



Short-term Missions

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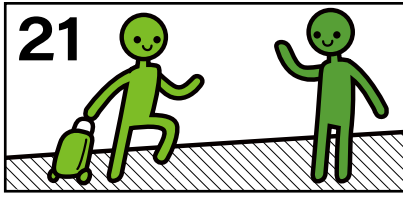
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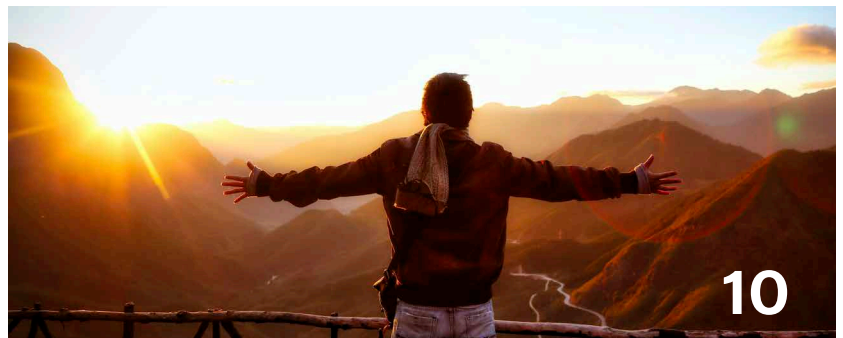
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May

CPI Grace Week 2

May 7-11, 2018
Fukuin no Ie, Okutama, Tokyo

Refresh Retreat in Kobe

May 8-11, 2018
Motherhouse Bethel, Kobe

Kanto Prayer Summit

May 15-18, 2018
Okutama Bible Chalet

Kansai Prayer Summit

May 21-24, 2018
Nosegawa Bible Camp



July-August

Refresh - the Karuizawa Union Church Summer Conference

July 29 - August 5, 2018
Karuizawa Union Church



October

CPI Church Multiplication Vision Festa Nagoya (Japanese)

October 16-17, 2018
Nagoya, TBD

CPI Urban Church Planting with City to City Seminar

October 18-19, 2018
Ochanomizu Christian Center, Tokyo

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

jema.org

Also see our online magazine: **japanharvest.org**



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

Short-term missions

Most long-term missionaries first went on at least one short-term trip, either to the country where they now serve or to another place. God often uses short-term mission trips to guide people into long-term service. He did for me, though not in a simple straight line.

I went to Indonesia when I was 20, between my third and fourth year at university. The tour was led by an OMF missionary from my church who had a heart for young people. She led an annual trip to her former country of service to teach young people more about missions. It was a study tour rather than a service trip. Our team of about a dozen spent most of our time learning about some of Indonesia's religions (Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Christianity) and God's heart for mission.

I got home from that trip confused as to how God had spoken to me. The study tour smashed my simple childhood impressions of missions (I grew up in a mission-minded church). But I concluded that God might be calling me to be a missionary, maybe even to work with OMF, but definitely not in Indonesia. Mostly, though, I gained a greater understanding of myself. Looking back now, I know it was a crucial step in my journey to long-term ministry in Japan. It was not insignificant that God introduced me to my future husband through this trip!

Short-term missions has become a vital part of the missions world, even more now than when I was at university. It impacts many of our JEMA members, and I'm glad we can cover it as a theme in this issue. We've got a broad spectrum of articles—from personal experience to practical advice and from a bigger perspective on the trend to a survey of JEMA members' experiences with short-term trips. Two of the regular articles—New Voices and Voice of Experience—are also about short-term missions.

Many of these articles will be shared online on our website japanharvest.org and on JEMA's Facebook page. Why not share them with your supporters or short-termers that you've known? Who knows, they could encourage someone or inspire someone to come on a short-term mission trip to Japan.

Please keep the JEMA leadership team and the *Japan Harvest* magazine in your prayers. To design, edit, print, and distribute a print magazine is an expensive undertaking, and the cost is something the leadership team has had to seriously consider. However, the JEMA leadership team continues to be committed to producing a print magazine and has been able to significantly reduce the cost of its printing for this coming year. That savings, combined with the hundreds of hours put in by our volunteer magazine team and all the writers who contribute, make this magazine possible. So I want to thank all who contribute, because you allow this magazine to continue to support and encourage the JEMA community.

Advertising is an important source of revenue for the magazine. If you know of anyone who might benefit from advertising on these pages, please put them in touch with Atsuko Tateishi, our advertising director, at jema-info@jema.org.

Above all, I pray that God will be glorified in you and your ministries as you continue to serve him.



Yours in Christ's service,
Wendy
Managing Editor

The themes for the upcoming issues are:

Summer 2018: Cultural understanding (submission deadline closed)

Autumn 2018: Renewal/revival (submission deadline July 10)

Winter 2019: Returnees (submission deadline August 30)

Spring 2019: Engaging the community (submission deadline January 10)

Remembering Jūkichi Yagi

Christian Shimbun, December 3, 2017

Translated by Tomoko Kato

Photos submitted by Christian Shimbun

There was not a cloud in the sky on October 26, 2017, a fine autumn day that marked the 90th anniversary of the death of Christian poet Jūkichi Yagi. About 70 people, including admirers of his poetry, gathered at his birthplace in Machida City, Tokyo, to commemorate the date. This day has been known as “Chanohana-ki” (literally “Tea Flower Mourning”) since the opening of the Jūkichi Yagi Museum in 1984.

Those in attendance gathered around Yagi’s grave for a memorial service and sang his favorite hymns before Pastor Shigeru Kobayashi (of Ōbirin Church, The United Church of Christ in Japan) delivered a message. “If there was one thing that defined Yagi, it was his faith in God,” he said.

After the memorial service, there was a formal opportunity for other guests to speak. Mr. Norio Ozawa, the former principal of Ibaraki Christian Junior and Senior High School, said he had sometimes shared Yagi’s poetry in classes and at parents’ meetings. “They’re not just good poems. They’re poems that live and work, getting into the hearts and minds of students. I once had a difficult student who was so touched by Yagi’s poetry that he presented a collection of it to his mother as a gift. It was deeply moving.”

Ms. Yukiko Kanbayashi, curator of Machida City Museum of Literature, said that many people visited the Jūkichi Yagi exhibition that they held in 2016. “We planned it in the hope that those who read Yagi’s poems might take the opportunity to think about their own lives. These poems are the stars of our hometown, and we want to pass them on to our children.” She indicated that the museum will continue

in its efforts to introduce people to Yagi’s poetry.

Mr. Mikio Yagi, himself a poet, and a member of the Board of Directors of Kanagawa Museum of Modern Literature, expressed his thoughts on one of Yagi’s poems, “A Plain Koto.”

“If you lay a plain koto in this brightness, it will begin playing quietly, unable to endure autumn’s beauty.”

(Translated by Yasuhiro Yotsumoto)

この明るさのなかへ
ひとつの素朴な琴をおけば
秋の美しくさに耐えかね
琴はしづかに鳴りいだすだらう

“It doesn’t take long to read, but it raises a number of questions. Who lays the koto there? Who plays it? Maybe it’s the poet, or maybe it’s God. Maybe Yagi himself is the koto, and God the one who plays it. If we examine Yagi’s poetry like this, we can catch glimpses of a deeper world.”

Jūkichi Yagi was born in 1898, the second son of a farming family. He started reading the Bible in his high school years, and became a devout Christian, but it wasn’t until his time as an English teacher in Hyōgo Prefecture that he began writing poetry. His first book, *Autumn’s Eye*, was published in 1925. Two years later he was struck down with tuberculosis, and died at the age of just 29, leaving behind two young children



and his wife, Tomiko, who went on to publish *The Complete Poems of Jūkichi Yagi* in 1959.

Word of Life Press Ministries published a book about Yagi’s life to coincide with the 90th anniversary of his death. *Jūkichi to Tabi suru* (Travel with Jūkichi) includes examples of his poetry along with many photos and illustrations, which make it a good introduction to Yagi and his work. Many of those in attendance at the commemorative gathering bought a copy.

Ms. Hiroko Satō, a relative of Jūkichi Yagi, and acting director of the Jūkichi Yagi Museum, thanked guests for their support, and indicated that she hopes to continue commemorating Chanohana-ki Day into the future. ■



uest News

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

Prayer for Abductees

Christian Shimbun, November 26, 2017

Translated by Atsuko Tateishi

Photos submitted by Christian Shimbun

On November 9, 2017, the Prayer Support Group for Sakie Yokota and the National Blue Ribbon Prayer Group co-hosted the "19th Expanded Prayer Meeting to Support Sakie Yokota" in Tokyo.

Sakie and Shigeru Yokota's daughter, Megumi, went missing on her way home from school in 1977, when she was 13. It was not until 2002 that the North Korean government officially admitted that they had abducted Megumi and several other Japanese people. During high-level bilateral talks between North Korea and Japan, North Korean officials claimed that Megumi had died in 1993, but later said it had been in 1994. Despite this, Megumi's death has yet to be convincingly proven and her family continues to campaign for her return.

Over the years prayer groups have been formed to support Sakie, a Christian, and to pray for the release of abductees. The November prayer meeting followed two significant events for the Yokota family: a meeting between family members of abductees and US President Donald Trump on November 6 and Shigeru's baptism on November 4.

Speaking at the prayer meeting, Sakie revealed that for many years following their daughter's disappearance her husband had

been against all religion, and would get angry if she so much as mentioned Christianity. However, one day last year when Pastor Hiroshi Kokubu (of Nakanoshima Christ Church) asked Shigeru if he would accept the Lord into his heart, he said, "Yes." This was a surprise to Sakie, but a welcome one. Shigeru was baptized at home by Pastor Kokubu on November 4.*

Sakie also reported on her meeting with President Trump in Tokyo. Her son, Takuya, took along an old family photo that showed Sakie with all three of her children. Mr. Trump looked at it intently and gave her an encouraging



Mitsuo Fukuzawa showing that adding a cross to the kanji for bitter/painful/difficult (辛) becomes the kanji for happy (幸).

smile. Sakie said she was grateful that Mr. Trump took time out of his busy schedule to meet with family members of the abductees, and also that he raised the abduction issue during the United Nations General Assembly in September 2017.

After Sakie spoke, Tsutomu Nishioka, President of the National Association for the Rescue of Japanese Kidnapped by North Korea, shared his perspective on recent developments. With North Korea's repeated nuclear missile experi-



ments and mounting pressure from the US, the situation is tense. However,

God is still in control, and his ways transcend our understanding. Nishioka encouraged the audience to respond to tense times with prayer.

Evangelist Mitsuo Fukuzawa continued with a sermon from Exodus 17. He urged audience members to be like Aaron and Hur—to support Sakie through prayer in the same way that Aaron and Hur supported Moses on

each side during battle. Just as Aaron and Hur's contribution was recorded in the Bible, our God takes note of each person's intercessory prayers.

Following the sermon, three representatives prayed for the abductee situation. Then the audience broke into small groups to pray. The meeting closed with a musical number by Migiwa, a gospel singer who attends the same church as Sakie.

"I pray that we will have resolution soon," said Sakie. "I'm waiting for the day that Megumi can return home to us. My tears have dried up, but I hope that soon I will shed tears of joy." ■

* Translator's note: He was baptized at home due to deteriorating health.

A 25-year tapestry

By Brittney Carlson

*God wove together many threads
in bringing me to serve in Japan today*

About to embark on my ninth trip to Japan, I was assailed by the same questions from my family and friends as I prepared to leave them once again: *Why Japan? Do you think you will stay there long-term? Do you like Japan better than America? Will you ever live back stateside again? When will you be back home?* Then I recalled members of my Japanese church said “Please come back,” weeks before I left my first home assignment. “Of course, I will be back,” I said.

Why Japan? And why am I always sure about going back? It’s a long story—a 25-year tapestry woven by God who crossed the threads of my life and heart with those of the Japanese.

