



Your stories

To Create Products Of Excellent Quality...

Miyoshi Oil & Fat was founded in 1921 as a manufacturer of soap for the textile industry.

In 1941, the Foods and Oils Division was established and Miyoshi began producing Margarine, followed by shortening, lard and other products. Today, Miyoshi produces more edible processed oils and fats than any other manufacturers in Japan.

While diversifying the applications of oils & fats, Miyoshi has remained true to the goal it set itself eight decades ago: **to create products of excellent quality.**



Main Products

- Margarine
- Lard
- Whipping Cream
- Frozen Dough
- Shortening
- Powdered Oil & Fat
- Fillings

MIYOSHI OIL & FAT CO.,LTD.

66-1, 4-CHOME, HORIKIRI, KATSUSHIKA-KU, TOKYO 〒124-8510

BRANCHES : OSAKA, NAGOYA, FUKUOKA

FACTORIES : TOKYO, KOBE, CHIBA



YAMAZAKI BISCUITS Co.,LTD.

Autumn 2016



12

Forward

- 4 Happenings
- 5 From the Editor
- 6 News

Member Missions

- 8 The Japan Fellowship Deaconry Mission



16

Feature Articles

- 9 A peek behind the scenes
by Linda Karner
- 10 God at work
by Michelle Jackson
- 12 I'm lonely
by David Barkman
- 14 Following and serving Jesus in a holistic way
by Dale Viljoen
- 16 The marathon of ministry
by John Houlette
- 18 From Shikoku to Tohoku on a prayer
by Dawn Birkner
- 20 Pastor search
by Sara Wolsey
- 22 Without prayer I am nothing
by Michael Hoehn

General Articles

- 24 Give us this day our daily peanut butter
by Steve Kunnecke
- 26 Creation evangelism in Japan
by Don Batten
- 28 Becoming better listeners
by Lorna Ferguson

Regulars

- 29 Off the Bookshelf
- 30 New Voices
Follow me!
by Daniel Templeman Twells
- 32 Language and Culture
Cafetalk
by Simon Pleasants
- 33 Focus on Prayer
What prayers does God answer?
by Ken Reddington
- 34 Member Care
Cross-cultural stress: causes and coping strategies
by Eileen Nielsen
- 35 Good Writing
The power of stories
by Wendy Marshall
- 36 Modern Tech
Dodging digital disaster
by Jared Jones
- 38 Pursuit of Excellence
Encourage everyone to grow
by Michael Essenburg

January

Fresh Encounter (mini prayer summit)

Starting January 16, 2017, continuing on the 3rd Monday of every month unless it is a holiday
Osaka Migiwa Chapel



WIM Winter Day of Prayer

Wednesday, Jan. 18, 2017
SEND Center, Higashi Tokorozawa

February

Shepherds Gathering Prayer Event

Wednesday, Feb. 5, 2017
ICA near Tokyo University (see jema.org)

JEMA Connect (formerly Plenary)

Feb. 20-22, 2017
OCC, Ochanomizu



March

WIM Kanto Annual Retreat

March 1-3, 2017
Fukui no Ie, Okutama



Details about future JEMA events can be found on the JEMA website:

jema.org

Stay
tuned

JCE6 6TH JAPAN CONGRESS ON EVANGELISM
第6回日本伝道会議
再生への Re-VISION ~福音・世界・可能性~
2016.9.27(火)~30(金)
主催：クリストファー・J・H・ライト博士
主 催：第6回日本伝道会議 実行委員会
神戸コンベンションセンター <http://jcenet.org/> jce6-jim@jema.org

Over 1,600 Christian leaders attended the *Sixth Japan Congress on Evangelism* September 27–30 in Kobe, Japan. For links to digital reports, visit www.japanharvest.com. The Winter 2017 issue of *Japan Harvest* will include a Congress summary in the *Japan Update* English newsletter insert (produced by the Japan Evangelical Association).

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



Volume 67 No. 4
Autumn 2016

© 2016 Please do not copy any article, photo, poem, or report unless permission is granted. Contact Managing Editor.

Japan Harvest Staff

JEMA President: Nathan Snow
Executive Editor: Gary Bauman (gbauman@jema.org)
Managing Editor: Wendy Marshall (wmarshall@jema.org)
Advertising Director: Atsuko Tateishi
Art Director: Greg Corey
Layout Designer/Production Editor: Karen Ellrick
Associate Editors: Rachel Hughes, Simon Pleasants
Editorial Assistant: Jennifer Bello
Fact Checker: Georgia Anderson
Proofreader: Ken Reddington

Printer

New Life Ministries

JEMA Executive Committee

President: Nathan Snow
Vice President: Dale Little
Secretary: David Scott
Treasurer: Carol Love
Members-at-Large: Gary Bauman, Andy Game, Paul Ewing
JEMA Office Secretaries: Yuka Oguro, Atsuko Tateishi, Ai Nightingale, Kaori Kurasawa Cooke

Submissions

The editors welcome unsolicited articles.
Writer's guidelines are available at:
<http://www.jema.org/resources/JHWriters-Guidelines.pdf>

Submission Deadlines

Spring issue: January 10
Summer issue: March 30
Autumn issue: June 30
Winter issue: August 30

JEMA Order Form: Page 39
Price overseas is \$30.00 (USD) per year.
Price in Japan is ¥2,800 per year.
Single copy is ¥750.

Postal Transfer: Account #: 00130-4-180466
Name: JEMA-Japan Harvest

Moving?

Contact the JEMA office so we can update our files!
JEMA
2-1 Kanda Surugadai
Chiyoda Ku, Tokyo 101-0062
Tel: 03-3295-1949 Fax: 03-3295-1354
Email: jema-info@jema.org
Web site: <http://www.jema.org>

Japan Harvest is the official publication of the Japan Evangelical Missionary Association (JEMA). It is published quarterly. Individual articles or advertisements express the viewpoints of the contributor and not necessarily those of JEMA.

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

The value of stories

I love stories, particularly biographies and true-life stories. Earlier this year I read a large hard-cover book about Richard Scarry, a children's author and illustrator. It's not your usual biography; it's generously adorned with his illustrations, including whole spreads from his books. But for me, the best thing about the book was the stories about his life. Like the time he was teaching his young son archery and shot an arrow straight up. They lost sight of the arrow, but days later they found it had landed on the neighbour's roof. When Dick (as he was called) saw no one home, he took a ladder and went to retrieve the arrow. But his neighbours came home while he was descending the ladder and he had quite a time explaining why he was on their roof!

This issue

I hope you find this issue fascinating and encouraging as you read people's stories about life and ministry in Japan, as well as how they've been encouraged in their own journeys.

We had a large response to our call for articles for this issue; I presume it is because people love to tell stories too. I hope that we can have an issue like this every 12 to 18 months and continue to encourage, inspire, and equip one another.

However, this issue lacks anything about Biblical storytelling. Through social media, I've been following a growing group of people who use Biblical storytelling in their ministries. I read about a missionary in Hokkaido who, while waiting at a bank for paperwork for his house purchase, told Bible stories to the three real estate agents, two attorneys, and the previous owner of the house, who were waiting with him. They all heard the gospel for the first time in their lives. Biblical storytelling would be a good thing to hear about in the future.

Japan Harvest team

In August we had the fourth annual planning meeting for the **Japan Harvest** team. It was the largest ever meeting for this magazine. Six people came in person, and two team members joined us for varying times via Skype. It was great to have most of the team together to talk about the various behind-the-scenes activities that go into putting this magazine together.

Again I am humbled by God's provision of this team of volunteers. They are all busy with other responsibilities but give of their time to serve the missionary community by helping put this magazine together. They do a magnificent job despite facing significant challenges at times. I want to thank you for being patient with us over the last three years as we've struggled to get this magazine out on time. The quality of the magazine has improved, but our timeliness has slipped as a result. We were able to get the Summer issue out in August and I can assure you that we are working as hard as we can to ensure that we don't slip behind again.

We spent time looking to the future and chose the magazine themes that you can see below. As a team, we're all keen to see the magazine continue to improve in quality and usefulness to the missionary community. We've got another Reader Survey planned for the next issue (Winter 2017) and look forward to hearing from you via this. But please contact me at any time if you've got ideas, comments, or even encouragements you'd like me to pass on to the team. My email address is wmarshall@jema.org.



Blessings in Christ,
Wendy
Managing Editor

The themes for the coming issues are:

Winter 2017 Independent missionaries (submissions closed)

Spring 2017 Minority groups in Japan (submission deadline Jan. 10)

Summer 2017 Reaching minority groups (submission deadline Mar. 30)

Sakuradai Children's Dining Hall

Christian Shimbun, June 12, 2016

Translated by Hiromi Kiuchi

Photos contributed by Christian Shimbun

In Japan, 3.25 million children under 17 (one in six) were in a state of poverty in 2012, according to the Ministry of Health, Labor, and Welfare. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), this number is one of the highest among developed countries; Japan ranks poorly even among the 34 OECD member countries. Taking this issue seriously, a church in Nerima-ku, Tokyo, decided to take action against child poverty. Nerima Baptist Church (Japan Baptist Church Association) established Sakuradai Children's Dining Hall and began opening their dining room twice a month as a place where children and their guardians can gather for nutritious, home-cooked meals at an affordable price. Since October 2015, up to 90 children and adults have gathered and enjoyed not only a hot meal but also warm company at this church.

At 4 p.m., the church dining hall is already busy with staff preparing for the evening. The cooking team, led by a veteran housewife in her 80s, comes up with a delicious menu each time and posts it on their webpage beforehand. A greeting card with a message, "Thank you so much for coming to our dining hall! Please feel free to eat as much as you like!" is placed on each table to welcome visitors, along with a flower vase. As soon as the doors open at 5:30, the dining hall fills with excited children and their parents lining up. Children, parents, and guardians pay 100



yen, while other adults pay 300 yen for a meal. Each person is asked to fill out a sign-up sheet and gets a stamp on their rally card. Many have come numerous times, accumulating ten or more stamps on their cards. After finishing their meals, the children move to the play area where staff entertain them with card games, origami, and storytelling. While their children play, parents enjoy time with each other and the staff.

Mr. Tsukasa Kōno, a representative and head officer of Sakuradai Children's Dining Hall,

comments, "Each person who comes to our dining hall carries a burden, and sometimes they travel far just to come here. It is not only financial issues that burden the mothers' hearts; concerns about their children's growth and relationship with their neighbors trouble them a lot too. We are just thankful we can provide a place to encourage families that are raising children." He continues, "We have tried our best to protect the children's safety and privacy by avoiding media interviews as much as possible. But then we realized our children's dining hall had grown to be the largest in Tokyo. We are different from other children's dining halls in that our primary goal is not social action but rather to joyfully serve local children and their parents. We have many church members and even neighbors who rush to the church after work to demonstrate love to the children. We



have learned so many lessons since we started this, and we are grateful for how God has lead us through this all."

Since some children lose weight over the summer vacation because they don't get served school lunches, Sakuradai Children's Dining Hall was preparing (in June 2016) to host a summer-vacation study program with meals provided. ■

uest News

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

The manga *One Piece* from a Christian perspective

Christian Shimbun, May 29, 2016

Translated by Grace Koshino

Photos contributed by Christian Shimbun

During the J+Passion Tokyo 2016 conference,* people broke up into six discussion groups, one of which was titled “*One Piece* from a Christian perspective” and was led by the chairperson of the board of Tokyo Christian Institute, Kaoru Hirose. Hirose talked about the vision (goal), passion (motivation), and mission (implementation) that can be seen in the popular, long-selling manga *One Piece*. The manga was written by Eiichirō Oda and is listed in the Guinness World Records as the most printed comic series by a single author.

Hirose says, “The world of *One Piece* is rather biblical.” It features nine people with unique personalities on a ship. It might not be considered unusual that “different people from various backgrounds can overcome their differences and become one mind and work together to reach the same goal. But *One Piece* is different.”

“Each of the nine characters has a different goal—that is the story’s main point. Luffy’s dream is to find the world’s ultimate treasure and become king of the pirates. Zoro wants to become the world’s best swordsman. Sanji is a cook and wants to travel to legendary seas. Chopper wants to become a doctor who can cure any illness. Franky wants to build a ship from a tree called Adam and travel to the

end of the ocean. And Usoppu wants to become a courageous warrior. They are all on the same ship, but they have different goals.”

“This is very interesting when thinking about the kingdom of God,” Hirose says. “At TCI, I see how individuals have different ambitions as they work and study on campus. . . But where can one get the passion to fulfill one’s dreams?” asks Hirose. “All the main characters in *One Piece* have lost their families. What keeps them going? They find the will to live by building relationships with each other. In a church, this kind of relationship is called the family of God.”

“So as a team of nine, what do they do? We see them constantly helping others. If they see someone in trouble, they don’t just pass them by. They rescue those in need even if it means risking their own lives. Despite having their own goals for their lives, they keep making detours. This is very much like the Good Samaritan in the Bible.”



“When we live our lives with God’s purpose in mind, we are able to be our true selves.

There may be times when it seems as if we are taking a detour or going around a roundabout, but the important thing is to live faithfully according to God’s will. This is the mission I have learned from *One Piece*. We need a Christian perspective and a clear vision, passion, and mission. This will lead to the joy of building up God’s kingdom.”

Hirose likes the following words of the main character Luffy and quoted them during a graduation ceremony at Tokyo Christian University. “Luffy says, ‘I can confidently say that I couldn’t survive without the help of other people.’ As a leader at this school, I can say the same. Would you also agree that without help you cannot survive? If we help each other as a team, we can overcome obstacles together and be victorious.”

Hirose also touched on the similarities between *One Piece* and *Anpanman*. He concluded that “our life’s vision, passion, and mission should be to help others, just like *Anpanman* would break a piece off himself and give it to others.” ■

*J+Passion Tokyo is a non-denominational youth conference that took place on the 16th of April 2016. This is the 16th time this conference has been held.

