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Japan Harvest
Autumn 2014/Winter 2015

Worldview

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

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*Japan Harvest publishes articles in either US English or Commonwealth English,
depending upon the author's primary English background.*

Worldview Awareness

Six-year-old Akira won't stop misbehaving on the train, so after multiple appeals from his mother to "stop bothering that man sitting over there," she gives him a piece of candy to distract his attention.

Meanwhile, six-year-old Billy is misbehaving a few cars down. His mother warns him to behave or they will get off at the next train station—where she will deal with him privately about his lack of self-control.

There are a number of worldview perspectives at work in these different responses to the same situation. Here are a couple:

"Inherently good" or "inherently bad"?

As those of us who have been in Japan for any length of time know, the perspective of Japanese culture (and post-modern culture in general), is that Akira was born "inherently good." His misbehavior is just a symptom of immaturity. Eventually, with proper education and understanding, he will learn how to act properly within his social context.

On the other hand, Billy's mother comes from a Judeo-Christian perspective and sees him as possessing an innate tendency to choose wrong (a sin nature), sometimes "despite himself." So at a minimum, from an early age he needs to be trained out of making bad choices (with the ultimate solution a spiritual heart change).

Collective focus or individual focus?

Akira is expected to properly fit within the environment of the people around him. He is "disrupting the harmony" of the train, so until he gradually learns proper behavior, any means to achieve harmony in social relationships is an acceptable solution.

Meanwhile, Billy's mother is primarily concerned that he relate properly within society because he "needs to learn to control his tendency to make wrong choices."

The end goals are the same, but the focus in Akira's case is to act properly for the current "collective good," whereas the focus in Billy's case is to learn proper behavior for his long-term "personal good."

Yes, I'm oversimplifying and pushing the point. But differing approaches to parenting can highlight some of the broad differences between significantly different worldviews.

Individual worldviews

Even individuals sharing the same general worldview also have slightly differing conceptions of the world—meaning, in reality, every individual has his or her own worldview, no matter how much that worldview may overlap with the next person's.

Some of you who are reading this editorial serve with mission organizations that draw personnel from multiple countries and cultures. You know firsthand some of the challenges of working together, even though you have a common spiritual bond in Christ. Challenges that come from individual worldviews affected by subtle or not so subtle differences in upbringing may not be obvious when you first discuss an issue.

As one example, a discussion within our Japan missionary community about universal versus self-directed healthcare would reveal significant worldview differences based upon our healthcare experiences in our passport culture, in Japan, and possibly other countries.

Another area in which we would find significant differences would be in how we should balance spiritual and social concerns within the context of sharing the gospel—an area that has been highlighted through Tohoku relief efforts since 2011.

People who have the same mother tongue, grew up in similar economic circumstances, come from the same cultural setting, and were raised in a common spiritual environment will have many similarities in how they view the world around them. But even a short conversation on a controversial subject will reveal clear worldview differences between individual Christians.

Obviously, the differences are even greater when speaking to non-Christians. As we touch on the complex topic of worldview in this issue, below are some questions to ask yourself as you think and read in this area.

1. How will the article I'm reading help me be more observant of unconscious worldview differences that get in the way of effective communication?
2. Are some of the areas that frustrate me related to worldview, with differing applications resulting from the same biblical truth?
3. The collective aspects of Japanese culture significantly affect relationships in ways I sometimes miss. How can I continue to grow in my understanding of this area? **JH**

Yours for the Harvest,




Gary Bauman (*Asian Access*) has led the Japan Harvest staff since September 2005. He enjoys the Conductor's smile when he improvises on his alto and soprano saxophones in a worship band.

P.S. When we started planning for the topic of worldview, we realized one magazine issue could never do this topic justice. So initially we planned for a two-issue focus. Trying to figure out which articles to assign to each issue wasn't easy, however. So when our summer 2014 issue was delayed to early autumn, we realized combining the autumn and winter issues would bring various angles of this topic together into one conversation and help us catch up our publishing schedule at the same time. We hope these articles stimulate your thinking and motivate you to write on this subject for possible publication in a future issue. Please submit your article proposal to gbauman@jema.org and we will forward it to the appropriate editor. Thank you in advance for your insights!

About the Cover

Across in a *torii* gate with a noose suggesting the crucifixion? The juxtaposition of contrasting worldviews through the cropping of our cover photo highlights the ability of many Japanese people to hold contradictory perspectives without conflict. Where else but in Japan can a self-professed atheist pray for success at a Shinto shrine, offer food to ancestors on a family Buddhist altar, and ask a palm reader for love life help? As you read this issue's feature articles, we invite you to reflect on how what may appear to be contradictory to an outsider can seem perfectly normal in Japan's collective culture.

Cover photo by Greg Corey



JEMA Datebook

Event	Date	Place
JEMA Fellowship Evening	February 23, 2015	Ochanomizu Christian Center, Tokyo
JEMA MLC and Plenary	February 24, 2015	Ochanomizu Christian Center, Tokyo
JEMA Leadership Seminar	February 25, 2015	Ochanomizu Christian Center, Tokyo
WIM Women's Retreat	March 4 - 6, 2015	Nikko Olive no Sato
Fresh Encounter	March 9, 2015	New Osaka Hotel
Prayer Walk	April 6, 2015	Emperor's Ground, Tokyo
Fresh Encounter	April 13, 2015	New Osaka Hotel

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

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1 Carton (38 copies) : 20,000yen

2 Cartons (96 copies) : 38,000yen

For larger volumes, please contact us for even lower prices. It's also available in bookstores, published by the Japan Bible Society, for 1,050 yen per copy.



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Member MISSIONS



As a part of Campus Crusade for Christ International, our desire in Japan Campus Crusade for Christ is to see God raise up MOVEMENTS OF MULTIPLYING DISCIPLES everywhere, so that everyone knows someone who truly follows Jesus. We desire to WIN people to Christ, BUILD them in their faith, and SEND them out to win, build and send others.

Our staff team in Japan is very international, with 80 staff from eight different countries – Japan, U.S., Canada, Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore and Australia. We have staff in Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Yokohama, Kobe, Kyoto and Fukuoka. Most of our staff work on university campuses, while others work in support roles alongside career people, stay-at-home parents, and other segments of society.

We desire to partner with others in the body of Christ, and always introduce new Christians to local church fellowships. Many students who came to Christ through our ministry have become lay leaders or pastors in their churches.

We have a two-pronged emphasis in our discipleship: 1. The Great Commandment, to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves (Matt. 22:37-40); and 2. The Great Commission, to go and make disciples of all nations (Matt. 28:18-20).

Through changed lives such as the ones below, through students who desire to share their faith and disciple others, we pray that God will raise up movements of multiplying disciples all over Japan! **JH**

Some testimonies of students' changed lives:

Misaki, in Nagoya, became a Christian through CCC during her freshman year. She grew in her faith, and as a sophomore, she prayed, along with her friends, that she could lead an evangelistic Bible study. She met a senior student and shared the gospel with her. Her new friend showed interest and decided to do the Bible study with Misaki. After about a month, she became a Christian! Misaki rejoices at how God answered her prayer and worked in her new friend's life.

Motoi, in Osaka, was a Christian, but didn't have any desire to share his faith. Through his involvement with CCC on his campus, he began to change. When he saw his friend going through a difficult time, he wanted to share with him. His friend asked many questions, and eventually, Motoi led him to Christ. Motoi says that he himself could feel God's love more deeply through this. His friend used to have a violent temper and was estranged from his alcoholic father. After receiving Christ, he experienced God's peace and forgiveness and took the initiative to reconnect with his father.

Rena, who helped plan the Tokyo campus Christmas party, shares: "Though I had been worrying about the party being successful, God showed me that it wasn't having a lot of people come that would make it a success... we need to just keep our eyes on Jesus. What I was most happy about was that my friend Kanako received Christ! I was worried about how I could take care of my other friends who came, but just like the shepherd who left the 99 to search for the one, I felt that I needed to take time to explain the gospel to Kanako after the program. After she received Christ, we came back to the big room and I saw other Christian students talking with my friends! I realized again that I don't have to do it all alone, but we are a team!"





New Life Ministries

New Life Ministries was founded in 1954 as a resource for missionaries in Japan to get the literature they needed for evangelism. Since that time, New Life Ministries has grown into a full-scale operation, with three high-speed web presses that, combined, can print 48 Bibles per minute. We print Bibles and gospel literature for ministries here in Japan and for Bible publishers and missionaries around the world.

This year, we celebrate our 60th anniversary as a ministry, having printed countless numbers of Bibles and gospel tracts over the years, with the vision of supplying God's precious Word to those who truly need it. While we have accomplished much during the past 60 years, there is still much work ahead.

Our ministry has three pillars: the Asia Project, the Manga Project, and the HOPE for LIVING Project.

For the Asia Project, we work especially with partners in the Asian segment of the 10/40 Window, where there are many minority people groups that need the Bible in their heart language, and other groups who simply lack enough Bibles for their Christian population.

The Manga Project focuses on printing and sending our manga to partners around the world. It began with sending *The Messiah* to partners in Uganda, but due to its universal use, it has extended to prison ministries in the United States and outreach to the Philippines in wake of the 2013 disaster.