Thread 1: An academic opportunity

It all started about 26 years ago in 1992, when I was considering taking a foreign language in eighth grade. I wanted to be a businesswoman, and people around me were saying that, if I was interested in business, the future was in China or Japan. Ezra Vogel’s bestselling book *Japan as Number 1* was popular and Japanese was offered at my school, so I enrolled. This was the first step in what would become a lifetime study of and connection to Japan.

Thread 2: A love for an unknown culture

After studying Japanese for six months, I no longer wanted to be a businesswoman, but I had developed

a love for the Japanese language and culture. Japanese was so different from anything I had seen or experienced before. Samurai, sushi, and kimonos were from a different world. No one could read what I wrote and they exclaimed, “Wow, you’re so smart!” and “That’s so cool!” Those comments kept this eighth-grader motivated to study the language. For two brief years, I studied the language and culture of a society that I had never experienced firsthand.

Thread 3: Going beyond the textbook

My high school had an exchange program and received Japanese students every April. So my first encounter with Japanese people came in the spring of my freshman year (9th grade), when eight Japanese students walked into my classroom. Almost a quarter of a century later, I am still friends with one of them.

During my sophomore year (10th grade), my family and I hosted one of the Japanese students for two weeks. I connected deeply with that group of students and I am still friends with them to this day. We also hosted girls during my junior and senior years (11th and 12th grades) and I became a “big sister” to a girl on another exchange program during my senior year.

Thread 4: A trip of a lifetime

The next life-changing thread came in the summer before my senior year, when I traveled to Japan for the first

time. I got a scholarship with Youth For Understanding and traveled to Japan on a cultural exchange. On my application, I wrote about the students I had hosted. To my delight, they connected me with the family of the girl I had hosted my sophomore year. So there I was, in Japan for the first time, living with the future mayor’s family, who were Buddhists, and attending one of the most elite high schools in Japan—a Buddhist private school.

This trip will forever remain engrained in my memory. It shattered my textbook stereotypes of the culture. I couldn’t find anyone dressed in kimonos, and I had sushi only once during my stay. However, the language and culture I had studied for years were now alive, modernized, and evolving in front of my eyes.

Thread 5: Buddhism 101

Until I arrived in Japan, I had not known that the high school that my school had exchange programs with was Buddhist, nor that all my friends were Buddhists. For two months, I got to live the life of a Japanese school girl: wearing a uniform, catching a train, walking up a mountain to school, eating bento lunches, participating in after-school activities, and being a member of a class that stayed together all day. That intimate experience remains with me today as part of my identity, as do the lifelong connections made in that group.



I also had the twist of experiencing it in a Buddhist environment, with prayer beads, daily morning prayer chants over the intercom, and school-wide religious ceremonies for various events. All this was second nature to my friends. But I was a new Christian and I believed that one's faith was personal. I was Christian; they were Buddhist, and that was that.

I returned home to my senior year. There were no more Japanese classes I could take, so I took German and visited my Japanese teacher as much as I could. I attended a Japanese program at Princeton University before college, started studying Japanese at Wellesley College, and applied to be a foreign exchange student. I was accepted into the program at Japan Women's University and Waseda University and spent all of 1999 studying in Tokyo.

Thread 6: Japanese Christianity 101

For various reasons I had stopped going to church during college, and I was worried how much more my faith would slip going to Japan, as I didn't expect to meet any Christians there. But God had other plans. He placed me with a Christian host family. I

grew up in a non-Christian home, so that was the first time in my life that I had had a family to go to church with, a family to pray with, and a family to live out God's Word with. I experienced the body of Christ in Japan and got glimpses into what it was like to be a Christian in Japan. I had been wrong—not all Japanese were Buddhists. There were strong, resilient Christians who were not willing to be hammered down by social pressures for being different.

Thread 7: Tentmaking, relief work, and long-term mission

I took my third trip to Japan directly after graduating from college. I worked as an Assistant Language Teacher through the JET program in Oita, Kyushu, for three years. While there, I worked as a tentmaker, connecting with a local Japanese church and a TEAM-run Japanese church. This experience and exposure to tentmakers and short-term, mid-term, and long-term missionaries led me to desire to come back as a full-time missionary.

I extended my contract the maximum of two times and returned to the States in 2004, with hopes of returning to Japan as a full-time missionary within two years. God had different plans, but brought me back seven years later as a Christian relief worker and support personnel through CRASH Japan for two months in 2011. This trip and experience connected my heart to Tohoku. Again I returned to the States and expected to return to Japan in 2012. But once again, God had other plans. In the summer of 2016, exactly

20 years after my first trip to Japan, I returned to Japan as a three-year associate through OMF.

Thread 8: God's faithfulness

Returning to Japan, a place I had come to consider home, took longer than I expected and things did not go as planned, but when I look back I see God's interwoven tapestry of how he led and prepared me to return to Japan. So when Americans ask me "Will you go?" the answer will always be "Yes." When Japanese ask me "Please come back." The answer will always be "Of course." And when either ask "Why?"—the answer will always be "God." My life and the connection and love I have for God and this country are deeply interwoven; it is a 25-year-old tapestry that I lay at his feet and trust his hand to finish. **JH**

Author portrait photo from Facebook profile, used by permission

Brittney Carlson's passion and love for Japan began 25 years ago. Having spent most of her early life as a public school ESOL teacher, she is currently an associate missionary with OMF in Aomori City.

Three values to help teams thrive

By Robert Adair

A desire to share the gospel, a willingness do anything that's asked, and a cheerful attitude are vital qualities for short-termers and long-termers alike

As you prepare for the ministry, I would like to share some key attitudes that can be used by God to greatly minister to the Japanese church and people:

- 伝道スピリット (*dendo supiritto*): spirit of and for evangelism (Col. 1:28)
- 何でもやる (*nandemo yaru*): will do anything, like a true servant (1 Cor. 9:20-23)
- 明るい (*akarui*): positive, cheerful, outgoing (1 Thess. 5:16-18)

Positive people (*akarui*), who take the initiative and will

2001 as part of a short-term team that served at Katsuta Church in Ibaraki Prefecture. Ten years later, I found myself continuing to lean on them as we trained teams to minister in Tohoku after the 3.11 disaster. I believe these key attitudes are valuable for screening and training short-term workers.

Spirit of evangelism (伝道スピリット)

While most short-termers come because they want to share the gospel with Japanese people, sometimes their zeal can do more harm than good. At one event I had helped to organize, our famous guest finished his long talk to a

There is a significant variation among short-termers about the most effective way to share the gospel with Japanese people. There is often an awkward moment when a short-term worker tells you about “the silver bullet”—that if you would just try it (Bible study, tracting, evangelism method, prayer style, etc.), Japanese people will turn to Christ.

In contrast, a quiet banker in his thirties who has come to Japan to serve for the last five summers isn't flashy. He's an amateur photographer who enjoys taking photos at various events. He also makes sure to connect with one family

do anything (*nandemo yaru*) to serve the church and share the gospel of Jesus Christ with the 99% who do not know him (*dendo supiritto*), are the people God will use beyond what you can imagine! Let us all be those kinds of people day in and day out.

By Takeshi Takazawa, Asian Access's vice president for strategic engagement, in an introduction letter to new staff and short-term workers.

I still remember being challenged to live out these three values when I came to Japan for the first time in June

crowd of hundreds of Japanese people with a form of “And this is why every one of you needs to accept Jesus into your heart today.” I cringed. Our venue was a government facility, and we had promised this would be a cultural exchange and a chance for people to interact with a celebrity. Instead we gave them a 30-minute religious talk. Our guest desired to see people know Christ, yet we had failed to coach him on what was appropriate in that setting. As a result, my partner pastor and I had to apologize and do additional work to repair the damage done.

every time he comes. He had dinner with this family his first summer in Japan and ever since has had a desire to see them know Christ. He has watched the children grow, and his commitment to this family has allowed him to share with them why he keeps coming to Japan.

When I was a short-term worker, it was two young musicians and an English student who broke my heart for Japan. Japan's statistics were challenging. The need was huge. But ultimately it was my relationship with these three individuals that made me desperate for them to encounter Christ. Our evangelistic spirit must be about people and not methods. It's important that we explain this to short-term workers who come to serve with us in Japan.

Will do anything (何でもやる)

The best short-term workers are those who are willing to do anything to serve. An excellent metaphor for this principle is the scene in *The Karate Kid* where Mr. Miyagi teaches Daniel karate by having him do seemingly meaningless tasks around his house.

I've consistently found that the most

They were students from the Japanese club at a Christian university led by a former missionary to Japan. We gave them the standard guidelines regarding transportation, housing, team size, etc. and prepared to receive them. Shortly before they arrived, we were informed that they would be bringing more people than our capacity allowed. As a result, the team's housing and transportation became a big problem for us. The team assumed we could figure something out, so they disregarded our guidelines. But they didn't realize it caused our local ministry team to be overworked and exhausted during their stay.

In the summer of 2011, we had a team of affluent young professionals with no language or real understanding of Japan come and serve in a coastal town. One day we handed them a

understood that long-term workers weren't there just to add people to their religion, but that they truly loved them.

Short-term workers' willingness to do seemingly meaningless tasks that they don't fully understand can be a window into their motivations for being here. Are they here to serve and partner with what God is doing or merely to promote their own agenda?

Positive (明るい)

For short-term workers who have limited or no Japanese ability, nothing communicates Christ and why they came to Japan more than their attitude. It is easy to tell when someone is happy to be here. Conversely, it is counterproductive for our Japanese friends to feel sorry for the short-termers for coming to their country.

We have a group that regularly comes from Hawaii. They are multi-generational, multicultural, and extremely comfortable with their identity in Christ. Even though most of them speak no Japanese, they happily approach the older ladies in the temporary housing and give them huge hugs with big smiles. Even without shared language, the residents know that these Hawaiians are happy to be there. I love seeing people melt into the bright kindness of this team.

Seeking and cultivating the three characteristics

In my experience, a short-term worker's character is far more important than training, knowledge, or even language. I look forward to continuing to serve with people who are committed to sharing Christ in a relational way, willing to do whatever is asked of them and having a good attitude in whatever they do. More than that, I am challenged to try to live these values out myself as we continue to serve in Tohoku. **JH**

Asian Access missionary Robert Adair serves in Miyagi Prefecture through a partnership with Shiogama Bible Baptist Church. He is husband to Roberta and father of two energetic boys. He enjoys spending time in the mountains.

challenging teams are the ones that think they know Japan well and the ones that aren't willing to "just do anything" to serve.

For the first few years following the 3.11 disaster, Shiogama Bible Baptist Church was receiving hundreds of volunteers every year. On paper, one group looked like an ideal team.

songbook and asked them to learn traditional Japanese songs to sing with the people still living in an evacuation facility. Though they didn't understand what they were singing and butchered the pronunciation, they happily sang with the people living there. And while they were not able to directly share their testimonies or scripture, through this act the people in attendance felt loved. They gave the residents an evening of light-hearted fun in the midst of a difficult time. Their service also gave the long-term workers in that city credibility. The people of that town

Short-term missions: moving forward

By Timothy R. Sisk

With the dramatic increase in short-term missions over the last two decades, churches and mission agencies need to critically assess their long-term effectiveness

You've probably seen a kid's show where the cartoon character is skiing, but then clumsily falls and begins to tumble down the slope. As the character rolls down the mountainside, they become enveloped in an ever growing and unstoppable snowball. That rapid growth and forward momentum of the proverbial snowball reminds me of short-term missions (STM).