One Piece cover art: Fair use, <https://www.amazon.co.jp/dp/4088701755/>

JFDM (The Japan Fellowship Deaconry Mission)

Since 1951, the Japan Fellowship Deaconry Mission (JFDM) has been blessed by our Lord to work alongside other Christian mission organizations in Japan. The beginnings of our mission, however, date back decades earlier to China where deaconesses (“sisters”) from Germany and the USA served the Lord by planting churches and offering dental assistance in remote areas under the umbrella of the China Inland Mission.

With the communist revolution in 1949 and the subsequent expulsion of our mission from China, our missionaries were forced to close their stations and resettle in a nearby country. The plan was to wait and serve for a few years in Japan until the political situation would allow for a return to China. With the sisters’ passion for outreach and their medical training, the first ministry emerged on Japanese soil in 1952 at Higashi Naruo in Kobe. As they observed the situation in China, our missionaries slowly began to realize and accept that the Lord was calling them to serve in Japan permanently. They prayed to find open doors for the gospel in this new country.

As the years passed, additional sisters from the mission headquarters in Germany and the USA were commissioned and sent out for ministry mainly in the Kansai region. In those pioneering days of JFDM, two churches in Shikoku were planted; both are now very active congregations served by Japanese pastors. Over time, mission families and young couples from Germany and North America joined the contingent of deaconesses serving in Japan. In 1987, the mission purchased a rustic retreat center in Karuizawa in Nagano and, by God’s grace, developed it into a beautiful guesthouse and Bible camp ministry. In addition, the Deaconry Motherhouse Bethel was established in Kobe in 1985.

Presently, JFDM has 11 churches in Kansai, two churches in Tokyo, and the camp ministry in Karuizawa. The churches are predominately led by Japanese pastors, and they work closely together with the six foreign missionaries who assist them. We thank our Lord that he has richly blessed his mission in Japan. We are reminded that all this became possible only because he called and equipped deaconesses, missionaries, pastors, and other Christian layman over the last 65 years.



Our current fields of activity are:

- **Church planting:** We seek to get to know our neighbors and invite them to church through activities such as cooking and language classes, musical performances, cell-group ministry, and children’s programs.
- **Mature churches:** JFDM wants planted churches to mature to the point where the mission’s support is minimal. The goal is for these congregations to be led by Japanese pastors, become outreach-focused, and join together as part of the Japan Fellowship Deaconry Synod.
- **Cooperation:** JFDM works together and partners with other Christian groups and churches to support special events, such as evangelistic activities in the Kobe–Osaka region.
- **Bible camp ministry:** We make our facilities at Karuizawa available to various church groups and individual families for spiritual refreshment and physical rest by providing an environment that nurtures genuine fellowship with other Christians and personal Bible reflection (www.kfbc.net).

Our vision:

- Through the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, we aim to plant churches in new areas and strengthen existing congregations so that they mature and become more outreach-focused. For this, we seek to discover how we can meet the spiritual needs of the Japanese people by making them feel more welcome in our churches. We also recognize that we are working in a changing Japanese society where spiritual conditions are in flux.
- Furthermore, through Bible teaching and encouragement, we seek to equip believers to share their faith with others, by word and deed, and thus fulfill the Lord’s commission in Matthew 28:18-20. **JH**



A peek behind the scenes

What looked like reluctance to study the Bible turned out to be exactly the opposite

By Linda Karner

Very rare are the times in my Christian life that God has lifted the veil, so to speak, and given me a peek behind the scenes, and these few times were always a tremendous encouragement to my faith. I hope you'll be encouraged by my most recent experience of this and be able to share in the thrill of seeing differently.

Many of us have used English conversation classes to meet the felt needs of Japanese people to improve in that area. People will come to a conversa-

I saw Sumire as a captive, who, in my mind, clearly didn't want to be there, but was too "Japanese" to leave.

tion class who would never set foot in a church. What a tool God has provided for us to meet new friends!

I first met my friend Sumire in such a class. I was not there to teach, but to model teaching for a young intern. Our classes included not only English, but also 30 minutes of optional Bible time. I most remember Sumire from that first Bible time: she sat back in her chair with her arms folded across her chest as if daring me to say something that would offend her. Her whole demeanor shouted to me that she was an uncommonly straight-talking

Japanese lady. I finished that Bible time wondering if she would give the intern any trouble.

At the time I was well aware that the students came and paid for the English portion of the class, and that only by God's design did they stay for the free Bible time. What design? His design of Japanese culture. Japanese people don't like to leave the group, as we know; they also don't like to leave until the teacher is done, and they knew the teacher was not done until Bible time was over. So they became a captive audience, so to speak. What an amazing opportunity—students from the second largest unreached people group captive around the Bible, that speaks the only answer to the brokenness in their lives and this world. Marvelous design!

That design formed my paradigm for understanding my students. I saw Sumire as a captive, who, in my mind, clearly didn't want to be there, but was too "Japanese" to leave.

Imagine my surprise when I found out it was just the opposite. She had, in

fact, not come to the class for English, but for the Bible time. She had fruitlessly searched for some years for a way to understand Christianity better and then she heard about our classes. She was actually paying for, and sitting through, the English portion to get to the Bible time! This was a complete paradigm shift for me. It was awesome and humbling.

Sumire continues to attend various activities of our ministry. Her Bible is as marked up as the most devoted Christian's. When we are in Bible study she often fills in the blanks for newcomers. I wondered why she still remained unbaptized. When I asked her she answered that she doesn't believe in the resurrection. I was saddened to hear that, since, according to Romans 10: 9–10, belief in the resurrection of the Lord Jesus is an essential requirement of saving faith. However, in view of her determination to find a Bible study, I cannot help but believe that God is at work in her life. The gift of faith is his to give, and I long to know that she has crossed over from darkness into his marvelous light.

Perhaps God has lifted the veil for you once or twice. I would love to hear your story. **JH**

After years of teaching English Conversation classes, Linda now teaches science and math to high school students in a small international school run by her team (she's been in Japan since 1989). She is with the Japan Presbyterian Mission.

Photo: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cesarastudillo/158254288>



GOD AT WORK

*Be encouraged by the stories
of two Japanese women who
were transformed by God*

By Michelle Jackson



Japanese people excel at persevering. You often hear them say *ganbare* (do your best) after natural disasters, during sporting events, and for most things in between. But it can be hard for us foreigners to persist in language learning when we can't even recall the words we learned last week or to continue in ministry in Japan when there is no visible fruit, and we begin to wonder whether it is all worth it. But by the grace of God, when we do witness visible fruit, God's Spirit at work, and someone becoming captivated by the love of Jesus, our hearts sing and the discouragement begins to fade. Over the last couple of years, I have experienced this with two ladies.

Maiko worked at a shop not far from my home. As I went through the register one day, she asked whether I taught English. Before long, she was a regular member of my English class. But she seemed particularly captivated by the Bible talks. After a couple of months, she started coming to our evangelistic Bible study and yearned to know everything she could about God. She began meeting with our pastor and reached the point where she surrendered her life to God. Not long after becoming a Christian, she was rocked by the news that she had a serious illness. Yet throughout the arduous treatments, she shared her gratitude that she knew God's strength and peace in the midst of the turmoil.

Although her family were not supportive of her taking the next step of baptism, she realised she needed to be obedient in this area and told me that she wanted to get baptised. Just recently, before I left Japan for home assignment, she texted me saying how thankful she was to God that we met in that shop two years ago. But she doesn't know how incredibly grateful I

am that we met or how encouraged I have been in witnessing God's transforming work in her life.

The second lady is Seiko, whom I first met when she came to church with a friend. Growing up, Seiko had no sense of home. The strict regime of her family's Buddhist cult had left her feeling lost and guilty. She hit rock bottom when her own marriage failed.

All she had heard about the Christian faith was from a television show that concluded the Bible could not be trusted. But in spite of this, she felt drawn to Christianity. After having been invited to church a number of times, she finally accepted early last year and experienced a sense of peace. Once through the doors, she immediately felt embraced by the warmth of the people and was keen to study the Bible.

We started meeting to read the Bible together. Seiko was like a dry sponge soaking up everything she could about God. She said that meeting God through his Word gave her a sense of coming home. Ephesians 2:19–20 is particularly special to her: "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone" (NIV).

She was so moved when I shared with her about God's unconditional love that she clapped her hands and gushed, "I've been waiting my whole life to hear that."

Seiko was baptised this year, and the sense of celebration in the church was palpable. She exudes a joy that flows from her relationship with God and is a huge encouragement to those around her. 1 Peter 5:10 is a special verse for Seiko and also for me because I am seeing these qualities of strength growing in

her: “And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast.”

Seiko hopes to use her professional skills for God’s glory. She is also a light among her family and friends. Her young daughters love coming to church and have been retelling Bible stories to their school friends. Seiko’s mother now regularly comes to church and has started meeting with the pastor to study the Bible. Her ex-husband, whom she continues to have contact with, is struggling and in desperate need of God’s grace to flow in through the windows of his life. She regularly shares with him about the Bible and prays that one day he will come to church.

Maiko, Seiko, another friend, and I regularly meet to read the Bible together, but it is now as Christian sisters, mutually encouraging each other. And gradually both ladies are learning to pray out loud with less and less trepidation.

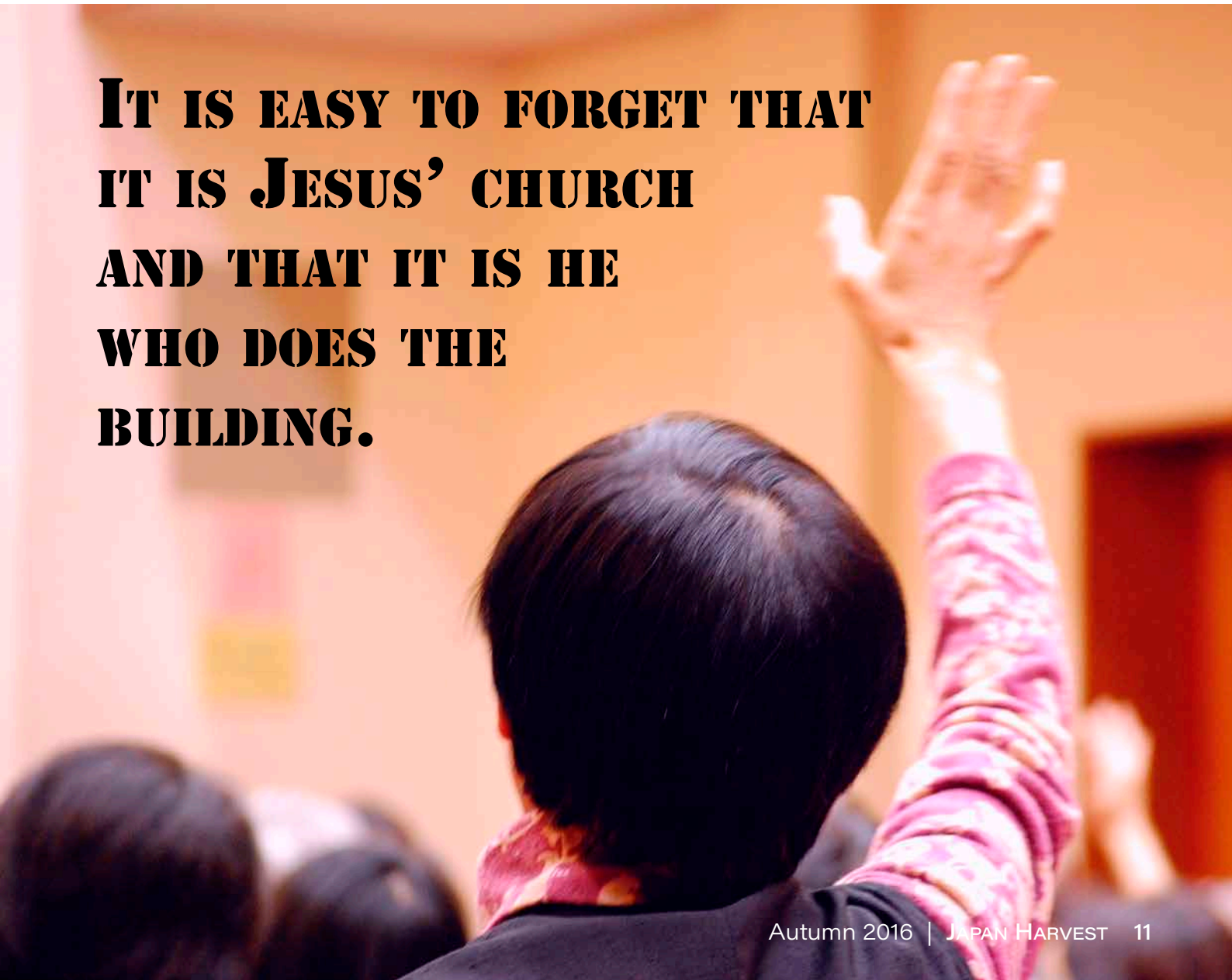
The stories of these two ladies remind me of Matthew 16:18, which says “And I tell you that you are

Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.” While expending all our energy in evangelism and making every human effort to convince people that Jesus is the way, it is easy to forget that it is Jesus’ church and that it is he who does the building. When our Lord God does decide to work, nothing will stand in his way. The gates of hell do not stand a chance. Even our failures, our language errors, and our weaknesses cannot stand in his way.

So be encouraged, as I have been. I’ve been humbled by the privilege of being near these women as they fell in love with Jesus, but I am fully aware that there was nothing I did to help bring about their conversion. It is God’s work. While we don’t know where the Spirit will blow, be encouraged to persevere: God is at work in Japan and we have the honour of being along for the ride. *Ganbare!* **JH**

Michelle is an Australian missionary (CMS) working in local church ministry in Kobe, Japan. She is married with three children and would one day love to be fluent in Japanese.

Photos provided by Karen Ellrick (the ladies in the article aren't pictured)



**IT IS EASY TO FORGET THAT
IT IS JESUS’ CHURCH
AND THAT IT IS HE
WHO DOES THE
BUILDING.**



I'm Lonely

Rethinking my approach to evangelism

By David Barkman

“Barkman-san, when you pull out your Bible, I get nervous and uncomfortable. I’m lonely and just want someone to visit me.”

