



Parachurch Evangelism



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July

Shepherds Gathering Prayer Event

July 3, 2017

ICA near Tokyo University

October

WIM Fall Day of Prayer

October 3, 2016

Rose Town Tea Garden, Ome

CPI National Conference

October 25-27, 2017 (pre-conference 10/24-25)

The Heritage Resort, Saitama



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

jema.org

Blast from the past

From 1957...

A remarkable phenomenon of post-war missions in Japan has been the large number and great variety of societies which have come in. "A babel of confusing voices!" some immediately cry.

And the danger is obvious and very real. But the danger itself is a challenge and an opportunity. If even a relatively small percentage of these missionaries, bound together in the love of God and a passion for His glory and without human organizational ties to unite them, were to go forth with one heart and one voice to preach the Gospel in Japan, what a demonstration it would be of their spiritual oneness! What a witness to this heathen nation! **JH**

This is a new addition to the magazine. Somewhere in the magazine each time we'll include a short quote from a *Japan Harvest* issue long ago.

From the Summer 1957 issue of *Japan Harvest*, article "Missionary Survey 1957" by Ken McVety (page 13)



Japan Harvest

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The editors welcome unsolicited articles.

Writer's guidelines are available at:

<http://www.jema.org/resources/JHWriters-Guidelines.pdf>

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Moving?

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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.

Are parachurch organisations like soccer teams?

When we put out the call for articles on parachurch evangelism, potential authors wanted to know what specifically we were looking for. We had to clarify that we weren't looking for articles on parachurch organisations per se but rather on parachurch evangelism. Church planting is one way the gospel is being proclaimed in Japan, but many other ministries are also active in evangelism. We wanted to feature evangelism that's happening alongside that being done by churches.

Evangelism is one of the main activities that many parachurch organisations are involved in, as well as social welfare. As I read various definitions of parachurch groups, I realised that my own mission organisation, OMF International, qualifies, as does JEMA. It also occurred to me that my husband works at a parachurch organisation: the Christian Academy in Japan. Furthermore, like most Christian student groups, the organisation I spent time with in my university years, IFES (International Fellowship of Evangelical Students, the same group KGK belongs to), is a parachurch group.

I like the similes that Brian Strider used in his *Gospel Coalition* article in 2012. He compared a local church to a family and a parachurch organisation to a soccer team.¹ A family is permanent, nurtures on many levels, and is a much more holistic group than a soccer team, which does just one thing: play soccer. A family has deeper and broader purposes, whereas a soccer team has a very specific goal—win games. You can take it even further—without soccer team members' families, the soccer team wouldn't function well at all.

This issue highlights the evangelism that some parachurch organisations are doing in Japan and how churches can work with them in reaching Japanese people. The issue has articles about Family Forum Japan and an evangelistic venture by several churches that provides a worship environment for homeless people. It contains an article about Evangelism Explosion, an evangelism tool provided by a parachurch organisation to equip believers in local churches. It provides a historical glimpse with an article about social activist and evangelist Kagawa Toyohiko and the Japanese parachurch group of the early twentieth century he founded—Friends of Jesus. Two other articles look at different angles of the partnership between parachurch organisations and churches and how it can most effectively work in Japan.

Apart from the feature articles, there is an article about the three JEMA women's retreats held earlier this year and an exciting photo essay about the long-time missionary involvement in Karuizawa. This issue also has two Member Mission articles, bringing to a close a series we began in summer 2014. These two missions were accepted into JEMA membership in February 2017. Thank you to all who have contributed to this series. All the member mission articles are now available at the japanharvest.org website.

I hope you enjoy this issue of *Japan Harvest*, learn more about what is going on in mission circles in Japan, and grow to understand this land more. I pray that you'll be inspired, equipped, and encouraged while dwelling on the contents of this issue.



Yours in Christ's service,
Wendy
Managing Editor

1. Brian Strider, "Like Families and Soccer Teams: Church and Parachurch", *The Gospel Coalition*, December 3, 2012, accessed April 11, 2017, <https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/article/like-families-and-soccer-teams-church-and-parachurch>

The themes for the coming issues are:

Autumn 2017: Experiences/first-person stories from missionaries here less than 10 years (submission deadline closed)

Winter 2018: Missionary family life in Japan (submission deadline August 30)

Musical based on executed journalist's story

Christian Shimbun, February 19, 2017

Translated by Hiromi Kiuchi

Photos contributed by Christian Shimbun

February 1st this year marked two years since Japanese journalist Kenji Gotō was executed by the Islamic State (ISIS) in Syria. On January 28, *Imaginary Line*, a musical based on his story, was performed at Kuon Christ Church (in Asagaya, Suginami-ku,) as part of a gathering called, "Indigo Blue Shama—Two Years On." The musical was written and directed by Sakura Baba and produced by Sakura Presents. It debuted in Osaka last year, but this was its first performance in Tokyo.

Baba crafted the musical's lines and scenes using information that Gotō had shared with her personally. Dancing and gospel songs at key points throughout the play increase the impact of the message. The story revolves around Gotō's freelance work as a war correspondent and his interactions with local people in conflict zones. In the mu-



sical Gotō arrives in one such area to conduct interviews, but a sister at the local church refuses to be interviewed. While Gotō tries to persuade her of his best intentions, Akira, who had tagged along with him to pursue his ambition as a journalist, wanders off on his own, only to stumble upon the "imaginary line" that journalists must not cross.

Gotō's reporting style

Following the musical, Baba hosted a live interview with Gotō's friend

Kazunori Kurimoto, a videographer and documentary director whose book, *Message of Life from Journalist Kenji Gotō* (Hosei University Press), was published last December. "An imaginary line separates fiction from reality. A journalist can wield a camera and record something as a bystander, but Gotō's reporting style was to intentionally cross the imaginary line, and become involved with his subjects rather than just looking on unattached. Either he felt that there was no such thing as the imaginary line, or he considered it as something that should be crossed."

Kurimoto shared stories from Gotō's time on the field. "When he was in Liberia, he witnessed the burial of children who had been killed in the conflict. Their bodies were put into a square hole in the sand, piled up on each other as if they were trash. He could never forget that scene, and shed tears every time he recalled it. But that was exactly why he continued to return to conflict zones."

Gotō's final field report

When asked why Gotō entered ISIS territory, Kurimoto answered, "That was the main question I asked myself when writing the book. This is



West 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!"

only speculation, but I think he went, assuming that he would be captured. He was a Christian and was driven to share his message, even if it cost him his life. I was deeply shocked when the YouTube video of him kneeling in the wilderness was posted. It was his final field report, and his greatest. In the video, Gotō looks directly at us with a powerful gaze. I think he was confident in his faith that God was always with him, even to the very end."

"I feel that what happened to Gotō raises the question of whether we can change or choose our own destiny. What was Gotō thinking in his final moments? Was he searching for a way out, or had he accepted that this was the will of God, whose power surpasses human understanding? In the gospel of John we find the parable of the grain of wheat. I think that, like the grain of wheat, Gotō's death was meant to bring forth much fruit. ■

Fumie discovered

Christian Shimibun, January 22, 2017
Translated by Grace Koshino
Photos contributed by Christian Shimibun

A *fumie* that belonged to a Kyoto antique collector has been passed on to Chapel Kohitsuji in Sakai, Osaka, a church pastored by Hironari Takatori. Satoru Ueda, a lay member of the Chapel, had received the item as a memento, and donated it to the church, saying, "It is a valuable part of Christian heritage, so I hope that it can be used for the Lord."

Fumie are tablets bearing Christian images that were kept in local magistrate offices of Japan in the Edo period. In order to expose hidden Christians, officers would take them around towns and villages, ordering people to step on them. The ancient *fumie* serve as a reminder of the conflict and uncertainty

The ancient *fumie* serve as a reminder of the conflict and uncertainty faced by hidden Christians in Japan, who held onto their faith even through a time of unprecedented persecution.

faced by hidden Christians in Japan, who held onto their faith even through a time of unprecedented persecution.

This particular *fumie* was appraised by Father Gen Aoyama, professor emeritus of Nanzan University and Japan's leading expert in *fumie* research. He verified that it is an authentic piece used in the Nagasaki area. It consists of a metal plate (about 14 cm tall and 10 cm wide), engraved with an image of the birth of a child, set in a 3 cm thick slab of wood (about 26 cm tall and 20 cm wide). The facial expressions of the Virgin, Christ child, and those kneeling around them are unclear, likely worn away by the many people who stepped on the *fumie*. According to Father

Aoyama, Christian art displayed in homes would have been confiscated and embedded into wooden slabs like this. Since wood deteriorates with time, it is likely that the slab would have been replaced a number of times over the years.

On January 21st the movie *Silence*, based on a novel by Catholic author Shūsaku Endō and directed by Martin Scorsese, premiered across Japan. The story is set in the era when the Tokugawa shogunate began oppressing Christians. Pastor Takatori contacted the film's distributor and offered them the use of the *fumie* for events. Journalist Yoshimasa Moribe, an expert on the history of Christianity in Japan, gave a lecture at Chapel Kohitsuji on January 22nd.

In order to help preserve and make use of the *fumie* for ministry, a preservation group has been set up within the church. If the *fumie* was kept in a museum, people would be able to go and look at it, but they would no longer be able to pick it up in their own hands. "I think an item of Christian heritage like this one is most meaningful when it is seen by many people and used as a testimony of faith," said Pastor Takatori. "We wish to lend it to as many churches, Bible colleges, and Christian schools as possible." ■



Please direct enquiries to: Chapel Kohitsuji, *Fumie Hozonkai*, 2-87 Nakamozu-cho, Kita-ku, Sakai-shi 591-8023. Phone: 072-255-7707

The Lutheran Evangelical Association of Finland (LEAF) is an independent missionary organization that works with the national church of Finland (the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Finland). Its background is in the Lutheran revival movement. It works both in Finland and overseas. Its purpose is to propagate the gospel of Christ and to circulate literature that upholds the Bible and the Lutheran confession.

Publishing

The foundation of our work lies in our belief that God acts through his Word and the sacraments: baptism and communion. Through them God offers salvation, brought by Jesus, when he died on the cross for everyone. Therefore, salvation through Jesus is the source of our joy.

These beliefs are articulated in our publications. Among the works we have published is the *Sionin Kannel* (*The Harp of Zion*), a songbook of the Finnish evangelical movement. We have also translated and published Luther's works because we value the Lutheran traditions of Christianity. In 1996, we published a CD-ROM containing about 20,000 pages of Luther's works in Finnish. LEAF also publishes three periodicals: a weekly *Sanansaattaja* (*The Messenger*), a magazine for young adults *Nuotta*, and a children's magazine *Vinkki*.

The Finnish evangelical movement today

In Finland, there are 17,000 members in 350 local LEAF associations. In some of the major towns (Helsinki, Tampere, Turku, Jyväskylä, Lahti) LEAF has its own premises that are also consecrated churches. There are also about 30 prayer houses. A national gospel festival is held every summer in different localities and attracts over 10,000 participants. There are also 10 evangelical folk high schools, as well as 12 colleges.

Our foreign missionary work

In 1900 LEAF began its foreign missionary work in Japan. Since the 1970s, it has expanded its missionary work to countries such as Kenya, Papua New



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Guinea, Zambia, Cameroon, and Russia. In Russia, the work concentrates in the province of Ingria among the Finnish-speaking population. An increasing part of the work is done in Russian, too. LEAF also began sending missionaries to Myanmar in 2017. LEAF has about 30 missionaries worldwide.

Missionary work in Japan

In 1900, Rev. A. R. Wellroos and his family, along with Miss Esteri Kurvinen arrived in Nagasaki to begin missionary work in Japan. Soon after, the Wellroos family had to return to Finland due to their daughter's death. Sixteen-year-old Esteri Kurvinen stayed in Japan to continue the work with American Lutheran missionaries in Saga. In 1905 other missionaries from Finland arrived and LEAF moved its mission to the area of Lake Suwa, in Nagano prefecture. Congregations were formed and missionary work spread to nearby areas.

In time the work also spread to Tokyo and Hokkaido. In 1913, existing congregations formed an independent organization called the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Fukuin Rüteru Kyōkai). It joined the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC) in 1963.

During WW2, eight LEAF missionaries missed the chance to return home and had to remain in wartime Japan; they had a very difficult time. So when they finally returned to Finland they were given three years of leave. This is the only instance in LEAF's history where the mission work was interrupted.