Broadly speaking, the impetus for the contemporary STM movement can be traced to two men: George Verwer (Operation Mobilization) and Loren Cunningham (Youth With A Mission). Passionate about seeing Christian youth mobilized to reach the nations, both men developed the strategy of taking youth across the globe on short-term trips to expose them to the spiritual needs of the world and to employ them in the harvest field. The number of North Americans involved in STM has jumped dramatically from 540 participants in 1965 to well over 1 million in 2010.¹

This phenomenal growth was not just due to globalization. Many mission agencies and local churches thought this strategy might help to raise up long-term servants and provide missionaries and national churches with additional laborers. As a result, mission agencies and churches have invested a great deal of human and financial resources to provide STM opportunities to their constituents. For North

American Christian teenagers, going on a STM trip has become the equivalent of an evangelical bar mitzvah.

While the investment of resources and the number of participants in STM have swelled, there has been little critical reflection and assessment on how effectively STM meets these original goals. Are we seeing greater numbers of long-term missionaries emerge from this swell of STM participants? Are those on the receiving end of these trips truly benefiting from short-term missionaries? Below, I briefly survey some concerns and benefits of STM.

Concerns

Costs

The amount of money used to fund STM is enormous, surpassing at least a billion US dollars annually.² Is this the most prudent way to spend so much donated money?

The amateurization of missions

Churches sometimes send short-termers to do work in other cultures which they would never allow them to do in their own local church. STM teams are often made up mostly of people with limited foreign language ability, ministry experience, and cross-cultural awareness. My plea to churches is not to send their "B team" to the mission field.

Increases ethnocentrism

While we tend to think that exposing people to other cultures will increase cultural sensitivity, the opposite is often true. Social scientists point out that short-term exposure to other cultures tends to increase ethnocentrism. I compare STM participants to first-year Greek students in seminary: they frequently know just enough to be dangerous. This can be partially avoided if the STM participants are given cross-cultural training and opportunities for on-site debriefing.

Promotes a "quick fix" mentality

STM can give the impression that the work of global disciple-making can be accomplished in days or weeks. I've heard short-term teams testify to having seen large numbers convert to Christianity or having planted a church during their one-week trip. While the team was possibly present for the opening service of the new church, those engaged in disciple-making and church planting know that they involve much more than one week of ministry.

Benefits

Source of long-term servants

Every semester, I have students in my classes at Moody Bible Institute that are headed into missions because of their participation in a STM trip. However, the concern with a number

of mission agencies is the lack of “return on investment” they are currently seeing. While the number of STM participants has increased dramatically over the last two decades, the number of long-term missionaries has not kept pace. Some of this could be solved by churches and agencies being more selective when forming teams. What if, instead of extending an open invitation to join an STM team, we prayerfully selected team members based on the needs of the ministry and the spiritual gifts and long-term service potential of the participants?

Increased prayer and giving

Roger Peterson argues that his post-trip surveys indicate that STM participants give more and pray more for missions.³ Firsthand exposure to the needs of the world can spur believers toward greater global engagement.

Spiritual growth of the participant

In surveys done among Christian university students who had participated in a STM trip, “I grew spiritually” and “I learned more about God and his church” are consistently top responses.

Encouragement of national believers and missionaries

My own experience as a missionary in Japan points to this as being one of

the greatest benefits of STM. In nations where there are very few believers, STM participants who meaningfully engage with national believers and long-term missionaries have a wonderful opportunity to minister to and encourage the “receivers.”

My plea to churches is not to send their “B team” to the mission field.

While some are calling for a moratorium on STM trips, I believe that changes can be made that may shrink the numbers but increase the effectiveness.

So, as we move forward in our consideration of STM and, more particularly, our implementation of this methodology, I would encourage you to ask the following questions:

- Who is really benefiting from this particular STM trip? If the answer is primarily the participants, then that should be cause for caution and reconsideration of the trip. Are we truly helping the “receivers” or are we adding to their workload and expending resources for personal growth and enjoyment? Remember, these are mission trips, not pilgrimages.
- Do our STM trips foster dependency? Missionaries and agencies who host these trips often scramble to find work for the team to do while they are in the country.

Sometimes the work that is performed is something that the local congregation could and should be doing themselves. Creating dependency is one of the significant issues in missions. We don’t want to continue to foster such dependency via STM.

- How do we integrate lessons learned into long-term change and results? Behavioral scientists tell us that long-term change generally happens with long-term exposure. Can we structure the STM experience so that while the team may only be on-site for a short time, their involvement in training, prayer, and follow-up would extend over a longer period in order that lasting change may take root?

Along with interacting with the questions above, I highly encourage you to visit <http://www.soe.org/explore/the-7-standards/> and engage with the resources on that site. My hope and prayer is that we will critically assess the outcomes of our STM trips and find ways to increase the long-term impact of our short-term trips. **JH**

1. Priest, R. J. “Short-term missions as a new paradigm,” in *Mission after Christendom*, edited by Kaul, O., Vethanayagamony P., and E. Kee-Fook Chia (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2010), 84-99.
2. This is a conservative estimate based on one million short-termers spending an average of US\$1,000. The source above (Priest) estimates much more than a billion dollars.
3. Roger Peterson and Timothy D. Peterson *Is Short-Term Mission Really Worth the Time and Money? Advancing God’s Kingdom Through Short-Term Mission* (Minneapolis: STEM Ministries, 1991).

STM photos by Karen Ellrick



Timothy R. Sisk grew up in Kobe, Japan, as a missionary kid and later served as a missionary in Japan and Bolivia. He is currently a professor of intercultural studies at Moody Bible Institute in Chicago, Illinois.

Lessons I have learned

Practical ideas for how to host short-term teams
By Janet Brown

Scenario: Your church or mission wants to send a short-term worker or team this summer and they have asked you to be in charge.

How do you approach this big task? You know that hosting short-term workers and teams is important for the future of missions, but you want to make sure it is meaningful for the Japanese and the short-term worker.

Over the past 20 years as a short-term coordinator, I have learned that there is no magic formula to success when it comes to running a short-term program. There are as many ways to host as there are people hosting. But here are a few guidelines that will help make the task easier.

Prepare myself

First, I make sure that I am ready. I start with prayer: I ask the Lord for wisdom, guidance, and a servant's heart. Am I prepared—mentally, physically, emotionally, and spiritually? If I want the workers to serve the Lord, I need to set the example. Once I am ready, I can help others. The airplane example of putting on your own oxygen mask before helping others is a good analogy. Then I am ready to start working with those who come.

Pre-field preparation

A good short-term ministry program starts long before the team or individual arrives. Pre-field preparation makes a big difference.

1. Application process

When a church or mission wants to send someone to serve, there needs to be some preparation on their end. With individuals, most missions have a screening process. However, most churches do not.

When a church tells me they want to send a team, I recommend that they make everyone go through an application process. The application should include questions that make the applicant think about what they are coming to do. For example:

- What skills and talents do you bring to the team?
- What are your expectations for this mission trip?

The goal of these questions is to ensure they want to serve and not just be tourists.

The application also helps the team leader and you (the host) know what talents, skills, and interests each team member has. This helps with scheduling—if no one has any music talent then the team will not work with Gospel choirs.

If I request the team, then I set the purpose of the team and give the sending church an idea of what to look for in team members. For example, if I need a team to do children's ministry, I would expect the team members to like working with children.

Each team member should put together an album with 5 to 10 pictures that tells about them. Family pictures, pets, interests, activities, places, etc. Whatever best tells their story.

The application should also cover medical conditions, medicines, limitations (e.g. diabetic), allergies, and preferences (e.g. vegetarian by choice).

2. Budget (per person)

Here are some items I include on the budget:

- Food: US\$25/day (all prices in US dollars). Some can manage with

less but this gives you wiggle room, especially if the team eats out most meals.

- Lodging: \$15/day. If they are working with a Japanese church, the church should help with housing. Homestays are nice but not practical for the size of most teams. If the church provides accommodation I still include that as part of the budget, then give it to the church as a gift.
- Transportation: \$10–15/day. Consider if the team will use public transportation, or will someone drive them around? If the team is in the Tokyo area I calculate this according to where they are staying and where they are serving. Also include the cost of transport to and from the airport (this might include shipping luggage costs).
- Administration: \$50 (one-time fee). Our mission has an administration fee. If you don't have a set fee I recommend that you put this in the budget to cover some of your costs in hosting. You can set your

own amount.

- Miscellaneous: \$50 (one-time fee). This could include phone or internet rental, unexpected materials or supplies, and items like name tags for team members.

This comes to a total of about \$50–60/day—a low but doable budget.

The sender needs to add to the above budget:

- Insurance: The team needs travel insurance that covers their stay in Japan.
- Airline tickets: It is their job to find tickets, not mine.

3. Schedules

The schedule should include the following:

- As many different types of ministry as you can (see sidebar on page 17 for suggestions).
- Free time: Remember that God rested on the seventh day. If the team or individual is serving longer than 10 days, I would include a day off for each week they are in Japan. They decide what they want to do, whether sightseeing in places like Disneyland, shopping, or rest.
- Orientation: On the first full day in Japan. Because of travel fatigue and jetlag, I don't recommend doing this on the first evening.
- Devotions: Scheduled time for team and personal devotions. If it is not scheduled, it usually doesn't happen.
- Team time: Encourage them to have a daily team time, which can include a daily debrief.
- Debrief: Either on the last evening or last morning.

I like to know where the team is staying each night, where they will eat, and who is responsible for their meals.

4. Testimony

Each team member should write a simple testimony three to five minutes long. Include how they came to Christ and a Bible verse that helped them in their walk with Christ. Ask them to

send it to you ahead of time and you can give these to the church or missionary they will be working with. This allows time for translation and a chance to pick the testimony that will have the most powerful impact.

5. Pictures

Each team member should put together an album with 5 to 10 pictures that tells about them. It could be family pictures, pets, interests, activities, places, etc.—whatever best tells their story. When they get a chance to talk to Japanese people, it can be used to start a conversation and help break the language barrier. If they want to do it on their phones, put the photos in a separate folder for easy retrieval.

6. What to bring

Many airlines now allow only one checked suitcase, so each person needs to make the best use of their baggage allowance. They need to pack clothes for both ministry time and free time. Let them know if they need to dress a certain way, or if certain kinds of clothing are not desired. You can set the standard. Many people in other countries are getting tattoos; if a team member has a tattoo, they should bring a light shirt, sweater, or long pants that will cover the tattoo when needed—even in the summer.

On-field orientation

1. Go over the schedule.

2. Get to know the team and what they expect.

I like to ask questions like these:

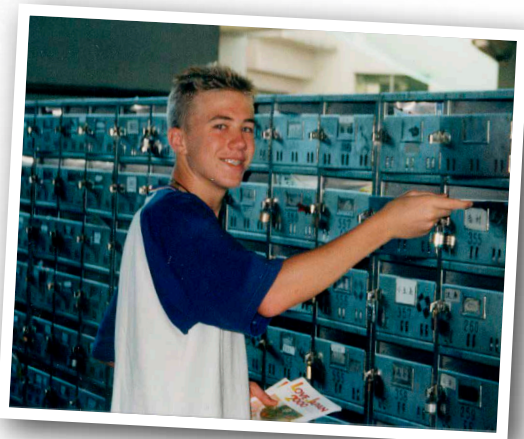
- What do I need to know about you, to help you better serve in Japan? How would you describe your personality (e.g. extrovert, introvert, need space, need quiet)?
- What are your hopes or expectations for this time in Japan?



- What are your greatest fears about your time in Japan?
These last two points can lead into a short devotional and prayer time. We give our expectations to the Lord and ask him to help us with our fears.

3. Convey expectations I have for the team.

- No whining!
- Try it!
 - Food: I say, "If you are not sure you will like it, take only a little. Taste it, and if you like it take more. If you don't like it, don't make a scene."
 - Culture: I give everyone the opportunity to experience a public bath at least once. Besides the public bath, you might prefer to recommend other "must-try" Japanese experiences.



I warn them that if they are doing something offensive to the host or culture, I might ask them to stop and/or direct them to do something else. They should not protest but just trust me and obey, and we can talk about it later in private.