I had been told by disaster cleanup volunteers that Mr. Suzuki was interested in a Bible study. So, after several visits, I pulled out my Bible and started to share the good news in a brief and simple way. When I saw that Mr. Suzuki was not responding well, I asked him how he really felt about reading the Bible together. That’s when he told me his true feelings. So I put my Bible away and decided for the time being to just be his friend. Through this and other experiences, God set me on a journey to rethink my approach to evangelism.

Since arriving in Japan in 1985, my wife Eileen and I had lived in suburban Yokohama, Tokyo, and Saitama. We’d participated in four church plants and assisted in evangelism and disciple-making in an established church. Our ministry principles were mainly based on what we had been taught as the appropriate way to do evangelism in Japan.

Then came the 3.11 Great East Japan triple disaster. Through a divinely-ordained sequence of events, God led us to long-term church-planting ministry in Tohoku by clearly closing the door to our previous ministry plans in western Tokyo and opening another door for us in eastern Sendai, Miyagi Prefecture. We began assisting Pastor Yukikazu Otomo and the Shiogama Bible Baptist Church to minister to the post-disaster needs of the people in our neighborhood and in the five temporary housing complexes in Shichigahama, providing “heart care” and encouragement to these hurting and lonely people.

A “tsunami” also hit my understanding of how to do evangelism. Our new setting in Tohoku forced me to examine the assumptions of my previous 26 years of ministry in Kanto. In doing so, God led me to develop the following five principles.

1. Trust the Lord with prayer and fasting

God impressed upon me the need to make prayer a priority—not just the activity of pray-

ing, but the attitude of trusting him through seeking his face and committing everything into his hands. We found the fuel for our prayers in passages like Matt. 6:9-10, 11:28, John 16:8-11, Rom. 10:13-15, 2 Cor. 4:4, Eph. 2:8-9, 2 Pet. 3:9, and Rev. 15:3-4.

In order to mobilize others to pray, I also send out four to six specific prayer requests in a weekly update email on Sunday evenings. God strengthens us by reminding us that he is working through the prayers of many people.

My wife and I had practiced fasting in the past when we faced a special need. After moving to Tohoku, I felt compelled to urgently seek God’s face through regular fasting and intercession for the desperately needy people around us. They needed so much more than the donated goods, fun events, and *gambappe* encouragement we could give them (Tohoku dialect for *ganbare* or “keep at it”). So we devote ourselves to prayer and fasting at Wednesday breakfast and lunch times to pray for specific people and God-encountering events. This is not to somehow manipulate God, but to align our hearts with his so we can join in what he is doing. In this way we are seeking to act on the belief that God has ordained to work through the prayers of his people.

2. Do everything in love, addressing felt needs

My personality and my training compel me to proclaim the truth of the gospel of the Lord Jesus. But what if people like Mr. Suzuki are not interested in the good news as I present it? What can I do for them? God impressed upon me the need that all people have for love. How else will they be attracted to God’s love if they don’t experience it through his children?

When I confess the shallowness of my love, Jesus reminds me that he is indwelling me, and through me communicating his perfect love. When I am visiting with someone, I am gradually learning to first ask, “God, how do you want to love this person through me?” instead of only thinking, “How can I communicate God’s truth to this person?” I have come to firmly believe

We are now spending a lot more time sitting on the floor, drinking tea, eating pickled vegetables as a snack, and showing love by listening. Then, as we discover felt needs, we ask if we can pray for them. We have not yet been refused.



that love opens people's hearts to hear God's truth. "If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels, but have not love..." (1 Cor. 13:1, ESV).

3. Go to them, seeking out a person of peace

In the past, I have practiced a "come to us" approach in evangelism. This seemed to work in urban areas where there were seekers who came into my territory. But what about all those not-yet-seekers who see Christianity as irrelevant (or worse) and who have not yet heard the good news or experienced the love of God?

God led us to go into their territory, to hang out with them. We are now spending a lot more time sitting on the floor, drinking tea, eating pickled vegetables as a snack, and showing love by listening. Then, as we discover felt needs, we ask if we can pray for them. We have not yet been refused.

God has also given us key "persons of peace" who have become gateways to meet other people in the community. This leapfrogs us into trust relationships that would take much longer to build without these insiders to make the introductions.

4. Enter their world to contextualize the gospel

But it is not enough if I simply go to their physical location. I have to understand their concerns, fears, and hopes; and then communicate God's grace in a way that is meaningful to them. Too often my gospel presentations have been like scratching that misses the real location of the itch.

Mr. Suzuki told me he was lonely. It forced me explore how to present Jesus as a Savior who ad-

dresses not only his loneliness but also the cause of that loneliness. So I have listened to Mr. Suzuki's war stories, explored his family history, and prayerfully poked into the corners of his experiences to find his felt needs and tailor the presentation of the good news to those needs.

5. Testify to the Lord Jesus and his gospel

So what can I say when someone is not ready for a Bible study or even a brief explanation of the gospel? I have found that stories (present-day testimonies as well as Bible stories) are well-received, especially those that address felt relational needs. Stories are interesting, indirect, and non-threatening ways to share Biblical truths and practical applications. Of course, I am always ready to open up the Bible with someone. Until then, I must trust the Holy Spirit to whet their appetite to want to hear more.

I have to admit that these five principles of evangelism are still more prescriptive than descriptive of me. But I am confident that as I prayerfully listen and learn, God will use my Spirit-led words and expressions of love to address both the felt needs and the deep heart needs of Mr. Suzuki and others like him. **JH**

Dave and his wife Eileen came to Japan in 1985 from the US. They moved to Tagajō, Miyagi in 2012 to engage the unreached and establish reproducing churches. Dave leads the Tohoku Team of SEND International.

Empty teacup photo: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wabi-sabi#/media/File:Contemporary_wabi-sabi_tea_bowl.jpg
White teapot photo: <https://pixabay.com/en/kettle-hot-tea-cup-drink-pot-565595/>

Following and serving Jesus in a holistic way

By Dale Viljoen

How I found renewal in multiple areas of my life

“Hi, my name is Dale. I’m a recovering workaholic. I’m a recovering sugaraholic.”

I have changed (and continue to be changed) from being work-driven and fat. I’ve been in ministry for over 37 years in Japan, and during the last ten years I’ve had a renewed realization of the joy and rhythm of being in Christ and serving Jesus in Japan. I have studied, applied, and been molded by the following four concepts during these years.

Working with Jesus

Driven by the perceived expectations of other Christians and my own unrealistic expectations, I did everything in my power to work *for* God during my initial ministry in two church-planting situations.

“What’s wrong with working for God? Isn’t this why I have been called to Japan?”

I have reflected on these questions over these past years. My conclusion is that, in my zeal to reach Japanese for Christ, I wore out the church members, hurt my family and myself, and did not see much fruit. (But I did receive good reports from my mission organization!) I now realize that while I was working *for* God, I was not working *with* God. I was doing “good” things but probably not what God wanted me to do on any particular day. Although I was having regular devotions, I was not living in Christ each day, able to listen to the Shepherd’s voice and follow the Spirit’s leading. And even if I heard God’s voice, in my busyness I did not have

the “space” to listen to that person a little longer, or write that letter, or make that phone call.

Oh, how I wish I had learned to work *with* Jesus sooner in my ministry!

In January 2016, when my wife and I were visiting her parents in California, I mentioned my “insight” to the pastor of one of our supporting churches. “You must read the book *With*,” he said.¹ “We’ve just finished discussing this book as a church.” I purchased the book and was blown away. Highly recommended!

The drive to work *for* God can be fueled by one’s personality (I am type A), the desire to be seen by others as working hard for a good cause, the Japanese culture of busyness, and by the expectations of Japanese Christians and pastors.

As part of my recovery process, I have built the following prayer into my rituals after waking up in the morning: “Jesus, allow me to rest in you and your love for me today. Guide me and grant me God-moments to reveal your love, light, and grace to others. Help me to discern the opportunities you give me today and grant me the courage to seize them for your glory.”

Holistic productivity

I started to incorporate rituals into my daily routine after discovering Asian Efficiency on the web (www.asianefficiency.com). At first, the name put me off a bit, but I realized that this group takes the best of all that is out there and combines many different things into a well-rounded, holistic, and productive way of living.

Some of their recommendations are well-known, such as preparing clothes the night before, drinking half a liter of water directly after waking up in the morning, and using a task manager to get things to do out of your head. Other examples include “Eat that frog!” (do the most important and difficult task immediately after your morning rituals when you are fresh), and “deep work” (the ability to focus without distraction on a cognitively demanding task, dividing work periods into 25 minutes of concentration and 5 minutes of rest using a timer).

Because of the dopamine rush I experience when clicking on an email and the distraction email is



from concentrated work, I began to clear my email inbox to zero once or twice a day at specified times, by putting emails into folders: Answer; Waiting for reply; Do later; Trash, etc. I then set a specific time to answer all email received during the day. This has allowed me to prepare for Bible studies, sermons, and counseling sessions much more quickly, leaving time for the unexpected (but anticipated) God-directed tasks.

Refreshment and rest

Two things that Asian Efficiency stresses are the need for daily meditation and prayer and for adequate rest and sleep to promote creativity, productivity, and health. Taking regular retreats to refocus is also important.

I was amazed at our mission's recent All Japan Conference to hear how many people struggle with getting enough good-quality sleep. I, too, struggle with sleep. One book that has been a great help to me is *The Sleep Revolution* by Arianna Huffington (founder of Huffington Post).²

I have been using an app to wake me up when I am in light sleep (preventing a groggy feeling) and trying to take a 10–15 minute nap in the afternoon. (Some big organizations have nap rooms in their offices to increase efficiency!)

All this is leading to a better quality of life in God!



but it took us four months to get our heads around the fact that we do not need to eat carbohydrates. I realized that I was addicted to sugar and carbs. We decided to cut out all carbohydrates and eat good saturated fat—a low-carb, high-fat, medium-protein diet (LCHF).

Over 10 months, I lost 18 kilograms of body fat, came off all insulin and diabetic medication, and reversed the effects of diabetes on my eyes and heart. My moods stabilized, and my fatty liver returned to normal (after 35 years). By eating healthy LCHF foods, I received a new start to my life! This was so different to the 30 years of hunger pangs I experienced in the past by trying to diet the traditional way of cutting back on calories and exercising more (and then gaining it all back again, increasing my weight).

I am now qualified as a Banting coach.⁴ During a recent premarital counseling session, I suggested to the couple that we should meet for a meal together after their honeymoon, but that we not eat carbs. “We don’t eat carbs, either!” replied the university professor and doctor. Amazingly, they had heard of Banting and were excited to hear my own story.

I praise God that he is the God of second chances. Not only does Jesus use us in our weakness, he also works in amazing ways to strengthen us for future ministry! **JH**


Dale Viljoen (OMF) came to Hokkaido from South Africa in 1979. After 21 years of church planting, he served as director of language, orientation, and training until his wife's death. Dale subsequently married Karen Harless (formerly TEAM) and continues to serve in Sapporo.

1. Skye Jethani, *With: Reimagining the Way You Relate to God* (Thomas Nelson, 2011).
2. Arianna Huffington, *The Sleep Revolution: Transforming Your Life, One Night at a Time* (Harmony, 2016).
3. “William Banting,” Wikipedia, accessed Oct 11, 2016. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Banting
4. The scientific evidence for saturated fat being good is there but is suppressed by the sugar industry. If you would like to know more about the LCHF/RealMeal way of eating please contact me at dale@passion4japan.net.



Renewed health

The biggest change has been with my health. I was really struggling in May 2015, wondering whether I would make it through that year! My blood sugar levels were out of control in spite of injecting increasing amounts of insulin. I was chronically tired and had huge mood swings. Returning from a home assignment in South Africa, we heard that two to three million people around the world were “Banting” (a low-carb, high-fat diet developed by British undertaker William Banting in the 1800s³),



By John Houlette

The marathon of ministry

Finding the resilience to sustain us for ministry over the long term can be a painful experience

“Give him some water,” were the last words I uttered before hitting a tree—arms and legs flailing in spasmodic discord. I ended up in the emergency room of Guam Memorial Hospital, a victim of dehydration and poor training at the finish of the 1974 Guam Marathon. I had been thinking of another runner’s need for water but had powered on to the finish line of the grueling 42.1-kilometer (26.2-mile) course without addressing my own liquid debt. Pain is a great teacher and often a lifesaver. Thankfully, the tree at the finish line ended my course toward possible premature death.

I have found that life and ministry (like a marathon) require pacing, intake, ongoing training, and the skill to process the pain of transitions. A long-distance runner uses interval training to develop endurance and quick recovery time by varying the intensity of a workout. He also runs with others. This is also true in ministry. After 33 years on the field as a church planter, field leader, and clergy care giver, I have learned the wisdom of ongoing training, varied pace, and running with the pack. Below, I describe two transitions that have helped me to develop resilience in ministry.

Terry Walling in his book *Stuck!* talks about transitions and our need to face the pain that they can bring. Walling teaches that the transition process guides us into intimacy with God and gives us an expanded capacity for receiving more of God’s power. He also shows that it can finally produce in us a capacity to influence others.¹

Transition #1:

From burned-out church planter to thriving field leader (1999–2004)

I had a vision to start a church in Toda, Saitama Prefecture, which only had one church, despite being a growing city of 95,000 people and 15 minutes by train from Ikebukuro. We launched Saikyo Hope Chapel in 1997, with a great church-planting team and a growing nucleus. Then in February 1999, the owner of the bread shop next to our rented church facility committed suicide. We had befriended him, but now he was gone. His death greatly saddened

me. A seeker asked me why I had not led him to Christ.

That cold February evening became the beginning of a chilling dark night of my soul. Over the next few years, our nucleus of leaders shrunk as home assignments, job changes, and callings to other churches took people away. I was alone. In 2002, I became the field leader of our mission. I was soon experiencing full-blown burnout as, over time, the demands on my life far exceeded my resources to handle them. Thankfully, I was able to ask a church-planting network to “adopt” our fledging congregation. In 2003, the network provided a Japanese pastor and the “orphan congregation” was now in a healthy family of churches.