Currently, LEAF's missionaries are located in the Tokyo area. Two missionaries work in Suomi Church ("Suomi" means "Finland" in Finnish). It's a JELC church, built in 1990. There are two other missionaries, one who does music ministry and the other in deaconal work, both working in congregations of JELC. LEAF has also employed two Japanese-speaking missionaries whose purpose is to spread the gospel to the Japanese by means of the internet. **JH**





International Ministerial Fellowship®

Serving Those Who Serve Others

We searched through the narrow back streets of Yomitan, Okinawa, until we found the ocean-view house we had reserved through AirBnB. For the next three days, seven of us filled the house with food, fellowship, prayer, praise, teaching, and fun. We listened to one another's ministry reports from across the spectrum: Navy chaplaincy, church planting, pastoring a Japanese congregation, English teaching, tech support for ministries, and evangelism of international students at Japanese universities. We learned about biblical sites in Turkey and Greece and about the Celtic Way of Evangelism. We prayed for our IMF Japan members, those at the retreat and those who couldn't make it for various reasons. It was

November 2016, and we were enjoying our first IMF Japan retreat. Nearly six decades have passed since the IMF was founded in the U.S., but the mission department is much younger, and IMF is still in the early stages of getting established in Japan.

IMF was established in 1958 as a fellowship of non-denominational ministers. From that beginning, it has grown to include nearly 1,300 members serving as missionaries, evangelists, pastors, missionaries, and chaplains across the world. The Fellowship provides a spiritual covering, visible accountability, and organizational support for its members. This includes appropriate ministry credentials and/or ecclesiastical endorsement, as well as acting as a missionary sending and support agency for members.

Many members are seminary or Bible college graduates, but IMF leadership believes that the call to Christian ministry is not limited to those with formal theological training, so ministry experience, formal and informal education, and references are all examined in evaluating applications. In any case, all IMF members are expected to strive to present themselves "to

God as one approved, a workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth (2 Timothy 2:15 NIV)."

IMF welcomes a variety of people: some need all the functions of a mission-sending organization, some need accountability for their evangelistic work, some are church planters who have a mission agency but need to be ordained before being formally recognized as the pastor of their church—each situation is unique. IMF members are free to pursue the vision of ministry that the Lord has given them and to follow where God leads, even when that means

a change of direction. For example, an IMF military chaplain may feel called to become a missionary, or IMF missionaries may feel that the Lord is leading them to return to their home country, or even move to a third country to serve as pastors or evangelists there.

IMF is accountable to the wider church and is a member of the National Association

of Evangelicals, the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability, and the National Association of Chaplains Commission (all U.S. organizations).

IMF workers serving in Japan include military chaplains on US bases, missionaries who were ordained or licensed by IMF and now serving with other mission organizations, and missionaries who belong to the IMF Missions Department. Only the six members of this last group are referred to as IMF missionaries, but all IMF personnel are valued members of the IMF family and are welcome at IMF Japan events and retreats. **JH**



IMF

International Ministerial Fellowship

Two decades of family ministry in Japan

By Tim Cole

We can learn new ways to reach people through the experiences of Family Forum Japan ministry

“Your broadcast saved our marriage.”

“We had no idea how to be parents until we read your book.”

“I never understood God’s plan for gender until we attended your seminar.”

These are some of the comments we hear from people whose lives and families have been touched by the ministry of Family Forum Japan (FFJ). FFJ was founded in 1996 for the purpose of “strengthening and supporting Japan’s families and churches through biblical values and principles.” By God’s grace, FFJ has ministered in more than 500 of Japan’s churches and aired radio broadcasts in Tokyo and six other prefectures. We’ve produced scores of books and media resources on family issues and pioneered in developing biblically based sexual “abstinence” education and gender education in Japanese.

FFJ’s staff and board are passionate about this ministry because it:

- meets a strategic need in the Japanese church—the need to inform and strengthen Christian homes and to ensure the passing on of the Christian faith to the next generation;
- provides a more effective tool for churches to reach their communities than some other methods employed in the past; and

- speaks to Japanese culture as a whole, pointing the way to the truths of God’s Word.

In Hokkaido and Okinawa, FFJ’s radio broadcast *Family Talks* commands top listenership among several age groups. Program host, Kōji Kaneko, has become a popular figure in those prefectures’ “speaking circuits,” addressing audiences as diverse as Buddhist priest associations, cosmetics sales ladies, and PTA associations. Two years ago, Kōji thought his invitation to speak to a radical feminist organization must have been a mistake, but at the conclusion of his talk, the leaders exclaimed, “We’ve never heard gender presented from your viewpoint [i.e., biblical viewpoint], and it makes so much sense!”

Meanwhile, churches that have replaced their annual evangelistic meetings with community-friendly family seminars featuring FFJ speakers have seen the number of newcomers triple or quadruple. For three years straight, I was asked by a church in Tachikawa to give family seminars as one of their annual outreaches. In the second year, a couple came up to me and asked if I remembered them. I did (very vaguely). They told me that the previous year, on the very Sunday I had given the first

family seminar, they had come to this church “by chance” as a final effort to save their marriage. They said, “What you said last year changed the course of our marriage. We are Christians now and attend church every Sunday.”

Japanese people don’t read books or even watch DVDs like they used to, but Facebook has provided a powerful tool for FFJ to disseminate biblical truths about marriage, parenting, sexuality, gender, worldview, and, of course, the gospel of salvation in Jesus. During this year’s spring vacation, FFJ missionary Jonathan Benedict posted daily excerpts from his book *Futari No Tame Ni (For the Two of You)*, which averaged more than 1,300 views a day. By offering our seminar content on Facebook as live videos, we can reach Japanese people wherever they are in the world. Furthermore, streaming technology will enable us to minister in multiple small churches in remote areas, which don’t have the financial resources to have us come in person.

The great thing about family ministry is that churches and missionaries can do it with a minimum of expense and expertise. FFJ, Alpha Marriage, WLPM, Harvest Time, and other ministries have CD/DVD series, texts, and online resources. These resources in-



FFJ radio personality Kōji Kaneko addresses radio listeners in Okinawa about family life principles

FFJ missionary Tim Cole trains Christian workers to communicate biblical truths about sexuality to others in Tokyo

clude content for marriage-enrichment programs and parenting groups and seminars on topics like gender, sexual morality, and dating and romance.

In some churches, the ladies have invited the mothers they know to a weekly parenting discussion group and used Barbara Bauman's bilingual workbook *Discovering the Joy of Parenting*. To attract newcomers to Sunday services, some have used FFJ's DVD series *Seisho Ga Kataru Renai Kekkon Kosodate* (*The Bible Speaks About Romance, Marriage, and Parenting* by yours truly) or *Miryoku Afureru Katei Seminar* (*Abundantly Attractive Family Seminar* by Patrick McElligott) for a special outreach series in place of normal Sunday messages.

The word "counseling" implies the presence of counselors with credentials, but the Japanese phrase "family *sōdan*" connotes a more informal listening ear. Some churches provide a free family resource library and a *sōdan* hour manned by mature believers—a place for people in the community to come and share their family struggles and be prayed for. Other churches allow their facilities to be used by various neighborhood groups, such as mothers' parenting groups or support groups for family members of persons with addictions. Increasingly, the needs of the elderly are also opening up new opportunities for churches to minister to families in ways that make a huge difference.

When we were church planting in northern Nagano, after using many evangelistic approaches with little success, we switched to a whole new

strategy—using our little group of four believers. We asked these believers if they would be willing to host two or three informal tea times in their homes, which we would at-



FFJ missionary Jon Benedict uses duct tape for an object lesson during a junior high school sexual abstinence presentation

tend. Three of the four believers agreed to do this and they invited their friends, neighbors, and relatives to these tea times. Five to seven guests attended each tea time, and we simply sat and listened while people talked about their lives and what was troubling them. Inevitably the conversation turned to family issues—struggles with marriage, parenting, in-laws, and the elderly. And without fail, someone would turn to us and ask, "What do you think we should do?" Doors began to open. In each case, the group asked to meet again, and soon each group was meeting regularly to discuss family matters. Soon someone would say, "You keep mentioning the Bible . . . can you tell us more about the Bible?" And the topic switched from family issues to basic biblical teachings. Within two months, many of those guests had started attending

our church meetings and a high percentage were saved.

Like disaster relief, outreach to homeless people, and other forms of social ministry, family ministry requires patience and persistence. It gives credibility to the Christian message through tangible expressions of biblical love and wisdom. We need to first listen to understand

the needs of those we're trying to reach and then offer understanding. Finally, a little at a time, we need to provide advice. As trust and relationship build and as folks realize we're not manipulating them or pressuring them into a religion, they will often begin to seek spiritual answers, as they're inspired by the wisdom and relevance of the Bible. For many we are trying to reach, family issues are a shortcut to the heart. An added benefit is that they begin the process of healing and restoration, even as the gospel is being introduced. **JH**

For further information, contact me at familyforumnews@gmail.com

All photos provided by the author

TEAM missionary Tim Cole lives in Karuizawa and works with Family Forum Japan. He is a US citizen but was born and raised in Japan. He is married to Katie and has five adult children.

Church sexual abstinence seminar



Sidewalk Chapel

Christians partnering together to reach homeless people



By Mark John Bennett

Early every Saturday morning around 100 people gather in Yoyogi Park for worship. Most of them are not even believers yet. Many hear the good news for the first time. Regardless of the weather they gather to pray, sing praises, recite Bible verses, and hear testimonies and a biblical message. The participants then gather in small groups for prayer, discussion, and sharing. Does this sound a lot like church?

This gathering started out being called Sidewalk Church. The founder, Josh Park, who died in 2013, was working with a team to facilitate a “house church.” He called it Sidewalk Church because they were reaching people without homes. Since then the name has been changed to *Tsūro Chapel* or Sidewalk Chapel.

Christians from about 20 different churches and mission organizations work together to facilitate Sidewalk Chapel. Twice a week, Saturday 7:00 a.m. and Monday 3:30 p.m., at the South Gate of Yoyogi Park, we gather volunteers and homeless people to worship. Afterward, while sharing a cup of hot coffee or cocoa, participants gather in small groups to discuss the Word and the topics raised. In these small groups everyone is encouraged to share their hearts and thoughts; they are also boldly encouraged to pray simple prayers and have faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. Many are coming to faith and finding discipleship through Sidewalk Chapel.

Parachurch organizations are ministries that come alongside the church. They often work in places or ways the institutional church may find difficult. Sidewalk Chapel is an example

of a parachurch ministry. As well as local Christians, we frequently have short-term volunteers from around the world. We are parachurch-like in the way we operate, but we are working toward increasing the body of Christ. We always seek to lead those who are interested in Christ and especially those who trust in Jesus as Lord into a local church. We do not practice the ordinances of baptism and the Lord’s Supper outside the context of a local church.

There is a certain level of freedom and joy at working in a gathering of

One homeless man said in his testimony that what attracted him was that the volunteers learned and used his name.

the body of Christ without the constraints of an institution. Those who serve (and there is a wide diversity) all call Jesus Christ their Lord and believe the Bible is God’s Word.

Sidewalk Chapel continually proclaims the good news to those who have never heard. We are seeing Japanese men and women coming to faith in Jesus Christ, their hearts and lives transformed.

Key Ingredients

Felt needs

Homeless people are physically hungry and we are meeting their immediate physical needs by providing bread donations from Costco and food stuffs from Second Harvest Japan (2HJ). We regularly distribute clothes, shoes, and sleeping bags. We also seek to meet their emotional and spiritual need for someone to talk with by listening, not just speaking. The gift of time to a hurting person speaks volumes. Most who come are not in a hurry to leave and would gladly visit for a long time.

God’s Word

Proclamation of the Word is the most foundational and important aspect of what we do. Participants hear the Word of God read and clearly or simply explained, both in testimony and message form. Participants are given the opportunity to consider a different truth from that taught by their culture and own expectations. The



word of God is active and alive. God says, “my word that goes out from my mouth: It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire and achieve the purpose for which I sent it” (Is 55:11 NIV). Participants read or recite Psalm 23 each week and eventually memorize these timeless words. Most can already recite the Lord’s Prayer and are learning Proverbs 3:5-7.

Prayer

Simple and heartfelt prayers are the glue binding all activities together. Of course, we have opening and closing prayers, but while volunteers are working they actively seek the presence of the Lord in mighty ways. Individual workers ask participants before, during, and after how we can pray for them. In small groups we encourage simple prayers—just honestly calling out and asking the Lord for help. We tell them to ask the Lord to reveal himself. He does.

Small groups

Participants have the freedom to share their feelings and hurts in a small group. There are those who say the anticipated excuses, but more often than not, people are honest with their anger, hurt, and shame. They see transparency on the part of those leading and feel the freedom to express their hearts. In most cases, their culture, beliefs, and support systems have let them down. There is freedom in expressing one’s true feelings and, in a community of

Christ’s love, there is often at least the beginnings of healing. I believe this small-group dynamic coupled with prayer and proclamation is the reason we saw 15 Japanese men come to faith in Christ in 2016 (11 were baptized into a local church).