4. Culture

I give each team member several written pages. This includes key Japanese phrases, church vocabulary, the Lord's Prayer and the Apostle's Creed both in English and Japanese, and more. I like to take the team on a field trip to Asakusa Shrine/Sensōji Temple and compare it to going to the temple in Jesus' time.

5. Transportation

I teach the team how to get around using public transportation. Part of my orientation is what I call the Tokyo Tour. It includes the above-mentioned visit to Asakusa, riding the trains (teaching as I go), lunch at a ramen shop in Shinjuku, and seeing the city from the observation deck in the Tokyo Metro Government Building. Finally, I task the team with finding their way back to where they are staying.

6. Garbage

I like to say that one of the testimonies you have in Japan is how you deal with trash. If you don't sort it, it will not be picked up; the Japanese or the host will have to go through the garbage and sort it before it can be thrown away.

7. Devotional

I either lead a devotional or have the team leader do so.

8. Prayer

I like to begin and end with prayer.

9. Encourage them to journal

Include not just what they saw, but also what they thought and learned, and "God sightings."

Other guidelines for hosting a team

1. If you are with the team 24/7, I recommend that you get away from



them now and then. It gives you a break and lets them figure out how to be on their own. If you teach them how to get around, then on their day off, they can go to 10 different places and you can have a day off too.

2. Use teachable moments—answer their questions. Share your story with the team. What led you to become a missionary? Teach culture points as you go. Show them the fun things in Japan. Take them shopping at a ¥100 Shop. When they get home, have a show-and-tell time.

The team will want to go to the shop again, to get what they missed.

3. Try to include a day or meal with a Japanese family. This works well when you are working with a church plant or a Japanese church, or teaching English (a great way to learn English is to host the foreigner).

On-field debriefing

Just as important as orientation is a debrief time. I like to schedule about two hours.

1. Prepare them to return home

Part of this includes what to expect when they get back. They will have hours of stories to tell, but their family and friends usually have an attention span of about five minutes. So, they need to plan what to say. Remind them that the Lord called them to go and called others to stay. So, listen to what others at home have to say, and ask if anything happened while they were gone.

2. Thank-you letters

This is an opportunity to start thinking about sending thank-you letters to people that supported their trip or writing a report for their church. They don't have to plan it immediately, but they could start thinking about it.





5. Prayer time

Use the schedule and have them pray for the seeds that have been planted, the people they have worked with, the churches, ministries or missionaries they worked with—specific names, if possible. Pray for Japan and the ongoing ministry of winning Japanese for Christ. This is the act of leaving everything in God’s hands and asking him to bless their efforts and the seeds they planted. Then pray for their church and the people that will hear their testimonies when they return. Pray about their return to regular routines. I look at this as a time to prepare them for what he has for them back home.

We all want a successful experience with short-term teams—a win-win for the short-term workers and their hosts. I hope these suggestions are helpful as you plan your program. **JH**

STM photos provided by Karen Ellrick

Janet Brown (WorldVenture/Japan Baptist Fellowship) first came to serve as a physical education teacher at the Christian Academy 34 years ago. She has now served as JBF’s short-term coordinator for the past 20 years.

3. Discussion time

What did the team learn about Japan (both people and culture)? What did God teach them? The team speaks and you listen.

4. What’s next?

What would they like to do with their experience? I recommend that they write a letter to themselves that they will open in six months. They can challenge themselves, recall what they learned, and use the time to see if God is leading them to return to Japan. If Japan is still in their hearts in six months, what should they do about it?

Ideas for ministry

Give them a mix of experience beyond the ministry they are doing.

Some suggestions:

- » visit a Hallelujah Gospel Family (HGF) choir rehearsal
- » do an English Café
- » feed the homeless
- » clean wheelchairs with Wheelchairs of Hope
- » attend a Japanese church service
- » distribute tracts or flyers for a ministry outreach
- » spend time with other missionaries in your mission (visit their ministries or have them share about their ministry)
- » teach English
- » prayer walks
- » teach a special skill, e.g. a craft
- » university campus outreach
- » work project for the Japanese church or the missionary



Short-term prayer teams

By Karen Viljoen

God is using prayer teams to encourage his people in Japan and prepare the way for revival

“Our prayer team is here and Christians in U.K. are praying because Japan is on God’s heart.” With these words, team leader Angelo Lebrato encouraged the members of the 2015 UK Prayer Team, which came out through OMF International’s Serve Asia program. His words continue to inspire me as I look forward to welcoming new prayer teams each year.

Coordinating and welcoming prayer teams was not my idea. My thoughts were initially quite negative: “Why can’t they just pray in their own country for Japan?” and “Is coming on a prayer trip a mere guise for enjoying a guided tour of Japan with an interpreter?” Thankfully, the Lord has changed my mind and heart. He is using prayer teams to reveal his heart.

Hokkaido is on God’s heart

My personal experience with prayer teams began in 2013, when the Lord brought a group of three people from the UK. Each person had a passion for a specific area in Japan, one of which was Hokkaido. The group contacted me, asking for help in discerning where and for whom the Lord would have them pray. Then, in 2014, the Lord sent a married couple from the Netherlands, who were given a prayer burden for Japan and have been praying faithfully for revival here since 2006. Two different groups, and yet I heard one common prayer request: “Lord, reopen the wells that have been dug here.”

Yes, God’s heart for Hokkaido is not a new phenomenon. Spiritual “wells”

were dug here over a century ago. During subsequent prayer trips, Pastor Kitō of Kitami Grace Church always mentioned four key Christians who had significant influence in Hokkaido (all worth a Google search): William S. Clark, who spent just eight months in Sapporo from 1876 to 1877; George and Ida Pierson, who spent “forty happy years in Japan” between 1888 and 1928; and John Batchelor, who was a missionary to the Ainu people from 1877 to 1941.

And yet we are sensing that God wants to do a new thing in Hokkaido. The spiritual wells that have been filled in and stopped up will be reopened. The Lord is preparing for a great revival here, and I believe he is using prayer teams to help bring it about.

God’s heart for his people

How the Lord lavishes his love on his people! One of the great blessings we have experienced through prayer teams is their ministry of encouragement to their Japanese brothers and sisters in Christ Jesus.

Outside of Sapporo, most churches in Hokkaido are small, but they are not forgotten. 2014 UK Prayer Team member Maddy Griffiths commented:

“A visit from a prayer team encourages local Christians that they are being prayed for and cared for—that they are not standing alone or forgotten, but are a vital and cherished part of God’s family.”

The OMF-sponsored UK Prayer Teams to Hokkaido were established to direct those who had a prayer burden for Japan to pray for the new JECA-OMF joint church plant in Nayoro, which started in 2014. Teams have been visiting and praying for Nayoro Grace Church for the past four years. Angelo said: “It was very rewarding to see that people remembered us from the previous year and appreciated our commitment to keep sending prayer teams who share the burden of praying for Japan.”

Through the connection with Nayoro Grace Church, the teams were also linked up with Kitami Grace Church and Grace Chapel in Abashiri. Many stories could be told of how God has used prayer team members to encourage Japanese believers.



One of the key couples God led us to was Mr. & Mrs. Kataoka. In 2014, while a second-year student at Hokkaido Bible Institute, Mr. Kataoka came to my church to speak about the ministry of the college. When I learned that he would become the pastor of Grace Chapel in Abashiri after graduating, I asked if he would be willing to meet the members of the prayer team which was going to visit that church in a few weeks' time, so that we could pray for him and the church. He was a bit nervous but agreed. During that meeting, we learned that his wife was "the caretaker" of the church in his absence. Thus began a journey with this couple in which we sought to encourage them with the Lord's grace. They had been separated for three years during his study but were reunited when he finished, and he was installed as the church's pastor in 2016.

The encouragement, however, is not one-sided. There is mutual encouragement as Japanese brothers and sisters in Christ share their lives of faith with prayer team members. Again, an insight from Angelo: "Short-term prayer trips are a great blessing and encouragement for the Christians and missionaries in Japan who are faithfully serving the Lord, but probably even

more for everyone on the prayer team as our faith is strengthened and our eyes opened to the spiritual needs of a country."

God's heart for the lost

How the Lord longs to lavish his love on the people of Japan! He has been giving people around the world a burden to pray for this land—even to come and pray "on-site."

Last year, the Lord brought us two women from South Africa, Rita Blackwood and Lillimore Wagener. These women, who were both in their seventies, came to Sapporo for just three days to share with us a prayer vision Rita had received from the Lord:

The Japanese flag appeared before my eyes. I saw the land of Japan—beautiful and green. The Lord said these words: "I am about to open wide the gospel in the Land of the Rising Sun. The awakening of this great nation will begin in Sapporo." I then saw the ocean. As the waves were breaking on the shore, it turned red. I asked the Lord what that meant, and he said: "The nation of Japan will come to know the full redemption

of the blood of Jesus. A new move of the Spirit is going to take place. Be expectant that something is about to happen. A coming period of revival, repentance, and an exceedingly great harvest. Japan will be saved. You shall see a new flag raised over this nation, as the Sun of Righteousness shall arise in his glory over Japan."

Looking back, I am in awe of the range of people God uses in this ministry of prayer—newbies in prayer to prayer warriors; aged between 20 and 70; groups of two to six from Europe, Africa, and the US. Looking forward, I am expectant that God will move in answer to the prayers of these prayer team members, along with all of his people who pray for Japan.

"For the earth [and Japan!] will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea" (Habakkuk 2:14 ESV). **JH**

Photo of prayer team at Abashiri submitted by author

Karen Viljoen (nee Harless) served as a single missionary with TEAM from 1992 to 2008. She married Dale Viljoen in 2008 and joined him in OMF International. Karen now serves as the short-term coordinator for Hokkaido.

Short-term teams are valuable

Short-term missions can be life-changing, both for team members and those whom they serve

By Brian Smith



We consider short-term teams a great asset for the work of the Lord in Japan and other nations. Short-term teams assist with evangelism in many locations including parks, railway stations, and college campuses as well as with ministries such as English programs and feeding the homeless.

Changed lives

Much of this work is done in partnership with local Japanese churches. As we partner and serve with the local churches in their areas of need, we see people saved and lives touched. Many believers are encouraged as they see that God cares about Japan and sends people from the other side of the world to serve with them and bless them.

Each member of these short-term teams has taken seriously Jesus' command to "go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19 NIV). As Hudson Taylor said, "The Great Commission is not an option to be considered but a command to

be obeyed." We hope that some team members will be called to serve Japan as members of other short-term teams, long-term missionaries, prayer partners, or intercessors.

Our goal with short-term teams is to see lives transformed. We desire to see people in Japan changed and touched by God's love as they come to know Jesus and realize how much he cares for them and that he has a purpose for their lives. We also want to see those on the teams changed and drawn deeper into their relationship with God so that they return home saying, "God changed my life in Japan, and I had experiences I will never forget."

Challenges and future opportunities

Short-term outreach can be challenging sometimes, as team members are at various stages in the discipleship process. We are called to serve and strengthen one another daily and at times to bear one another's burdens (Gal. 6:2).

As we prepare for outreaches for the Rugby World Cup in 2019 and

the Olympic Games in 2020, short-term teams will be a key component for mass evangelism. They will serve at these events and in local churches.

We want to involve teams at both these events in outreaches on the streets, as well as a number of other opportunities. These include: sports clinics, games in schools and parks, distribution of Christian literature, and ministry to individuals through prayer and encouragement. When people show a great interest in the Lord or become Christians, then we will introduce them to a local church in their area where they can be disciplined and become part of a Christian church family.

We value short-term ministry teams. As we see people take up opportunities to serve and also lives changed, we praise God for all that he's doing in and through these teams. **JH**

Photo provided by author

Brian Smith was born in New Zealand. He served as a missionary in the Philippines, Holland, and then Japan. After a period of working in the IT sector in Japan, he is back serving with YWAM here.