Finally, in 2011, New Life Ministries began its HOPE for LIVING Project, a literature distribution effort in the wake of the disaster in Tohoku. After hundreds of thousands of books and booklets were sent to local churches to use in ministry to the disaster victims, New Life Ministries is once again doing HOPE for LIVING in the form of literature ministry alongside food supply programs, this time in Tacloban, Philippines, which was hit hard by a powerful typhoon in November 2013. Many lives were lost and whole neighborhoods destroyed. Many people have become homeless or are living in tents/temporary housing. Churches lost their Bibles and materials for discipling children. This year, we have developed an Evangelistic & Discipleship Program to strengthen 30 churches in Tacloban City as they reach out to the hurting community, focusing particularly on the children. This will be coupled with a food supply program for the kids, thereby providing nourishment for both body and soul. We are continually praying about where God is leading us with this HOPE for LIVING Project, as we see it developing into a disaster response ministry.

We look forward to the day when everyone who needs a Bible has one. Until that day comes, we will continue serving the Lord in this work to which He has called us. **JH**



1. The Manga Project
2. Asia Project
3. HOPE for LIVING

To learn more about the work of New Life Ministries, visit our website at <http://newlifeministries.jp/>





In November 1951, the first missionaries sent by the North American Baptist Conference arrived in Japan. After two years of language school, they set up the first mission post in Ise City, Mie Prefecture. Church planting in the Tokai and Kansai areas has been our main ministry from that time until the present. University evangelism and English education have also been major parts of our ministry history.

Over the past 63 years, many career and short-term missionaries have been part of the ministry of NAB. We are grateful for those who have paved the way for our current ministry, and we have learned much from them. Presently ministering in southern Osaka, we have four career missionaries: Paul and Melissa Ewing, Shan Reed, and Yuri Nakano.

After NAB missionaries established several churches, the Japanese churches formed the Japan Baptist Conference (日本バプテスト宣教団). We now work alongside this sister organization as we minister in Japan.

Currently, we are continuing the tradition of church planting as we work in Sakai and Izumi Cities in southern Osaka. Although methods of church planting have changed over the years, the focus of planting and watering the seeds of the gospel has not changed. Building relationships continues to be where we pour our energies.

God has guided us through the ups and downs of ministry as we have sought to glorify Him in all that we do. Although we do not know what the future holds, we are looking forward with hope and joy to how He will continue to guide us.

As we look to the future, we have three priorities that are guiding our thoughts, ideas, and ministry:

1. Impact the next community
2. Reach the next nation
3. Equip the next generation

“Impact the next community” involves churches, members, and pastors going outside the walls of our buildings and houses to become involved more directly in the life of the community where God has placed us. We want to be a people who live out the gospel in front of and with our neighbors.

“Reach the next nation” is a call for us to look outside the comfort zone of our own culture to join God where He is at work across the street and around the world. We want to develop relationships that impact not only our own community, but also communities around the globe.

“Equip the next generation” reminds us to be intentional in developing leaders in all stages of life who will continue the call to share the gospel. The future of the community of Jesus-followers is dependent upon developing leaders today.

In the future, we hope to expand the ministry of church planting to include leadership development both in our current churches and in the surrounding communities. Although our current missionary numbers are small, God has blessed us with a variety of gifts and talents that we desire to be used for His glory. We pray more workers will join us in the ministry here in Japan.

The fellowship and cooperative spirit of the mission community in Japan encourages, challenges, and blesses us as we minister here. May God continue to be glorified as we become more unified as followers and servants of Jesus. **JH**

NAB
 (North American Baptist Mission in Japan)

Impact the next
community

Equip the next
generation

Reach the next
nation



NLM
(Norwegian Lutheran Mission)

The Norwegian Lutheran Mission (NLM) has been in Japan since 1949. As a fruit of our work, a Japanese church, West Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (WJELC), was founded in 1962. Today, WJELC is a group of 42 churches, mainly in western Japan from Kobe to Hiroshima. NLM and WJELC share a joint vision of our work in Japan.

In Japan, NLM cooperates with the Finnish Lutheran Overseas Mission and the Icelandic Lutheran Mission. We are 12 missionaries with a good mix of first-time and experienced missionaries.

Together with WJELC and three other churches and organizations, we run the Kobe Lutheran Theological Seminary. Together with WJELC, we also run Hiruzen Bible Camp in Okayama prefecture, where we are in the process of transferring the ownership of the land to WJELC. In Kobe, we have the Kobe Lutheran Bible Institute and a media center, Lutheran Hour, which we also operate together with WJELC. In addition, NLM has started many kindergartens; but now we have one, which has 35 children.

NLM thinks there is still a need for missionaries in Japan because there are so few disciples of Christ here. We strive together with WJELC to reach the Japanese with the Gospel and make them followers of Christ. Our joint vision's motto is "Catching, bringing up, walking together – not survival, but service." To fulfill this mission, we train people in good practices, such as prayer, giving, and Bible reading. We also encourage each other to use our gifts and witness to the world by sharing the Gospel. In addition, we use new forms of media to reach new generations with the Gospel. We want to organize our camp and education institutions so that we can evangelize and educate more effectively. It is important for us to consider how we all can cooperate more effectively.

In the future, NLM's task will be to continue to support the church in reaching out to new people, especially young people and students. We will help to develop new ways of reaching out. We will continue to provide missionaries who are able to teach at our theological seminary and Bible school. We will also have missionaries capable of using new media. Through our good close relationship with WJELC, we believe in a renewal and strengthening of the existing work in a country where there are many opportunities. **JH**



“But where are the children?” That was the obvious question when we reached the kids worship section of the Sunday morning service at Zushi Fukuin Church, SEND’s first church plant in Japan. I was filling in for the pastor who was preaching elsewhere. Someone yelled from the back, “They’re not here yet, so let’s do it at the end.” Eighteen adults nodded in agreement and the band cranked out another hymn. Yes, it was a hymn, and yes, it was a band — a young man strumming away on a black acoustic guitar, an older lady trying her best to keep up on a six-stringed Morris, a young woman slapping away on a bass guitar, all being driven by a man in a suit playing a piano with great enthusiasm. Not exactly what I was expecting to find at a JECA church started by the mission formerly known as Far Eastern Gospel Crusade, if you know what I mean.

“They’re here!” yelled someone again, and the service was back on track as a little boy and girl popped through the back doors, ran down the aisle, and sat themselves on two little stools set up for them at the front of the cozy chapel. The lesson started. I gasped as a fully costumed Jesus appeared through the side door, complete with a wig, beard, bobby-pinned crown of thorns and removable cloak. Two thieves materialized on each side of Jesus, fully decked out for the part, carrying homemade Japanese-size wooden crosses behind them. The most impressive thing was not that they were saying their lines from memory, with only the narrator reading from a script. And it wasn’t that these were church people going all out for two neighborhood children on a non-Easter Sunday when their pastor was away. No, the most impressive thing was

that Jesus said, “I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” (Matthew 16:18 NIV).

SEND has been birthing churches ever since 1945 when it was itself birthed out of the GI Gospel Hour, a ministry among American servicemen who felt called to bring the gospel to their former enemies of World War II. Along the way, SEND operated three bookstores and the Fukuin Maru, a boat that carried missionaries to ministry locations in the Ryukyu Islands. A vision for camp ministry launched Okutama Bible Camp in 1968. While most SEND missionaries are involved in church planting in the Kanto area, some relocated to Tohoku after the disaster there in March of 2011.

Back at Zushi Fukuin Church, the service ended and we sat around the *oyatsu* (snack) table sipping tea. Church members began sharing excitedly about a charity rock concert they had held the previous week that 100 people came to. Rock concert? 100 people? The church officially has 24 members, most of whom are elderly. I had no idea how they got 100 people to show up, much less how they all squeezed into that building.

“It showed my friends that goof-ups like me are welcomed at church,” said the tattooed guitarist with a shady past. “Jesus came to seek and save the lost,” chimed in an obaa-chan with a walker. “We are few here, but we’re all trying to use our various gifts in obedience,” explained a middle-aged woman with tears in her eyes. It was all very refreshing, to say the least.

Rock on. **JH**

By Paul Suzuki, Area Director for SEND Japan



SEND ladies at Okutama Bible Chalet



Bible study

Clothed & Ready

Stressed? Under pressure? Finding life tough when sharing the Good News of the Lord Jesus?

It's comforting to know that these challenges are not new. As we open God's Word, we find a letter written especially for Christians who were strangers and aliens, living in a foreign country for the sake of the Gospel. These early Christians preached the word wherever they went. Sound familiar?

As we read the letter of 1 Peter, we find that these same people were suffering as a result of all kinds of trials. Immediately, we, as people in ministry, understand how they feel. We too are godly people living in a strange land, learning another language, adjusting to a different culture and sharing the most important message—God's salvation—to people who do not necessarily want to hear it.

So what is our response to those situations when we too are faced with frustrations, difficulties and in some cases, serious suffering? As Christians, how can we clothe ourselves in readiness for those times when we feel stressed and pressured to meet the demands and expectations of our ministry? These pressures can become magnified when living in a culture not our own.

In such circumstances, we have choices. We can opt out. We can withdraw. Or we can be duped into pretence like the Emperor of the Hans Christian Andersen fairy tale. In our story, the Emperor was persuaded to wear a new and remarkable suit of clothes. Clad in such "splendour" he strutted through the streets of his kingdom with his loyal subjects cheering and waving with huge smiles on their faces. It was not until a little boy yelled above the noise of the crowd, "The Emperor has nothing on!" that the pretence was over.

All too often in ministry we keep up appearances and pretend that all is well. Sometimes we trick ourselves into believing that the smiles we give, our obedience to the culture and an attitude of self-sufficiency is genuine and will impress.