Personal

One homeless man said in his testimony that what attracted him was that the volunteers learned and used his name. For one who is often present but seldom seen by the millions who pass by, this spoke to him. Personal encounters, getting to know individuals and knowing and using their name, is so important. Everyone wants to know and be known. Not only do we learn and use their names, but we introduce them to Christ who knew their name as he hung on the cross. That knowledge draws people to him.

Partnership

Partnering with a broad variety of Christians is not only a joy, but so important in the context of ministry in Japan. The work is hard, can be lonely, and often we feel unsuccessful. By the grace of God, lots of volunteers show up, get their hands dirty, and expose their hearts to the hurt around them. Valuing, thanking, and giving people a job to do is imperative to seeing our ministry grow and be effective. Mentoring and discipling are key practices we intentionally value.

Maybe by seeing these key ingredients you too may be able to meet the needs of hurting people around you (they don’t have to be homeless). We are surrounded by hurting, anxious, hopeless, depressed, fearful, or suicidal people. They need healing, restoration, love, and grace. They need the healing, restorative, loving, and grace-filled relationship with their Creator God through faith in Jesus Christ. Our task, whether in the church, or outside the church in parachurch ministries, is to bring them the good news where they are in their everyday lives. **JH**

Photos by Mark Bello

Mark John Bennett (D. Min., Fuller Theological Seminary) has been with the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention since 1990 with his wife Sharon. They have served in various roles and are currently ministering to homeless in compassion/mercy ministries.



EVANGELISM EXPLOSION in Japan

By Matt Cummings

After a slow start, the evangelistic program Evangelism Explosion is bearing fruit in Japan



One night, in our quiet neighborhood in Shiga prefecture, a Peruvian woman knocked on our door. “I’m looking for spiritual peace,” she said. “Can you help?” Over the next hour, I watched in amazement as my wife used the Evangelism Explosion (EE) method to share the gospel in Spanish. The woman found her peace in Jesus. I was astounded (and a little jealous).

How would you respond if you heard of three Japanese conversions in the space of a month, and one of the converts the evangelist barely knew? Skeptical? Incredulous? I don’t blame you—about a year ago, so was I.

Though I had heard EE didn’t work in Japan, seven months later I enrolled in the main training program in Kyoto. I listened skeptically until about the eighth week. Then, a seeker came to our church wanting to know how to forgive her parents. EE had taught me to respond to spiritual need with personal testimony, which I did, and this led to a presentation of the gospel. I

stumbled through, with my wife’s help, and within an hour the woman came to trust in Christ. This happened with two other friends in the next month. I was stunned and then sold.

We’ve now started EE training in Sendai, and the results have been the same: conversions, Bible studies, and lay believers equipped and excited to share their faith. The pastor who hosted EE training here stated, “This is the most fruit we have seen in 30 years of ministry.”

Evangelism Explosion in Japan

EE is a personal evangelism program conceived by the late Pastor D. James Kennedy of Florida in 1962. Through it, his church exploded from 17 to 10,000, making it the largest in America at the time. The approach has been used to lead millions to Christ all over the world.

Until recently, however, EE had failed in Japan. In the 1980s, a group of Japanese pastors took the EE training in Florida and returned passionate to implement it here. However, it floundered due to inadequate translation of the materials and because the pastors used it primarily to grow their churches. That all changed in 2007 under the guidance of Pastor Tomoyoshi Yamanaka, who now leads EE Japan.

When he was 16, Yamanaka tried to kill his abusive father with a knife. In the aftermath of this incident, a missionary led him to faith in Jesus. Persuaded by her to seek a better life in

the US, Yamanaka stayed for 12 years in Pennsylvania, where he received a clearer understanding and assurance of his salvation through EE. On returning, he assessed the situation of EE in Japan and believed it could be improved. Yamanaka translated the materials into simpler, vernacular Japanese and shifted the vision from growing his church (though it did grow) to equipping lay believers to reach Japan for Christ.

The results have been astounding. In 2008, the first EE training class in Yokohama attracted 20 students, and over the course of the 13-week training, 17 people were led to Christ. Over the ensuing 10 years, Yamanaka estimates that 800 Japanese have been led to faith through EE.

Takeshi Hattori is one inspiring example. A typical Japanese employee, Hattori worked long hours, came home late, and pretty much lived at his job. However, his boss was a Christian, and one day he invited Pastor Yamanaka to evangelize his employees. The boss told Hattori to go into a conference room, where Yamanaka sat waiting for him. “Sit down and listen,” he was told. Yamanaka then shared the Evangelism Explosion presentation with him, and by the end, Hattori simply believed. Today, all his family members have also come to Christ through EE. Hattori has completed seminary, is engaged to a Christian woman, and is assistant pastor at Yamanaka’s church. His presence at EE training seminars tangibly reminds participants of God’s power to save.



Then there was a Christian high-school math teacher, who, unable to answer a student's question, fell into deep depression and quit his job. While receiving counseling from Yamanaka, he heard of the EE training program, and for some reason insisted on enrolling. Halfway through, he called Yamanaka at midnight, excited. "My wife and I have just led a very close friend to Jesus!" he said. This taste of evangelistic fruit began to fill him with confidence and hope that his life was worthwhile and could be used by God. He stopped taking medication and returned to work. He eventually went to Bible school and today is a church planter in the Philippines.

Evangelism Explosion and you

These stories are inspiring, but you might be thinking, "EE sounds too good to be true. It won't work for me." I understand such hesitation, but there are several reasons why EE could bless your ministry.

For one, it offers a clear presentation of the gospel. EE begins with "Heaven is a free gift" and ends with "But how can you receive this gift?" This clear motif is woven into a well-organized presentation and combined with easy-to-understand, emotionally engaging illustrations. Could it be that, despite your best efforts, your friends haven't yet believed the gospel because they haven't fully understood it? EE will overcome this obstacle.

EE can also help you "harvest" your contacts. One element of the EE course is On the Job Training, where the

When three factors converge—an existing relationship, a sense of personal need, and a clear gospel presentation—many will respond to a gentle invitation to believe.

student first observes and then practices sharing the gospel with a non-believing friend using the EE method. Because the presentation ends with an invitation to trust in Christ, many conversions occur during these appointments. Thus, EE provides a natural and friendly way to invite friends to faith.

Another way that EE can help you is its conversational, relational approach. Rather than beginning with doctrine and propositions, it starts with personal testimony, which lowers resistance. It then asks a diagnostic question that reveals a person's foundation for eternal life and then asks them for permission to share the gospel. In this way, EE proceeds naturally and smoothly toward a well-rounded, biblical gospel presentation that the listener has requested to hear.

Finally, thanks to Pastor Yamanaka's translation, EE will teach you the heart language of the Japanese. A good example is the translation of the invitation to believe in Christ. It is phrased gently, and the question, "Would you like to receive the gift?" explains saving faith in a concrete way that the Japanese can grasp. "My people don't understand phrases such as 'receive Jesus into your heart' or 'become a Christian,'" explains Yamanaka. "These are too abstract or too religious. But they

understand the concept of a gift. It's concrete, objective. And they respond."

Some might object that EE does not connect to the postmodern mind. However, many people we talk to here still think in traditional categories of heaven and hell, God(s) and the devil, and ethical right and wrong. Others may object that Japanese don't just accept Jesus on the spot. While "cold contacts" generally don't, we've found that when three factors converge—an existing relationship, a sense of personal need, and a clear gospel presentation—many will respond to a gentle invitation to believe.

As a previous skeptic who became convinced of the effectiveness of EE for reaching Japanese, I'd encourage you to find out more about EE and give it a try. If more of us were to learn the EE approach and train lay people to do the same, incredulity would turn to joy as new hearts are born. **JH**

For more information, see EE in Japan's Facebook page: www.facebook.com/EvangelismExplosionJapan/

Matt Cummings *A missionary kid born and mostly raised in Japan, Matt is a church-planting missionary in Sendai with WEC International. He and his wife, Annette, have five children. When not preparing sermons, Matt enjoys running, eating potato chips, and Skyping friends.*

A new model for parachurch groups is needed in order to help churches in Japan and other non-Western contexts

By Jonathan Wilson

Historically, there are two kinds of structures that God has used (1) local churches and denominations, and (2) parachurch organizations that are independent of the church—such as mission societies, Bible societies, evangelistic organizations, and social welfare institutions. The origins of modern parachurch organizations are rooted in the West, where the situation of the church differs vastly from that of the church in other parts of the world. Here, I argue the need for a new model for parachurch ministry that is more suited to churches in non-Western contexts.¹

The two models

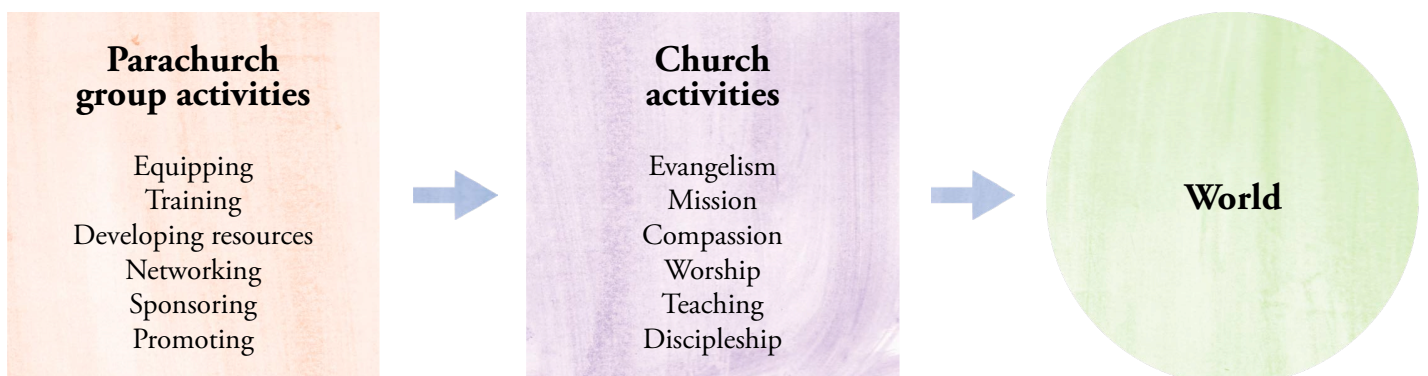
In the old model, churches send money and talent to support parachurch groups in order to reach the world. These parachurch organizations pool resources and recruit members from a wide range of churches towards specific causes or activities that are difficult for local churches to accomplish by themselves.



This kind of approach has many advantages for the Western church, where resources have been abundant, but this model has proven more difficult for the non-Western church. For example, many local congregations in Japan, while they might approve of the cause, come to view parachurch groups not as a help but as a distraction or a drain of precious talent.

A new model for the non-Western world must take into account that resources are often scarce and that the churches may not be able to send their best and brightest to other organizations. In this model, the parachurch ministries become servants of the servants of the Lord. Their goal is not to relieve the church of doing difficult ministry but to make that ministry less difficult.

In this new model, parachurch groups provide training and resources to support churches in order to reach the world.



Examples of the new models

CRASH Japan

When I founded CRASH Japan (crashjapan.com), I wanted to avoid making a Christian disaster-relief organization that would have to keep responding to disasters to justify its existence and asking churches for funding. Rather, our purpose was to empower local churches to respond to disasters in their regions. Our method was to train churches, network information, and provide initial leadership during a crisis, but with the goal of seeing churches engage in lasting ministries of compassion in their communities. Of course, this was exceedingly difficult during the full-blown crisis of the 2011 tsunami, but we held onto the following three core values.

The first value was always to listen to the pastors and respond with what they needed. In the first weeks of the disaster, they often needed a buffer—someone to stand between them and an unending stream of requests for help from the community and offers to help from the outside. As time went on, they needed periods of rest, help with understanding trauma and self-care, extra staff to handle the workload, and a network of peers with whom to share their burden.

Our second value was to be patient. In typical parachurch fashion, we were often more effective and efficient than the local church because we concentrated on one thing and had pooled resources and volunteers to devote to it. But if we had sidestepped the church and simply done the job for them, we would have defeated our own purpose of strengthening. So there was a careful balance of patiently including the local church despite the extra cost in time and effort, knowing that these relationships would be crucial for the next steps.

The third value was to partner with local churches and help them take ownership of their own relief ministry. This required us to get smaller in order

to allow the church to get bigger. We needed to reduce our footprint, our leadership, our control of finances and decision making so that the churches could step up to the challenges in their own communities.

The 4/14 Window Network Japan

The focus of the 4/14 Window Network (4to14window.jp) is to encourage children's ministry in Japan. This is especially because over half of the churches no longer have a children-focused ministry and the demographics of the church are in a much worse state than the aging general population. The network's goal is to bring children back into churches. But what drew me to this effort was how the 4/14 Window Network globally has set about this task. Their main function is to network leaders of churches with parachurch ministries, with the express intent of strengthening the churches to reach children. The parachurch groups come into these events not to promote their own organization or recruit staff or volunteers but to share their expertise and resources with churches that are looking to reach children. The key point that makes this a new-model type of parachurch ministry is that each ministry is there to share something with the greater body of Christ.