With the church in good hands, I began to deal with my issues of weak boundaries and people pleasing. By listening to God, my family, and trusted men who created a safe place for me, I learned to slow my pace. I took the Sonship course, which focuses on gospel-centered living, and later became certified as a ministry coach with Creative Results Management. I found a mentor, read books on how to lead, and invested in our mission leadership team. In addition, I helped missionaries launch new ministries and developed a strategic plan for our mission.

Transition #2:

From isolated missionary-in-residence to connected ministry director (2008–2011)

From 2008 to 2010, I served as a missionary-in-residence at Gordon College on Boston’s north shore. I felt isolated, being away from my usual ministry context. It was like starting all over again in a place I had never lived before, with people I had never met. Furthermore, it was the first time I’d worked with college students.

While at Gordon, I mentored student leaders and took groups on mission trips to Memphis, Tennessee. An extended period of time away from my Japan ministry context, it was a chance to slow down, reflect, and assess the previous term of ministry. I focused more on family and my need to develop healthy boundaries to discover my own identity.

Counseling and spiritual direction helped heal my soul and gave me the courage to dream of a preferred future. I took the bold step of starting a doctoral program at Bethel University. It was ten years since I'd finished seminary and studying was hard work. My first class featured a battery of assessment tests and an assignment to take a hard look at my life in ministry. It was painfully insightful as it highlighted my need to verbalize my emotions and helped me look at unhealthy patterns and habits.

We returned to Japan in the summer of 2010, and a year later I launched Three Stream Ministries (TSM) to come alongside pastoral couples to listen together to what God might be saying to them. The desire of TSM was for these couples to be whole, holy, and missional. And its focus was to help ministers of the gospel have healthy souls that integrate the will, mind, and body.² TSM includes practical exercises in self-care, spiritual formation, and leadership development. In launching a new ministry, I was again alone, but not for long: I developed an advisory team and found several mentors and a spiritual director.

The triple disaster of March 2011 took my small vision and greatly expanded it. I had planned to serve two couples a year for two years, but instead in 2011–2012, I worked with CRASH Japan, Churches Helping Churches, and Asian Access to serve 100 pastors and their families. I had greatly underestimated the need for clergy care. My wife and I moved to Sendai in 2013, to be centrally located in Tohoku.

I partnered with a Japanese pastor with a similar vision and used my seminary training to help the Disaster Response Church Network (DRCnet) train disaster-response chaplains to provide emotional and spiritual care to disaster survivors and caregivers.

In recent days, God has invited me into the trust-building journey of waiting upon him with hope, instead of plowing ahead with my own schedule of events. I planned three retreats for pastor couples in Tohoku for 2016, but we had to cancel the first two due to a lack of registrants. In place of these, God has given me opportunities to share in denominational settings and to serve in Kumamoto, Kyushu during the summer.

Have you run any more marathons, you ask? I revisited the Guam Marathon in 1980. Better trained and well-hydrated, I not only finished the race, but came in first place. While I run much slower now, I have run the Sendai half-marathon two years in a row. **JH**

John Houlette (US) and his wife Eriko serve with Asian Access in Sendai. John is the director of Three Stream Ministries, teaches at Sendai Baptist Seminary, and is a disaster-response chaplain trainer.

1. Terry Walling, *Stuck! Navigating the Transitions of Life and Leadership* (Wheaton, IL: ChurchSmart Resources, 2008), 17.
2. John Ortberg, *Soul Keeping: Caring For the Most Important Part of You* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2014), 43.

Running shoes photo: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/josiahmackenzie/3414064391>

Hydration station photo: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:USMC-120415-M-GU618-080.jpg>



From Shikoku to Tohoku on a prayer

By Dawn Birkner

Prayer played a vital role as God led me to minister to tsunami-ravaged communities in Iwate

*“All the way my Savior leads me,
what have I to ask beside”*

Fanny Jane Crosby

My journey to Iwate was birthed in prayer. In February 2011, during a four-day gathering committed to prayer, I conversed with attendees about Iwate outreach—only a few weeks before the tsunami devastated Tohoku. After the tsunami, much Christian relief work focused on places with local churches, but God gave me a burden for communities without a church or church plant. Since a community’s local church is there for the long term, it is desirable for Christian relief work to be done through it (with help from the broader body of Christ). But for an unchurched community, that means simultaneously planting a church and doing relief work.

At the time of the disaster I was content with my ministry in Shikoku and had nothing to incline me to relocate, and so I thought of mobilizing others to go to such communities. But instead God mobilized me. After I was called there, I learned that my agency’s Japan members had been praying for one among us to move up, and a Japanese couple had long prayed for a church planter for Noda. Thus, my journey truly was birthed in prayer.

Testing the waters

The Northern Sanriku coast rarely made the news, but God often brought the area before me. For example, as a friend drove through assessing coastal needs in March 2011, he called me about it.

In May, I went to volunteer as well as to consult and learn about Christian relief work in Iwate. On entering Iwate from Akita, I suddenly thought: “I am driving into home.” I’ve lived in 40 places and visited 50 states, 46 prefectures, and several countries, but that was a first.

Prayer driving from Ōfunato to the village of Noda, I realized God wanted me to be involved in impacted unchurched areas. I prayed

for ears to hear and volunteered again in August, all the time seeking to better discern God’s calling. Funds for the trip came from a near-stranger who knocked on my door in Shikoku with a donation.

Wading deeper

My initial plans fell through at the last minute and I began thinking maybe I shouldn’t go. I had no idea where I’d stay, but like he did with Abraham, the Spirit told me to “go to a place I will show you.”

A friend told me of a new Cell Church Mission Network (CCMN) base in Tōno, however it was completely full. But then the next day, one person canceled. I found a website announcing another network’s new base in Tarō. So I arranged to stay a week at each base, while independently researching the unchurched coastal areas.

With a place to stay and a clear “go” from God, I went in August. I considered bringing *Sanuki udon* (specialty of my part of Shikoku) to serve in temporary housing but was advised I’d likely be turned down without more lead time and connections. About to abandon the idea, I sensed the Spirit say, “Bring all the supplies for an *udon* event.”

Much had changed since my last visit, so I drove along the coast, consulting with town governments and fellow pastors, and gathering information. When I went to the church at Kuji, I hoped to obtain contact information from the church sign. A young man arrived and informed me the pastor would be there in five minutes though it was a weekday and he is usually in Iwate only on weekends. He was happy to talk at length and we connected well. He expressed a willingness to help as a backup church if I moved up to plant a church in the area. It was perfect timing—had I come a few minutes earlier or later in the day, we’d never have met!

Next, I volunteered in Iwaizumi and was led to ask there about an *udon* event. God gave favor—a woman in the town hall referred me to another department but said they probably wouldn’t authorize

**On entering Iwate
from Akita, I suddenly
thought: “I am driving
into home.”**



it. Later, she offered to go with me and advocate for it. Despite me being a foreigner, a pastor, unaccompanied, and unaffiliated with a formal relief organization, the event was approved. Through an unusually large turnout of 50 people, God confirmed a calling to move to Iwaizumi.

A diverse range of groups were providing Christian relief work in all church-impacted municipalities in Iwate. But there were no regular relief activities in North Sanriku (Noda, Fudai, Tanohata, Omoto, and Iwaizumi)—the very area God had put on my heart. Suddenly it was clear—I wasn't supposed to just support the area from afar, find others to send, nor work further south in Tohoku, but rather I was to start and lead something for North Sanriku. Everything in me wanted to continue in Shikoku, but I prayed, "I will go if it is your will; just show me clearly." I began sensing a deep pastoral responsibility for the area.

Final confirmation came when I received an Iwaizumi town magazine that featured the *udon* event on its front cover and introduced me to the whole town as a Christian pastor. I started preparing to relocate.

The last step

With no one in Iwate to search ahead for housing and knowing I'd forfeit my supplementary tent-making income by moving, I asked a friend in Osaka to pray. A mutual friend from the US was visiting and overheard this. He had just met a cram school owner in Ōfunato, and this led to a place to stay while I searched for one in Iwaizumi, plus six months of English-teaching work. I moved up in February 2012. Rental accommodation was scarce after the tsunami. As I searched, Iwaizumi resident Y's name kept emerging. We met, he searched



Visiting temporary housing residents

hard, and we found an apartment by April. There was also a need for a bigger place intermittently for use for worship service, kid's events, and larger teams. One day Pastor Z from another city helped me to search, but he gave up and went home after he found nothing. However, the Spirit impressed on me, "You aren't done for today." I prayed, "What else should I do?" Suddenly, an idea came that caused me to inquire at a certain shop. The person I went to see was gone, but another asked why I'd come. That very hour, through their introduction, I found a place.

Our faithful God led me in surprising ways on an unexpected journey to North Iwate where I lead a church plant (Kita Sanriku Kirisuto Kyōkai). I also lead the Christian relief work in Iwaizumi, Omoto, Tanohata, Fudai, and Noda. One year ago, God led me to relocate the church and relief work volunteer base from its initial location on the edge of Iwaizumi to the center of town. In August 2016, Iwaizumi was struck by a typhoon just after having recovered from the tsunami. The church's current location is a one-minute walk from one of the areas most impacted by the typhoon. So as the local church's pastor, I am now coordinating Christian relief work in all areas of Iwaizumi. The church's volunteer center continues to receive volunteers (email me at dawndb1@hotmail.com to volunteer). **JH**

Dawn Birkner (US) has been planting churches in rural Japan for 15 years. She pastors Kita Sanriku Christ Church (Iwate), leads relief work, coordinates the Rural Japan Church Planting Network, and directs the mission agency Reaching Japan Together Association.

Ministry photos by Sara Wolsey; *udon* photo by sekido - るみばあちゃんの讃岐うどん, CC BY 2.0, <https://commons.wikimedia.org/w/index.php?curid=4724947>





By Sara Wolsey

Pastor search

The author's experience of serving on a pastoral search committee

In July 2013, God led me into an unexpected ministry—to serve as the chairperson of the Pastoral Search Committee (PSC) of Osaka International Church (OIC; oicjapan.org), a church with about 60% Japanese and 40% international people from Asia, North America, Africa, and Europe. Below, I highlight 12 aspects of our experience of searching for a pastor (which took just over a year) with a view to helping other search committees and encouraging readers to persevere in prayer when facing challenges.

Praying fervently

One of the most important aspects of a pastoral search is regular, fervent, faith-filled prayer. During the search, the congregation, the PSC members, and I spent a lot of time fervently praying, both individually and in groups.

Forming a committee

The PSC consisted of six church members of various nationalities and ministries: the finance committee chair (American), the treasurer (American), the discipleship committee chair (Japanese), two church administrators (Japanese), and the chairperson (me, a Briton). None of us volunteered to serve on the PSC; rather, several church council members asked us to serve and, after praying and seeking God's guidance, we agreed. It is important that PSC members are mature Christians and have time to pray and work on the pastoral search as it is a fairly heavy workload. God led us through the Holy Spirit's leading, the Bible, answered prayers, and divine appointments. We also followed the church's constitution and Robert's Rules of Order (parliamentary rules for churches and other organisations; robertsrules.com).

Enlisting help with the budget

We found it helpful to have at least one member from the church finance committee on the PSC to assist with working out the search budget.

Using Google Hangout

Our main administrator set up a Google Gmail account. One of the features of Gmail is the Google Hangout facility. This allowed us to add the names of all PSC members and main applicants so that we could keep in touch as a group and share documents easily. I downloaded the Gmail app on my smartphone so I could check emails while on the move.

Reviewing the biblical qualities of an overseer

At our first meeting, after a lot of prayer, we listed and studied the qualities of an overseer (pastor) given in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1.

Conducting a congregational survey

Proverbs 15:22 says, "Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed" (NIV). With this verse in mind, I helped create a survey to give the congregation an opportunity for input in the search. The survey included questions (mostly multiple choice) about experience and ministry areas to focus on as well as a comment box.

Producing application documents

I helped with editing past documents on file, such as a congregational profile of our church, a document that listed pastoral duties and areas of church ministry, and a personal data form for gaining information about ministry experience, cross-cultural experience, and qualifications.

Advertising

We advertised for three months (four months might have been better, since we received many applications in the fourth month that we were not able to accept as the deadline had passed). We advertised through JEMA, Reaching Japanese for Christ (RJC), and Prophetic Witness (an international Christian magazine).¹

Shortlisting and interviewing

After a time of prayer, we shortlisted the most suitable applicants. We developed interview questions about key doctrinal beliefs, Christian music for services, children in services, and the starting salary. We conducted the initial interview by Skype. I contacted the three referees of the main candidate and asked for detailed references.

Arranging a visit by the main candidate

Several church members organised a two-week visit for the main candidate during which he preached two sermons and met as many church members as possible at Bible studies and dinner events.

Holding a general meeting

On recommendation by the PSC, a general meeting was called for church members to vote on whether to call the recommended candidate.

Witnessing God's divine provision

During the search, I was often in awe of God's provision. The following three events were especially awe-inspiring:

- **Call to Japan:** While reading Ezekiel 2, Rev. M, an experienced pastor and former missionary to Japan, felt God telling him to return to ministry in Japan. Not long after, a woman at Rev. M's church in the UK gave him the June 2014 edition of *Prophetic Witness*, which contained our advertisement.
- **A divine provision:** We invited Rev. M to visit our church from the UK. Our PSC needed about ¥90,000 to pay for a two-week hotel stay, a preaching honorarium, meals, and transportation to meet church members. We had no idea where this money would come from. But God knew! We prayed fervently with deep faith that God would provide.



Recommended books

I found the following books very helpful:

- B. Biedebach, *What to Look For in a Pastor* (Day One Christian Ministries Inc., 2011).
- C. Brauns, *When the Word Leads your Pastoral Search* (Moody Publishers, 2011).
- D. T. Gordon, *Why Johnny Can't Preach* (P & R Publishing, 2009).
- E. V. Johnson, *The Work of the Pastoral Relations Committee* (Judson Press, 1983).
- J. Umidi, *Confirming the Pastoral Call* (Kregel Publications, 2000).

While walking to church on a sunny Sunday in September 2014 and praying about this need, a Japanese man suddenly approached me. He handed me an envelope and said it was for the pastoral candidate's visit expenses such as hotel and meals. It contained ¥90,000! We had not advertised this need but had only prayed about it as a committee. This man had no idea that we had been praying about this or how much money we needed!