However, in 1 Peter 1:13, God's people in ministry are encouraged to "set all your hope on the grace that Jesus Christ will bring you when He is revealed." As believers, we have already experienced this amazing grace at the moment of receiving Christ into our lives. And when Christ returns, we will experience this grace in ways beyond our understanding.

Still feeling overwhelmed? We can respond God's way! Our choices should be about living according to God's plan because in Him we have a living hope. Rather than focusing on my way, my thoughts and my behaviour, focus on God's plans, glorifying God and asking for God's strength to persevere during difficulties, disappointments and challenges. It will be less about self-pity, retribution and despair. It will be more about rejoicing in our sufferings to the extent that we can experience indescribable and glorious joy.

1 Peter 1:13 further encourages us to experience this living hope by preparing our minds for action. Easy to say but more difficult to do, you might be thinking. Often our minds are filled with irrelevant details, making endless plans or consumed by the busyness of ministry.

Preparing our minds means to put away distractions so that we can be ready to hear God's prompting, to obey, to follow and to speak as God leads. While our minds are cluttered with the daily grind it is difficult to be ready for action. How much more important it is to be alert both mentally and spiritually with a Christ-centred attitude.

In Exodus 12:11, we read that the Children of Israel were instructed to eat their Passover meal with "your cloak tucked into your belt, your sandals on your feet and your staff in your hand. Eat in haste..." NIV?. This is the same wording in Greek as used in "prepare your minds for action" NASB?. Metaphorically, we need to have the robes of our mind tucked into our belts, ready for action as God prompts us to obey.

1 Peter 1:13 also encourages God's people in ministry to be self-controlled. While living in another country, enjoying the pleasures of a different and exciting culture, surrounded by beautiful people and delectable foods, an exotic lifestyle may hold an attraction and enticement. Being thousands of miles away from people who hold us accountable for our actions, we can be tempted to indulge ourselves in ungodly behaviour without risk of discovery

As Christians, how can we clothe ourselves in readiness for those times when we feel stressed and pressured to meet the demands and expectations of our ministry?

When the pressures of the task to which God has called us become tedious, monotonous or too much like hard, unrewarding work, it is easier to make unwise choices. We tell ourselves that our stresses and challenges give us permission to take a break from ministry. We deserve it.

Peter reiterates the need of self-control and self-discipline two more times in his letter. In 1 Peter 4:7 he writes that we need to be clear-minded and self-controlled so we can pray. When we are experiencing stress, the aspect of our lives that is most likely to be neglected is our prayer life. We become less interested in prayer under-pinning our ministry. Conversation with God is no longer a priority.

Then in 1 Peter 5:8 we are reminded to be self-controlled and on the alert as your enemy the devil prowls around, seeking for someone to devour. As Dr Ken Williams of Wycliffe Bible Translators says, "No one wakes up in the morning and says to himself, 'today I am going to ruin the rest of my life!'" Yet for so many people committed to serving God overseas,

it just takes one moment where self-control is abandoned, when we are no longer wearing the protective robe of righteousness, that Satan devours the very person anointed for strategic ministry.

As we reconsider our response to stress, pressure and suffering, the Apostle Peter encourages us

to anticipate the wonderful hope we have in Christ, a hope that will be fulfilled when we hear those words face to face, "Well done, good and faithful servant" (Matt. 25:21, NIV).

And as we serve each day, living in a foreign land, we can rejoice by clothing ourselves in the hope that is ours, preparing our minds for action and being self-controlled. As we become more Christ-like, saturating ourselves with prayer and remaining alert to Satan's wiles, we can be confident in the knowledge that we are truly God's chosen ones. He has set us apart to serve Him. We will know with assurance that our faith and hope are in Him. **JH**

Jill Dyer and her husband have served in the Philippines and in Romania. Currently they work as consultants counseling families with children who face re-entry and educational challenges. Jill's heart's desire is to share the Good News of Jesus and encourage other women to grow in their journey of faith.

Warukuchi.

I thought I knew Japanese people. I had been interested in Japan for over five years, had lived there for 18 months, 10 of those months in homestays with two Japanese families. In Australia, I had shared my apartment with two Japanese flatmates for about nine months. I had many Japanese friends and language-exchange partners, had been actively involved in Japanese churches in both Australia and Japan, and had taught English to Japanese students in both countries in professional and volunteer capacities.

My impression of Japanese people was that they were some of the best people that I had ever known. They struck me as honest, diligent, clean, polite, and considerate. I could find almost nothing to fault them, and could heartily concur with Xavier when he described the Japanese as being “the best [people] who have as yet been discovered, and it seems to me we shall never find among heathens another race to equal the Japanese.” But this rose-tinted view was painfully shattered during my second stay in Japan.

Things started off well. I was working in a research group in a Japanese university. My supervisor and his graduate students made me feel very welcome. At the same time, I started sharing an apartment with a Japanese undergraduate student who was very friendly and easy to get along with. Everything was fine for the first six months or so.

Then I started overhearing the conversations being held in the adjoining office at the university. I initially noticed that there was a lot of laughter going on, and that it was not the general, good-natured variety, but the mocking type when someone is being subjected to ridicule. I tried not to pay too much attention to it, but it persisted and seemed to grow worse. While I couldn't hear everything and my Japanese was far from perfect, I could pick up enough to know that I was the main person they were talking about. I found it very difficult to focus on my work while it was going on. On a couple of occasions, it became so intense that I had to leave the office and walk around campus.

The worst perpetrator seemed to be a student that I had first got to know when he visited my university in Australia for a few weeks. I had become friends with Yoshi (not his real name) and took him sightseeing one day. When he became sick one day, I went shopping for him. Then when he needed a place to stay for the last few days of his visit, I let him stay at my apartment. He returned the favor by helping to move my stuff when I moved into my apartment in Japan. He was always ready to help me whenever I needed assistance with anything in the lab. Nothing was ever too much trouble for him.

But for some reason his attitude towards me had changed dramatically. To this day, I'm not sure exactly why. He seemed to be the most vehement and scathing in his criticism of me behind my back. The thing I found hardest to take was that there was no hint of animosity when I spoke to him face to face; indeed, if it hadn't been for the fact that I could overhear his conversations, I would never have suspected that anything had changed in our friendship.

A few months later, I noticed a similar phenomenon occurring at my apartment. When the student I was staying with had friends over, I often heard raucous laughter similar to that I was hearing in the lab. Once again, there was no hint of any animosity when I spoke with him directly.

I began to wonder if I was suffering from paranoia, and I told my predicament to someone who lived in Japan for much longer than I had. She informed me that speaking about people behind their backs was an all too common occurrence in Japan and that a lot of foreigners experience it. I have subsequently experienced it in many different situations – at a ramen shop where the owner assumed that I couldn't speak Japanese, at a Japanese factory I visited a few times a month for work, at the Japanese companies that I've worked at. The telltale signs are two or more people

speaking just far away enough so that you can't hear the entire conversation, but not so far that you can't pick up the gist of what they're saying; the characteristic mocking laughter; and conversations peppered with the word "jibun" (myself).

Saying unkind things about other people behind their backs while pretending to be friendly with them to their face is certainly not something that is unique to Japan; nor is it a characteristic of every Japanese person. But I was taken aback by the intensity of the backstabbing and by how well people concealed it when they were dealing with me directly. The latter phenomenon is a well-

known characteristic of Japanese people, and is referred to as *tatemae* (public face) and *honne* (true thoughts).

I wonder about many things. I wonder if the fear of this form of ridicule and rejection is one of the main reasons why Japanese people find

it difficult to be open about their faith at work and in other environments and why it often takes seekers a long time before they decide to publicly follow Jesus. Being different from others might expose them to this form of rejection. In other words, *warukuchi* could be one of the biggest hammers in the toolbox that Japanese society uses to clobber down the proverbial protruding nail. I wonder how much it occurs in Japanese churches (thankfully, I haven't encountered it much in the churches that I've been involved with). I wonder whether, for various reasons, Westerners living in Japan are spared or are ignorant of the worst of this backbiting, whereas Japanese are all too familiar with it.

Have you experienced this phenomenon in Japan? If you have, I'd love to hear from you and learn about your experience. Please drop me an email at docsimple111@gmail.com. **JH**

Simon Pleasants works as an editor in the Tokyo office of a scientific publishing company. Originally from Wales, UK, he now calls Australia home. He helps maintain several Japanese-related websites, including Japanese Ministries Downunder
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warukuchi

JAPANESE RELATIONAL GLUE

Most Westerners adopt an individual approach and can do without a group as long as they have one or two close friends. In Japan, the opposite is the case: Japanese first demonstrate their loyalty to the group and in so doing earn the trust required for individual friendships.

They say that love is the universal language, but in Japan, you'd better bring an interpreter! Many assumptions we missionaries make about relationships and how to express love don't translate very well in Japan. We all came to Japan with a love for the Japanese and a desire for them to know the love of Jesus Christ, but although we spent months or perhaps years studying theology and the Bible, few of us have put the same effort into studying Japanese relational patterns. I hope this article will encourage you to explore this important area of worldview and help pull back the veil on the often inscrutable world of Japanese relationships.

Friendliness and Friendship

When foreigners come to Japan, they are often impressed by Japanese politeness, but can be put off by what they perceive as a lack of friendliness. Friendliness is an important North American value, but doesn't necessarily mean North Americans highly value deep friendships. An Indian man approached someone in New Delhi and immediately identified him as an American as opposed to a European or an Australian. When asked why, he said, "Oh, it's obvious. You're walking briskly like you're going somewhere really important, and you're looking at everyone and smiling. Americans always think everyone is their friend. But they don't trust anyone."¹ In his experience of Americans, friendliness was readily offered, but real friendship was seldom conveyed.