BibleKids YouTube channel

Media ministries are probably one of the worst offenders when it comes to asking churches for funding. Broadcast and production are both expensive and quality programming comes at a high price. The key to making the first season of BibleKids available for free on YouTube (www.youtube.com/BibleKids) was eliminating as many of these costs as possible. We collaborated with CGNTV Japan on production, who aired the show first on their network and did all of the filming and post-production processes. Scriptwriting, artwork, and acting were all done by our ministry, GraceJapan. Because we were able to create the show very

cheaply, we are now able to make it available online for free.

Our goal is to help churches that do not have a regular children's ministry have something solid to offer first-time or irregular visitors with children. The show's 24 episodes teach through Genesis in Japanese and link to children's praise and easy paper crafts. Getting churches to buy a DVD or curriculum when they don't have any children currently attending is a difficult proposition. Cutting production costs and using free online distribution allows us to meet our goal.

New model for parachurch ministry

As you consider what makes a parachurch ministry successful in Japan, I would encourage you not to do ministry in place of the church, but to serve the church as they seek to do ministry. This requires a humble attitude, a willingness to listen to their needs, refraining from doing things for them, and intentional reduction in leadership and responsibility. We need to carefully consider the balance of taking versus giving and make sure we never become a burden on the church but continue to be a blessing.

To accomplish this, we need to rethink our business models and funding, strive for lean and effective structures, and embrace new technologies that allow decentralized distribution and communication. If we are willing to do these things, we will be able to continue to be relevant to churches outside of the Western context. **JH**

1. Jonathan E. Wilson, *How Christian Volunteers Can Respond to Disasters: Lessons from the 2011 Japan Tsunami* (CreateSpace Independent Publishing Platform, 2014). Available on Kindle at <https://www.amazon.com/How-Christian-Volunteers-Respond-Disasters-ebook/dp/B00KFA8OQC>

Jonathan Wilson (US) is the founding pastor of Grace Christian Fellowship in Ome, Tokyo, and director of OpSAFE International, a Tokyo-based non-profit organization training churches to bring psychological first-aid to children after disaster. He has authored several books.

Japan's parachurch pioneers

We can learn much from Kagawa Toyohiko and the Japanese parachurch organization of the early 20th century: Friends of Jesus

By Brian Byrd and John P. Loucky



This article introduces Toyohiko Kagawa (1888-1960) and the work of the Friends of Jesus, a parachurch group founded in 1921.

Kagawa was born in Kobe to a wealthy merchant-bureaucrat and his geisha second wife. His father and mother died when he was four, so he was sent to live in Shikoku with his father's first wife. Kagawa endured a lonely childhood, finding solace in the countryside's natural beauty. He moved to Tokushima for middle school, boarding in a dormitory operated by a Japanese Christian. He met Southern Presbyterian missionaries Dr. Charles A. Logan and Dr. Harry A. Meyers in Tokushima when he attended church and English Bible classes. It was also where he encountered in the Bible a heavenly Father that cared for the lilies of the field, and for him. During this period, his family went bankrupt, so he moved in with his wealthy uncle. When Kagawa chose to be baptized at 15, his uncle, having no use for foreign religion, threw him out of the house. Logan and Meyers took Kagawa in, helped pay for his schooling, and remained his lifelong supporters and friends.

While on holiday from university in 1909, Kagawa preached enthusiastically in the streets of the God of love he had experienced. He didn't stop until he collapsed, wracked by tubercular pneumonia. Lying on his deathbed, Kagawa prayed, saw a vision of light, coughed up clotted blood, and began to recover. His already dramatic life then took a significant turn.

On Christmas Eve that year, the 21-year-old Kagawa moved out of his dormitory at Kobe Seminary and into the nearby Shinkawa slums. Kagawa practiced incarnational ministry there

(ministering to a group while living among them). He ministered amidst laborers, prostitutes, ruffians, and the sick and injured, all of whom were marginalized in Japan's rapid industrialization. His autobiographical novel recounting these days, *Crossing the Death Line* (1920), sold a million copies. It brought public attention to the plight of the slum dwellers and made Kagawa a household name.

Finding that merely feeding and caring for the poor without changing their environment was inadequate, Kagawa led labor, farmer, and suffrage movements, spending time in jail for his efforts, like Ghandi and Martin Luther King, Jr. Realizing that change must come from the bottom up, Kagawa started cooperatives and credit unions, where members pooled their resources for the common good. However, as Kagawa saw his non-violent labor and farmer movements hijacked by Marxist teaching, he decided to return to his first calling: working for spiritual transformation.

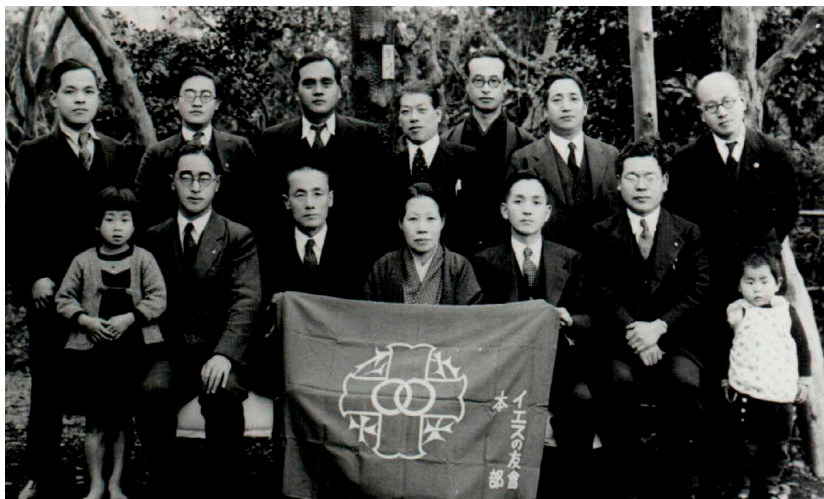
The Friends of Jesus

Kagawa did not work alone. A year after entering the slums, he founded the *Kyūrei Dan* (Band of Salvation), men influenced by Kagawa who shared their goods and worked and prayed together. Ten years later, in 1921, after a time of earnest prayer, Kagawa, his wife Haru, and thirteen pastors formed what would become one of Japan's most effective parachurch organizations: the Friends of Jesus. Kagawa, well-read in church history, modeled the new quasi-monastic group on the Third Order of Franciscans: communities of married or single lay people that live simply, serve the poor, and do not bear arms. The Friends of Jesus sought to incorporate the spiritual discipline of the Jesuits, the preaching mission of the Dominicans, John Wesley's Methodism, and the Salvation Army's hands-on activism. Jesus' command became their watchword: "My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends.



KAGAWA WITH THE CHILDREN

Methodist Prints



You are my friends if you do what I command” (John 15:12-14 NIV).

Members committed themselves to five principles:

1. Piety: devotion to God in Christ. Members met regularly to pray and read the Bible and devotional classics.
2. Work: of mind and hand. Becoming a friend of the poor. Following Jesus, the carpenter, who modeled and sanctified labor.
3. Purity: in personal life and war on vice and liquor. Kagawa was a leader in the fight to end Japan’s licensed prostitution.
4. Peace: including opposing war.
5. Service: social, religious, and political.

The Friends of Jesus chose no leader or committee, and made no specific action plan. But they met a felt need. Within a year, over 500 members from Hokkaido to Kyushu and from all walks of life had joined. Kagawa’s books, reputation, and ‘Pillar of Cloud’ newsletter sped this growth. The vision, initiative, talents, and teamwork of collaborators turned these ideals into reality. The Friends of Jesus established settlements or facilities in poorer communities that housed schools, medical clinics, consumer cooperatives, and labor union offices. Settlements kept prayer and Bible study at the heart of their work for social welfare. Kagawa poured the significant royalties from his books back into the settlements and other projects. His wife served faithfully alongside—caring for their three children, managing her quick-to-give husband’s finances, and finding ways to respond to the many needs.

Although critical of churches’ inward-looking stance and what he saw as greater concern for building steeples than transforming society, Kagawa preached and lectured in packed churches and lecture halls throughout Japan. He presented Christianity in the language of the people—illustrating his messages with examples from his own life, current events, science, and history. Writing on large sheets of paper as he spoke, Kagawa made points with words, pictures, maps, and statistics. During his life, hardly a church in Japan was without at least one member influenced for Christ by Kagawa. Today, when I mention Kagawa to Japanese Christians over the age of eighty, many recall having heard him speak.

The Friends of Jesus brought together Christians from different churches for charity and evangelical work. Following the 1923 Kanto Earthquake, the Friends of Jesus were the first on the scene, leading relief efforts, rallying Christians and challenging Buddhist priests to help. As the situation stabilized, Friends of Jesus members prayed together in the rubble and preached hope to the devastated residents.

Today, the playing field has shifted. Disasters still strike, and Christians come together to provide relief, but government-provided social welfare has largely replaced Kagawa’s settlements and other projects. Christians and others work to prevent suicide, provide meals to the homeless and to some of the 16.3% of children living in poverty,

If you’d like to find out more about Kagawa and his movement, *Seeing All Things Whole: The Scientific Art and Mysticism of Kagawa Toyohiko (1888-1960)* by Thomas Hastings and *Toyohiko Kagawa: Apostle of Love and Social Justice* by Robert Schildgen help fill out the picture of this striking, somewhat controversial Japanese saint and his tumultuous times. Mark Mullins focuses on the movement in his article, “Christianity as a Transnational Movement: Kagawa Toyohiko and the Friends of Jesus.” Kagawa museums in Tokyo, Kobe, and Tokushima welcome visitors. The Friends of Jesus and Kagawa study groups still meet. You can also direct questions to the authors.

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Robert Schildgen *Toyohiko Kagawa: Apostle of Love and Social Justice*, (Centenary Books, 1988).

and reach out in countless ways.¹ The struggles faced and approaches taken by our predecessors instruct and challenge us today. Kagawa would applaud and advise: Work with friends. Start with prayer. Involve others. Meet felt needs. Network. Keep a broad, eclectic, historical, perspective. Know your audience. Speak their language. Use your expertise. Keep on learning. **JH**

1. Mizuho Aoki, “Children in Japan struggle to break out of the poverty cycle,” *The Japan Times*, January 4, 2017. <http://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2017/01/04/national/social-issues/children-japan-struggle-break-poverty-cycle/>

All photos from the Kagawa Toyohiko Memorial Matsuzawa Archives

Brian Byrd, in Japan since 1984, wrote his dissertation on Kagawa. He teaches English at Seigakuin Primary School, Introduction to Christianity at Aoyama Gakuin, and English Bible classes (brian.aez.jp).

John P. Loucky, in Japan since 1987, teaches at Seinan Jogakuin in Kita-Kyushu. His website includes information on Kagawa and teaching English (CALL4ALL.us).

Parachurch organizations partnering with local churches

By Dawn Birkner

There are good ways and bad ways to help small local churches; let's steer toward the good ways

Eighteen hundred towns and villages in Japan have no church, and increasingly, established churches are declining. Parachurch organizations can speed the process of establishing churches in unchurched areas and help revitalize outreach in areas with declining churches. However, it's important to do so in ways that don't hinder long-term evangelism. Here are various ways this can work.

Different ways to partner

Assisting pioneer church plants

One full-time church planter can plant churches simultaneously in a cluster of nearby unchurched areas if they receive assistance from other

churches or parachurch organizations. Examples of such support include:

- Churches within a two-hour radius offering to send helpers for things such as playing guitar or kid's ministry. This assistance is best done under the church planter's leadership. I've used this approach before and after 3/11 with diverse interdenominational involvement both in disaster zones and unimpacted areas of West and East Japan. Such back-up churches don't need to be large; some of the steadiest help has been from churches with 15 members.
- Churches further away in Japan and abroad offering to assist via regular short-term teams. Think what

could happen if churches repeatedly sent short-term teams to assist specific pioneer church plants at the rate they did to assist disaster relief in Tohoku. After hosting hundreds of short-termers, one trend I have observed is that smaller teams sent regularly from a given church or group are more effective than large one-time teams.

- Cross-agency placements. Mission agencies seconding first-term missionaries as interns to a pioneer rural church plant. This provides additional manpower to the church plant, and on-the-job training to interns.
- Retired pastors or missionaries offering to help a pioneer church plant.

Principles for a parachurch organization's relationship to local churches and church plants

It's best for parachurch groups to offer their services in ways that build up local churches or church plants. Here are six tips:

1. Ask how you can help, rather than imposing what you think is needed.

Explain your group's range of services and ask in which ways you can help, or offer specific services, which the church can accept or decline.