- **Answered prayers for visa:** Soon after we called Rev. M to be our new pastor, the administrators and I applied for his visa for Japan. On several occasions in the past, missionary friends of mine all received one-year visas initially. We spent a lot of time praying for Rev. M's visa. By the grace of God, he received a three-year visa!

Conclusion

During my time on the PSC, I found the following five points helped us to trust God to provide a suitable new pastor:

1. Trust God and have faith
2. Pray fervently and regularly
3. Seek guidance from the Holy Spirit and the Bible
4. Wait on God's timing and don't rush
5. Update the congregation regularly

I would love to hear about readers' experiences of pastoral searches in a Japanese context and how God provided a new pastor. Please write to me at sarajw@fastmail.fm. JH

Sara Wolsey first came to Japan in 1998 as an Assistant English Teacher in public schools. As well as teaching English in Kansai, Sara is the chair of the Osaka International Church Council.

1. "Osaka International Church Senior Pastor Advertisement," in *Prophetic Witness Journal* Vol. 14, No. 217 June 2014, p. 13.

Pulpit photo: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Christian_Flag_etc_Covenant_Presbyterian_Long_Beach_20050213.jpg

Without prayer I am nothing

God's gracious intervention in response to prayer is the cornerstone for transformation in Japan

By Michael Hoehn

I would never have come to Japan were it not for the Lord's promise and gracious intervention. A deaconess introduced me to a booklet about getting a job in Japan, but it was praying with two Japanese servant leaders that turned out to be pivotal in me coming to Japan. Doors opened to things I'd never dreamt of and a career I never imagined I'd have—teaching and serving at a university and establishing university partnerships founded on Christ's blood. In addition to my call to Japan, I could mention many other amazing encounters with the Lord—his staggering grace makes me blush.

The power of prayer and his grace are sufficient for anyone serving the Lord in Japan—especially those who feel like giving up because they're not seeing much fruit. Because God already knows our needs (Matthew 6:32), we should change our mindset from one that focuses primarily on intercession

The power of prayer and his grace are sufficient for anyone serving the Lord in Japan—especially those who feel like giving up because they're not seeing much fruit.

to one that offers more love prayers of praise, thanks, and worship. Only then will transformation happen and God's kingdom become a reality in Japan by his amazing grace.

The dynamite-like power of prayer permeates my story and those of many other Christian brothers and sisters. These stories are centred on a wonderful, amazing love relationship, provided we don't get too caught up in the busy Japanese mindset and become too busy to pray. And I might

add that we should be careful about becoming too lethargic to pray. These warnings should resonate in the heart of every Christian in Japan—whether missionary, pastor, or layperson. To live life to the full, we need to strive to “pray without ceasing” (1 Thess. 5:17, ESV)—and sooner rather than later.

Below, I give three challenges based on my own experience.

Three challenges for change

1. Becoming compassionate for the whole of Japan

“When he saw the crowds, he had compassion for them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd” (Matt. 9:36).

One afternoon in 2002, after about nine ‘lost’ years of ministry in Japan, the Lord guided me to my knees, saying, “Intercede for all the prefectures of

Japan using *Operation Japan!*” Some time later, while prayer-walking around the Emperor's Palace in Tokyo, I prayed again for each of Japan's prefectures. Through prayer the Lord prepared me for ministry in Toyonaka, Osaka where we now live. Though academically qualified, I didn't expect to become ordained as the pastor of the then Christ of All Nations Church (Now Minoh International Church). My ordination thesis, *A Vision for Mission in Japan in the 21st Century*, looked at the

challenges and opportunities which lie ahead of us in Japan and this became the heartbeat of my life.

My hope is that a huge crowd of harvesters will be filled with the Lord's holy compassion for this needy country, where about 3,500 people pass away daily without believing in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.¹ This need causes me to wonder why we are so lukewarm in taking up the cross of Christ daily.

2. Loving the Lord of the Japanese harvest

As a participant at a day of prayer in 2003, I was asked whether I had any urgent prayer requests. Instead of asking to be healed of my “thorn in the flesh,” I asked for intercession that I might love the Lord more. (Nowadays, I would ask for love that can be given only from above—holy, absolute love that springs from the bottom of a Christ-like heart). My mediocre request had an awesome and life-transforming outcome—the triune God intervened. The Father powerfully outpoured his majestic presence, which I could feel around my arms; the crucified Christ approached me as the resurrected one; and the Holy Spirit came upon me in waves, causing me to fall back. At that time, one desire came suddenly to my mind—that each Japanese may have the same sort of gracious encounter with the living God.

From then on, the Holy Spirit graciously worked through me in ways I'd never experienced before. These included receiving an anointing to become one of the servant leaders of the Western Japan Prayer Summit in 2005, promoting the Global Day of Prayer movement in Japan since 2007, and igniting and networking with Chris-

tian servants in various fields like the T4T training (Training for Trainers),² Father's Heart Japan, and campus and networking ministries.

3. Praying, going out, and never giving up (Luke 10:3ff. and Luke 18:1–8)

In focusing on the Lord of the harvest, we focus on the Lord's heart, and the Lord in turn focuses on our hearts. Since participating in worship seminars run by Christian Artists Network, the following three steps for effective prayer permeate my prayers:

1. Bow down: approach the loving Lord and Saviour of mankind with a humble heart and a broken spirit (Psalm 51:12).
2. Listen to the Lord's voice more than talking to him. Since we don't really know the best way to pray, we should revel in the Lord's presence and let the Holy Spirit pray through us (Romans 8:26–28). Such Spirit-filled revelling can easily lead to the awesome Lord revealing himself and the wonderful plans he has for each of us who serve the Japanese—not by our own strength, but by his divine purpose.
3. Stand up: no praying without obeying. This is usually the most challenging and yet most rewarding step of a healthy prayer life. Touching the lives of others and becoming a contagious Christian is exciting, but it may cause opposition in various ways. However, revival will not come without opposition or persecution, as Christians in Korea and China can testify.

Where to from here?

Let us not expect the ultimate answer from people, but from the living and loving Lord. He graciously led me to Amos 8:11–12: “Behold, the days are coming,” declares the Lord God, ‘when I will send a famine on the land—not a famine of bread, nor a thirst for water, but of hearing the words of the Lord. They shall wander from sea to sea, and from north to east; they shall run to and fro, to seek the word of the Lord, but they shall not find it.’”. The shepherd Amos would certainly sympathize with the compassionate Jesus if he saw the Japanese people of 2016 hungering and thirsting for the Lord's Word! However, most Christians, including lukewarm missionaries like me, withhold Jesus' life-giving water from their Japanese neighbours. Judgment will happen, but in 9:11, Amos announces the restoration of Judah's ruins along with prophecy for harvest and transformation: “In that day I will raise up the booth of David that is fallen and repair its breaches, and raise up its ruins and rebuild it as in the days of old.” I read in The Japan News (by the Yomiuri Shimbun) about six months ago that about 15% of Japanese between the ages of

15 and 30 are sympathetic towards Christianity. But they could end up as Jehovah's Witnesses if we are not ready to reach them first.

Are we ready to be filled with Christ's compassion, to love the Lord of the harvest and our Japanese neighbours, and to fulfill our prayer-driven mission? As mature Christian servants, we don't need many action plans or programs. On the contrary, we just need to pursue four big steps in our relationship with God: becoming still, listening, following joyfully, and loving God and our neighbours. Finally, my challenge to you is to intercede for all the lost in Japan and step into the harvest field. And the Lord will intervene, usually without warning. **JH**

Michael Hoehn arrived from Germany in 1993. He is married and has two children. He's involved in many ministries, including Father's Heart Japan (as Kansai coordinator), T4T Church Planting and the Osaka B1 House Church Movement. Contact: amazing-grace-japan@road.ocn.ne.jp

1. “Live Births, Deaths, Foetal Deaths, Marriages and Divorces” (Excel:36KB), <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/nenkan/1431-02.htm>, accessed Oct 12, 2016.
2. <http://t4tonline.org/>

Let us not expect the ultimate answer from people, but from the living and loving Lord.

Give us this day our daily peanut butter

A surprising story of God's provision

By Steve Kunnecke

Just after we arrived back in the US on our first furlough in 1985, our nine-year-old daughter was asked in a Sunday night service what she missed about Japan. She answered rice. The next day, a woman who'd heard our daughter's answer turned up at our apartment door with a bag of Japanese rice. She told us the following story from her childhood in Japan.

Her father, Samuel Thornton, had been a missionary pastor in Kobe. At one time, he led several young Japanese men to the Lord. Since in those days (the 1920s) new Christians were often kicked out of their families on becoming Christians, Pastor Thornton became responsible for these young men. One day, while he was walking and praying on the docks of Kobe, he came across a crate of machinery, which no one seemed to know anything about. When he saw

what was in the crate, he acquired it and hauled it home. It was a machine for making peanut butter, which was not very common in Japan at that time. Soon several young men were making peanut butter during the day and studying the Bible at night. Eventually, the Japan Self-Help Bible School was formed.

The peanut butter business continues today and is still named after Pastor Thornton.

However, his name was converted to katakana (ソントン) and then sometime later back into romaji ... Sonton.¹ JH

Steve and Janet came to Japan in 1982 from Indiana. They are members of SEND International.

1. Charles Thornton, *One in Seven Thousand, The Life and Legacy of Samuel Watson*, accessed Oct 11, 2016, <http://www.sonton.info/docs/One%20in%20Seven%20Thousand.pdf>, 14.

Disclaimer: the product pictured is peanut cream.

Photo: Fair use, <https://www.amazon.co.jp/dp/B008XEXLII/>



Advertisement



Winter Day of Prayer

DATE: Wednesday, January 18, 2017

PLACE: SEND Center, Higashi Tokorozawa

TIME: 9:30-10 Mingle and enjoy homemade goodies and coffee

10-12:00 Program followed by lunch
(bring your own or buy an obento nearby)

COST: ¥500 (Facilities and program fees)

2017
Annual
Women's
Retreat

When:
March 1-3

Where:
Fukuin no ie,
Okutama

Speaker:
Liz Curtis-Higgs

Theme:
"It's good to be
queen"

For details visit
jema.org

Top 10 Reasons to Study at Tokyo Christian University

by Randall Short, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies

1. You love Japan.
2. You want to build lifelong friendships with Japanese and international students from Asia, Africa, Europe, and America.
3. You want to live in the Greater Tokyo Area, the world's most populous metropolitan area.
4. You want to speak Japanese fluently.
5. You want to understand Japan, Asia, and the world.
6. You want to learn deeply and widely about Scripture, theology, church history, and Japanese religion.
7. You want to study subjects like philosophy, history, linguistics, anthropology, and education without ignoring the most important questions you have about life, faith, and God.
8. You want to go to a school of "big learning" (the literal meaning of *daigaku*, the Japanese word for college) without getting lost in the system.
9. You want to get a college degree without taking on debt that will take years and years to pay.
10. You want to network with today's and tomorrow's Christian leaders in Japan, and to work with them to solve problems facing Japanese church and society.

Come join us at Tokyo Christian University! What reasons do you have to go anywhere else?

TOKYO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

SPONSORS

ACTS-ES



The Global Meeting Place for Christian University Students

- A Bachelor of Arts degree, fully accredited by the National Government of Japan.
- Liberal Arts based.
- Instruction in English. Japanese as a second language.
- Amazingly low cost in comparison with fully accredited evangelical colleges and universities in the United States or with other private universities in Japan.

TOKYO CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY, ACTS-ES ADMISSION OFFICE

3-301-5 Uchino, Inzai City, Chiba 270-1347, Japan

E-mail: acts@tci.ac.jp Website: www.tci.ac.jp

CREATION EVANGELISM IN JAPAN

A church in Okinawa is seeing positive results from using creation evangelism

By Don Batten

I was tremendously encouraged in 2014 when I saw a first-hand demonstration of what had happened after Naha Baptist Church (NBC) in Okinawa began to use creation evangelism teaching. Eleven years before, I had visited the church as part of an extensive Japanese tour. I had been invited back in my role with Creation Ministries International (CMI) to teach them further about creation.

NBC is the lead church of the Okinawa Baptist Convention (OBC) of 40 churches. Today it has about 300 attending Sunday morning services, with a good proportion of men and young people.

About 70 people attended the five sessions, including teaching on the Genesis foundations for the gospel, evidence for Noah's flood, origin of races, and dinosaurs and the Bible. Tōru Yasui, of Bible and Creation, Japan,¹ translated all my talks and also presented one of the seminar sessions to the high school youth of the church.

Many people expressed a heartfelt appreciation for the teaching. At the end, a lady took my hand. With a

beaming smile and in faltering English, she said it had given her a completely new way of thinking. It reminded me of the time in my own life when I realised I could actually believe what the Bible said about the creation, the fall, and the flood; it was almost like being born again—again.

During my first visit to this church the senior pastor and others realised the importance of creation evangelism in reaching Japanese people with the gospel. (One of the leadership team back then had repented in front of others of his unbelief of that portion of the Bible.)

They have since conscientiously applied and developed what I taught and NBC has grown significantly. I remember senior pastor Rev. Mamoru Kuniyoshi being excited at the time, but to see the application since is incredibly encouraging. The senior pastor is part of a small fellowship of Japanese pastors who promote creation evangelism in Japan. One member from a Presbyterian background on Honshu visited us in Brisbane on two occasions to follow-up on ideas for creation evangelism and

started a new church, by conversions, in one of Japan's Shinto strongholds, using creation evangelism principles.

A church culture of creation evangelism

Although other factors have no doubt been important in contributing to NBC's growth, congregations which doubt the truth and authority of the Word of God are much more likely to be hobbled from the start. Creation apologetics has become part of NBC's culture. During the all-age Sunday School, before the main worship service, the adult class (about 100 people) was addressed by a lady who had been to the Grand Canyon recently. She explained, using her own photos in a slide presentation, how the Grand Canyon was a monument to the biblical flood of Noah.