A short-term worker's experience (by Rohan Salhotra)

Before coming on the outreach trip I had various expectations, but God showed me that outreach was very different from what I had imagined. When we first arrived, I couldn't believe that I was actually here and that we would have the opportunity to be Jesus' hands and feet in Japan.

One of the first ministry opportunities we had was to feed the homeless in Ueno Park and near Kita Senju station. I first felt bitter about this. I was fighting with

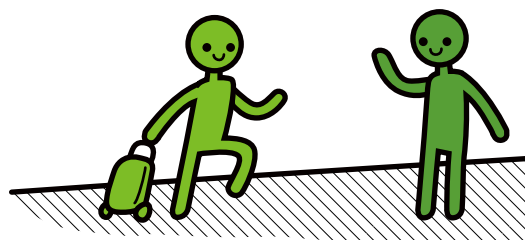
myself and with God, asking why we were doing this, why we had just shown up to sing a few songs, pass out bowls of food, and then pack up. Since we didn't know Japanese, it was nearly impossible to build relationships with anyone. But in one of my quiet times, God showed me that we were leaving an everlasting effect on these people. By being present with them, we were able to show Jesus to them and reveal a small glimpse of God's heart.

Two weeks into the outreach, I began to become irritated with myself because of how little we were doing in Japan and how everything was going so slowly. I soon realized that God had some amazing things in store for us. I was able to step out by leading worship in many different ministries and churches we were then working with. I love how God allowed me to lead others and encourage people through the songs we sang and the smiles we shared.

Survey on short-term missions

Short-term missions are being used a lot in Japan, and JEMA members generally think they are beneficial

By Simon Pleasants



To find out about JEMA members' experiences of short-term missions (STMs)—both as participants and as hosts—I conducted an email survey in December 2017. The response was excellent: 80 people (thank you to everyone who completed it).

Participation in STMs prior to long-term engagement

Of the 80 respondents, 81% (65) had done at least one STM trip before serving in a long-term capacity. There was a great range in the number of short-term trips undertaken (from one trip to “too many to count”, with the average being 2.3 trips), duration (five days to three years; average: 4.8 months), and place (within home country to just about everywhere, except Islamic countries; 52% (34) had done an STM trip in Japan). On average, missionaries who had participated in STMs had spent 10.4 months doing STMs before embarking on long-term mission. Of the 15

who hadn't, 10 thought it would have been helpful preparation for long-term ministry (two noted that STMs weren't really an option back when they had been considering becoming long-term missionaries).

Furthermore, 67 people (85%) would recommend doing an STM trip to someone contemplating long-term service. Only one person said they wouldn't; the remaining 11 generally would recommend doing an STM trip but qualified their responses in some way (for example, it depends on person or circumstances).

These numbers highlight the important role that STMs play in preparing people for long-term mission.

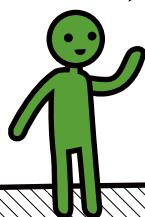
The 65 people that had participated in an STM cited a wide range of positive outcomes. By far the most common (28 respondents) was that the trips confirmed a sense of calling (sometimes to missions in general and sometimes to Japan in particular) and were a stepping stone on the path to

becoming a long-term missionary. In this regard, 51 of 65 respondents said that STMs had made them want to come back and serve in a long-term capacity. The next most common response (18 respondents) was that STMs had made them aware of the need and of God's heart for people. Other benefits included a stronger faith in God (11), a better awareness of the practical details of missions (10), a greater consciousness of what's involved in cross-cultural ministry (8), a broader vision of God's plan for the world (8), and the potential to help using the gifts they had been given (8).

Looking back at their STM trip(s), 51 of 63 (81%) respondents said they thought that STMs had provided good preparation for long-term missions, 4 (6%) thought they hadn't, while 8 (13%) were ambivalent. Three people noted that STMs by themselves are not sufficient, while four commented that there are significant differences between short-term and long-term missions.

For some missionaries, STMs proved life changing:

“[I] did a two-week trip to Japan, never intending to be a full-time missionary, but God used that trip to change my plans.”



“It put a ‘bug’ in me and made me want to follow God wherever God would have me go. It was very transformational.”



“The time in . . . changed the entire direction of my life. Through that experience, I chose to submit every part of my life to the Lord.”



STMs play a significant role in missions in Japan and JEMA members generally view them quite positively.



Using STMs for ministry

Regarding getting short-term workers to help out with long-term ministries, 64 respondents (81%) had used their help, while 15 (19%) had not. Those who had not cited the policy of their mission organization as well as mismatches between their work and tasks that short-termers can help with. Two said they would consider using them to help with their ministries in the future. Of those who have used short-termers in their ministries, the frequency varied greatly from “all the time” to “once in 20 years”. Out of 57 respondents, 37 (65%) said short-termers work with them at least once a year. Many said that the frequency varies with fluctuations in both need and supply.

Responses ranged widely to the question of how useful short-termers are. I graded responses on a subjective scale of five (1: not useful at all; 2: marginally useful; 3: somewhat useful; 4: useful; 5: highly useful). The responses were skewed towards the useful side of the spectrum: 1: four responses (7%); 2: five responses (9%); 3: eleven responses (19%); 4: twenty-two responses (39%); 5: fifteen responses (26%). So 65% found short-terms use-

ful or highly useful. Many respondents noted that usefulness depends a lot on the individual short-terminer.

The range of activities that short-termers help with was quite amazing. Based on the responses, I formed 17 categories, but even those didn't capture everything. The main tasks were English ministry (37), evangelism/making contacts (17), tracting (16), singing and music (16), practical support (15), children's ministry (14), helping run special events (12), giving testimonies (10), praying (8), helping with building/painting projects (8), cooking (5), sports ministry (4), homestay ministry (4), preaching (4), youth ministry (2), special ministries (2), and strengthening ties with supporting church (1).

Almost all respondents believed that STMs are mutually beneficial (86%), although one thought they were not, four were ambivalent, and four thought they mainly benefited the short-terminer. No one thought they mainly benefited the long-terminer.

The advantages of using STM workers were many. They helped with specific needs (16), assisted in reaching people (14), were a source of new long-term workers (14), were an encouragement to the mission and lo-

cal church (11), strengthened ties with home churches (11), and injected fresh energy and creativity (10).

However, there were downsides. By far the biggest was the extra effort and time they required (43). On top of that, there were problems due to ignorance of culture (14), lack of Japanese ability (12), poor attitude (8), and conflict (2).

Survey respondents were asked: “For those who have no intention of serving in full-time missions (i.e. their main intent is to lend a helping hand), do you feel the money they pay to participate in an STM trip would be better spent in supporting full-time missionaries?” Just over half (53%) said no, while 14% said yes. Of the remaining 33%, almost all said the answer depends on factors like the motivation of the short-terminer, the kind of help they can give, and the short-term program.

Two big points

The survey reveals two noteworthy conclusions—STMs play a significant role in missions in Japan and JEMA members generally view them quite positively.

The first point is shown by the facts that 81% of respondents had done

It is true that not everyone has had positive experiences with STMs:



at least one STM trip, spending 10.4 months on average, before embarking on long-term ministry and that 80% of respondents have received assistance from STM workers for their ministries (with at least 46% hosting them once a year or more).

The second point is conveyed by the facts that 81% of respondents said they thought that STMs had provided good preparation for long-term missions, 86% believed that STMs are mutually beneficial, 85% would unequivocally recommend doing an STM trip to someone contemplating full-term ministry, and 65% found STMs useful or highly useful for their ministry.

Also, there is near unanimous consensus that STMs take a lot of time and effort on the part of those hosting short-termers. Whatever else STMs are, they are not an easy way to get a helping hand with tasks.

Some keys to good STMs

The responses indicated several key points to running successful STM trips.

1. Selecting the right people

Many respondents noted that the quality of the short-termers can make or break an STM trip. Some said that careful screening of applicants is vital.

“It’s important that short-termers be screened well. Some are amazing and become like part of the family. Some are more work than they’re worth.”

“Improving the vetting process has helped produce better helpers.”

2. Good attitudes on both sides

It’s important for both sides to have right mindsets when it comes to STMs.

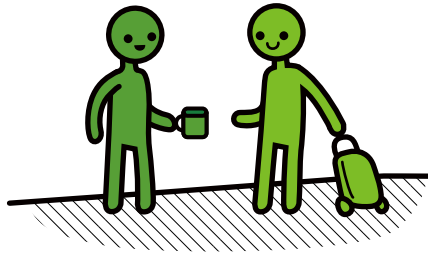
“Having a heart to serve is the key factor in fruitful short-term ministry.”

“So many young people come out expecting to ‘have fun’ or ‘see a new country’ rather than with a heart to serve.”

“It totally depends on the person and their attitude about serving.”

“I have looked on STMs as opportunities to minister to those taking part, helping them to be open to hearing God. There are multiple people working in Japan today as a result.”

“It’s less about how helpful [short-termers] are, but more about how helpful we are to them.”



3. Good preparation and debriefing

Another recurring theme was the importance of good preparation and debriefing.

“The preparation should be deliberate. This takes planning on both ends.”

“The preparation leading up to the actual short-term trip, including team building, personality inventories, and basic culture and/or language study

can be a really valuable component of the short-term missions experience. Similarly, a well-thought-through, post-trip debriefing is needed to help the workers process their feelings, emotions, thoughts on the culture or [the] national church, etc.”

4. Strategic planning

Some respondents noted that it was important to tailor STMs in terms of people and tasks.

“I think STMs should be more focused and done more strategically.”

“Quite helpful if you know what you are looking for and you know the candidate well enough to fit an assignment.”

“If you don’t have a good plan and purpose for a team, [an STM team] is more of a distraction than a help.”

Worth the trouble if done well

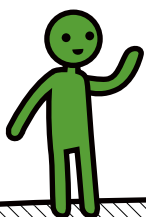
When done well, STMs can be great experiences for both sides and can strengthen the work of God in Japan.

“My service was nothing compared to what I got out of it.”

“It’s definitely a lot of work but worth the time if the Lord is glorified!” **JH**

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: rjcnetwork.org

“On one STM [trip], three of the six team members are now serving long-term in Japan.”



“I appreciate the time and the leadership that was given to my short-term experience. Without that I would not have returned to Japan.”

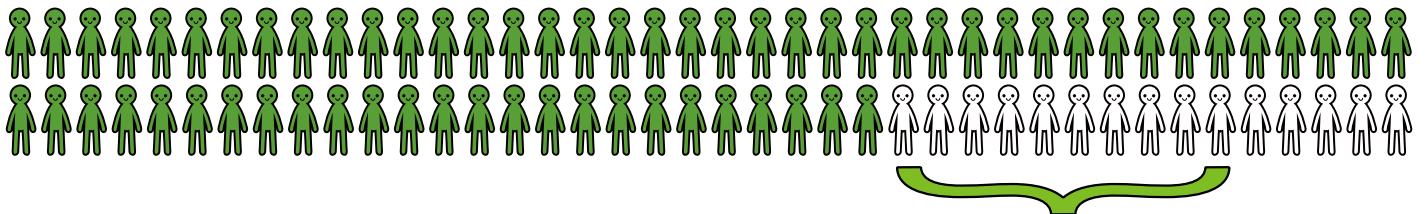


“Everyone says the same thing: STMs are a blessing, but they are very time-consuming.”



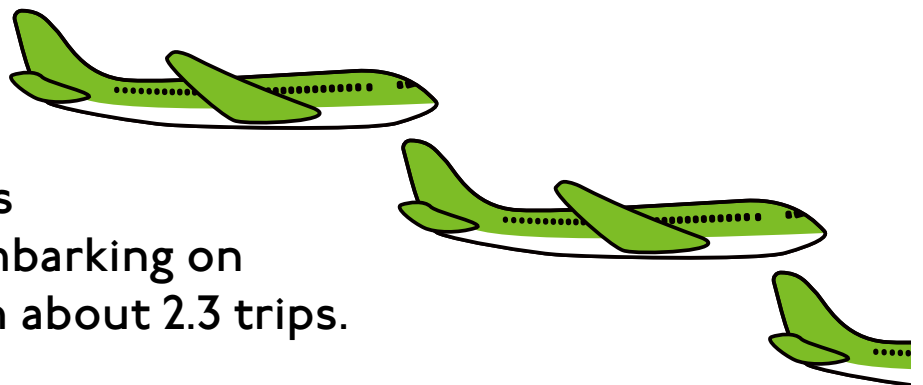
Infographic showing some important statistics and facts from survey on short-term missions.