Cultural analysts Stewart and Bennett describe the typical Western mindset like this, "To be liked or loved means simply that one is worthy of love, not that one is thereby obligated to the other person. Popularity and friendship are both matters of social success and not the conditions for establishing deep relationships."² It's important to recognize that, compared with people from non-Western cultures, North Americans tend to emphasize friendliness but not necessarily friendship. So what is it that makes us appear relationally shallow and even selfish to people of other cultures?

Intimacy and Obligation

By Japanese standards, North American relationships lack the glue that holds intimate relationships together, namely obligation. Stewart and Bennett describe the approach like this: “While social activities occupy much of their time, Americans avoid personal commitments to others. They do not like to get involved... Americans usually prefer to pursue their social life under conditions that minimize incurring social obligations. The circumspection required to avoid social indebtedness is in direct contrast with conventions in most parts of the world.”³ It’s uniquely American to dive into a personal conversation with a waitress in a restaurant, because we assume that intimacy and commitment are unrelated. Not so in Japan.

In Japan, *giri*, the concept of mutual obligation, is the glue that binds people together in intimate relationships. “*Giri* ... does not have an equivalent concept in English, [although in Japan it is considered] the most valued standard in human relationships... If pressed to define it, *giri* involves caring for others from whom one has received a debt of gratitude and a determination to realize their happiness, sometimes even by self-sacrificing.”⁴ I have to admit, *giri* wasn’t immediately attractive to me, nor is it something that comes naturally. But I have learned that faithfulness in meeting my relational obligations has done far more to deepen my Japanese relationships than the outward signs of friendliness that I am used to.

When I struggle with *giri*, I’m encouraged by the biblical emphasis on obligation in relationships. In the Old Testament, for instance, if a man didn’t ‘fulfill his duty’ in marrying his widowed sister-in-law, the elders would take off his sandal, spit in his face, and he and his descendants would forever be known as “the family of the unsandaled” (Deuteronomy 25:5–10). Contrast this with North America where a man will back out on his alimony payments and resist church membership, but feel righteous when buying a stranger a cup of coffee.

Insiders and Outsiders

When I came to Japan, I quickly learned that the word for foreigner (*gaijin*) literally means “outsider person,” and when I saw the boundaries between insiders and outsiders, it seemed that these walls were orchestrated by Satan to exclude the disenfranchised and hinder the spread of the gospel. I now consider that view one-sided. Lines that distinguish insiders from outsiders clarify to whom

you are obligated. In my more democratic Western approach, I felt proud in the perspective that I had no lines. “I’m supposed to love all people,” I thought. The problem with not drawing lines is that you can say that you’re obligated to everyone, but in reality that’s impossible and so, more often than not, we express obligation to no one and have no one who’s really committed to us in return.

As I’ve observed Japanese relational glue in the context of groups of insiders, I’ve realized that while “God so loved the world” (John 3:16), he also sees circles of relational obligation. While the Bible challenges us to love even our enemies, God particularly encourages us to recognize the deeper layers of responsibility that accompany our closer circles of trust, through verses such as Galatians 6:10, 1 Timothy 5:8. In Japan, my care for the outsider will be recognized as love, only if it is preceded by a commitment to the circles in which I am considered an insider. The same goes for my pursuit of friendships. Most Westerners adopt an individual approach and can do without a group as long as they have one or two close friends. In Japan, the opposite is the case: Japanese first demonstrate their loyalty to the group and in so doing earn the trust required for individual friendships.

I’m convinced that as missionaries begin to adapt to Japanese relational styles and infuse them with gospel truth and Kingdom values, not only will our evangelism be more effective, but our relationships will be richer and our churches healthier.

Questions to consider:

- Are you seeking to build genuine relationships or just being friendly?
- Do your neighbors perceive you as committed to the neighborhood?
- Who are you committed to? What are your circles of obligation?
- How do you see the Japanese around you expressing *giri* in healthy ways? **JH**

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1. David A. Livermore, *Cultural Intelligence: Improving Your CQ to Engage Our Multicultural World* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2009), 74.
2. Edward C. Stewart and Milton J. Bennett, *American Cultural Patterns: A Cross-Cultural Perspective* (London: Intercultural Press, 1991) 108.
3. Stewart and Bennett, *American Cultural Patterns*, 94.
4. J. Gillespie and Y. Sugiura 日本文化を英語で紹介する事典 *A Bilingual Handbook on Japanese Culture* (Tokyo: Natsumesha, 1996) 150.

Biblical Response to *Warukuchi*

Having considered the problem of *waruguchi* and noted its prevalence in Japanese culture, it's important to ask how we as Christians should respond when people slander us behind our backs, especially within a Japanese context. There's a lot that could be said on the subject; here are some reflections based on my experience.

Four things not to do

First, don't be taken by surprise. We live in a fallen world, and Jesus taught his disciples that they could expect to receive the same kind of treatment he received while living in this world.

Second, don't take the harsh things people say about us too much to heart. We often care overly much about what others think and say about us (it's certainly a sin that I'm particularly susceptible to). It's natural to want to be thought well of by others, but ultimately our identity comes from God and what he thinks and says about us (more about that below). Slander can have the beneficial effect of weaning us off worrying about what others think and grounding us more firmly in God's estimation of us in Jesus.

Third, we should avoid the opposite reaction of totally disregarding what others say about us. It's important to consider whether we've done anything to offend the other person. That's especially critical in a cross-cultural context. We all know how easy it can be to unwittingly offend others even when we share the same culture—the potential to offend is greatly enhanced when we operate across cultures. Sometimes, the offence could be totally unrelated to what they're saying about us to others.

Finally, we should resist the temptation to respond in kind. The most natural way to respond to slander is to spread malicious gossip about the perpetrators. But we're called to bless those who curse us. Peter instructs us to "not repay ... reviling for reviling, but on the contrary, bless, for to this you were called, that you may obtain a blessing" (1 Peter 3:9 ESV). Retaliate against those who say bad things about us behind our backs by saying good things about them behind their backs! In this way, we will be following in the footsteps of Jesus who "when he was reviled, he did not revile in return" (1 Peter 2:23).

Positive ways to counteract gossip

It goes without saying that as Christians we should never actively propagate gossip. But we can also be proactive by being the first to stand up for others when they're maliciously maligned. There's the temptation to feel relieved that we're not the ones being talked about and so keep quiet (or even secretly enjoy the slander—especially if it's about a person we find difficult to get along with). Refuting gossip can take some courage, and it may mean that we find ourselves on the receiving end.

When people say hurtful things about us, we can take the pain to God. Like every trial that we experience in this life, when handled wisely it can bring us closer to God. We have a heavenly Father who cares for us deeply and to whom we can take any care or concern. We also have a Saviour who has experienced firsthand what it's like to be slandered when He had done absolutely nothing to deserve it.

We're to see everything from a gospel perspective. The truth is that people can't say anything too bad about us. They might say many things that are untrue and unfair, but if they really knew what we are like, they could say far worse things. Martyn Lloyd-Jones states, "When a man truly sees himself, he knows nobody can say anything about him that is too bad. You need not worry about what men say or do; you know you deserve it all and more."

To confront or not to confront?

When I heard someone whom I considered a good friend speaking about me behind my back in the laboratory of a Japanese university, I agonized about whether I should directly confront him about it. The thing that made it so hard was that he never showed any indication of animosity to my face. In fact, he acted as if he were a good friend. After I had left the laboratory and started a new job, he asked to meet me socially. I confronted him by email. I never received a reply.

I suspect that when you are certain that others are talking maliciously that direct confrontation is probably the best approach, even if it goes against Japanese culture. (I'd love to hear how others have responded in similar situations.)

A gossip-free community

The church should be a gossip-free community. What a counter-cultural witness that can be in Japan! The church should be a place where people are able to feel secure, confident that others are not saying malicious things about them when they're not around. When we're hurt or wronged by others, our first response should not be to malign that person to others, but rather to confront the person face to face (again a very counter-cultural response—and not just in Japan either!). We're only to involve others if that initial approach fails, and even then, it's to be done in a loving way with a view to restoring the relationship (Matt 18:15–17).

Tune in to the heavenly conversation about us

Probably the most important thing we can do is, by faith, to tune in to another conversation that's being held about us. Right now, there's another slandering match going on behind our backs—the devil is accusing us before the throne of God. I suspect that he doesn't have to resort to lies (which are not much use in the presence of omniscience); he only needs to remind God of what's true about us. (On the rare occasions when he can't find any dirt, he can accuse of us of having impure motives, as he did with Job). Fortunately, he's not the only person speaking about us to God—John tells us that "if anyone does sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous" (1 John 2:1). He does not plead extenuating circumstances (or insanity!), rather he pleads his work on our behalf—his perfect life and substitutional death on a cross.

The hymn writer expresses it thus:

"Before the throne of God above

I have a strong, a perfect plea;

A great High Priest, whose name is Love,

Who ever lives and pleads for me."

With an advocate like that, we needn't be overly concerned about what others say about us and we can be empowered to love them with the same love that God has showered upon us.

What is your response to *waruguchi*? If you have suggestions or thoughts feel free to drop me a line. **JH**

Simon Pleasants works as an editor in the Tokyo office of a scientific publishing company. Originally from Wales, UK, he now calls Australia home. He helps maintain several Japanese-related websites, including Japanese Ministries Downunder
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Ultimately our identity comes from God and what he thinks and says about us.