A member of the church, a medical doctor, has translated Stones and Bones, Dr Carl Wieland's booklet-sized introduction to the creation/evolution controversy, into Japanese.²

There is good cooperation among churches in Okinawa. The Okinawa



Baptist Convention is the largest Christian group on the island, so it is quite influential. Other churches have become interested in what NBC and the other churches of the OBC are doing with creation evangelism. NBC had organized a Monday morning creation seminar with Tōru Yasui especially for pastors of other churches.

I also had opportunity to teach at a small church near Narita airport on my layover between Okinawa and returning to Australia. The pastor and his wife started this church in their home a few years ago and they have now acquired the property next door to accommodate the growing congregation. On a Monday afternoon about 25 parents and children crowded in, eagerly taking notes. Again, this pastor is growing a church using creation evangelism.

God taught from the beginning as Creator of all

All this is happening in a country where we often hear that people are unreceptive to the gospel. However, when the Bible is taught from the beginning to establish God as the Creator of all, people are receptive. How can people understand their need for forgiveness, and a Saviour, if they have no concept that God created them, so they are accountable to him? Who will judge them for their sin if there is no Creator-God to whom they will be held accountable? How can they trust the Bible on salvation if they can't trust its history in Genesis, so foundational

CREATION EVANGELISM: WHAT IS IT?

Creation evangelism teaches people the big picture chronologically following the unfolding revelation of the Bible, beginning from Genesis: God made us, we are all from one man and woman who had a relationship with him, but then fell into sin. The fall led to the curse and resulted in the groaning creation we see all around us. The resultant global flood was a judgment of God showing the depths of his hatred of sin, and then the dispersion at Babel is the origin of all people groups. This big picture lays the foundations for knowing that there is a real "hands-on" Creator-God who created me. I am responsible to this God for my rebellion and need to be forgiven and God himself has provided the means by which I can be forgiven, through what Jesus Christ did (see Paul's speech in Athens in Acts 17:16-34).

to the gospel, of how sin and death entered the world?

An American missionary in Okinawa attended the Saturday sessions of the seminar at NBC. He appreciated the biblical creation message being delivered. He shared how he uses Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ / 確かな土台:創造からキリストまで (New Tribes Mission) in church planting and evangelism, and that it is effective.

We need to stand firm on the authority of God's Word from the beginning, and thus continue to be effective in sharing the gospel with those who are perishing. Belief in a Creator God is vital to mission. Without such a Creator, there is simply no need for a Saviour. **JH**

Edited version of original article published by Creation Ministries International: <http://creation.com/creation-evangelism-japan>. Used with permission.

Dr. Don Batten is the CEO of Creation Ministries International—Australia. He has spoken around the world on the creation issue and is the co-author of many books including The Creation Answers Book and Answers to the 4 Big Questions.

1. Bible and Creation, Japan is associated with the *Dōmei* denomination. They offer seminars, sell books, and DVDs educating people about the Biblical creation standpoint. <http://b-c.jp/>

2. Four books from CMI are now available in Japanese:

- *Stones and Bones*: カール・ウィーランド, 創造の確かな証拠
- *Creation Answers Book*: デイビット・キャッチプール, ジョナサン・サルファティ, カール・ウィーランド, 聖書に書かれた『創造』の疑問に答える— 創造論、進化論、創世記に関する60以上の解説 — Editor: ドン・バッテン
- *Refuting Evolution*: ジョナサン・サルファティ, 進化論は科学か? ~最新の科学で進化論を検証する~
- *Starlight, Time and the New Physics*: ジョン・ハートネット, 光年の謎と新宇宙論

Photo: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Grand_Canyon_Panorama_2013.jpg



Becoming better listeners



Recommending a book by a Japanese counselor that teaches lay people how to be better listeners

By Lorna Ferguson

“Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” This quote of Stephen R. Covey regularly pops up on social media. Perhaps this shows how many people long to be listened to in order to be really understood. Perhaps it also reveals that many of us know that we are not good at real listening.

A few years ago, my husband and I had the privilege of attending a course on pastoral psychology at Hokkaido Bible Institute taught by OMF missionary Kaori Chua (known as Kaori Sai among the Japanese-speaking community). A major topic of this course was how to become a good listener. At that time, we were involved in church-planting ministry, and several of the seekers God brought us had various hurts and issues in their lives. These seekers needed real listeners who would ask questions in such a way that opened up conversation rather than shut it down. These seekers needed people who were listening to the Holy Spirit while they were listening to them. And so we found Kaori’s lectures of great practical and spiritual help in our ministry. Kaori wrote this to me about her book:

Good listening is the foundation of every caregiving ministry as well as Christian mission. We do not know what to share without listening to the hearts of people. But how can we listen to others in such a way that we could truly be of help to them—not only to solve their problems but also to bring them closer to Christ? This is the question I have explored for many years through reading, training, and my own practice of pastoral and counseling ministry.

Based on the conviction that every Christian is called to be a good listener (to God and to our neighbours), this book presents a biblical foundation of the ministry of listening and suggests practical ways in which we can integrate our faith in our daily practice of listening. Although the book is written with a view to equipping lay Christians to care for one another in church, the same basic principles can be used when we reach out to non-Christians. Special care was taken to pay attention to the context of Japan in our practice of listening.

Biblically-based and immensely practical, Kaori’s book *Becoming a Good Listener* is written in Japanese but is not difficult to read.¹ It starts by considering the importance of knowing how to listen to God, before addressing how to listen to others. The book contains Scripture passages to ponder and practical examples to learn from. It is not so much a book to be read for enjoyment as a tool to be used, especially by Japanese believers.

Becoming a Good Listener can be read or studied individually or in a group. At the end of each chapter, there are discussion questions and a practical exercise to facilitate self-reflection and active learning.

A few months ago, I told a Japanese Christian worker about the publication of this book. He was very excited, saying it was something much needed in many Japanese churches. I would definitely recommend using this with the believers in your ministry to encourage and equip them to care for each other in a deeper way.

You can buy *Becoming a Good Listener* from Christian bookstores or online for 2,000 yen plus tax. (Kaori is donating the royalties from the book to Hokkaido Bible Institute, where she and her husband How Chuang served for several years.) **JH**



Lorna Ferguson (Scotland) has been in Japan with OMF International for 18 years. She and her husband David worked for 15 years church planting in Hokkaido. Now based in Chiba, she serves as OMF’s Sector Leader for Personnel.

1. 蔡香、よい聴き手になるために — 聖書に学ぶ相互ケア (Kaori Sai, *Becoming a Good Listener: What the Bible Teaches About Caring for One Another*) (Word of Life Press Ministries, 2016).

Silence and Beauty: Hidden Faith Born of Suffering

Makoto Fujimura (IVP, 2016, 263 pp.)

Martin Scorsese's film *Silence*, based on Shusaku Endō's novel of the same title, will be screened in theaters from December 2016. Makoto Fujimura's new book *Silence and Beauty* is now available in anticipation of this release and a Japanese translation is due to be published later this year.

Endō's *Silence* is a dark and depressing novel, full of persecution of Christians, betrayal of faith, ineffectiveness of missions, and God's apparent silence in the midst of suffering. But it is a must read for all missionaries in Japan—*Silence and Beauty* tells us why.

Silence and Beauty is a profound reflection on Endō's book, but it is also much more. Fujimura, a Japanese-American artist, takes us through his personal journey of understanding the gospel in Japan, which led to his eventual conversion. Drawing heavily on Japanese history and arts (especially the writings of Kenzaburō Ōe and Yasunari Kawabata), he helps us understand the essence of beauty in Japan—a beauty he says is born of pain and suffering.

Fujimura shows, through Endō, that Christianity in the Japanese context is not about the triumph of faith but rather about the brokenness of this world pointing us to Christ, and that Japanese concept of beauty reveals unique insights into the gospel. This book was not written specifically for missionaries in Japan, but it may as well have been, since it asks questions such as: What is the role of Christians and missionaries in Japan? What could and should the Japanese church look like? And, what is the role of the arts in church planting in Japan?

Silence and Beauty challenges our view of missions and the church in Japan while also giving hope in the power of the gospel. I believe it to be one of the most important books in print for missionaries in Japan today. It is my hope that it will spark many conversations among us as we read it and serve together, endeavoring to unveil the gospel of Christ to this great nation. **JH**

Reviewer rates it 4.5 out of 5 stars ★★★★★

Roger Lowther serves as the Director of Faith and Art at Grace City Church Tokyo (www.gracecitychurch.jp) and Director of Community Arts Tokyo (www.communityarts.jp).



Brief reviews of other resources

Shutting Out The Sun: How Japan Created Its Own Lost Generation

By Michael Zielenziger (Reviewer: Mel Jessop)
Paperback, Vintage Books USA, Sept. 4, 2007

Shutting Out The Sun focuses on how the unique situation of Japan's history, politics, economics, culture, and social expectations have come together to create the social adjustment disorder known worldwide as hikikomori.

The author, a journalist, built relationships with a handful of young men with hikikomori and their intimate interviews bring depth, life, and insight to the sensitive issues many with hikikomori face, and give the reader a perspective that is not usually shared.

Zielenziger also interviewed medical professionals, social workers, parents, volunteers, and people who once suffered from hikikomori. This breadth of opinion and expertise paints a picture of the broader social issues at play and the varied approaches and responses to hikikomori. It also shows the personal issues faced by people with hikikomori.

The author's thorough analysis of the economic and political influences is interesting, well written, and thought provoking. I enjoyed reading this book and highly recommend it to anyone hoping to gain a deeper understanding of some of the challenges in Japanese culture today.



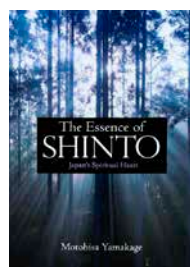
The Essence of Shinto: Japan's Spiritual Heart

By Motohisa Yamakage (Reviewer: Mark Gelsthorpe)
Kodansha USA, Sept. 7, 2012

This book is written by a Shinto priest (*kannushi*) with the aim of explaining Shinto to a Western audience. He presents interesting parallels between Shinto and modern thinking such as self-improvement through meditation and environmentalism.

Shinto practice is described as the attempt to realise the *kami*-nature (god-nature) within all of us. Yamakage writes that the lack of doctrine and scripture in Shinto allows worshippers a great freedom in the way they worship. He

explains there is no concept of sin but a strong emphasis on self-improvement, which continues beyond death.



It is striking how Shinto appeals to experience over the rationalism we often rely on in the West. While this book doesn't cover how deeply ingrained Shinto is in the thinking of ordinary Japanese people. I would

recommend it to those who want an easily accessible introduction to the subject. **JH**

Follow me!

An injured hand and feelings of lost identity in Japan led to the discovery that true identity is found in following Jesus in the here and now

By Daniel Templeman Twells

Six months before we arrived in Japan, I seriously injured my right hand and had to have surgery on it. As I am right-handed, the next couple of months were challenging. Simple daily tasks either had to be done for me or required extra time for me to do them myself. Writing was out, as was doing up the top button of my shirt. Having to rely on others meant that in some ways I couldn't be myself; little did I know that this small temporary loss of identity was preparing me for how I would feel after our arrival in Japan.

The injury came at a busy time—I was preparing to leave my current ministry and making arrangements to move overseas for an extended period to live and work. I remember thinking: *This injury couldn't have happened at a worse time.*

There was so much to do and little time to do it, and yet during this busy time one of the prayer intercessors from my church invited me to consider what God might be teaching me through this experience.

I believe the physical recovery process was a spiritual precursor of what I experienced on my arrival in this beautiful, and in many ways, mysterious country.

Starting life in Japan

My wife Melissa had lived in Japan for a year as an exchange student after graduating from high school in Australia, so she had told me something of what life here was like. And yet the reality was really quite different from anything I had imagined.

For the first few weeks after we arrived in Japan, everything was new—the sights, sounds, and smells. Things I would have imagined to be the same wherever you went in the world, were not (even mic tests were conducted differently!). The vending machines, toilets, and elevators intrigued me, as did the jingles played before the train doors close and the sight of people politely

queuing for ages outside restaurants. The Hello Kitty-themed road construction barriers revealed how deeply the Japanese appreciation for cuteness had reached the most practical of activities. In those first few weeks, we said to each other countless times, “Well, we’re not in Kansas anymore, Toto!”

After a month or so, the reality that we were not on holiday began to set in as we got into the routine of attending language school, going to the supermarket, and trying to understand Japanese social etiquette.

Loss of identity

After I arrived in Japan, my sense of identity, self-estimation, and self-confidence were challenged in ways I had not encountered before as I realised that I was an unknown quantity to others. The identity and the credibility I had developed at home suddenly counted for little (in my mind at least) in my new environment. I felt as if I was starting all over again. Who I was, where I came from, my abilities and inadequacies, the life experiences I had had up until that point—all of these things were new to those I now lived and worked among. It felt strange not being known very well.

In his book *Adam's Return*, Richard Rohr writes this about identity:

The essential religious question is the one God, in effect, asks Adam, “Who are you? And whose are you?” We like the first question because we think there is something we can do about it, and it gives us control. We fear the second question because only God can answer it, and his answer seems too good to be true.”¹

Even now, in our fifth year of service here, I sometimes feel like part of me is missing and

The “real” me is not someone I left behind in Australia and who is waiting for me to return one day in the future to simply pick up from where I left off.

that I can only communicate a shadow of what I really want to say. I sometimes say to Melissa, “I feel like I am not able to be who I *truly* am.”

Finding my identity in following Jesus in the here and now

And yet recently, I have come to the important realization that who I truly am is not necessarily who I was before I came to Japan. The “real” me is not someone I left behind in Australia and who is waiting for me to return one day in the future to simply pick up from where I left off. The life I live here and now and the people I live and work among are my world; the people in my life now are the people God has given to me. The “real” me is in fact the very person I am today, right now.

Rather than fear the sense that part of me is “missing”, I want to try to embrace this aspect of my identity as exactly that—my identity. In some way, an awareness of who I *am not* is an affirmation of who I *am*; the space that the missing part leaves allows something new to emerge.