2. Avoid dependency. Don't do for a local church what it could do itself (even if welcomed). Equip and empower after building a trust relationship.

3. Stick to what is sustainable. A local church's human and material resources are often limited compared to parachurch groups. Parachurch organizations may have resources to do something big for

a season. Yet if it cannot be carried on long-term by the local church, it is best to refrain from such activities.

4. Be careful with finances and outside human resources so they don't unintentionally stifle development of (or even weaken or supercede) the role of local churches in evangelism and community service. Provide external resources only for temporary needs at an early stage or during a crisis, and be careful not to do too much or do it for too long.

5. Respect the local church's knowledge, leadership, and judgment. Offer to help in ways that match its perception of the needs, rather than push what the parachurch organization thinks is needed. Understand that a church considering input from an outside group must weigh information from many sources and their

own experience to make decisions right for their church and community. Offer advice sparingly and only after first building a respectful trust relationship.

6. Seek to work through or in cooperation with local churches. It perplexes and stresses Japanese when different Christian groups seem to be competing in the same community. In areas with a church plant underway or an established church, the general practice should be not to start another church plant or ministry in the same area unless the local church or church plant can give it their wholehearted blessing, especially in towns and smaller cities. It is best if parachurch organizations either help existing churches and church plants in ways they are open to or focus on unengaged areas.

Proactively bridging contacts made by media (e.g., radio, internet, tracts) with local churches

Christian media generates interest across a geographically broad area. But even when such groups proactively work to connect people to local churches, lists of local churches are often incomplete, leading to missed opportunities. Key needs are:

- Development of complete locally-verified lists of churches and church plants.
- Pre-evangelistic tracts that pique interest, a series that builds gradually over time, and large-print tracts for use in aging rural areas.

Equipping established churches to evangelize their own community

- Missionaries can offer to equip churches to do evangelism, but should avoid becoming long-term staff of established churches. They can also temporarily fill in during a transition, crisis, or sabbatical.
- Parachurch groups could equip declining churches to evangelize in ways that won't create ongoing dependence on outside evangelism.

For example, only teach English if it is just one aspect of a diverse outreach program.

- Campus ministries, Christian schools, hospitals, and facilities for elderly can welcome involvement of nearby churches and encourage students or clients to commit to a local church.

Raising up, equipping, ordaining, and releasing lead church planters to go to unchurched areas

Providing Christian social services through and in the name of local churches

When the local church or church plant is seen as central to relief work, it is viewed as more relevant to its community, making coming to faith more socially acceptable. It is strategic when social services by parachurch organizations, such as relief work, are conducted as much as possible through the leadership of the local church. In this way, locals connect the worldwide body of Christ's response to a disaster with their nearest local church, not primarily with Christians from far away. Bonds

are also formed with the local pastor and church members through their participation in relief work, which is key for follow-up after mid-term workers leave the area.

Robert Lupton said, "When we do for those in need what they have the capacity to do for themselves, we disempower them."¹

Parachurch groups serving the interests of local churches and pioneer church plants can positively contribute to evangelism in diverse ways. Proactively and integrally connecting their activities to the pioneer church plant or established local church or churches is powerful. It can maximize kingdom growth as the local church, as the long-term presence of the body of Christ in its community, carries primary responsibility for community evangelism and service. **JH**

1. Robert D. Lupton, *Toxic Charity: How Churches and Charities Hurt Those They Help, And How to Reverse It*. (HarperOne, 2012).

Dawn Birkner, planting churches in rural Japan since 2001, pastors Kita Sanriku Christ Church (Iwate: Iwaizumi, Omoto, Tanohata, Fudai, Noda), leads relief work (tsunami/typhoon), coordinates Rural Japan Church Planting Network, and directs Reaching Japan Together.

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Women in Ministry

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Three kinds of missionaries

Learning from Paul about how to cross cultures

By Bill Swan

I'm thankful for the day I met "Bun" in Japan. For more than 20 years I traveled to his apartment every week to read the Bible—all of the New Testament and some of the Old. We read books like Romans and Galatians several times. He devoted his life to Christ in the second year of our studies, with a handshake across the *kotatsu*. At first he was persecuted at work, but later, applying what he saw in Jesus, he became the top salesman in his company. He also became a friend and confidant of the company president.

He became a dear friend and co-worker in the gospel. In time, he began teaching me new ways to look at the Bible. Now, with his help, I'm writing essays on Paul's letter to the Galatians and sending them to over 100 Japanese acquaintances. Below is an edited version of one of these. I think every new (and old) missionary should grasp Galatians and its message of crossing cultures.

We understand that there is only one gospel. However, in Galatians there are three kinds of people seeking to do "ministry."

First kind of missionary

The first kind is found in Chapter One (vv. 6-9). They are seeking to propagate what Paul calls a false gospel. Actually, it is quite close to the real gospel. These were Jews who believed in the Messiah but could not strip their Jewishness from their message. Their message was a mixture of the true gospel and their own cultural and religious practices. Paul was adamant, though; this mixture is not the gospel by any means!

What does this have to say to us as we seek to cross cultures? It is easy to add our own cultural practices to the gospel, but Paul calls that a perversion of the gospel (v. 7).

Second kind of missionary

The second kind of person seeking to do ministry shows up in the second half of Chapter Two. Surprisingly this is Peter, the disciple that got most of Jesus' at-

attention, and Paul's traveling companion, Barnabas. They temporarily became "enemies" of the gospel. They were different from the first kind of missionaries in that they were not zealously or consciously sharing a different gospel. In fact, they were not saying anything. But it was through their actions that they departed from the true gospel (2:11-13), and this is equally dangerous.

These actions communicated essentially the same thing as in the first kind of missionary: that the Gentile Galatians were inferior before God and were expected to add the Jewish religion and practices to their faith in order to please God. Peter's motive was fear of the Jewish Christians who had come from the Jerusalem church.

Perhaps he also had a political motive—seeking to maintain peace between the legalistic Jews and the newcomer Gentiles. Whatever the motive, it also represented a false gospel.

Whatever the motive, it also represented a false gospel.

Third kind of missionary

The third kind of person in this story is Paul, who stood virtually alone against the false representation of the gospel in both instances. Because of his courage, this precious message of Jesus was able to break out of its Jewish wrappings and spread to every corner of the globe.

Do we have a similar challenge as we seek to tell a message unfettered by Western additions to the essential gospel? As Hebrews 12:27 says, "getting rid of all the historical and religious junk so that the unshakable essentials stand clear and uncluttered" (MSG).

Point for discussion

There can be many walls and barriers between nations, religions, genders, generations, and even within families. How does the book of Galatians help us to overcome these walls? How can we apply its message to our mission in Japan? **JH**

Because of Paul's courage, this precious message of Jesus was able to break out of its Jewish wrappings and spread to every corner of the globe.



Bill Swan and his wife (US) have been long-term missionaries in Japan with The Navigators since 1977. They've done city-wide ministry in Sendai since 1982 and been longtime mission consultants in Russia and the USA.

JEMA Women In Ministry Retreats

By Edie Town

An annual time where women in ministry in Japan can join together to be refreshed

It's special for women in ministry to take a break from family and ministry responsibilities and gather for a time of teaching, fellowship, fun and rest. Space and freedom to share our stories, joys, pains, disappointments, and exciting moments with other women who are also serving Jesus in Japan help us process and understand our situations better.

This year in March, JEMA facilitated three retreats for women in ministry: Tokyo, Sapporo, and Kobe.

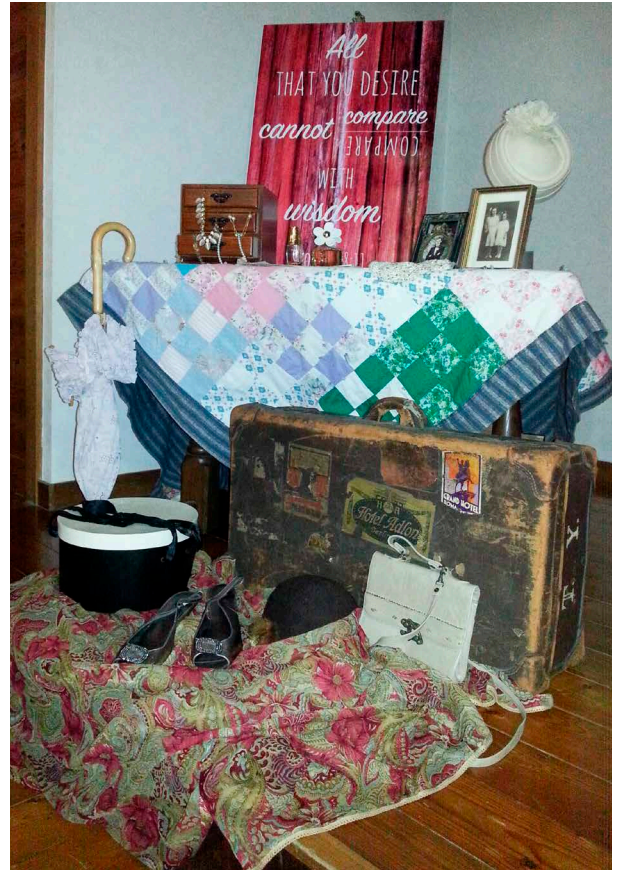
Tokyo—Okutama Fukuin no Ie

Seventy women traveled from as far away as Miyagi and Hokkaido for our two-night retreat. Our time together was spread over three days and rich with activities. We had three worship and input sessions. They each began with praise and worship led by Bethany Chang, a talented, godly worship leader from southern California, who joined us for the second year in a row. The theme song she chose—"Where You Go," by Ian Nagata—spoke what we feel:

Chorus:

So where You go I will go
Where You stay I will stay
Where You lead me I'll remain
Though our lands we may leave
To each promise we cling
In Your presence we find our home

On the second afternoon there were numerous free time options in which to enjoy time together. Two workshops were also offered: "Facing Adversity with Resilience" by Judy Steier of Barnabas Ministries and a writer's workshop by our speaker, Liz Curtis-Higgs. Throughout the retreat private counseling was available with Arleen Yee or Chris Lau.



The highlight of this retreat is often the teaching. We were blessed to have Liz minister to us. She often speaks to much larger groups, in the US and in 15 other countries. She has written 35 books including historical fiction, children's literature, and studies on women in the Bible.

Her topic centered on 1 Kings 10 and the Queen of Sheba's visit to King Solomon. Liz explored why the Queen made such a long, arduous journey, laden with gifts. We learned that the Queen approached Solomon boldly and asked him hard questions. His answers to all of her queries gave her an awareness of his greatness. Liz pointed out that he was amazing because of the true God in him who gave him wisdom about everything. She reminded us that God doesn't love us because we're good, wealthy, or intelligent but because God treasures and highly values us as his children, whatever our status.



Okutama Fukuin no Ie



Tokyo: A time of worship

We said goodbye to two of our long-time retreat participants who are retiring. Wera Laschenko, who started with the Swiss Alliance Mission and later joined OMF, ministered in Japan for 26 years. Anki Kulberg from Sweden will have been in Japan as a church-planter for 35 years when she leaves next year. Her advice to new missionaries is, “When it’s the hardest to keep going, wait. Don’t make any decisions about leaving at that time but give God time to work things out.”

Sapporo—OMF Hokkaido Center

Although the temperatures were colder (-6°C), weather snowier, and the group smaller than in Tokyo (30), the fellowship at the one-day retreat was warm. The women who gathered represented a variety of situations: new missionaries still in language school, English teachers, wives of Japanese pastors and businessmen, and international university students or their wives. For some, this is the only English spiritual input and fellowship they get all year. Kesia Pain, the main leader of the group said, “We have a desire that our ladies are fed spiritually in such a way as to sustain them when they return home.”

Attendees enjoyed fellowship in English, finding new friends and encouragement in their faith walk, time to draw away from everyday life to listen to God, and Bible teaching from a woman’s point of view. Studying the lives of the women of old as well as sharing our unique problems and emotions with each other can richly help us with our own life situations.



Sapporo: Liz sharing in her delightful manner, and a view of the whole group



Kobe: Joy overflowing

Kobe—Kobe Union Church

This was the third year we’ve held a one-day women’s conference in Kansai, begun by Erika Grabowski. She confessed that she began the year thinking she only had “five loaves and two fish” to bring to God and that even if they had only five people come, they would hold the conference and trust God to help them with the expenses. She had faith that God would work and help with the many details. However, way beyond her expectations, 73 women gathered for the day.

It was an exciting time filled with singing, Liz’s teachings on “Embrace Grace” for four sessions, break-out times for small group discussions, and a delicious lunch. The room was filled with much laughter, music, and heart-to-heart talks stimulated by Liz’s questions at the end of each session. What a gift from God to everyone who attended.

Someone noted that as missionaries we count it a blessing to serve, preach, teach, and give of ourselves. These days we can get good teaching online but there is a different connection that happens when you interact with people face-to-face. You can ask questions, interact, have two-way conversations that stimulate our faith and help motivate us when our zeal wavers.