The Shadow of Confucius

Are you sometimes mystified by inconsistencies in Japanese behavior? If so, you have company! Even Japanese spend a lot of time trying to understand Japan. Thousands of *Nihonjinron* books, each attempting to explain some aspect of Japan, fill bookstore shelves. Even so, one major influence on Japanese culture is easily overlooked—Confucianism. The shadow of Confucius touches nearly all aspects of Japanese society.

Confucianism in Japanese History

Few Japanese people identify themselves as followers of Confucius today, but history reveals the depth of his influence on Japanese society. In 604 AD, Prince Shōtoku gave Japan its first constitution, a strongly Confucian document that opens with the declaration, “Harmony is to be valued”¹—words that echo the Analects of Confucius.² Later Japanese rulers implemented the *Ritsuryō* law system, which was also rooted in the teachings of Confucius. In the 17th century, the Tokugawa shogunate adopted Neo-Confucianism as its philosophy, and in 1790, the Kansei Edict forbade teaching any doctrine that conflicted with Neo-Confucianism. Japanese *Bushidō*, the Way of the Warrior, was also largely based on Neo-Confucianism.

Confucianism in Modern Japan

At the end of World War II, Japan adopted a constitution based on western ideals, but Japanese schools still teach Confucian topics, and Confucian values shape many areas of Japanese life:

- In society, the emphasis on education and exams directly reflects Confucian teachings. Japanese assumptions about human goodness and egalitarianism also find their source in Confucianism.
- In Japanese Buddhism, the placement of memorial tablets (*ihai*) in the *butsudan* (Buddhist family altar) and the practice of ancestor worship are Confucian—Buddhism did not originally include such things.
- In Shintō, activities such as prayers and offerings to spirits are consistent with Confucianism. Also, the practice of using neighborhood associa-

tion dues to support shrines and festivals—thus involving all local residents—reflects the Confucian view that community takes precedence over individual beliefs.

- The Japanese emphasis on order, harmony, and rituals of social courtesy come from Confucianism. The use of honorific language (*keigo*) further reflects Confucian values such as humility, respect for superiors, and attention to status in relationships.

Although Japanese culture has departed from Confucian values in some areas, Confucian thinking remains evident throughout Japanese society, where it often serves as a unifying influence.

The Impact of Confucian Values

From childhood, Japanese experience three diverse ways of understanding the world. Buddhism trains Japanese in ethics that emphasize respect for family, thankfulness, humility, responsibility, patience, compassion, and reverence for ancestors. Shintoism encourages Japanese to celebrate community and nation, and to ask for the help of many gods in their pursuit of happiness. Secular schools teach science, reason, pragmatism, and a man-centered philosophy, sidelining religious belief.

These influences are well known, but they are Confucian values which mold society, allowing Japanese to participate freely in Buddhism, Shintoism, and secular humanism without being disturbed by their contradictions.

The western missionary is baffled when a man who claims to be an atheist prays at a Shinto shrine and purchases good luck charms (*omamori*) for his car and home. We are perplexed when a woman who does not believe in the afterlife reports her family news at the *butsudan* and burns incense to a long-dead ancestor. We despair when Japanese friends cannot understand why such things concern us.

However, such contradictions are resolved if we view Japanese behavior from the standpoint of Confucian values. Confucius emphasized maintaining tradition, knowing one’s place, respecting authority, and fulfilling one’s assigned role as essentials

for social harmony. Today, these same values lead Japanese to subordinate personal beliefs to the Confucian imperative in order to fulfill their appropriate role in each situation.

A Real Life Example

One day, a middle-aged Japanese man thanked me for the Bible lesson. “Thank you so much for teaching me. I now understand that the Bible is true and that Jesus is the only Savior.” He went on to explain that he would honor his first missionary teacher by having his son sprinkle his ashes on the missionary’s grave after he died. Then he added, “But I could never be a Christian.” Later, he explained that he had promised his grandmother that he would hold her Buddhist memorial ceremonies—which would continue until the 50th anniversary of her death. Since he did not expect to live that long, he felt he could never be a Christian.

How many Confucian values can you identify in this man’s story?

First, I notice his desire to study new things and his thankfulness to his teachers. Second, I see his desire to honor his first teacher and to teach this respect to his son. Third, I notice that the obedience of his son is assumed. Fourth, I see filial piety in his life-long dedication to fulfilling his grandmother’s request. Lastly, I see how his obligation to an ancestor takes precedence over his personal beliefs and needs. At the time, this man’s thinking was a mystery to me, but from a Confucian viewpoint, it all makes sense.

Confucian Bridges for the Gospel

Confucianism is not really a religion; it is a system of secular ethics. As such, it includes both barriers to faith and bridges for the gospel. Here are a few thoughts about possible bridges:

- Confucius viewed family relationships as being of utmost importance. Today, many Japanese are lonely as their families are fragmented by distance or relational stress, but the church can offer adoption into a vibrant family with a loving Father and a multitude of brothers and sisters.

- Confucius taught that righteousness can be achieved through study and discipline, but history and personal experience both reveal our fallen condition. We can encourage Japanese to recognize this and to turn to Jesus to receive His righteousness.

- The Confucian goal for individuals is to be-

come complete men, fully human, perfect in all virtues. We can show that Jesus is the only perfect man in history, fully human and fully God, and that we can only become complete through a relationship with Him.

- The Confucian goal for society is the creation of a grand harmony, with music as the example. We can present heaven as the place of perfect harmony, filled with heavenly music.

- One verse in the *Analects of Confucius* is of particular interest. “Zi Gong asked: ‘Is there a word with which we should act in accordance throughout our lifetime?’ Confucius replied: ‘It is ‘forgiveness’. Do not do unto others what you do not want others to do unto you.’”³ Comparing this quote to Scriptures such as Ephesians 4:32 and Matthew 7:12 can lead to fruitful discussion.

- The life and writings of Kanzō Uchimura, one of Japan’s most famous Christians, provide a model of how Confucian values can empower a Japanese believer.

Uchimura embraced the Confucian value of loyalty, but chose Christ as the One worthy of his loyalty. Uchimura’s tombstone is inscribed with his words, “I for Japan, Japan for the World, The World for Christ, And All for God.”⁴

Reading about Confucius’ teachings and Japanese history has helped me to understand Japanese culture in new ways. For those who are interested, I recommend the *Analects of Confucius* and Prince Shōtoku’s Seventeen Article Constitution as places to begin study. **JH**

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1. *The Seventeen Article Constitution of Japan*, accessed July 22, 2014, <http://www.duhaime.org/LawMuseum/LawArticle-1182/604-The-Seventeen-Article-Constitution-of-Japan.aspx>.
2. *Analects of Confucius*, chapter 1, verse 12, accessed July 22, 2014, http://www.chinesewiki.com/Analects_of_Confucius.
3. *Ibid*, chapter 15, verse 23, accessed July 22, 2014.
4. *Uchimura Kanzō*, accessed July 23, 2014, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Uchimura_Kanzo.

Truth Sharing and the Gospel with Japanese

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“I think Christianity is probably true,” my Japanese friend finally told me. “But I’m Japanese, and I must honour my family.” We had been studying the Bible together for some months, and he had seemed to be moving steadily closer towards making a commitment. I knew the issues of honouring his ancestors and worshipping at Shinto shrines were there in the background, and we’d talked about what the Bible says about these things. But this response seemed so irrational! If Christianity is true, how could he hold on to something else that must be false?

I’ve heard this kind of response to the gospel frequently from Japanese friends. Perhaps you have encountered something similar. What is going on here?

Cambridge anthropologist Alan Macfarlane, in his introduction to Japanese culture, *Japan through the Looking Glass*¹, observes that for many Japanese, “social relations are more important than dispassionate cognitive truth”. We might add that in Japan such “social relations” can be with the dead (ancestors) as well as with the living!

As Christians of varied cultural backgrounds, we are of course people who value truth. God’s

word is truth (John 17:17) and Jesus Christ is “the truth” (John 14:6). Salvation—becoming a Christian—involves being born again “through the word of truth” (James 1:18).

It would seem, then, that the Japanese ambivalence concerning “truth” must be a significant obstacle to their receiving the gospel. Macfarlane describes a mindset that many readers who have shared the gospel with Japanese friends will recognise: “If two ideas clash or contradict each other according to strict logic, that can be overlooked, for reason is fallible and inferior to emotion and intuition. A Japanese is able to hold contradictory views without conflict.”²

As a missionary to the Japanese, I have agonised over this “problem”. But recently I have wondered if I am perhaps missing some potential “openings” for the gospel, to which the type of mindset described above may be amenable.

The gospel is certainly “truth”, but it is emphatically not “dispassionate”. Rather, it is personal and involving and gripping. The Person of Jesus Christ is “the truth”. As I present the gospel to Japanese, too often I am guilty of presenting a “system”, which can always be relativised by the Japanese (or by anyone else, for that matter!)

Sometimes our evangelistic materials and methods are unhelpful in this regard. Apprehension of truth does imply knowing - but even this knowledge is intensely personal. In John’s first letter, the truth is personified: it is seen in us, and characterises all we do as Christians. We belong to the truth (2:8, 3:18-19).