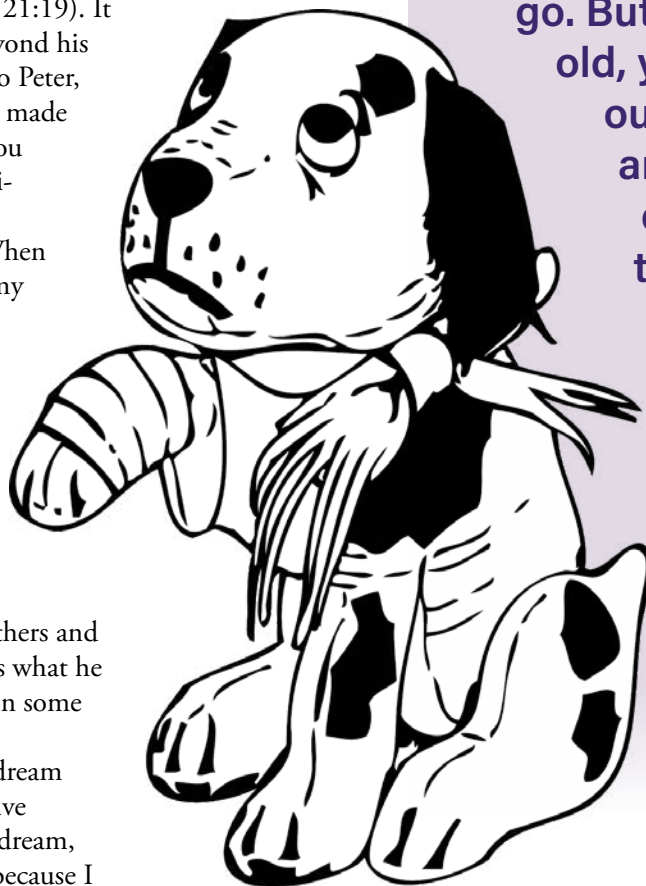
Jesus’ words to Peter after his reinstatement pointed to the kind of death by which he would glorify God (John 21:19). It alluded to circumstances beyond his control. Jesus in effect said to Peter, “When you were young you made your own decisions, when you are old others will make decisions for you, but until that time comes—follow me!” When I think about the injury to my hand and the similar feelings I experienced after I arrived in Japan, I am reminded that there have been times when I too have found myself in circumstances that were beyond my control, where all I could do was rely on the help of others and simply trust that God knows what he is doing. I wonder whether in some way Peter felt like this.

It seems like an absolute dream to have the opportunity to live and minister in Japan. It’s a dream, not because life is easy, but because I

know this is where I am meant to be. To know deep within that my identity is not entirely based on who I am or who I think I am; rather, my identity is found in who I belong to—God, who has chosen, called, and loved me. He simply says: “Follow me!” **JH**

Originally from Perth, Western Australia, Daniel along with his wife Melissa—both Salvation Army officers—have been serving in an educational and pastoral capacity in Tokyo since February, 2012.

1. Richard Rohr, *Adam’s Return: The Five Promises of Male Initiation* (New York: Crossroad, 2004), 60.



“I tell you the truth, when you were young, you were able to do as you liked; you dressed yourself and went wherever you wanted to go. But when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and others will dress you and take you where you don’t want to go.” ... Then Jesus told him, “Follow me!”

**John 21:18–19
(NLT)**

Cafetalk

Having lessons via Skype offers several advantages over conventional lessons

Most of us have probably studied Japanese in conventional language classes at some stage. While such classes are helpful, there is now a plethora of alternatives available via the Internet that allow you to study Japanese on a one-to-one basis from the comfort of your own home at a time that suits you.

One website I've found very useful for improving my conversational Japanese is Cafetalk.com. It's a service that connects students with teachers for lessons via Skype. To take a lesson, you first need to purchase points by credit card, money transfer, or PayPal. You then search for a teacher who looks suitable for your needs and book a lesson with them. There's plenty of choice—about 200 teachers are currently registered to teach Japanese. You can narrow the selection by choosing options such as price range, teaching qualifications, and countries of origin and residence. Each teacher's page has a profile written by the teacher as well as feedback left by students. I've had lessons with eight teachers so far and they've all been very good. It's advisable to try a few teachers to find those that bring out the best in you.

A wide variety of lessons are offered. Some are based on the teacher's preferred textbook (e.g., *Minna no Nihongo* or *Japanese for Busy People*), while others use the teacher's own material or ma-

terial supplied by the student. Other classes focus on grammar or activities such as reading manga or writing emails. Students intending to sit the NLPT tests can find lessons to help them in their preparation. I invariably take free-talking lessons because conversation is the area I need the most help with.

The lessons range in price depending on the teacher, but it's generally possible to find good lessons for about 1,200 yen per hour. It pays to check the coupon page for discounts, as teachers sometimes offer reductions on some lessons. Several teachers offer free trial lessons or discounts for first-time students. Also, Cafetalk refunds half

the points spent on lessons taken on the 19th of each month.

Cafetalk is particularly suited to people who find it hard to leave the house (for example, those with small children), those on home assignment or living far from Japanese people, and students wanting individual attention in their language learning.

Also, for anyone seeking to supplement their income, Cafetalk provides opportunities to teach various languages, or numerous other subjects. Anyone can apply to be a teacher (qualifications are helpful but not essential). The application process involves a short interview. Teachers are initially paid at 60% of the lesson price but that percentage can rise over time.

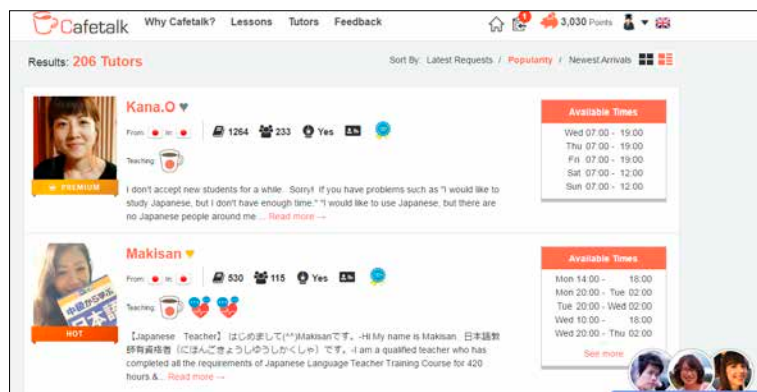
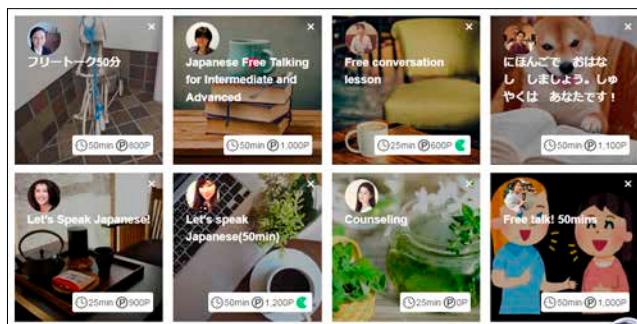
If you feel you need more help with learning Japanese, I'd strongly encourage you to give Cafetalk a try. **JH**

Disclaimer: I received three free lessons from Cafetalk earlier this year in exchange for writing teacher reviews.

Simon Pleasants works as an editor in the Tokyo office of a scientific publishing company. Originally from Wales, UK, he moved to Australia in 1988. He helps maintain several Japanese-related websites, including Reaching Japanese for Christ: www.rjcnetwork.org



Images are screenshots of Cafetalk.



What prayers does God answer?

Praying according to God's will

Answered and unanswered prayer

Many people think that answered prayer is when God grants us a request we have asked of Him. So if our request is not granted, it is then considered to be an “unanswered” prayer. However, this shows an incorrect understanding of prayer.

God actually answers every prayer directed to Him. There are times when God does not answer with a “yes,” but with a “no” or even a “wait.” God only promises to grant our prayers when we ask according to His will. “This is the confidence which we have before Him, that, if we ask anything according to His will, He hears us. And if we know that He hears us in whatever we ask, we know that we have the requests which we have asked from Him” (1 John 5:14–15, NASB).

Praying according to God's will

Praying according to God's will is praying for things that honor and glorify God as well as praying for what the Bible clearly reveals to be God's will. If we pray for something that is not honoring to God or is not God's will for our lives, then God will not give us what we ask for.

How can we know what God's will is? God promises to give us wisdom when we ask for it. James 1:5 tells us, “But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him.” The Bible also gives us many details about what God's will is, for example, 1 Thessalonians 5:12–25 details many things that are God's will for us:

But we request of you, brethren, that you appreciate those who diligently labor among you, and have charge over you in the Lord and give you instruction, and that you esteem them very highly

“Prayer is spending time with God!”

— Philip Yancey —

in love because of their work. Live in peace with one another. We urge you, brethren, admonish the unruly, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with everyone. See that no one repays another with evil for evil, but always seek after that which is good for one another and for all people. Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus. Do not quench the Spirit; do not despise prophetic utterances. But examine everything carefully; hold fast to that which is good; abstain from every form of evil. Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. Faithful is He who calls you, and He also will bring it to pass. Brethren, pray for us.

That is praying according to God's will. That is what He wants us to pray for. So, for example, when you pray against the evil in our society, pray for patience for yourself, or pray for your pastor, you know you are praying the way God wants you to.

Prayers God answers

The better we understand God's word, the better we will know what to pray for. John 15:7 says, “If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you.” The better we know God and His Word, the better we know what to pray for and the more often God will answer “yes” to our requests. **JH**

The better we understand
God's word, the better we will
know what to pray for.

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 37 years ago.



Cross-cultural stress: causes and coping strategies

Living in a cross-cultural context causes stress, but there are ways to manage it

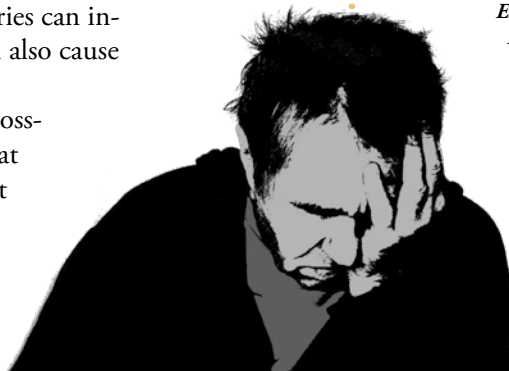
You're into your second or third term. Your language ability isn't great, but it's acceptable. Your kids have adapted well to living overseas and even have a few Japanese friends. You are relating well to the church people. Your neighbors know you and are friendly. And the church is growing slowly but surely. Yet you still feel stressed out. You wonder, *What is going on? Why am I still struggling after all these years?* The reason is not culture shock but rather cross-culture stress. Below, I define cross-culture stress, consider its causes, and suggest ways to manage it.

Cross-culture stress has been defined as "the adjustment stage in which people accept the new environment, adopting new ways of thinking and doing things so that they feel like they belong to the new culture. This takes years, and some missionaries never complete it. This may go on and on."¹ Everyone who is living cross-culturally experiences cross-culture stress, even those who are adjusting well. It comes from what may be called change overload.

Some causes of cross-cultural stress are:

- **Involvement:** The greater your involvement with a culture, the more stress you experience.
- **Values:** The more the values of your culture differ from those of your host culture, the greater the stress.
- **Communication:** Learning a language is only a small part of being able to communicate effectively. Non-verbal signals, ways of thinking, and a shared knowledge base are all important aspects of communication but may take years to learn.
- **Temperament:** The more your temperament differs from that of an average person of your adopted culture, the more stress you experience.
- **Entry-reentry:** Most cross-cultural workers live in two different cultures, never feeling fully at home in either.
- **Children:** If you have children and they adopt the values of your host culture, you will feel different from them.
- **Multinational teams:** Working with nationals from other countries can increase effectiveness, but can also cause increased stress.²

The first step to managing cross-cultural stress is to recognize that it exists and is an inevitable part of living in another culture. The next step is to understand that most such stress comes from two common mistakes.



“Uninterrupted stress of enough intensity leads to exhaustion sooner or later in most individuals.”

— Hans Selye —

The biggest mistake you can make is thinking that your adopted culture is not valid. It's hard not to be critical and feel your own culture is better. But it's important to remember that God works within culture and that the gospel is relevant no matter what the culture. Contextualizing the gospel extends back to the apostle Paul.³ He didn't let culture stand in his way of sharing the gospel; rather, he became all things to all men that he might win some (1 Corinthians 9:22).

The second mistake, which is common among new recruits, is feeling that you have to submerge yourself in the host culture in order to understand it and improve your language skills. This can lead to discouragement and burn-out as cultural differences and language can be overwhelming. New workers need to learn that cross-cultural life is a marathon, not a sprint. And getting fellowship with those from our own culture is essential because it allows us to relax and be ourselves. This is an important part of staying balanced in our missionary lives.

Living cross-culturally is stressful. But remember, you are in control of how you adapt to a new culture. Choose well what you want to change and what you don't want to change. This will go a long way in helping you manage your stress. It's impossible to live cross-culturally and not have stress. But with a little effort and planning, we can manage the stress and keep our lives in balance. Cross-cultural living is challenging, but if managed well, we can keep our stress from becoming distress. **JH**

Eileen Nielsen and her husband live in Tokyo. Eileen is the Member Care Facilitator for TEAM and has a private counseling ministry. If interested in meeting for counseling, contact her at eileenpnelsen@gmail.com.



1. Ronald L. Koteskey, "What Missionaries Ought to know about Culture Stress," accessed Sept 19, 2016. <http://www.missionarycare.com/culture-stress>

2. Ibid

3. Jon L. Dybdahl, "Cross-cultural adaptation," November 1992, <https://www.ministrymagazine.org/archive/1992/11/cross-cultural-adaptation>

The power of stories

Stories are a great way to engage our readers

How many times do preachers start a sermon with an engaging story? Stories draw people in, especially first-person ones. Yet most of us write to our supporters with facts, lists of events, and prayer points.

Mitch Ditkoff of *Huffington Post* tells us that a story is the best way to be heard because it quickly establishes trust and connection between the speaker and listener.¹ It engages emotions and allows the receiver to be a part of the story. It is also easier to remember.

Jesus often used stories to teach. It is much easier to recall the story of the shepherd seeking a lost sheep than the Sermon on the Mount.

