Ed. note: All blurbs provided by their respective publishers.



Doing Member Care Well

Ed. by Kelly O'Donnell, 2002

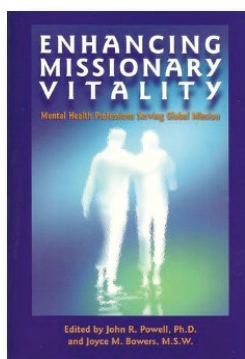
This book explores how member care is being practised around the world to equip sending organizations as they intentionally support their mission/aid personnel. The information provided includes personal accounts, guidelines, case studies, worksheets, and practical advice from all over the globe.



Too Valuable to Lose

Ed. by William D. Taylor, 1997

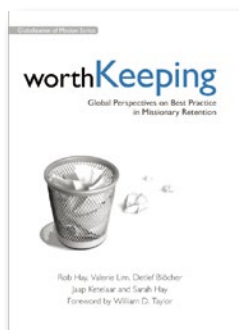
Does God really care about His servants? Yes! Do we care for our people who are serving the Lord in cross-cultural ministry? The Reducing Missionary Attrition Project (ReMAP), launched by World Evangelical Fellowship Missions Commission, seeks to answer that question in this important study. This book utilizes the findings of a 14-nation study done by ReMAP and will help supply some very encouraging answers.



Enhancing Missionary Vitality

Ed. by John Powell & Joyce Bowers, 2002

A comprehensive, 500-page book about member care of primarily North American missionaries. Perplexing challenges faced by the international missions community are addressed from the unique perspective of Christian mental health professionals. See more at: <http://resources.mennonitechurch.ca/ResourceView/219739#sthash.ieqfZEjj.dpuf>

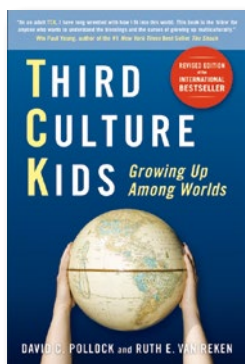


Worth Keeping

Ed. by Rob Hay, et al., 2007

“*Worth Keeping* is more than worth just reading. I urge church and mission leaders to reflect on the research and absorb the principles contained in this important volume. I am convinced if we put into practice its recommendations we will see more effective missionaries who feel valued as servants of the living God. *Worth Keeping* should be required reading for all mission leaders and local church mission teams.” –Geoff Tunnicliffe, International Director, World Evangelical Alliance, Canada.

[Ed. note: This book is a follow-up to Taylor’s *Too Valuable to Lose*.]



Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds

By David Pollock & Ruth Van Reken, revised in 2009

[Ed. note: This book was featured in our last issue, on page 24. If you don’t have a copy on hand, you can go to <http://jema.org> and use the button on the right-hand column marked “Japan Harvest Magazine: Click here to view back issues” to find the Summer 2013 issue (Vol. 65 No. 1). Viewing back issues of *Japan Harvest* is a free benefit for registered members of JEMA.]

Editing and Proofreading

Most good writers produce terrible first drafts. Ernest Hemingway used graphic language we can't print here to describe his opinion of the quality of first drafts!

It's tempting to rush straight to the final draft. But skipping the important step of editing, even in an email or prayer letter, could result in mistakes you don't want people to read, or if bad enough, may mean your writing isn't read at all.

Reading your work out loud helps you find the weak points.

Editing your first draft means more than just checking for grammatical and spelling errors, it includes checking the content too.

Here are some things to look for when you check through your first draft:

1. Does it all make sense?
2. Does everything relate back to the main point?

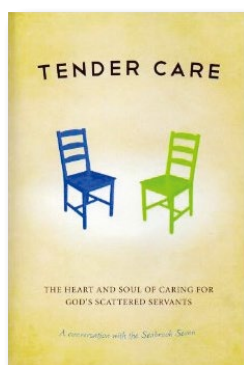


Wendy Marshall is the managing editor of Japan Harvest. She's learnt most of what she knows about writing from her international critique group, Truth Talk. She's Australian and works with OMF International.

3. Is your writing encouraging and informative, or does it lecture?
4. Are words, phrases, or ideas unnecessarily repeated?
5. Does it start and finish well?
6. Has it kept the audience in mind?

Editing your first draft means checking the content too.

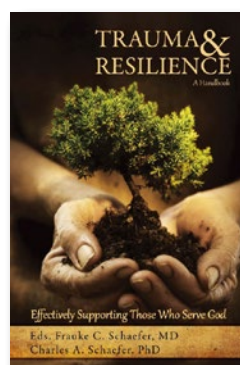
Leaving your work a day or more is a useful tip too. This, of course, means that you need to leave time before your deadline. Reading your work out loud helps you find the weak points. Best of all, find someone who will give you objective feedback—your writing and your readers will benefit greatly. ■



Tender Care

Ed. by Barnabas International, 2010

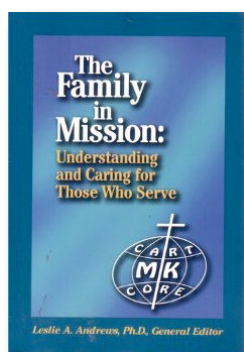
Seven coworkers from Barnabas International invite you into their conversation as they take a practical, candid, biblical look at the task of refreshing the hearts and souls of those who carry the good news of God's love to the nations.



Trauma & Resilience

Ed. by Frauke & Charles Schaefer, 2013

Are you looking for resources to come alongside people who are suffering as they serve God? This book brings together theological perspectives; personal stories; and spiritual, psychological, community, and medical resources. It is research-based and at the same time practical. This is a handbook for church and mission leaders, peer supporters, counselors, those in personnel and member care roles, as well as those who suffer. It is also an excellent resource for training courses about this topic.



The Family in Mission: Understanding and Caring for Those Who Serve

Ed. by Leslie Andrews, 2004

This book—a series of essays about family issues for those involved in missionary work—is the final product of 15 years of study of missionary kids and missionary families by the MK-CART/CORE group and supported by several mission agencies. It includes material from 23 contributors.

Winter Day of Prayer

Thursday, January 16, 2014

10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.

Refreshments starting at 9:30

¥500 for facilities and program

Bring your own obento

Come for all or part of the day

For details and directions visit jema.org

Location: The Christian and Missionary Alliance Head Office in Tokorozawa



Rejoice
in
HOPE
be
Patient
in
AFFLICTION
be
Faithful
in
PRAYER
Romans 12:12

Women in Ministry PRESENTS



2014

Women's Retreat

March 5-7 (Honshu)

March 8 (Hokkaido)

Called, Not Driven

"For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago" - Eph. 2:10

Join us as we hear from Anita Hallemann, our returning guest speaker, from Germany. Anita uses her rich experience as a SEND missionary, Bible School Teacher and women's conference speaker to empower women in ministry. Her true passion is helping Christian women to realize and actualize their fullest potential through the power we have in Christ Jesus.

For more information visit: www.jema.org



Anita Hallemann

Honshu Retreat

Location: Olive no Sato in Nikko

Date: March 5-7

Cost: Under ¥20,000 (add a one-day personal retreat for ¥5,000)

Details and registration on jema.org in mid January
For more information email: wim@jema.org



Hokkaido Retreat

Location: OMF Hokkaido Center, Higashi Ku, Sapporo

Date: March 8

9:00 – 4:30 p.m.

Registration and information:

hokkaidocwf@gmail.com



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All items postage paid.

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Chiyoda Ku, Tokyo 101 Japan

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