Neither is the gospel merely “cognitive”. Of course, it does have a cognitive aspect. There is intellectual content to the message. But there’s more to it than that, which is good news, because we humans are not just cognitive beings! We have bodies, which are more than just “cases” for our minds. American Christian philosopher James K.A. Smith argues that most human action is conceived at the “imaginative” level. This is somewhere between innate instinct and cognition. Smith says, “Being a disciple of Jesus Christ is not primarily a matter of getting the right ideas into your head in order to guarantee proper behaviour—rather, it’s a matter of being the kind of person who loves rightly.”³ So, what does this mean for the “non-cognitivist” Japanese? We can appeal to the “loves” of our Japanese friends, just as the gospel itself does. At a level deeper than cognition (a level which corresponds, I think, to Macfarlane’s “emotion and intuition”) I have noticed that even the Japanese do not like division of loyalties. Jesus is claiming their loyalty, which trumps other (love-like) commitments. The spiritual battle for the hearts of our Japanese friends is more likely to be won or lost at this level than if we never move beyond “mere” cognition.

Which leads us to a question: how do we “access” this level when we interact with our Japanese friends? What if we sense that they are unwilling to reveal their deep-seated “love commitments”? Some close observation and cultural analysis might help here. Smith argues that we all have our own “love stories” that have taken hold of

us on a precognitive level and that these influence so much of what we do. We might not recognise them cognitively. For example, have you ever asked a Japanese friend why they visit a Shinto shrine, and been told, “I don’t actually believe in Shinto”? This is a cognitive response, but it would be entirely wrong to assume that your friend’s shrine visit is not (1) meaningful, (2) powerful, and (3) formative of a deep attachment.

Something pre-cognitive is going on! This kind of “love story” is not communicated by ideas, but through cultural practices that Smith calls “liturgies”. When we hear the word “liturgy” we probably think of church services, but Smith means by “liturgy” any repeated practice that orders the way we orient ourselves to our ultimate loves. Going to a shrine is one example, but going shopping would be another. Any liturgy (repeated practice), whether “sacred” or “secular”, shapes and constitutes our identities by forming our most fundamental desires and our most basic attunement to the world.

I’ve been taking more time to observe and ask questions of my Japanese friends that aim to get below the surface: How would you feel if you didn’t go to the shrine? How would your parents feel? What do you think “draws” you to go there? Questions such as these begin to tap into pre-cognition, and to where our “love commitments” ultimately lie. We start to see what our idols are; the “rivals” to Jesus for our ultimate commitment and loyalty. As we work through these issues with our Japanese friends, we can pray (and sometimes speak) with a better understanding of what is going on spiritually.

So, to return to Macfarlane, we can conclude that the typical Japanese ambivalence concerning truth is not necessarily a

hindrance to sharing the gospel. That’s because the gospel is not “dispassionate cognitive truth”, but personal, transformative truth in relationship—God’s own power unto salvation (Romans 1:16). The nature of a human person proposed in James K.A. Smith’s model means that our ultimate commitments are not (first-and-foremost) shaped cognitively anyway, and so we can ask what liturgies (repeated practices) are forming the “loves” of the Japanese. But the opposite side of the coin is that a commitment to Jesus Christ will also have its “liturgies”. I’m not of course referring to liturgical church services (although I’ve nothing against them!) but to formative practices that orient us towards Jesus. If Smith is correct, we need to be drawing Japanese friends into those practices (even before they have made a cognitive commitment to him) to enable them to “experience”, viscerally, what the Christian life “means”. We need to draw them into Christian community, help them learn to pray, teach them to sing, and encourage them to serve. None of this is rocket-science, and the argument is not new! But perhaps I, for one, have underestimated the power of practice to effect change at the imaginative level.

I’ve missed the opportunity to commend the vision of a Christ-centred life by encouraging my Japanese friends to step into it. One irony of being involved in ministry to Japanese overseas is that the commitment many of them make to Jesus may well be primarily intellectual/cognitive. I wonder

if this is perhaps precisely why so many fall away when they return to Japan: their commitment never infiltrated the pre-cognitive, so that they became truly “rooted” in Jesus Christ at the level of love-commitment.

In Oxford, we’ve been welcoming Japanese into an international community of postgraduate students. At the moment, about three-quarters (45) of them are Christians, and the rest (15 or so) are not yet. In this community, the non-Christians experience the distinctiveness of Christian community. They see us putting the Bible into practice in the community, and outside it. Of course, they see our sin as well! But it is real, and visceral, and - in a sense - habit-forming.

I want to think of the whole person as I share Christ. Of course I don’t stop preaching the gospel. Of course I appeal to the intellect: in Oxford, of all places, who could fail to? But in most cases—given who we are as human beings, and given who the Japanese are culturally in particular—an appeal to the mind alone seems to be insufficient. We are not after all dealing here with Macfarlane’s “strict logic”, but with a mighty Saviour who—among competing suitors for our heart’s allegiance—claims all of us—body, soul and spirit—as his own. May many more from Japan respond, in his mercy! **JH**

Richard Brash is a postgraduate student minister at St Ebbe’s Church, Oxford, and mission partner with Japan Christian Link. He’s a graduate of the University of Cambridge, International Christian College, and Japan Bible Seminary. He lived in Japan for 7 years and is married, with two children.

1. Macfarlane, Alan, *Japan Through the Looking Glass*, Profile Publishing, 2007, page 157
2. Ibid, page 157
3. Smith, James K.A., *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview and Cultural Formation*, Baker Academic, 2009, page 33

As I present the gospel to Japanese, too often I am guilty of presenting a “system”, which can always be relativised by the Japanese.

The Universal Language

“It probably won’t be until the end of your second four-year term that you will begin to feel comfortable speaking Japanese,” a veteran missionary told me shortly after I arrived in Japan. “Eight years?!” I thought to myself, as I politely smiled and thanked him. “What have I gotten myself into?” Unsatisfied with his answer, I proceeded to ask other missionaries and people who had lived in Japan for many years when they began to feel comfortable speaking Japanese. While some gave shorter times, my heart was still restless. Language school commenced and tears soon followed. I was unprepared for how difficult learning to speak Japanese would be. I cried out to God, “Help me God, or I am not going to last.”

Looking back, I realize I came to Japan believing a lie — I had to speak Japanese fluently before I could really show God’s love or be useful to God. I believed I had to be able to preach in Japanese before I would be effective. I thought speaking with fluency would be the most powerful way I could communicate God’s love. I asked God why I had to learn such a difficult language. In time, God began to answer my questions and revealed a profound but simple truth.

I don’t need to be fluent in Japanese to show God’s love. I don’t even need to be particularly good. I simply need to show them Jesus. I remember one of the first times I began to understand this. One morning, I passed a homeless man near a train station. I felt compassion but was paralyzed to help him. I saw him again the next day. My heart grew restless. I wanted to help him but how could I? I was still in the beginner Japanese class. I asked God to show me how to love him. Matthew 25:35–40 came to mind.

The following day, I prepared a bag with some food, fruit drinks, money, a brochure to my church, and a Japanese Bible. I headed out, praying for courage as I walked. I soon approached his usual spot. I knelt down and our eyes met. Hopelessness, fatigue, and despair hid behind his faint smile. I proceeded to use the little Japanese I knew and asked his name and told him mine. I then explained I had a gift and gently handed him my care-bag. He took it, surprised but thankful. I then shared that Jesus loves him very much. He smiled and thanked me, and I rose and left, thankful for the opportunity. I have not seen him there since that day.

• **The long-term investment required to learn the Japanese language can be an expression of our love and commitment to those with whom we seek to share Jesus’ love.**

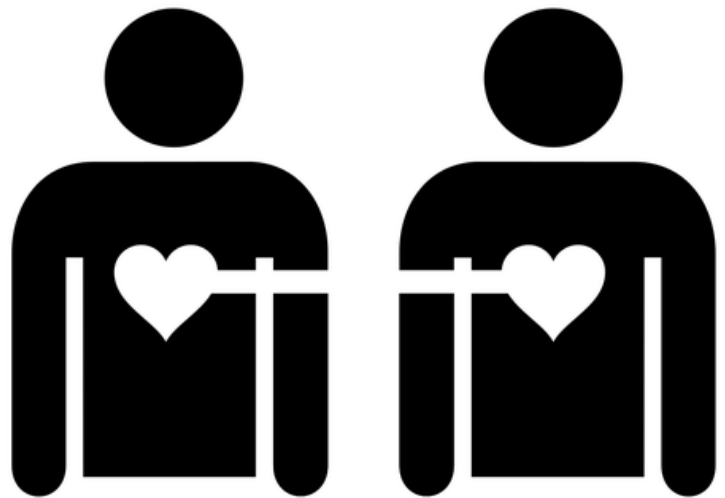
I don’t share this story to brag about my humanitarian efforts for the poor. I share this story as an encouragement. There are countless ways we can show love without being fluent in Japanese. Whether it is towards a co-worker, neighbor, or local shop-keeper, we all have people in our lives we can reach out to. Love is the universal language. You can still love those around you, without being fluent in Japanese. To be clear, I still advocate learning Japanese to the best of your ability—the long-term investment required to learn the Japanese language can be an expression of our love and commitment to those with whom we seek to share Jesus’ love. But no matter what stage you are at in learning Japanese, remember that love can transcend words.

“If I had the gift of being able to speak in other languages without learning them and could speak in every language there is in all of heaven and earth, but didn’t love others, I would only be making noise” (1 Corinthians 13:1; TLB).

May love be the language we use to communicate. **JH**

Kevin Cochrane is a missionary with SEND International, sent from his home church in Grand Rapids, MI. He is hoping to work with Hi-B.A. and reach the the next generation of Japan through evangelism and discipleship.

“Love” graphic designed by Anton Håkanson from the thenounproject.com



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Japanese Culture

and the Nature of Knowing

This article is third in a four-part series based on interviews with Japanese unbelievers about Japanese culture.