Once again, we were reminded that we’re not alone, we can’t do ministry and life in Japan by ourselves but instead we need each other. How thankful we are for this little taste of heaven every spring. **JH**

Edie Town is on the JEMA Women in Ministry Leadership Team. She has an English Tea shop in Ome that runs as a “Business as Ministry.” She’s lived in Japan for 27 years with her family.

Karuizawa: the end of an era

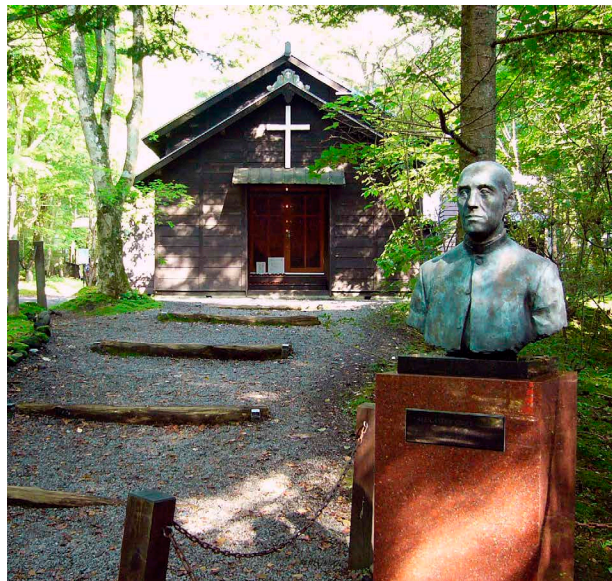
Northwest of Tokyo lies a mountain city that has a rich missionary history

By Tim Cole



In August 2016, Karuizawa's missionary language school officially closed, signaling the conclusion of a colorful chapter in Japan's missionary history. In the summer of 1886, Canadian missionary Alexander Shaw climbed up the 1,200 meter Usui Pass on the old Nakasendo highway, to find the cool summer getaway of his dreams—Karuizawa. Hundreds of western missionaries followed Shaw to Karuizawa in the subsequent years, initiating the creation of Japan's most prestigious resort.

For over a century, missionaries came to Karuizawa to be spiritually refreshed and renewed. It was here that some missionaries remaining in Japan during World War II found refuge. Hundreds learned the



Shaw Memorial (Anglican/Seikōkai) Church

Japanese language in Karuizawa before heading out into ministry. The Emperor met his wife here, and Japan saw Westerners at rest and at play. It is where (arguably) Japan's professional tennis came to life and where Beate John Lennon may have come to Christ.

Shaw established Karuizawa's first church, the Anglican church (*Seikōkai*). This was followed by the Catholic St. Paul's. Then in 1906, the former dormitory for the workers constructing the Shinetsu Honsen railway was purchased and converted into the Karuizawa Union Church (KUC). Eleven years later, more room was needed, and missionary

architect William Vories doubled the size to the current seating capacity of 300. These were the years when so many Westerners vacationed in Karuizawa that the town boasted two mayors—one Japanese and one Western. The intensity of the annual missionary tennis tournament, with the likes of champion missionary players Norman and Reischauer, was legendary among Japan's infant tennis community.

Following World War II, Karuizawa leaped to life again as an alternative to Tokyo for language learning. KUC hosted both a JEMA Conference and a Deeper Life Conference each summer, complete with youth programs attended by over 100. But no one could foresee the effects



The Karuizawa Kai Tennis Courts, where the Emperor of Japan met Empress Michiko, was originally the missionary tennis courts. The clubhouse was designed by William Vories.



Inside Karuizawa Union Church

ful attenders of the downsized summer KUC Conference lodge each year. A few missionaries continued studying at the Karuizawa Language School, but the end was in sight. On August 31, 2016 it closed its doors. My wife Katie was its last director.

Karuizawa today has become a place for fruitful ministry to the Japanese people. The retreat and conference centers are hugely popular, and over 6,000 visitors to KUC have received a gospel presentation or literature since

the Japanese economic “bubble” and the severe drop in numbers of Western missionaries would have on Karuizawa’s missionary community.

In the early ‘70s, missionaries returning from furloughs were met at the airport by realtors offering to buy their Karuizawa properties for more than ten times what they had paid for them. Some lots peaked at over \$1 million, and by the year 2000, almost all mission- and missionary-owned properties had been sold off to wealthy Japanese. This left only a handful of conference and retreat centers, where the faith-



Heavy winter snowfall on the language school building (right) and Karuizawa Union Church

it was featured on TV in August 2015. Year-round missionaries are down to three couples, but hopefully the Japanese Church will carry on Karuizawa’s legacy as one of Japan’s foremost Christian centers until the Lord returns. **JH**

Photos provided by the author except tennis courts and Shaw Church, which are by Wikimedia user 663highland (<https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/利用者:663highland/投稿画像ギャラリー・軽井沢町>)



The parents of ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer were Presbyterian missionaries who were active in the pre-war Karuizawa community, and this was their house



Lessons I'm learning in Japan

Four questions I ask myself to help me to remain a life-long learner

By Carol Suzuki

I have been in Japan for some time now, but pray that I will remain malleable in the hands of the Holy Spirit and always open to learning and change. I want to keep asking myself the following four questions:

Am I seeking to teach or learn? I want to be a lifelong learner.

I used to compare American and Japanese cultures, usually with the result that I saw the finer points of American life. Over the years, I've realized that I hail from a very young nation with only a few hundred years of history. I need to resist the urge to pass judgment: instead of labeling things as good or bad, I should view them as different. Rather than assuming the role of evaluator or teacher, I hope I will always adopt a learner's stance.

In his book *Cross-cultural Servanthood*, Duane Elmer interviewed the local people where missionaries were serving.

I asked many of them one question: What could missionaries do to more effectively minister the gospel of Christ in your culture? Many said that they valued the missionary presence and love they felt from them. But many said, with hesitation but conviction, "Missionaries could more effectively minister the gospel of Christ if they did not think they were so superior to us" . . . Superiority cloaked in the desire to serve is still superiority. It's not our words that count, but the perceptions of the local people who watch our lives and sense our attitudes. Added to this hidden and evasive superiority is the dilemma of living in a North American culture that often tells us we are the most powerful, the most technically advanced, the richest, the best educated, the leader of the free world.¹

Whenever I find myself dominating a conversation or migrating into teaching mode, I need to step back, zip my lip, ask poignant questions, and listen to learn.

Am I operating out of my own insecurities? May my security rest firmly in the person of Jesus Christ.

When I first arrived in Japan, I felt helpless and stupid. I was a child in an adult's body, not knowing what people were saying or what I should say back. But just the other day, I was trying to fill out some paperwork and had to ask the person if it was okay to write in *hiragana*. Despite many years in Japan and relative ease

with the spoken language, I am still quickly reduced to grade-school level when it comes to writing. Argh! Moments such as these cause me to reflect on how insecurities borne of living in another culture play out in my life.

On one hand, my insecurity can lead me to criticize my host culture and Japanese friends and view them with negativity. On the other hand, my insecurity can cause me to run into the arms of Jesus. If I can always place my security, hope, comfort, and assurance in the person of Jesus, that's the best place to be.

Do I continue to bring the freedom of the gospel of Jesus Christ? Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

I look around and sometimes see tired, uptight Christians, busy serving at church. Come to think of it, I am often one of them. Instead of Sunday being a day of rest, it has become a day of work.

Serving at church is a great privilege. However, it makes me wonder at how subtly the Christian life can turn into a lot of doing for the Lord, rather than being with the Lord. This leads me to question how I portray Jesus to my kids and the Japanese around me. I wonder, *Do I bring Jesus, and only Jesus, to Japan? Do I bring a gospel that is weighed down with 'doing' or a gospel that is full of church traditions from back home?* If I or the Japanese believers around me seem more concerned with form or behavior, how can I strip away some of that stuff so that they feel the freedom of being in Christ, being in relationship with Him? Do I promote the freedom and joy that is found in Jesus Christ?

I have this image of a welcoming church, arms wide open—"Come one, come all who are weary." People come to believe—and the church says, "Yay, welcome to the family of God." But sometimes the "arms" start closing at that point, meaning we start telling new believers what they can do and cannot do, we give looks of disdain when they tell us that they were out drinking with their friends. There can be a tendency to reduce the gospel to a list of dos and don'ts.

Where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. Being in the arms of Jesus should be the most freeing experience on earth.

How well am I resting? Find my rest in Christ alone.

“If anyone is thirsty, let him come to me and drink . . . streams of living water will flow from his heart” (John 7:37, 38 ESV). What if the quality of my rest determined the quality of my fruit?

I think, *But if I can just pare down my email pile, spend one more hour prepping for lessons.* So often, I get caught up in doing and forget about being. Spending time with Jesus instills strength, vision, and extra umph for the journey. Rest centers me, allows me time to listen to his gentle voice, enables me to dream, renews my purpose in Jesus, and propels me out of the starting blocks. When I operate from a place of rest, those around me will be able to see Jesus more clearly.

I pray that as I continue to learn and grow and find my security, rest, and joy in Jesus alone, he will shine even more brightly through me. **JH**

1. Elmer, Duane, *Cross-cultural Servanthood* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press 2006), 15, 17.

Carol Suzuki has been in Japan since 1995. She and her husband, Paul, are missionaries with SEND International. They have three children who lovingly serve as mirrors for her to grow in Christlikeness.”



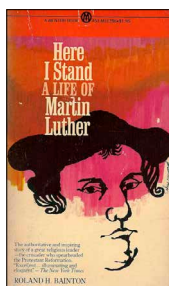
Remembering the Reformation

On October 31, 1517, 33-year-old monk and theology professor Martin Luther nailed 95 theses to the castle church door in Wittenberg, Germany. This became a key event in igniting the Reformation. As we celebrate the 500th anniversary of the Reformation this year, here are some helpful resources for those who want to learn more about Luther and how the gospel was unleashed with fresh power.

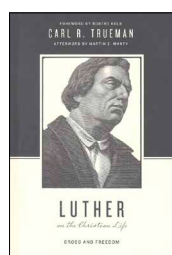
Here I Stand: A Life of Martin Luther

Roland Bainton (Abingdon, 1950). 336 pp.

Bainton's biography of the great reformer is a classic, and it's still in print. Bainton combined solid scholarship with readable clarity, and the book has sold over a million copies. He pictures the confrontation at the Diet of Worms: "Here was Charles, heir of a long line of Catholic sovereigns... ruling over a vaster domain than any save Charlemagne...and here before him was a simple monk, a miner's son, with nothing to sustain him save his own faith in the Word of God... What overpowered him was not so much that he stood in the presence of the emperor as this, that he and the emperor alike were called upon to answer before the Almighty God." Bainton tells of Luther's struggle in translating the Bible into German, which he calls "Luther's noblest achievement." He has a delightful chapter on Luther's marriage at the age of 42 to Katherine von Bora, a former nun, and their home life. Luther portrayed marriage as a "school of character." Family life is where one learns fortitude, patience, love, and humility. The book was translated into Japanese in 1954 (now sadly out of print) but is available from several publishers in English. **JH**



Reviewer rating is 5 out of 5 stars ★★★★★



Luther on the Christian Life: Cross and Freedom

Carl R. Trueman (Crossway, 2015). 214 pp.

One of the books in Crossway's excellent series on Theologians of the Christian Life, Trueman gives a compelling introduction to Luther, the "great, flawed genius of the Wittenberg Reformation." Trueman begins, "I have loved Luther almost since the moment I first grasped the gospel. Along with Augustine, Aquinas, Owen, Warfield, Lloyd-Jones, and Packer, he has been one of my private theological companions. And he has made me laugh far more frequently than any of those other auspicious names" (p. 15). "After Augustine, no single churchman-theologian has influenced the Western church more than Luther over the centuries" (p. 21). Trueman looks at some of the foundational theological concepts in Luther's thinking. "For Luther the most radical thing one could do was to learn the basics of the faith with the simple trust of a little child" (p. 27). Trueman, professor of

church history at Westminster Theological Seminary and pastor of Cornerstone Presbyterian Church in Pennsylvania, has been teaching on Luther for over two decades to students on both sides of the Atlantic, and every reader will profit from this book. He quotes from Luther's message about the power of the Word: "I simply taught, preached, and wrote God's Word; otherwise I did nothing... the Word did everything" (pp. 94-95). One of the most striking things about Luther is his sense of humor. "Humor was a large part of what helped make him so human and accessible. ... Luther knew that this fallen world was not as it was designed to be and was thus absurd and futile" (pp. 198-199). Luther's theology and humor point us to God and help us as we live the Christian life. **JH**

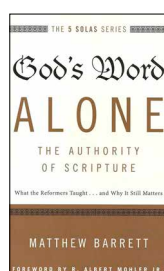
Reviewer rating is 4.5 out of 5 stars ★★★★★

God's Word Alone

The Authority of Scripture: What the Reformers Taught and Why it Still Matters

Matthew Barrett (Zondervan, 2016). 402 pp.