Of the 80 respondents, 81% (65) had done at least one STM trip before serving in a long-term capacity.

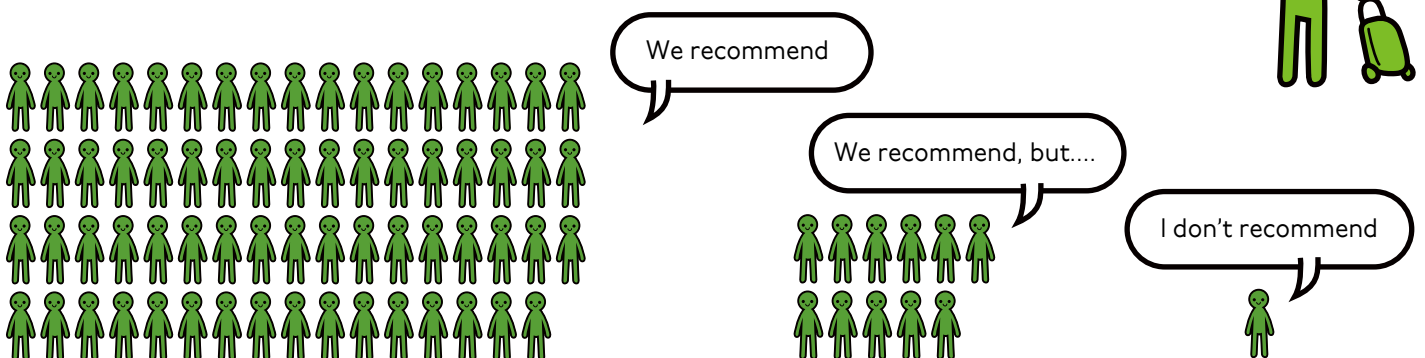


Of the 15 who hadn't, 10 thought it would have been helpful preparation for long-term ministry.

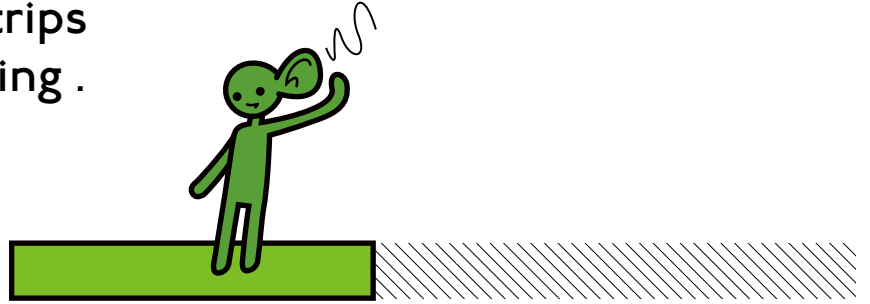
On average, missionaries who had participated in STMs had spent 10.4 months doing STMs before embarking on long-term mission, on about 2.3 trips.



For someone contemplating long-term service, 67 people (85%) would recommend doing an STM trip. Only one person said they wouldn't; the remaining 11 generally would recommend doing an STM trip but qualified their responses in some way.



The 65 people who had participated in an STM trip cited a wide range of positive outcomes. By far the most common (28 respondents) was that the trips confirmed a sense of calling.



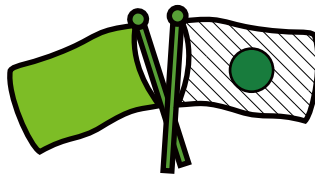
The next most common response (18 respondents) was that STMs had made them aware of the need and of God's heart for people.



Other benefits included a stronger faith in God (11),



a better awareness of the practical details of missions (10),



a greater consciousness of what's involved in cross-cultural ministry (8),

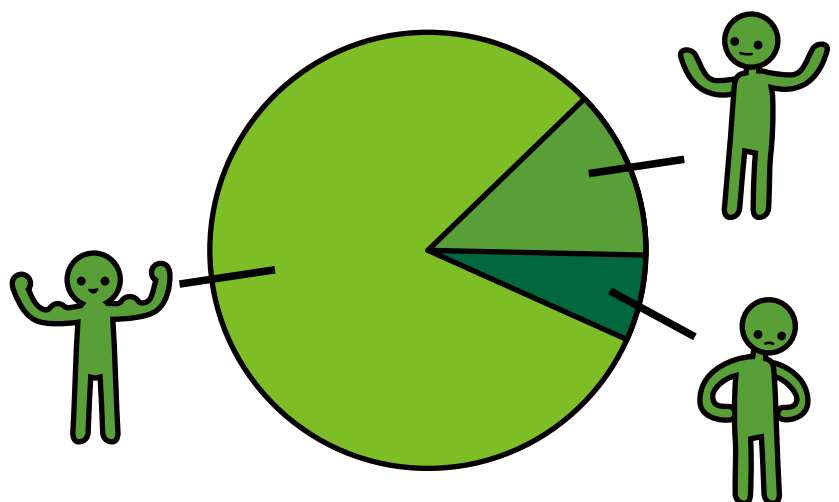


a broader vision of God's plan for the world (8),



and the potential to help using the gifts they had been given (8).

Looking back at their STM trip(s), 51 of 63 (81%) respondents said they thought that STMs had provided good preparation for long-term missions, 4 (6%) thought they hadn't, while 8 (13%) were ambivalent.



Review of the *Shinkaiyaku* 2017

Last Autumn saw the publishing of a completely revised and updated version of the popular *Shinkaiyaku* Bible translation. This review considers the changes that have been made and puts the new edition through its paces.

Coinciding with the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, a completely revised version of the *Shinkaiyaku*, a popular Japanese translation of the Bible, was published by Word of Life Press last autumn. Named the *Shinkaiyaku* 2017, the new edition is currently selling in three print formats and as an app (¥3,000 on iTunes).

There are four main Japanese translations of the Bible: the *Kōgoyaku*, the *Shinkyōdōyaku*, the *Shinkaiyaku*, and the *Living Bible*. The *Shinkaiyaku* was first published in 1970 and has subsequently undergone two minor revisions in 1978 and 2003.

Why the need for a new edition?

According to a booklet introducing the *Shinkaiyaku* 2017,¹ there are three main reasons for the major revision. The first is that Japanese is changing, so some words and phrases used 40 years ago sound old-fashioned today. The second is the constant advances that are being made in areas such as biblical languages and textual criticism, which the new edition reflects. The final reason is the need to improve consistency within the *Shinkaiyaku*. Since the New Testament was published before the Old Testament, there are some places where the words used in the two testaments differ.

Guiding principles behind the new edition

The *Shinkaiyaku* 2017 is based on six premises:²

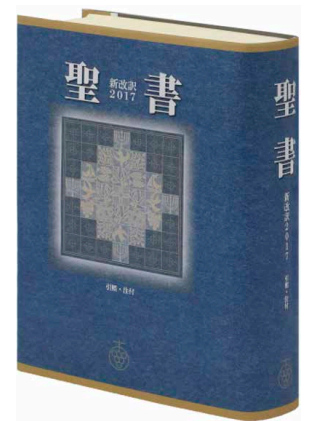
- the Bible is the inerrant Word of God,
- a committee translation is the best way to guard against individual biases,
- it is important to be faithful to the original manuscripts,
- genre has to be taken into account when translating,
- it is important to use current Japanese, and
- there will need to be future revisions.

The nature of the changes

To get a better idea of the extent and kind of changes that have been made, I used the “compare changes” function in Word to create comparison files of six passages: Genesis 1–3, Psalm 23, Jonah 1, Matthew 28, John 1, and Romans 1. My first impression was “Wow! That’s a lot of changes.” Almost every verse contained a change (over 90% of the verses have been revised³). Closer inspection revealed that some revisions were quite minor, for example replacing a word in *hiragana* with *kanji* or changing the punctuation.

By Simon Pleasants

Seven main types of revisions have been made.³ I’ve listed them below with examples from the first chapter of the Gospel of John.



1. Updating of language

As mentioned above, Japanese has changed over the past four decades, and so some phrases and words have been updated. I couldn’t find any examples of this in John 1, but elsewhere 「かわやに出されてしまう」 has been changed to 「排泄されます」。I got the impression that relatively few revisions fall in this category.

2. Clarifying ambiguous expressions

Revisions have been made in some places where the original translation was unclear. For example, in John 1:33, 「水でバプテスマを授けさせるために」 has been changed to 「水でバプテスマを授けさせるようにと」 to clarify that God sent John in order to baptise with water (purpose) and not because he baptised with water (reason).

3. Changing *hiragana* to *kanji*

The previous editions of the *Shinkaiyaku* contained quite a high proportion of words in *hiragana*. While that made it easier for children and Japanese learners to read, many Japanese people find *kanji* quicker and easier to read than *hiragana*. Consequently, many words have been changed to *kanji* in the new edition. For example, in John 1, 「やみ」 has been replaced with 「闇」, 「あかし」 with 「証し」, and 「ふたり」 with 「二人」.

4. Making the two testaments consistent

As mentioned above, inconsistencies in terms used in the Old and New Testaments in previous editions have been fixed in the *Shinkaiyaku* 2017. In John 1:29, 「小羊」 has been replaced with 「子羊」 for this reason.

5. Making phrases more concise and easier to read

Some phrases that were verbose in the earlier editions have been shortened. This change is designed to improve readability without altering the meaning. In John 1:15, 「叫んで言った」 has been shortened to 「叫んだ」 and there are several other such changes in the passage with other speaking verbs.

6. Making it easier to understand

It was hard to find a specific example of this in John 1, but there were several places where revisions seemed to improve comprehension. Two examples are replacing [ものです] with 「ものだ」 in 「おまえたちは白く塗った墓のようなものです」 and the introduction of paragraphs in Stephen's speech in Acts 7.

7. Updating names of people and places

The names of many proper nouns have been changed to reflect common usage. For example, in John 1:41, 「メシヤ」 has been replaced with 「メシア」 and in the following verse 「ケパ」 has been changed to 「ケファ」.

Opinions of Japanese Christians

I asked a few Japanese Christian friends for their opinions on the *Shinkaiyaku 2017* based on the six passages mentioned above. Their responses varied considerably.

One friend was very enthusiastic about it and wanted to rush out and buy a copy. She said it was much more readable, comparing it to reading a novel. She thought the punctuation was better and the words and phrases were closer to what people use in everyday life. She also liked the use of more *kanji*. Another friend thought that the *Shinkaiyaku 2017* was a definite improvement over the previous edition but didn't feel like the revisions were that big.

Another friend preferred the previous edition. He cited places where he felt the solemnity of the previous edition had been lost by using more everyday Japanese. He also pointed out places where the word-for-word translation resulted in unnatural and overly formal Japanese. Another friend also preferred the previous edition as it spoke to her more directly.

Thoughts of Japanese teachers

I also asked four Japanese adults for their thoughts on the new edition. Three had had limited prior exposure to the Bible and one who had had some exposure. These were four teachers that I took free-talk lessons with on the language-learning site Cafetalk (www.cafetalk.com). Three teachers were not Christians, while one had become a Catholic a few years ago.

I had prepared a document containing both the old and new editions (but without indicating which was the new or old one) of three passages: Genesis 1:1–12, Psalm 23, and John 1:1–14. During the lessons, I asked the teachers to read both versions of each passage and tell me which they preferred and why.