In my interviews, I asked two questions to explore this aspect of culture:

1. Who taught you when you were young, and what did they teach you?
2. How did you know if they were telling the truth?

Almost all of them spoke of learning from family (parents, grandparents), from school (teachers, books), from friends, and from media (television, Internet). Some talked about stages of life and how the source of knowledge shifts as they grow up. One woman is now learning from her children. Another woman said that the Internet has largely replaced the library as a resource for knowledge.

One man said that his mother and grandmother taught him manners. For example, “*hoka no hito ni meiwaku o kakenai*” or “don’t bother other people.” Family also taught Japanese legends and skills, such as how to grow flowers. One woman said she learned a great deal from her mother about life, as her mother modeled it.

•
• **If my son says this (a toy car) is a snake, then it is a snake for him.**
•

Some of my contacts said they never questioned what they were taught when they were young. “I am simple and so I always believed” is how one woman worded it. This same woman said Japan was very peaceful so there was no reason to be skeptical. She was stunned to discover as a 25-year-old traveling in America that many people in China hated Japan. For the first time she heard about bad things Japan did during WW2. Feelings are also used for distinguishing truth. One woman stated, “I don’t often determine if it’s true or not; I just feel. If I make a mistake with my feelings, it is my fate.”

Three young mothers stated, “There are different ways to heal a cold.” In other words, there is more than one truth.

Several of those I interviewed said experience isn’t just a good teacher; it also corrects misinformation. One businessman working in America said he learned a great deal about America before going, but once he actually worked there, he was able to determine what was fact. Another woman added that the closer you are to a source of information, the easier it is to believe. The youngest man I interviewed said, “people with good personality” give good advice. He defined “good personality” as those who are “generous with knowledge” and who “help you see things from a different point of view.” Another man said that if many people believe the same thing, it is probably correct. One woman said if it is a matter of life and death, seek an expert.

My biggest surprise in learning about how the Japanese know came from a young mother. Looking at her three-year-old son’s toy, she said, “If my son says this (a toy car) is a snake, then it is a snake for him.” She added, “I don’t want to challenge other’s claims, as I might hurt their feelings.” **JH**



John Edwards (US), with his wife Susan, have been missionaries in Japan since 1993 (with SEND since 2002), working with hi-b.a. and with churches in Kanto, Kansai and now in Tohoku. jobnejapan@gmail.com

Meditative Prayer



This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

Joshua 1:8 (NASB)

What is meditative prayer? In Jewish tradition, meditating on Scripture is to quietly repeat it, while giving oneself totally to God and avoiding outside distractions. The two main things to meditate on are God’s Word and God’s goodness:

“Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.”

Philippians 4:8-9

Notice the difference between the task-oriented Martha and the contemplative Jesus-focused Mary in Luke 10:38-42. Mary sat at Jesus’ feet listening to Him, while Martha was distracted with “much serving.” Jesus said that Mary had chosen the better way because she sat at His feet and was not distracted. This does not mean we avoid the “kitchen.” But there are times when we need to pause, sit down and listen without the distractions of normal life.

Meditative prayer is exactly that—sitting at the feet of Jesus, hearing and listening to His words. We take time to let the Lord speak to us through meditating on Him and His word in prayer.

Guidelines for Meditative Prayer

- Schedule it. Meditation requires planning. Try spending at least 30 minutes once a week in meditation. You can do it while commuting to work by car, bus or train. Or take a walk over the weekend, perhaps a Sunday afternoon; or sit down in a public park, near a lake, in a garden etc.
- Choose a quiet place. In our distracting world, we need a quiet place where we can allow God to speak to us. The most effective place to pray is where you are least likely to be disturbed.
- Allow at least 30 minutes. Many people only spend a few minutes each day in prayer. Very few people actually spend time in meditative prayer. It takes time to drown out the cares of the world, sit, prayerfully meditate on God’s Word and allow Him to speak to us.

- Choose a Scripture to prayerfully meditate on. Select a passage of Scripture that is especially meaningful to you. Perhaps it can focus on God’s goodness, His promises or on worshiping God. For example, start by writing out Philippians 4:8 in a journal. Underline words that stand out to you. Leave some lines open for notes.
- Allow God to speak to you. This is the hardest part. Many people never hear the Lord speak to them simply because they don’t allow Him to. We need to sit and listen for the voice of the Lord. Samuel said, “Speak, for Your servant is listening” (1 Samuel 3:10). One effective way to capture what the Lord is saying to us is to write down what we hear Him telling us. Prayerfully wait on the Lord to speak to you about each word you underlined. Use a concordance to look up cross-references for more clarity on what the Bible says about that topic. You might wonder whether it really was Him telling you these things or your own thoughts. In time, it will become clearer.
- Conclude with thanksgiving. It is important to speak to the Lord regarding what He has shown you. Start by asking that each aspect He has shown you be in your inner being. Ask Him to make you more sensitive to the voice of the Spirit and to become more obedient. Conclude your time of meditation by giving thanks to the Lord for His Word, for being faithful and for touching your heart through His living Word. **JH**



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 35 years ago.



Is prayer your steering wheel or your spare tire?”

Corrie Ten Boom

Developing Hardiness



Viktor E. Frankl, a Jewish psychiatrist writing from a prison of war camp in Germany during World War II, might be considered an authority on stress.¹ Life for the cross-cultural worker is also stressful. Since the triple disaster of 2011, life for many missionaries in Japan has become scarier, more frustrating, and uncertain. This causes a lot of stress. The spiritual aspect of our lives can keep us focused and centered but what can we do in our everyday lives to help in difficult and changing times? One helpful step is to begin to develop “stress resiliency”.

Stress hardiness is being strong, healthy, determined, straightforward, and more importantly, capable of recovery in the midst of stressful situations.² Note the word “recovery” because it is this quality of hardiness that we so desperately need in our lives today. It is a “mindset” shown by someone that makes them “resistant to the negative impacts of stressful circumstances and events.”³

“Hardiness” is a word employed by health care professionals to evaluate the effects of stress on people caused by their jobs. Hardiness describes that quality or ability to handle stress well, or the aptitude to bounce back after or recover from stressful situations. According to various studies, Rowe⁴ in particular, health care professionals who exhibit hardiness are able to appraise stressful situations more realistically, and make better adjustments as a result. These studies are informative because health care professionals have some stresses similar to those in ministry, such as low pay, lack of respect, staffing shortages, a low degree of peer support, lack of understanding and support from the administration, and an inability to meet patients’ needs.⁴

Both health care and ministry are often thought of as “vocations.” Two synonyms for this word “vocation” are words we are more familiar with, “calling” and “mission.”

In these studies, some participants were better able to handle stress and were more resilient to burnout. Interestingly, some people naturally have “stress-hardy” personalities.⁵ But more importantly, stress hardiness is actually something we can learn.

Rowe describes hardy people as being able to:

- view stress as a decision making challenge,
- emphasize personal choice and responsibility, by
- promoting a meaningful life through decision making and action.

To make this easier, there are three components of hardiness: control, challenge and commitment.

Control doesn’t mean that I can control everything, but rather that I believe and act in a way that can influence others and affect the way things turn out. When things don’t work out, I am willing to figure out why and take responsibility when necessary.

Challenge is based on the belief that change, not stability, is representative of life. Hardy people expect disruptions and use them as opportunities for growth.

Commitment is the ability to believe in the truth, importance and value of what one is doing. This belief wards off the ill effects of stress in one’s life.

Cross-cultural living is stressful, but doesn’t have to overwhelm us. By focusing on control, challenge and commitment, we can begin to develop hardiness under stress. It is no mistake that “courageous” and “robust” are synonyms for hardy. In these challenging times, it takes courage to become robust in dealing with stressful cross-cultural experiences. **JH**



1. Man’s Search for Meaning. An Introduction to Logotherapy, Beacon Press, Boston, MA, 2006
2. Farlex, “The Free Dictionary”, <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/stress+hardiness>
3. Dr. Michael H. Kahn, “What is Hardiness?”, MHK Coaching: Synergy for Success in Work & Personal Life”, 2006-2012, <http://medical-dictionary.thefreedictionary.com/stress+hardiness>
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5. Rowe, Ibid.
6. Rowe, Ibid.

Photos supplied by the author



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

“When we are no longer able to change a situation -we are challenged to change ourselves.”

Viktor E. Frankl

Five Hints for Prayer Letter Writing

Ever groaned over the thought of writing a prayer letter? Here are some suggestions to make the task easier:

Template

Save time by using a similar layout every time. Include sections or headings for the various elements (for example, Prayer Points, Family News, and Church News). This can also inspire you. When I start writing a newsletter, I often begin with the easy parts (such as Upcoming Dates). I also add photos from the previous month. I often find that as I move forward with the standard inclusions, I discover inspiration for the rest of the newsletter.

Frequency

Sending newsletters too infrequently may result in some people neglecting to pray for you, whereas sending news too often can overwhelm your readers. Find a regular rhythm with something to remind you. For example, one missionary I know starts writing his prayer letters when the dates hit the 20s and ensures he has it completed by the end of the month.

Length

If you write too much, your readers may not read all you've written. This is related to frequency: if you leave it too long between letters, you'll have too much to say. A good length for a

monthly letter is one to two A4 pages (about 500 to 1,500 words, depending on layout).

Photos

Include photos to illustrate your words. But remember to keep the size down if you are emailing. Emails are best kept under 1 MB in size (many email programs will display the size of an email if it is saved to drafts).

Follow up

Follow up on previous prayer requests. Let people know how their prayers have been answered. Again, don't overwhelm (remember that Japanese names aren't easy for many supporters to remember); keep it as simple as possible.