Barrett is also the editor of The Five Sola Series, an outstanding series on the foundational doctrines of the Reformation—Scripture alone, Christ alone, grace alone, faith alone, and God's glory alone. Barrett says that "we live in a day when Scripture's authority is questioned, the exclusivity of



Christ as mediator as well as the necessity of saving faith are offensive to pluralistic ears, and the glory of God... is diminished by cultural accommodation as well as by individual and ecclesiastical narcissism" (p. 11). Barrett and the authors in this series look not only to the past but also to the present, "demonstrating that we must drink deeply from the wells of the five solas in order to recover our

theological bearings and find spiritual refreshment." In Part One, "God's Word under Fire, Yesterday and Today," Barrett focuses on biblical authority in the 16th century as well as the modern crisis over biblical authority. Part Two looks at God's Word in redemptive history and Barrett traces the Word of God through Scripture's story line. Part Three is a study of the character of God's Word and contemporary challenges. Barrett shows how God speaks with authority (inspiration), God speaks truthfully (inerrancy), God speaks to be heard (clarity), and God's speech is enough (sufficiency). Barrett shows why we should devote ourselves to studying, obeying, and spreading God's Word. **JH**

Reviewer rating is 4.5 out of 5 stars ★★★★★



Don Schaeffer and his wife Hazel serve with the Christian & Missionary Alliance and came to Japan in 1984. They have planted churches in Saitama Ken and served in mission leadership.

Seeing the fingerprints of God in the everyday

Even while just learning the language, it's possible to catch glimpses of God's fingerprints in everyday things

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

John 1:1–3 (NIV)

My family and I are very new to Japan. As of today, we have been in Tokyo as long-term missionaries for less than three months. We spend our days learning language, cycling to grocery stores, making language blunders, learning language, experimenting with Japanese cuisine, and also learning language. Language is very important! For the first two years, our official ministry is to do no ministry other than learn the language and culture of this beautiful country and its people.

Without ever having experienced what “only” learning language would be like, I prepared myself to experience stagnation (if I can use such an unholy term). I expected this stagnation to be more than just spiritual—I anticipated an all-encompassing, giant pause while I learned to speak this new tongue. Quite unintentionally, and contrary to my own beliefs, I had separated the task of learning from the reality of the kingdom.

Recently, while I've been watching movies with my children, studying Japanese, fumbling through grocery store interactions, or commuting to language class, God has been taking me to school.

It started with my children's current Disney favorite on replay. The main character's core conflict revolves around who she is and who she was made to be, and how those things seem at odds. Because I have seen similar conflicts played out through conversations with Japanese young people, I initially assumed that was why my attention was drawn to this story.

Then, layer by layer, God began to reveal the gospel to me. I saw the expressed understanding that the world now is not as it should be. I saw an ache in people aware of that fact but lacking the power to change their situation. I saw an external force call someone out from the broken and average to be more whole than they were before. I saw glimpses of the gospel.

A week ago, I was working on an art project with atonement as the theme. The Japanese art of *kintsugi*

(mending broken pottery by applying gold lacquer to the cracks) had come up several times over the previous week. In *kintsugi*, a broken piece of pottery is salvaged from the rubbish bin by someone who sees value in it. A master craftsman reassembles the vessel, filling the cracks with a golden lacquer. It becomes a whole piece again, with greater value than before because of the precious material used to fill and accentuate its weaknesses. While drawing parallels from *kintsugi* is not new, the threads between this art and the reconciliation and redemption that follow the atoning work of Christ became clearer to me. I caught a glimpse of the gospel in art.

Two days ago, a friend from the US posted the Japanese proverb “Fall seven times, stand up eight” on my Facebook wall. Simple enough. Then she posted its biblical counterpart: “For the righteous falls seven times and rises again, but the wicked stumble in times of calamity” (Proverbs 24:16 ESV). A glimpse of the Word—Jesus—in another culture's wisdom.

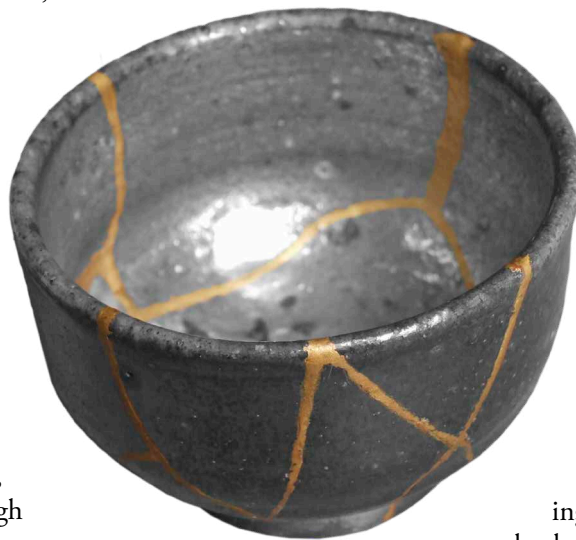
These are just a few examples of how God has been weaving everyday life and kingdom life together for me. What these connections are, or even whether they exist, is not the point; the crux is that I was surprised by the revelation in these things. In my fervor to make it to this beautiful country and during my language stumbles, my neighborhood explorations, my study times, and my down times, I had forgotten that I am constantly surrounded by the fingerprints of God.

The holy and the mundane both have the opportunity to expand the scope of God's kingdom.

To be sure, most of those fingerprints—holy or otherwise—are marred. They may be confused and muddled by people and sin, but they are still the fingerprints of the Author, Redeemer, and Sustainer. The Initiator and Instrument of creation has left a spark of himself in *all* things as a reminder that all things begin and end with him.

So while I'm “just” learning the language, God also wants me to be continually learning that he isn't bound by what I can contain of him in my limited view of the world. Amen and Amen. **JH**

Originally a graphic designer from upstate New York, Chris Pousseur serves as a TEAM missionary in Tokyo, alongside his wife and two daughters. His future ministry goals will focus on language and culture, discipleship, and the arts.



Gospel-inspired language learning

The gospel does more than save us; it also helps us in our language studies

When we consider the relationship between learning Japanese and the gospel, we tend to think that language learning is merely a necessary step for sharing the gospel with people in their heart language. But the relationship between the two is far richer than that.

The recent emphasis (in some circles) on the central role of the gospel in our ongoing walk with God, reminds us that the good news of the gospel does not just save us for all eternity; it also touches every area of lives in the present. The gospel helps us to learn Japanese in at least three ways.

The gospel liberates us

The gospel sets us free to learn to the best of our ability. It assures us that we are deeply loved by God because of what he has done for us in Christ, rather than because of our performance in any area of life. This truth frees us from grounding our identity in our language ability and can level out the inevitable emotional roller coaster that accompanies language learning. Since our proficiency in Japanese does not affect our relationship with God, we won't be devastated when we don't progress as much as we hoped.

Similarly, the gospel releases us from comparison. I sometimes feel twinges of jealousy when I meet people whose Japanese has overtaken mine despite studying for a shorter time. The gospel is the antidote to such envy. It takes our focus off others and allows us to live our lives before God.

I was once placed in a Japanese class that was too advanced for me and found it quite intimidating being the worst in the class. But I decided I wouldn't worry about how I fared in the class or the grades I got so long as my Japanese improved. In a similar way, knowing that all that really matters is God's pleasure in our efforts to study Japanese sets us free from lesser concerns.

The gospel motivates us

People have many different motivations for studying Japanese. The businessman studies so that he can secure contracts with Japanese companies and so improve his career prospects, the literature student learns to gain a deeper appreciation of Japanese books and maybe pursue a doctorate in the field, the man in love with a Japanese girl studies so that he might deepen their communication and relationship.

But all motivations pale compared to the one the gospel presents. God sent his Son into the world to die

Take the time to luxuriate in the stupendous truths of the gospel and allow them to reinvigorate your language learning.

for those who were alienated from him because of their sin, and he now offers free forgiveness and eternal life to anyone who believes in Jesus. There's no greater message than that! But as Paul asks, "how can they believe, if they have not heard?" (Rom. 10:14 ESV). For Japanese people to come to know God and the peace he offers, they need to hear the gospel in a language that they can understand.

When we're struggling and feeling that we're not getting anywhere it can really help to remind ourselves of why we're learning Japanese.

The gospel encourages us

When language acquisition is hard going, the gospel provides us with the encouragement we need to press on. God uses the challenges and trials of life to deepen our reliance on him and to produce the fruit of the Spirit in our lives. The gospel also provides hope for beyond this life. Paul says, "So we

do not lose heart . . . For this light momentary affliction is preparing for us an eternal weight of glory beyond all comparison" (2 Cor. 4:16,17). It holds out the certain hope that heaven will be populated with people "from every tribe and language and people and nation" (Rev. 5:9).

Enjoy the gospel to enhance language learning

So resist the temptation to compartmentalise your life into religious and secular zones. Rather, take the time to luxuriate in the stupendous truths of the gospel and allow them to reinvigorate your language learning. **JH**

fukuin (gospel)
福音



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

To whom do we pray?

Let's consider the roles that the members of the Trinity play when we pray

We all want to become better pray-ers. And we want those we work with to pray more and in a more scriptural way. To encourage prayerfulness among our church members, I have recently begun a time of prayer after the worship service every Sunday. I have started by teaching simple truths about prayer such as that we pray to God the Father (Matt. 6:9) in the name of God the Son (John 16:24) and in the power of God the Spirit (Rom. 8:26).

That has led me to the question: To whom should we be praying? The simple answer is that we can pray to any or all of the Trinity—the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. That's because they are a tri-unity—three in one. So we can join Paul as he gives “thanks to God, the Father” (Col. 1:3 NASB). Or when he “bow(s) (his) knees before the Father” (Eph. 3:14). We can also join Stephen who prayed to God's Son, saying, “Lord Jesus, receive my spirit!” (Acts 7:59). Paul also exhorts us to “call on the name of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Cor. 1:2).



But nowhere in the Bible does anyone pray to the Holy Spirit. That is because the Holy Spirit does not “speak on His own initiative” (John 16:13); He does not draw people to Himself. Instead, Jesus said the Holy Spirit would “testify about Me” (John 15:26) and “glorify Me” (John 16:14). The role of the Holy Spirit is supportive, to bring us to God through Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is very active in our prayers, though. We are exhorted to be “praying in the Holy Spirit” (Jude 20), moved and motivated to spend time with God. Even when we don't know how or what to pray, the “Spirit Himself intercedes for us” (Romans 8:26).

We also don't usually pray to Jesus, either. That is because there is “one mediator also between God and

“Prayer is God's way of getting man to behold His glory, surrender to His plan, and be filled with His nature. It involves coming to understand the mind of God by spending time in the presence of God until we are so enamored with the nature of God that all we want is the will of God!”

— Russell Kelfer —

men, the man Christ Jesus” (1 Tim. 2:5). He “intercedes for us” (Rom. 8:34). Jesus is our “Advocate with the Father” (1 John 2:1). We pray through Him, in His name (as His representative) and because He has redeemed us and given us the confidence to come before the throne of grace (Heb. 4:16).

But when we pray to the Father, we are praying to the “Everlasting God, the LORD, the Creator of the ends of the earth” (Isa. 40:28). He is “the Lord our God, the Almighty” (Rev. 19:6). We can join the throngs of heaven in saying, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power” (Rev. 4:11). Only He is worthy!

So all three persons of the Godhead are actively involved in a believer's prayer. But it's probably best to follow the general pattern of the Bible and pray to the Father through (in the name of) Jesus in the power (in reliance upon the help) of the Spirit. **JH**

Photo: Symbols of the Holy Trinity (“hand of God”, ICHTHYS, descending dove) at St. Ann's Catholic Church, Washington, DC (https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Trinity_Symbole_St_Ann's_Church_DC.JPG)



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 in 1978.

Expectations: attempting great things

Setting thoughtful goals is important

After a term of service on the field, most missionary debriefs are about hurts and disappointments. In almost every case these are the result of unmet or unfulfilled expectations.

One definition of “expectation” in the Merriam-Webster’s Dictionary is: “a feeling or belief about how successful, good, etc., someone or something will be.”¹

In order to meet our expectations, we set goals or make plans. It’s in this step that we often make mistakes that lead to unmet expectations.

Good goal setting

Set realistic goals: We are often not realistic about the time and expense that it takes to accomplish a task. A simple rule of thumb is to allow more money and time than you think something will take, and you are more likely to meet your goal.