The exercise really highlighted the knowledge gap that exists between Japanese Christians and general Japanese people. The three teachers who had not been exposed to the Bible before really struggled to make any sense of the passages.

For Genesis 1, all teachers thought the new edition was the easiest to read. They commented that the punctuation

was better, the reading was more natural and smooth, and the sentences were not so protracted. Opinion was divided about Psalm 23. The three teachers who had not read the Bible before found the old version easier to understand, whereas the Catholic teacher found the new version easier. For John 1, three of the teachers preferred the new version while one preferred the old one. Of those who preferred the new version, two mentioned that having *kanji* instead of *hiragana* made it easier to read.

As a final exercise, I asked them to read the same three passages in the *Living Bible*, which has been translated into Japanese from the English *New Living Translation*. It is a more paraphrastic translation than the other three Japanese Bible translations. The Catholic teacher preferred the *Shinkaiyaku*, but the other three found the *Living Bible* much more comprehensible and some commented that it was more like reading a novel.

Assessment and recommendations

The *Shinkaiyaku 2017* definitely seems to be a significant improvement over the previous edition. All of the seven kinds of revisions are helpful, and collectively they make the *Shinkaiyaku 2017* more accurate, easier to read, and more up-to-date than its predecessor. It's terrific that there are ongoing efforts to revise this translation of the Bible.

If you're using the *Shinkaiyaku*, it would be well worth your while to investigate the new edition and consider switching to it. I think it's a great translation for personal use, Bible studies, and reading and preaching in church. Don't let the fact that there are more *kanji* frighten you, as all versions published so far have *furigana*.

Probably the area that it fares least well is evangelism, but even here the *Shinkaiyaku 2017* is better than the previous edition. The *Shinkaiyaku 2017* feels like the Japanese equivalent of the *English Standard Version* (ESV) in terms of where it falls on the formal equivalence (word for word) to dynamic equivalence (thought for thought) spectrum. In other words, it tends to favour accuracy of translation over readability, which is great for solid Bible study but not so helpful when introducing someone to Christianity.

The crying need at the moment is for a Japanese Bible that corresponds to the English *New Living Translation*—but one that has been translated from the original languages instead of from the English version. Japan needs a version that is more readable and colloquial than the current translations (would having Jesus and his Galilean disciples speak in *Osaka-ben* be going too far?). Is anyone up for the challenge? **JH**

1. どう変わるか?新しい聖書新改訳2017 Word of Life Press (2017), page 4.

2. Ibid, page 3.

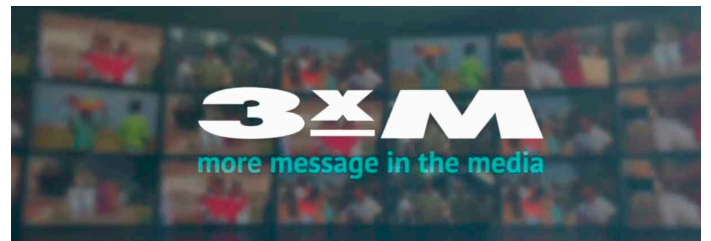
3. Ibid, pages 5-8.

Book image: <https://img05.shop-pro.jp/PA01018/534/product/123080344.jpg>

Combining forces to bring evangelical television to the nations

A ministry based in the Netherlands is working with partners and church leaders to make and broadcast programs with a Christian message in many countries

By Martien Timmer



While working as an accountant in the Netherlands in 1985, I felt God leading me to become involved in a Christian organisation, and for the next four years I prayed that he would direct my steps. He led me to More Message in the Media (3xM), a ministry that is reaching out to people in many countries via television and social media. I have been involved with 3xM for over 28 years and am now its chief executive officer. I am thankful that God has placed me in an organization where I really feel I belong.

Broadcasting the gospel to the nations

3xM was founded in 1980 with the mission of spreading the gospel beyond the borders of the Netherlands. When I joined 3xM, we conducted a feasibility study to evaluate whether we would be able to show evangelical programs on Belgium's national television. After setting up a non-profit organization, we encountered many problems and did not make much progress for a couple of years.

Only after years of trying did our partner receive a phone call from the Belgium government with the news that our programs would be broadcast on the national television channel. Our partner is now self-sufficient and continues to broadcast on national television and radio. It took more than five years and countless visits to achieve this. Despite our initial doubts, we can look back on 25 years of broadcasting the gospel. What seemed like a hopeless cause at the time proved to be a precious investment in the Lord's kingdom!

We also started projects in English-speaking eastern and southern Africa, and we worked for nearly 20 years in Estonia, Romania, and Bulgaria after the Iron Curtain fell. After evaluating our work, we decided to focus on the 10/40 window, the area of the world with the least access to the gospel but which is home to two-thirds of the world's population. We are now working in ten French-speaking countries in western and central Africa as well as in Bangladesh, Pakistan, and Central Asia, and we plan to extend the ministry to Japan and Afghanistan.

An emphasis on unity

3xM works in unity with church leaders in a country. One of the first things we do when starting a project in a country is to bring leaders together in a united effort to reach their nation with evangelical television. This strategy is based on Jesus' prayer in John 17:20–21 (ESV):

I do not ask for these only, but also for those who will believe in me through their word, that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.

We strongly believe that the unity of believers is a powerful key in bringing the gospel to people. The prayer Jesus prayed describes a closeness we often fail to fully appreciate. The relationship between Jesus and his heavenly father is

unbreakable; they are deeply intertwined. The effect of this profound unity is clear: that the world may believe. During my years with 3xM, I have witnessed firsthand the impact that a united effort has in the countries where we work.

I will never forget the day I was asked to sit down with a group of church leaders in Estonia who had been working together for five years. They thanked me for my efforts in bringing them together. Denominations that had once been fighting like cats and dogs were now joining forces to reach common goals.



Lutherans and Pentecostals were evangelizing together in outreaches. God is glorified when his children work together in unity.

Working with partners to make programs

Together with our partners, we have developed a concept of television programs that we create and broadcast on nationwide television channels, often at prime time. Our partners function as a production house, delivering quality programs to television channels, websites, and social media.

Over the years, we have gained the necessary experience while fine-tuning our approach. Television programs suitable for prime time must comply with the requirements of the broadcasting channel. Unfortunately, I have often seen programs made entirely from the standpoint of the Christian producer that ignore basic rules for the medium, such as striking the right balance between entertaining content and the message we want to share with a non-Christian audience.

Our partners have demonstrated that drama is an excellent way to intrigue an audience while presenting the gospel. Their dramas highlight social issues from the perspective of Christian values. Our partner in Bangladesh produces weekly television programs on issues like acid attacks, public harassment of women, corruption, and child trafficking. Episodes are broadcast during prime time on a popular television drama channel owned by a conservative Muslim. This surpasses all expectations, considering we are broadcasting in a country of 180 million people of whom only 1% are Christian!

In Central Asia, programs are made on subjects such as bride kidnapping, domestic violence, and the bullying of girls. These programs are broadcast on the internet as well as on television. The number of views on YouTube exceeds 14.5 million, and one program on bride kidnapping has been viewed over 4.5 million times.

Programs in west Africa address topics such as domestic violence, the effect of social media on marriages, child trafficking, and family life. In 2016, our partner there received 9,000 phone calls and letters, 35,000 comments on a web-

God is glorified when his children work together in unity.

site, 55,000 likes and comments on Facebook, and 26,000 responses through a clinic that plays the programs all day. These responses indicate the large impact these programs are having. We also do independent impact research to evaluate our work.

Plans to broadcast in Japan

I have visited Japan five times in the past six years. During these visits, I've noticed that there is a hesitation to embark on such a project. People have told me that it is too ambitious to achieve at a national level and that the probability of failing and losing face is too great. Another problem is the minimal cooperation between churches of different denominations. My experience has been that if churches unite, a lot of opportunities will present themselves.

During my last trip to Japan, I observed that some Japanese have a deep appreciation of Western culture, others appreciate Japanese culture more, and still others appreciate both. To reach Japanese people, we will need to produce programs that take into account this diversity while proclaiming the gospel.

Looking for leaders in Japan

At 3xM, we are looking for Japanese leaders with a heart for the Japanese people and the ability to unite church leaders in Japan. We want leaders who are willing to head up an evangelical television and social media project on social issues. In particular, we are praying for leaders who are willing to approach the country's television channels and governing bodies about the possibility of starting such a project.

If you have any questions or comments concerning our work, approach or vision, we would love to hear from you (info@3xm-intl.org). More information about the 3xM ministry can be found on our website: www.3xm-intl.org. **JH**

Images from 3xM introduction video: <https://youtu.be/wThIfKYDv1E>

Martien Timmer joined 3xM in 1989 and introduced a new concept for evangelical television, which has opened doors in many hard-to-reach countries. The mission also now generates social media content.

Blast from the past

From 60 years ago...

In April Japan's Anti-Prostitution Law went into effect. Tokyo's 17 red-light districts announced they would close by March 31. The one-year period of grace provided for in the Anti-prostitution Law expired on March 31, with prostitution now illegal as a trade. The union of red-light district operators had a membership of 1,119. Over 600 have already given up their trade, and over 2,000 of the estimated 4,500 prostitutes have found new jobs. This gives all evangelical missionaries cause to consider what is being done for these girls, what could and should be done, and how we individually might help them find the Lord and be restored to a normal place in society.

"Reaching the Prostitutes" by Mary Lo Lant, Vol.6, No. 2, Spring 1958 of *Japan Harvest*

The Sky Blue Series

A new fiction series by a former missionary in Japan

When I was asked to review these books, I was very interested. I love fiction (more than half my library is fiction). And the author, Karol Whaley, had been a missionary in Japan (mainly in Hokkaido) for over two decades, I wondered how she would portray the Japanese people. Though fiction, the story is based on the author's actual experiences in Japan—so in that sense it's very factual.

There are three books, but it's actually one story. They were all page-turners, and I really enjoyed the whole series.

Sky Blue by Karol Whaley (Hartline Literary Agency, 2017).

The main character, Eiko, moves from her home in Hokkaido to Tokyo to start work after finishing college. A series of God-planned events (some not easy to handle) cause her to think about spiritual things—her relationship with God and her family's traditions and beliefs. In the process, she becomes a Christian. This book is a good way to understand how the Japanese think, feel, and can be led to Christ.

Clouds Gray is the second book in the trilogy. The main character Eiko leaves her Tokyo job to return home to Sapporo, Hokkaido, for the New Year's holidays. This begins a time of testing for her. Since it is only a few weeks

Eiko hears the Lord whisper to her, "Eiko, you are like a bamboo plant. You will mature quickly if you continue to follow Me, and I will use you to bless others."

after her father's funeral, she asks her boss for extra time to be with her grieving mother and brother. She is able to share her faith in Christ with them. But just as she plans to return to her routine in Tokyo (which she loves), a skiing accident puts her in a hospital in Sapporo. But because of this, she is able to be of help and shares her faith with those who are in the same hospital room. This book is shorter than the first, so I read it quickly. I highly recommend it. As with *Sky Blue*, it almost seemed that the author sometimes thought of the Japanese word first and then tried to put it in English! I think that is the fate of all of us who know two or more languages well.

Bamboo Green is the third book in the trilogy. In this book, Eiko returns to Tokyo from Hokkaido, where she



had been recuperating from a skiing accident. Returning to work, her church, her neighborhood, and her "boyfriend," she finds things falling into place. Meanwhile, in a park one day, Eiko hears the Lord whisper to her, "Eiko, you are like a bamboo plant. You will mature quickly if you continue to follow Me, and I will use you to bless others." She finds this to be true as she is the maid of honor at her best friend's wedding. Her neighbor becomes more interested in Jesus Christ. And a lady at work (to whom she had witnessed) starts coming to church. As an incurable romantic, I ended up crying a lot at how beautifully things were going. It almost seemed to work out too well.