Not every missionary enjoys writing, but if you follow the above principles, you'll find the task easier than you thought. **JH**



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.

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Internet Safety

Do you have safety controls implemented on your electronics? If you're a single person or an empty nester, you may not see the point—there aren't any kids around. Besides, all you do on your computer is check e-mail and Facebook. Or maybe you do have kids, but you have parental controls established and firm rules about their computer use, so you're covered. Well, what about smartphones? And have you forgotten that gaming consoles (Nintendo 3DS, PlayStation3, etc.) can access the Internet? Internet safety is for everyone in any situation.

What are the dangers?

The most obvious problem is adult content, particularly pornography. "50% of all Christian men and 20% of all Christian women say they are addicted to pornography."¹ This is the minimum, as it is likely there are more who won't admit their addiction. Also alarming is the statistic from the same source that says 90% of all boys and 60% of all girls are exposed to pornography before the age of 18. With such an early start and the ease of retrieval that the Internet provides, no wonder so many people struggle with this very serious problem.

Another danger of the Internet is on sites which allow you to illegally download media. These are torrenting sites, which offer digital downloads of books, movies, music, software, and other materials for free or at very little cost. If you ask someone, "Is stealing wrong?" most will answer, "Of course." But if they're offered a link to a movie they want to see or to software they want that's out of their budget, they don't see the harm in downloading it. Who's it hurting? Besides, isn't it like borrowing a book from the library, since that's free, too? It's not stealing if I pay 10 cents for that song; I paid for it!

Wrong—if the deal looks too good to be true, it is. Those sites have illegally taken the content and are giving it away for free or at pure profit (to the thieves). Even if nothing directly happens to you as a result of such a download, it's still breaking the law. Worse, there could be serious

consequences: You could be sued (even if it was your child who did it, not you), something else could be downloaded with it (malware, spyware, viruses, etc.), or you could lose your Internet service. Your Internet provider knows what you—or your kids—are doing online, and if they note that someone at your IP address (your house's network) is downloading illegal content, they'll threaten to cancel your service and will act promptly if you don't comply.

Though there are other unsavory parts of the Internet, the final "big baddies" we'll discuss are online predators. Suppose your child meets another child in a chat room or forum and becomes friends. They choose to meet in person, only to discover that the other "child" is an adult with criminal intentions. Children aren't the only ones susceptible to dangerous online "friends." If you have a Facebook account, even if you don't discuss private matters, a person using a fake account, posing as someone you think you know could potentially gather enough information from posts about your everyday life to answer security questions to other private online accounts (the name of your dog, your mother's maiden name, etc.). Or a "friend" could see you'll be on vacation for two weeks, offering plenty of time to sift through your house.

What does the Bible say about all this?

You might think the Bible doesn't address Internet safety. But a surprising number of passages discuss the wisdom of protecting yourself or keeping yourself accountable. Here are just a few: Proverbs 11:14, 22:3, and 28:13-14; Romans 6:1-23; and 1 Peter 2:15-16. Also, Romans 13:1-10 specifically says we need to obey the law and reminds us that God forbids stealing. It's so easy to convince ourselves it's okay to download something when clearly it's not.

So, how do we stay safe?

No matter your age, or gender, or how you use the Internet, you are at risk of temptation or breached security. To remain healthy and safe, everyone should have all of their devices protected. In the next issue we will offer a list of tools to help you do just that.

In the meantime, know that the Bible doesn't just finger wag—it gives you tools, too. Job 28:28 tells us that having a healthy fear of the Lord helps us resist evil. Psalm 119:9-16, 30, and 33-40 talk about how important it is to memorize scripture to protect ourselves against impurity.

So, spend some time in the Word, memorize scripture, and keep an eye open for the next issue of Japan Harvest.

Dusty and April Mack (US) have been in Japan since 2010. Dusty is a technology coordinator at CAJ and has a degree in computer information systems. April has a degree in professional writing.

1. <http://www.covenanteyes.com/pornstats/> Accessed July 29, 2014.

"Shield" graphic designed by Guido Haak from [the noun project.com](http://www.thenounproject.com)

Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes

As a teenager in the 1960's I knew exactly what the preacher meant when he thundered, "First Timothy two, verse nine, says women should 'adorn themselves in modest apparel, with propriety and moderation.'" ("Not with braided hair or gold or pearls or costly clothing" wasn't even mentioned).

When Richards and O'Brien suggest that Paul might not have had sexual modesty in mind at all, but rather economic modesty (p. 43), verse nine takes on a whole new meaning. Using examples like this, the authors challenge us to take off our cultural blinders as the spotlight is trained on Western presuppositions that can skew a proper understanding of Scripture passages.

Although written by Westerners for Westerners, this book benefits Easterners as well. Richards served as a missionary in Indonesia, and brings his experience in Asia to the table, sharing examples through the lens of Eastern culture that may or may not be the best understanding of a particular verse.

Perhaps intentionally, the book is organized in a classic three point Western format: three main sections explore three subject areas each, detailing how Western and Eastern perspectives can render strikingly different conclusions.



Part One, "Above the Surface," deals with 1) mores, 2) race and ethnicity, and 3) language. Part Two, "Just Below the Surface," dips into 4) individualism and collectivism, 5) honor/shame and right/wrong, and 6) time. Part Three "Deep Below the Surface," dives into 7) rules and relationships, 8) virtue and vice, and 9) finding the center of God's will.

Each chapter closes with "Questions to Ponder," a helpful addition that will be useful for a book discussion group.

The book concludes with a list of books for those who wish to dig more deeply into each of the nine topic areas.

As an introductory text to the issue of Western bias when reading Scripture, this book is an excellent first read. **JH**

*E. Randolph Richards
Brandon J. O'Brien
Misreading Scripture with Western Eyes
Removing cultural blinders to better understand the Bible
Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2012
240pp.*

*Reviewed by
Gary Bauman*



The reviewer rates this book 4 out of 5 stars

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Live Out What's Important to You

This article is part one of a four-part series, based on the following: In your ministry, make sure that you live out what's important to you by (1) identifying your core values and increasing your understanding of them, (2) leading from your core values, (3) developing practices that reflect your core values, and (4) assessing how well you are living out your core values.

I want to make sure that in my ministry I live out what's important to me. Why? Because I want to honor how God made me. I've found that when I do, I increase the likelihood that I'll be at my best, I better understand myself and those I serve, and I improve my decision-making, planning, and overall effectiveness.

What helps me? Identifying my core values and increasing my understanding of them.

I'm involved in leadership development, and my identified core values are empowerment, growth, focus, and working smart. Identifying my values and increasing my understanding of them has helped me focus leaders on their God-given callings. Because of my core value of empowerment, I've shifted from giving advice to asking questions.

My wife is also involved in leadership development. While we both want to see leaders who are thriving as they pursue their God-given callings, we have different core values. My wife's core values are joy, stewardship, community, and learning. We are both pursuing the goal of equipping and shaping leaders, but we approach it differently.

Identifying our core values together helps us recognize that God makes people differently, so they have different views of what is important, even when pursuing common goals.

So, what are your 3-5 core values? If you haven't already identified them, don't worry. The process isn't that difficult: reflect on two questions, preferably with someone who knows you well.

- 1 What's important to you?
- 2 What 3-5 words identify your core values? (use the word list, as helpful)

How can you deepen your understanding of your 3-5 core values? Here are 6 ways:

- Connect each value to a relevant Bible passage. For example, I've connected my value of focus with I Corinthians 9:24 where Paul encourages us to run for the prize.

- Identify what each value means and doesn't mean. For example, empowerment means getting others to set goals; it doesn't mean me setting goals for them.
- Research how others (individuals and organizations) define their values.
- Read books that address your values. I value working smart and have read books like *Decisive: How to Make Better Choices in Life and Work*, *Crazy Busy: A Mercifully Short Book about a (Really) Big Problem*, and *Declutter Your Inbox: 9 Proven Steps to Eliminate Email Overload*.
- Journal or blog about each of your values — what they mean and how you are using them.
- Use your values to guide your planning. For example, I value growth, and when planning a workshop, I ask myself, "How will this training help others grow?"

The point? In your ministry, make sure that you live out what's important to you. Identifying your core values and increasing your understanding of them can help.

What about you?

What are your core values?

What's encouraging/dis-encouraging about the way you live out each of your core values?

On a scale of 1-5 (5 being high), how well do you understand each of your core values?

How can you increase your understanding of your core values?

How can you use your core values to serve those you minister to? **JH**



Michael B. Essenburg (US; Christian Reformed Japan Mission) is involved in leadership development.

Word list:

accountability, caring, character, Christ's Body, church planting, collaboration, communication, community, compassion, contextualization, creativity, deeper life, deference, developing people, discernment, discipleship, diversity, education, effective ministry, empowerment, encouragement, enfolding, equipping, evangelism, excellence, faithfulness, fellowship, freedom, focus, gentleness, giving, global focus, God's family, God's glory, God-directed ministry, grace, growth, holiness, holistic ministry, honesty, impact, improvement, incarnational ministry, initiative, innovation, integrity, interdependence, Jesus Christ, joy, kindness, leadership, learning, love, mentoring, mission, mobilized laity, multiplication, networking, openness, partnering, passion, patience, peace, people, personal development, personal growth, prayer, preaching, productivity, reconciliation, relationship, relevance, respect, risk-taking, servanthood, spiritual passion, stewardship, support, sustainability, teaching, team ownership, teamwork, training, transformation, trust, truth, working smart, unity, vision.

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