Don’t use comparisons in setting goals: A mom with preschoolers at home shouldn’t set her goal for accomplishing language acquisition the same as a single missionary. Setting goals by using comparison with others will almost always end in frustration. Follow Paul’s admonishment of “doing your creative best with your own life” (Gal. 6:4 MSG) to keep from falling into this trap.

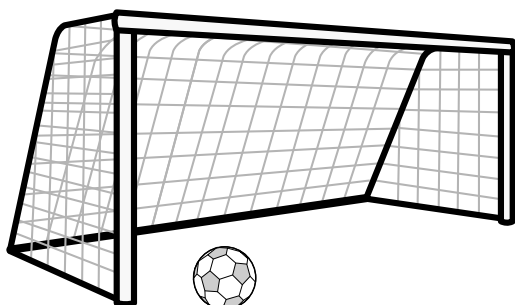
Remember your audience when setting goals: That we have an Audience of One is a great reminder in setting goals. Rather than worrying about what your host culture, supporters, or co-workers are thinking, set goals with Proverbs 3:6 in mind, “Listen for God’s voice in everything you do . . . he’s the one who will keep you on track.”

Ask for input from others: Finding out what those close to us think is often the most helpful step in setting more realistic goals.

Dealing with unmet expectations

But what if we have carefully set goals and still don’t meet our expectations? In this case, we need to develop a godly view of suffering.

The word “suffering” seems an usually strong word used in this context. Aren’t words like “disappointment” and “sadness” more apt when talking about the result of unfulfilled expectations? A biblical definition of suffering,



“No matter how thoroughly missionaries are prepared for going to their field service, the reality is often far from their expectations!”

— William D. Taylor —

however, is: “to sustain; to be affected by; as, to suffer loss or damage.”² It fits this context.

A good example of how to develop a godly view of suffering in missionary life is seen in the example of William Carey. Carey had high expectations for his missionary career, adopting “expect great things of God, attempt great things for God” as his motto.³ This quote has inspired many to become missionaries. But once on the field, Carey’s expectations evaporated in the light of reality, including the death of his son, his wife’s declining mental health, lack of finances, and a poor response to the gospel. He was quoted as saying, “This is indeed the valley of the shadow of death to me.”⁴

It was during this time that Carey realized that he wasn’t afraid of failure, but rather was afraid of succeeding at things that didn’t matter. He used suffering to becoming even more focused on what God wanted him to do in his life and service. It can be the same for us. More than anything else, suffering in our lives can help us refocus and align our expectations with God’s will.

If we are to meet our expectations, we need to be thoughtful in the goals that we set. But we also need to remember that, in spite of our best efforts, our expectations may never be met. At those times, we need to remember that God might be using this disappointment in our lives to grow us into godly people. **JH**

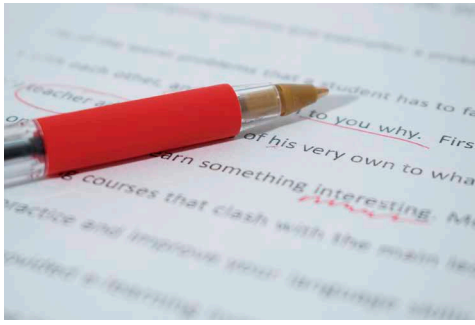
1. “Merriam-Webster’s Learner’s Dictionary,” accessed March 17, 2017, <http://www.learnersdictionary.com/definition/expectation>
2. “The King James Bible Page,” accessed March 18, 2017, <http://av1611.com/kjbp/kjv-dictionary/suffer.html>
3. “Christian History: William Carey,” accessed March 18, 2017, <http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/people/missionaries/william-carey.html>
4. “Christian History,” *ibid*



Eileen Nielsen is presently a middle school and high school counselor at CAJ, as well as Member Care Facilitator for TEAM. If you are interested in meeting with her for counseling, you can contact her at eileenpnelsen@gmail.com.

Editing your work

Editing involves checking writing on multiple levels



What do you think of when you hear the word “editing”? After you’ve written something, do you check it over? That’s editing. Many people think of editing as just checking spelling, punctuation, and grammar, but it encompasses more than that.

Think of editing as peeling back layers. If you start with the outer layer—the overall view—and ask hard questions like the ones below, you will do a better job of editing than if you start with the finer details such as punctuation and spelling.

Here are some questions you can ask to improve your work before you let other people read it.

The first layer is the overall view:

- Who is the audience?
- What is the goal of this writing?
- Does it make sense? Is it clear and logical?
- Does the vocabulary match the audience?
- Does it have the right tone (feel and approach)?

The second layer is the skeleton:

- Does it start and finish well?
- Is it structured well, so that the reader is compelled to keep reading?
- Does it explain the topic and tell the reader why it matters?

The third layer is small (but important) stuff:

- Are the facts correct?
- Do any sentences lack necessary parts (i.e. are there any fragments)?
- Are there vague pronoun references? (e.g. “When Brenda and Sarah went shopping, she asked her if she’d like an ice-cream.”)
- Is the verb tense consistent? (e.g. past and present tenses are not mixed)
- Is there undue repetition of words or sentence structures?
- Have you used the correct words? (e.g. words like “effect” and “affect” are easy to mix up)

And finally, the fourth layer:

- Are the spelling, punctuation, and capitalisation correct?

As an editor, every time I receive a new submission, I struggle not to start at the bottom of this list. As a writer, it’s a great temptation too.

No one writes great work the first time. Take the time to ask hard questions. **JH**

Note: A more detailed checklist for third- and fourth-layer editing is given here: <http://www.quickanddirtytips.com/education/grammar/grammar-girls-editing-checklist>

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

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There's an app for that

Apps you can use in your ministry

I remember when our family got its first portable phone: it was like carrying a brick around in a purse. The phone also only had one function—to make calls. This came in handy, though, if you were stuck in the mud out on the farm and needed to connect with someone to get you out. We now have smartphones, which are nothing less than small computers connected to the internet. With the right tools installed, these smart phones can not only get us out of the mud, but can also help us make new connections, manage them, and move our ministry forward.

Conversation starter app

Have you ever been stuck for a way to start a conversation? Or struggled to know how to move to the deeper topics of life? There's an app for that. **Questions In A Box** is a great conversation starter app that lets you select from four levels of relationship depth. After selecting the type of relationship, the screen will provide random conversational questions. Developed by spreadtruth.com, a Christian organization, many of these questions are specially designed to bridge to your personal testimony and gospel truths. This app is great for one-on-one relationships and also groups interested in conversational English.

Mobile tract app

How many times have you met someone you knew was interested in the gospel, but you didn't have a tract on you? The app **Got Questions** can be a lifeline to recommend to someone in those situations. It is a great app to refer to anyone seeking more information about all things related to the Christian life and the Bible. The app contains thousands of articles in many languages. More content is constantly being added and translated by the Got Questions team to address current spiritual and political issues around the world.

Meet new people app

Have you wondered how you can meet new people in your area or invite people to your event? There's an app for that too. **Meetup** lets you search through groups categorized by interest that meet near you. There are international clubs, play dates for children, language exchanges, Bible studies, running groups, and many more interests to search through. Meetup is free to use after creating an account. Some groups require that you join their group before the location and time is shared, but others are open to anyone. If you have a group you would like to promote, Meetup charges you a small monthly fee to list it so that others can find it. Meetup is an easy way to make new connections and find others who have similar interests.



Remembering your acquaintances app

As you make new connections using these various apps you will need a way to keep all these acquaintances in order. Remembering the names, work, relatives, hobbies, and other information of so many people before they make it into your "official" address book can be difficult. **Trello** can help. It allows you to create a "card" for each person you wish to add. On each card, you can take notes as you build a relationship. If you forget the name of someone you met at the park that you later see at the grocery store, you can simply search for them with keywords you may have entered in their card such as, "park, two kids, husband, salaryman." Trello can also serve as a tool for you to pray through lists of people you are communicating with.

These are just a few of the apps that can be used to help you in your ministry. Don't be afraid to try out new ministry-specific apps. Feel free to contact their creators and let them know what you do and don't like, because apps only get better as people use them and give feedback. As you can see, not every app has to be ministry specific for you to take advantage of it for ministry purposes either. Experiment with your current apps to see if they can help you in ministry in ways that you may have not thought of. With the right apps, your phone really can be a valuable resource in your ministry toolbox. **JH**



Jared Jones lives and works in Takasaki, Gunma 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.

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by Randall Short, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies

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God has great plans for Japan

The key to longevity as a missionary is not neglecting fellowship with God

I was born in Fukuoka of missionary parents in 1948, but I brought my family to Japan for the first time as an adult in 1974. After two years in Sasebo—teaching English in a college, an English Bible class in my home, and helping out at a couple of local churches—we went to Texas to get formal seminary training. In the process of seeking to return to Japan, I pastored a rural church in Virginia for two years, which was valuable, even if highly removed from Japanese church life. Actually, correspondence from a pastor in Sasebo convinced me to accept that rural church's call. I realized that I needed to be able to empathize with small-church pastors, even if I expected to be a Bible teacher rather than a pastor.

As powerless as we are on our own, God can, will, and does use us to bring people into his family and grow them as his children.

The Lord opened the way for me to come back to Japan in 1981. Pratt Dean, a Southern Baptist missionary in Nagasaki City, got me an interview with a private school in Ōmura, and they offered me a job on the spot. My wife and daughters joined me, and we have been a fixture of Ōmura ever since. I originally intended to teach the Bible at different churches, not pastor. However, the Lord had other ideas. When people started being saved through the English Bible class in our home, and the church we were attending put up barriers to their baptism, we started an independent church. We have no support from anywhere outside of Japan, but God has faithfully met all our needs in many ways.

All of this would be completely irrelevant here if I didn't have anything to offer to younger and/or less experienced missionaries. But I do. Japan has been called “the graveyard of missionaries,” and not without reason. So, what is the secret to longevity as a missionary?

The secret to longevity in ministry

I believe that the most fundamental essential is a vital, vibrant devotional life. We can't become so busy with the work of the Lord that we neglect fellowship with the Lord. Language

proficiency is certainly helpful, as is an understanding and appreciation of the culture, but nothing has any value if we neglect communication with God. The pressures are unrelenting, and we cannot hold up under them on our own.

Words of caution

I would also give a strong word of caution, especially to new missionaries: things that work in your home country are not likely to work in Japan. I wouldn't say that my time in an American seminary was useless, but there was virtually nothing that translated effectively to serving here.

Japanese culture has very little emphasis on either love or forgiveness, so those must be demonstrated—daily and consistently.

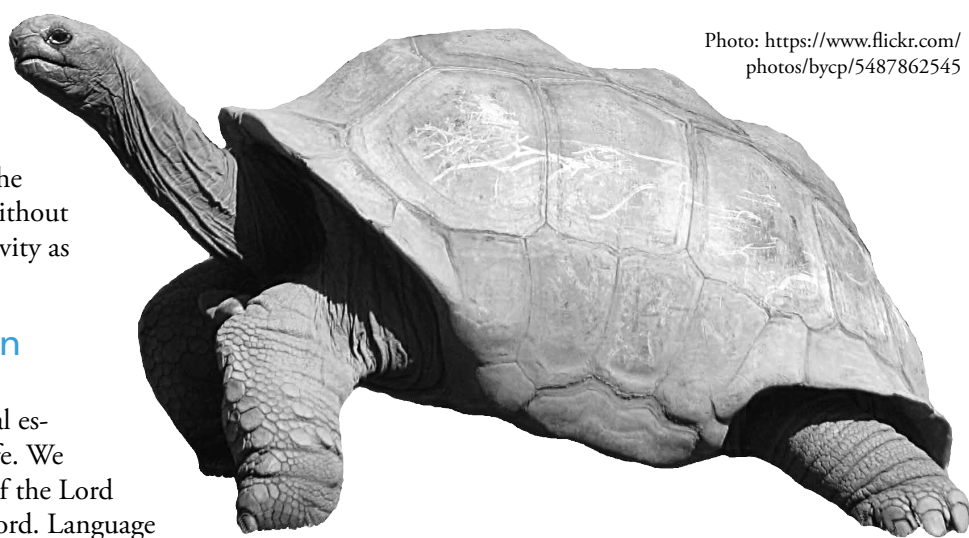
The division between the public face (*tatemae*) and private face (*honne*) in Japan leads to people saying what they think you want to hear, or simply what is convenient for them, rather than what is actually true. Sadly, that is the case for many Christians, as well. This has always been difficult for me.

God's got great plans

Though the above things sound negative, I continue to be convinced that God has marvelous plans for Japan. However, I can't make them happen in my own wisdom and strength. As powerless as we are on our own, God can, will, and does use us to bring people into his family and grow them as his children. We must remember, though, that this happens best when we ourselves are on close terms with him. **JH**

Jack Garrott graduated from Carson-Newman College and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary. He's married to Cathy; they have lived and ministered in Ōmura since September 1981. They have two daughters.

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