During a church visit on one of our home assignments, a lady came up to me and reminded me of a story I'd told several years earlier on our first home assignment—a story about when my son was in hospital in Japan as a toddler. Tears had coursed down my cheeks at the time, and my voice got wobbly. The lady told me she'd cried that day too and had never forgotten. The story had spurred her on to pray for us and other missionaries.

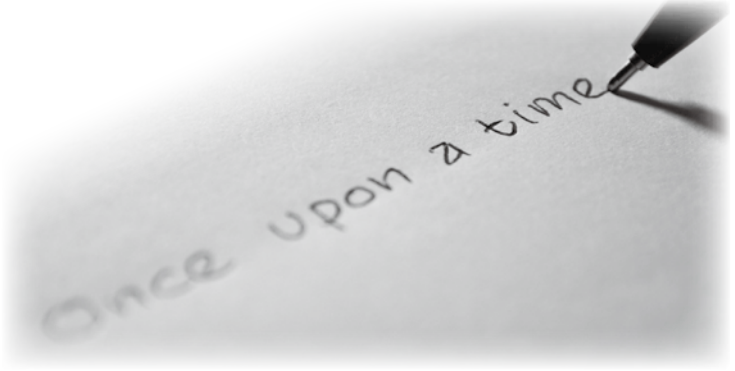
Advertisers use stories too. The ads we remember are often the ones that have stories, even brief ones. Years ago, there was a boat insurance ad in Australia. The 30-second ad sticks in my mind because it involved a wife making a joke at her husband's expense about the charter yacht he ran into with his small motorboat.

Why don't we write stories? Maybe because while they're easy to listen to, they aren't so easy to write. Here are some ideas to spark stories for your next prayer letter, mission's webpage, or blog entry:

- Give details about one person who stands out in your church.
- Recall a surprising conversation.
- Write about a humorous moment.
- Describe something that happened on your day off.
- Write about a moment when you knew God was calling you to do something different. **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.

1. Mitch Ditkoff, "Why tell stories?" *Huffington Post*, December 3, 2015, accessed October 4, 2016, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/mitch-ditkoff/why-tell-stories_b_8703710.html



Advertisement



Live, work, and serve in tomorrow's world

Your international degree starts here



Kyoto International University
www.kyotoiu.ac.jp

TEL: 0774-64-0804 Email: info@kyotoiu.ac.jp

- The mission of KIU is to educate individuals from a Biblical worldview in the western-style liberal arts tradition.
- KIU has 7 partnership universities in US, Canada and UK.
- KIU credits are transferable to complete degrees in most universities/colleges in the US and Canada.
- Affordable tuition and fees.
KIU : ¥960,000
Public Univ. (US) : ¥1,800,000
Private Univ. (US) : ¥4,000,000
Source: <http://www.statisticbrain.com/average-cost-of-college-tuition/>

 www.facebook.com/KIU.ac.jp

KIU and KIU Academy (Grades 1-12) are eager to serve you.

Dodging digital disaster

How to avoid that sinking feeling when your hard drive fails

I remember saving up over a whole summer to buy my first 40 GB hard drive. Everyone wondered what I would use all that space for, but after spending weeks turning my CD collection into MP3s, I finally had the drive full. I returned to college overjoyed with my new music collection, only to hit the power button and hearing nothing but an ominous click. My new 40 GB hard drive had just died! Fortunately, it was under warranty and I received a replacement. But all the work I had put into my new music collection was erased in just a second. Anyone who has suffered digital loss knows the frustration and grief accompanying the harsh reality that those pictures you took on family vacation or that term paper you spent a semester writing are forever gone. Today, I have terabytes of data. If it were to disappear, I'd probably cry like a baby.

Thankfully, today's hard drives are much more reliable. But that does not exempt you from digital loss. Fire, disaster, theft, ransomware, a pot of coffee, or any number of accidents can still take those precious memories. Here are a few ways I use to prevent digital doomsday. The three places you should backup those irreplaceable memories are onsite, offsite, and in the cloud.

Onsite backups

Windows Backup and Apple's Time Machine are built-in programs that you can use to set up an onsite backup—namely a backup made at the same location as your computer. Onsite backups are important because they allow quick recovery from small and large data losses. Deleted a file yesterday? Kids played on the computer and now your program is gone? Both Windows' and Apple's backup programs enable you to look at what was on your computer before and restore it to where it should be. An onsite backup is especially critical if you work with lots of files or the data you are preserving exceeds a few gigabytes.

Offsite backups

The above two programs can also create offsite backups, where backups are stored in a different location from the computer. For example, you could save a backup of all your family's photos and videos up to the end of last year and store them at your parents' house. Having an

offsite backup is critical in the event of fire, theft, lost luggage, or other catastrophe that also destroys your onsite backup. If you or your business works with other people's information (including photos, videos, audio recordings, and other personal information), having an offsite backup can help keep things running smoothly, even when large amounts of data are lost. An offsite backup also does not have to include everything—just those things you cannot live without. An offsite backup differs from an onsite backup in that it usually only recovers information up to a certain time.

Cloud backups

The final place you should keep a backup is in the cloud. A cloud backup provides seamless protection for your data when you are away from your other backup solutions. A cloud backup is not the same as cloud sync services like Google Drive and Dropbox, which are designed for sharing files in a folder between computers. Cloud backup protects everything.

If you do not currently have a cloud backup, I recommend starting with CrashPlan (www.crashplan.com) because it is easy to use and its plans are affordable. CrashPlan can even be used for free since it allows you to use the free space belonging to friends or family members that are CrashPlan users. Other cloud-backup providers that get high marks are Carbonite (www.carbonite.com), Backblaze (www.backblaze.com), and SpiderOak (spideroak.com). While a cloud backup may sound like the solution to all your backup worries, remember it could take weeks

to download your files if something destroys your data. Onsite and offsite copies come in handy if you need your data fast.

Following these guidelines can help you to protect your precious digital memories and resources for future generations to enjoy as well as enable you to continue to operate smoothly if your work involves digital files. **JH**

Jared Jones lives and works in Takasaki as a church planter for the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He and his wife, Tara, have been in Japan for nearly ten years and have four children.

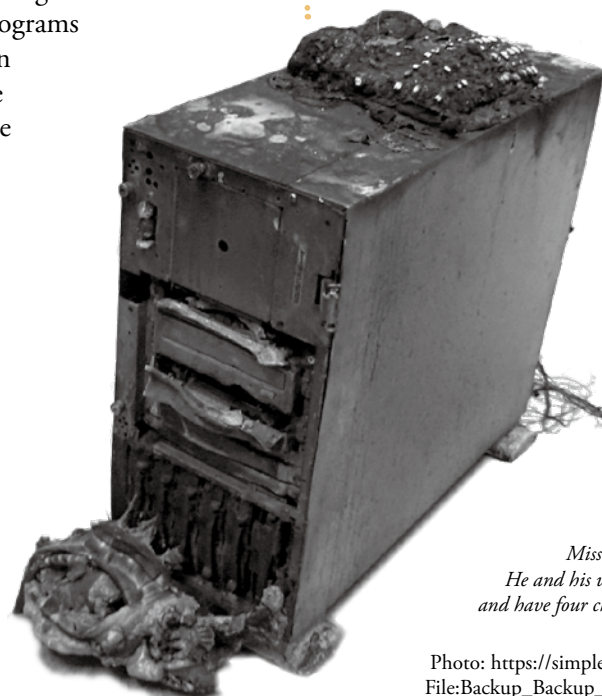


Photo: https://simple.wikipedia.org/wiki/Backup#/media/File:Backup_Backup_Backup_-_And_Test_Restores.jpg

Published in 42 languages worldwide - now on sale in Japan!

ファイヤーバイブル



FIREBIBLE

Japan's First Pentecostal Study Bible

This Study Bible strengthens and reinvigorates your faith, devotion and prayer life!

On Sale
SEPTEMBER
3rd 2016



The FIREBIBLE is rich with in-depth notes, articles, Themefinders™, charts, a concordance and passage references.

Whether you are preparing for a powerful message or just studying the Word, this is the perfect tool!

- Study Notes
A richer understanding of the Word through helpful Study notes
- Articles
A more thorough and comprehensive way of dealing with important subjects beyond study notes
- Themefinders™
Symbols in the margin next to a vertical line which represent a specific theme of importance in the Pentecostal tradition

¥11,000-
(Tax not included)

2 Cover Types (Same Content)
A5 Size (2736 Pages)

Published by Life Publishers International <http://www.lifepublishers.org/> Japanese distributor: Dendobunsho Center TEL 049-296-3143 Bible- Shin-Kaiyaku Seisho (1970, 1987, 2003), Concordance ©Shin-Nihon Seisho Kankokai



Loving God, serving others
Christian Academy In Japan

www.caj.or.jp

042-471-0022

Encourage everyone to grow

This article is part four of a four-part series, based on the following: An effective ministry leader (1) builds Christ-centered community, (2) focuses everyone on the purpose, (3) ensures everyone understands what's happening and why, and (4) encourages everyone to grow.

People want to grow—effective ministry leaders know this.

They know people want to use their God-given gifts. They know people want to serve even more effectively. They know people want to learn. And because leaders know this, they encourage personal and professional progress.

Why do effective ministry leaders do this?

Because they want people to minister more effectively—which tends to happen when people are growing. And because they don't want people to be discouraged—which tends to happen when people are expected to do new things without getting the necessary training. (For example, people get discouraged when asked to use Twitter, Instagram, and Pinterest to network, but aren't shown how to do it.)

You may think to yourself: *Seems like a good idea. I can see how encouraging this would help our team. But I don't have the training or experience to do this. What can I do?*

Good question. I recommend that you reflect on this topic and that you use your reflections with your ministry team. To get started, answer these questions:

1) What happens when you're growing? I feel invigorated and hopeful. I work more effectively because I'm learning how, for example, to schedule better, to write better emails, or to use storytelling to capture others' attention. I talk more about things I'm learning, like how to use free online resources to support my growth, how to develop workshops that fit with adult learning styles, and how to use social media for fundraising. I also share more resources that have helped me like Christianity Today's Twitter account (@CTMagazine), Christian Schools International's webinars on curriculum development, and Timothy Keller's *Prayer: Experiencing Awe and Intimacy with God*.



What about you? What happens when you're growing (and when you aren't)?

2) What helps you grow? Three fundamental things that help me are being on a ministry team that values personal and professional development, setting three-year growth goals, and having access to free online resources, for example, the Malphurs Group's Twitter account (@malphursgroup) and Keith Webb's blog (keithwebb.com).

Other things that help me include mentoring someone and getting mentored and reflecting on what I'm learning by blogging. I thrive if I'm on a team that believes in me and believes that God is helping his people learn to serve him more effectively, but also believes that growing is more about motivation than information. If the team also realizes that people flourish as they take responsibility for defining, committing to, and achieving their goals, then I'm really helped.

At the ministry team level, six things that help me are:

1. having a team growth goal,
2. discussing an article that helps us achieve our growth goal,
3. celebrating the team's growth,
4. having time in meetings to share the progress we are making individually and good resources we've found,
5. having documented expectations and guidelines regarding personal and professional development, and
6. being asked the following questions as part of an annual review: What progress have you made on your goals? What would help you even more? What about you? What helps you grow?

Bottom line? Be an effective ministry leader. Plan for and foster growth.

What about you?

1. What's one way you've grown?
2. What's comfortable/uncomfortable about encouraging others to grow?
3. What happens when you're growing?
4. What helps you grow?
5. What's next? **JH**

Michael B. Essenburg (Christian Reformed Japan Mission, Resourcing Christian Education International) serves at Okinawa Christian School International. Time permitting, Michael works with missions.



JEMA ORDER FORM

All items postage paid.

Membership Dues

Includes JEMA Web site login, JEMA Directory, *Japan Harvest*, and membership discounts. (Not a member? Go to www.jema.org and click "Liaison/Membership" for an application.)

	Qty	Subtotal
¥6,300 Single	_____	_____
¥7,500 Couple	_____	_____

Japan Harvest Magazine

One year subscription for non-member

¥2,800	_____	_____
US \$30.00 overseas (economy air)	_____	_____

JEMA Directory

¥1,500 Member	_____	_____
¥2,000 Non-member	_____	_____
US \$25.00 overseas (economy air)	_____	_____

Grand Total _____

Postal Furikae:

00130-4-180466 JEMA-Japan Harvest

If you itemize your order on the *furikae* in the "This payment is for:" column, it is not necessary to mail the order form separately.

To order, call the JEMA office at 03-3295-1949,
fax this form to 03-3295-1354,
or mail your completed order form to:
JEMA, OCC Bldg, 2-1 Kanda Surugadai,
Chiyoda Ku, Tokyo 101 Japan

Moving?

Contact JEMA office so we can update our files!

Name: _____

Date: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____



Youth Encounter the Bible

Superbook Season 1 DVD Set

(Sūpah Bukku Sheezun 1 DVD Setto) CBN/LifeCreation
Home Use as well as Church/public Use DVD. #49053 ¥16,000+

Animated Bible stories featuring children and their robot friend traveling back in time to experience the events in the Bible firsthand in dramatic computer generated animation. This is the first season of the TV programs with 13 stories on 7 DVDs. Superbook teaches children timeless truths and life lessons through the captivating, Bible-based adventures. Episodes: In the Beginning (Creation); Abraham; Jacob and Esau; Moses and Exodus; 10 Commandments; David and Goliath; Daniel; First Christmas; Miracles of Jesus; Last Supper; Cross and Resurrection of Jesus; Paul; Revelation. In Japanese and English with subtitles in both languages. Set includes 5 posters and Japanese Discussion Guide book.

A related online Bible study course in Japanese is being prepared at www.wlpm.or.jp/superbook/. For English Bible studies online search "Superbook Academy" or use the Superbook application for smart phones that includes Bible Q&A, interactive games, Bible profiles, daily quests, photos and videos, etc.



いのちのことば社伝道グループ
Word of Life Press Ministries

2-1-5 Nakano, Nakano-ku
Tokyo 164-0001 JAPAN
Tel. 03-5341-6911



Good Day, Good Bread.

YAMAZAKI BAKING CO., LTD.
3-10-1 Iwamoto-cho, Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo, 101-8585



www.yamazakipan.co.jp