One complaint I have about this trilogy is that Eiko goes very quickly from being unsaved to going to church to growing in the Lord and becoming a vital member of the church. Having been a church planter in Japan for nearly forty years, I thought things seemed to move too fast. But perhaps the author was just trying to show the steps one goes through to becoming a Christian and then becoming someone used of the Lord. Though the process might take a long time, it doesn't have to. That's encouraging.

I highly recommend the whole trilogy. Though it is fiction, it accurately depicts what a Japanese goes through as they hear the Gospel and respond to it. For those of us in Japan, it is a well-known story. For those who don't know how it is in Japan, it is a very good depiction and can be used to pray for us as we labor for our Lord in this country. **JH**

Reviewer rating is 5 of 5 stars ★★★★★



Ken Reddington is an MK who returned to Japan as a church-planting missionary 39+ years ago. He's always liked to read. He reads 15-20 books a year, though that includes rereading some of his favorites.

From short-term trips to long-term commitment

God used the love and prayers of two men to transform me into wanting to serve long-term in Japan

Why would I ever want to be a missionary? I hated bugs, considered myself a picky eater, and was rather fond of modern conveniences such as air conditioning and computers. In high school and college, I avoided making eye contact with missionaries because I was afraid they might ask me to become a missionary. However, God used leaps of faith by a pastor with a heart for Japan and a Japanese missionary to change my mind toward missions (and food!).

The first taste of Japan

Dr. Randy Gilmore, a pastor from Indiana and now Pacific Rim Director at Word of Life Fellowship, had a passion nurtured by God to share the gospel with Japanese people. He took a leap of faith by leading trips to expose college students to Japanese culture and ministry. My college agreed to offer one of those trips. Soon after, tucked away in the morning announcements, were the words, “If you’re interested in visiting Japan, please meet up front after chapel.” A short trip to Japan where we would serve God and see the culture sounded great; it wasn’t a real commitment to missions.

During this trip, I helped at Bethel Baptist Church in Iwatsuki, Saitama, under Baptist Mid-Missions missionary Joe Mita, who took the next leap of faith. During free times, he invested time and energy into finding out more about me, sharing about Japanese culture and ministry, and even offering helpful life advice. His concern for someone he had recently met and his love of God greatly affected me. God was gradually changing my heart.

Preparing to serve at home

On returning from the trip, I began seminary, where my focus remained on training for pastoral ministries in the US (my home country). God used my experience in Japan to crack my heart open and allow the idea of being a mission-minded pastor to brew. Taking trips to serve and encourage missionaries while exposing church members to firsthand experience of God’s work in other countries seemed perfect. Of course, Japan was near the top of the list of places to go. What a great way to help missions without committing myself to full-time mission work!

While I walked this life path, Pastor Gilmore took another leap of faith by asking me to come again to Japan as a team leader, offering added responsibility during the trip. God provided another opportunity to see Japan, serve him,

and gain experience. In addition, I could reconnect with the Mita family. I returned to the US from that trip still convinced that God wanted me to pastor a church back home. Why else would I have received all this training and experience?

A life-changing year

The following summer, I graduated from seminary and married the love of my life. We started looking for a pastoral position in the US. However, God orchestrated things such that the day I confirmed a promising pastoral interview with a church, I also received an email from the Mitas in Japan. In a gigantic leap of faith, they asked if we would consider coming to Japan and helping Bethel Baptist for a year. They assured us they would not push us for further commitments. After much prayer and discussion with our church and Christian friends, including Pastor Gilmore, we accepted their offer. We then raised a year’s worth of support and moved to Japan.

God used that year to change our lives.

The faith it took to invite relatively unknown newlyweds to move to Japan and help the church spoke to us. The Mitas kept their word, never pushing us to return to Japan full-time. That year spent serving the church and reaching out to the surrounding neighborhoods accomplished what pure logic and argument could not—it made me want to become a missionary.

More accurately, I realized and joyfully submitted to God’s calling for me to serve as a missionary. I praise God that my wife also realized her call.

God can do amazing things

The teenager who feared becoming a missionary has now become an adult who can now think of nothing else in the world he would rather do. So please do not fear asking people to do great things for God. We must prayerfully consider reaching out and encouraging people to serve God in the ways he has enabled them to serve. Those two men not only reached out to me, they also stayed connected and prayed—even when I voiced my desire to stay stateside. We serve a great God who uses people to accomplish his will. What a great privilege we have, not only to share the gospel, but also to teach the next generation how to do the same. **JH**

Andrew Gonnerman and his wife spent 15 months living in Saitama and Nagano as short-term missionaries. This spring, they will arrive in Tokyo as Baptist Mid-Missions missionaries and begin language school.



With Joe Mita

Photo provided by author

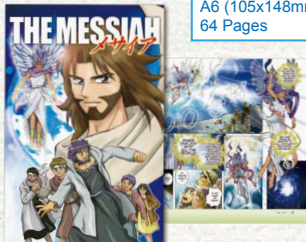
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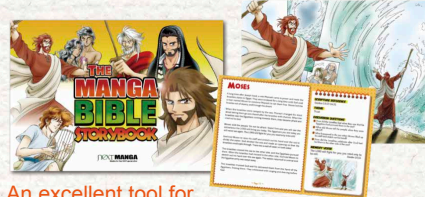
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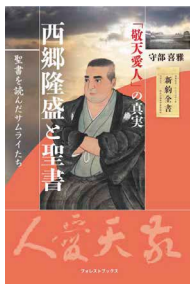
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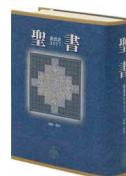


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A house of prayer

Jesus calls us to place prayer at the centre of his church

In his book *Fresh Wind, Fresh Fire*, New York pastor Jim Cymbala describes one of his early messages at the famous Brooklyn Tabernacle. It was a Sunday evening and 15 people were gathered in a dingy meeting room. Just as he was preparing to close, the pew holding five of them collapsed!

That was 45 years ago. Jim decided then that it was time to turn to the Lord in prayer and that the Tuesday evening prayer service would be his primary focus. God has answered beyond all expectations. They now hold three services on Sunday in a beautifully renovated theatre that seats 3,200 and they still meet for prayer on Tuesday evening. But you will spend an hour or longer in the line that wraps around the block to get into any service, including the prayer meeting. What a testimony to the power of prayer.

Jesus put great emphasis on its importance by his example of continual communion with his Father, by his intercession, and by his angry reaction to the busy-ness (and business) of the people in the temple in Jerusalem. In

Prayer gives us access to the very throne room of heaven and invokes the power of the Almighty. When we call on him, he begins to coordinate schedules and align resources. Since his ways are not our ways, we can expect some surprising changes to our plans. And he will

Prayer is the sacred ground on which God builds his church and his kingdom.

answer in ways that far exceed our greatest expectations because prayer to build his kingdom is at the centre of his will. Our own best work is just a waste unless we draw on the power and love of the Lord, because “unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it” (Psalm 127:1).

Let’s determine that we will set apart time to hear the voice of God, to bow in worship, and to lay our needs and concerns before him, especially when we are overrun with busy-ness. It is then that we truly must find time for prayer so that God can arrange events, solve problems, reveal his will, and indeed, enable us to get everything done that needs to be done.

James Paterson, my good friend in Ontario, makes “prayer machines”—interactive art that illustrates the impact of prayer. A small wheel with a handle on it animates the entire sculpture, putting it in motion through wheels, pulleys, and belts. What a demonstration of the great truth that our often unseen, seemingly insignificant prayers reach the ear of the Almighty and call him to action.

And that’s when mountains move. **JH**



Mark 11 we read how he blocked the traffic and overturned the tables of the moneychangers, saying, “Is it not written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer for all the nations?’” (v. 17 NASB).

Prayer is the sacred ground on which God builds his church and his kingdom. So, while worship and teaching contribute to a healthy church, Jesus stressed the centrality of prayer as the core function of the house of God. Therefore, it should be *our* first priority, especially when we are about the work of the King and his kingdom. Everything else will arise from that foundation.

An edited extract from an article in *SERVANT* magazine, a ministry of Prairie Bible Institute (prairie.edu). Used by permission.

Mark Maxwell is president of Prairie Bible Institute in Alberta, Canada.

SERVANT magazine is published twice a year by Prairie Bible Institute (<http://prairie.edu/servant>). Subscriptions to *SERVANT* are available for those in North America. For those living overseas, email notification when the magazine has been posted to Prairie's website is available. I highly recommend *SERVANT* magazine.

Ken Reddington

Cultural intelligence

Some guidelines and qualities for developing the intelligence needed to adjust to life in another culture

“Culture is a set of shared assumptions and values that distinguishes one group from another.”¹

Knowing how to adapt to another culture is essential for successful cross-cultural living, but the training that most missionaries receive emphasizes language acquisition. While it may include some references to cultural practices (such as not wearing shoes in the house and it being okay to slurp noodles), it rarely mentions the need to develop good cross-cultural skills, or cultural intelligence, which is the key to adjusting well to living in another culture. Below, I define cultural intelligence and give some guidelines on how to develop it as well as some personal qualities that enhance it.



Cultural intelligence is one’s ability to adapt to different cultures and to understand people’s values, beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors.² We can “use this information to communicate, collaborate, and negotiate with people from diverse backgrounds.”³ Cultural intelligence is about gaining intelligence, but it requires both empathy and observation to put that knowledge to use.⁴

Three skills are needed to develop cultural intelligence: cultural knowledge, cross-cultural skills, and cultural mindfulness.⁵

Cultural knowledge is the process of getting to know a culture. This can be done through studying and acquiring information about a culture. You can develop your cultural knowledge by learning what makes a culture unique, focusing on the behaviors, beliefs, and rituals that are distinct to it.⁶

Cross-cultural skills are skills learned through living cross-culturally and include:

- relational skills: interacting with others
- tolerance of uncertainty: being okay with not understanding everything
- adaptability: behaving flexibly in new situations
- empathy: trying to understand how people feel
- perceptual acuity: discerning what others’ actions might mean

Cultural mindfulness means that “one is aware of the cultural context, consciously analyzes the interactive situation, and plans courses of actions for different cultural contexts.”⁷ In other words, set a goal (for example, to understand the way people greet each other) and then

observe how people in the other culture do greetings, such as bowing and shaking hands. The next step is to try greeting others yourself and observe how people react. Evaluate this reaction and build on this information. Only by doing this last step can you begin to develop your cultural intelligence.

The following three qualities help you become more culturally intelligent:

Drive: Your desire to know a culture shapes how well you will adjust to your new place. Seeing differences as challenges rather than obstacles will make acclimation to a new culture easier and even enjoyable.

Knowledge: Rather than just accumulate information, observe how the culture shapes a country’s

values, behaviors, and beliefs. A good start is to watch how people interact, including their facial expressions and body language.

Strategy: Think on your feet when things don’t go smoothly. As you become more culturally aware, it becomes natural to quickly adapt to new situations.

Cultural intelligence is essential for good cross-cultural adaptation. Fortunately, the steps and skills for improving cultural intelligence can easily be included into everyday life. **JH**

1. Matthew MacLachlan “Cultural intelligence: What is it and what is my score?” 13 December 2016, <https://www.communicaid.com/cross-cultural-training/blog/do-you-have-cultural-intelligence/>
2. Echo Yuan Liao “Why you need cultural intelligence (and how to develop it)” 24 March 2015, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/iese/2015/03/24/why-you-need-cultural-intelligence-and-how-to-develop-it/#1b493c4e17d6>
3. Ibid, Liao
4. David Livingstone “The Cultural Intelligence Difference: Master the One Skill You Can’t Do Without in Today’s Global Economy” 2011, <https://www.mind-tools.com/pages/article/cultural-intelligence.htm>
5. David Livermore and Linn Van Dyne “Cultural Intelligence: The Essential Intelligence for the 21st Century” 2015, <https://culturalq.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/SHRM-report.pdf>
6. Ibid, Livingstone
7. Ibid, Liao



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.

Why do you write prayer letters?

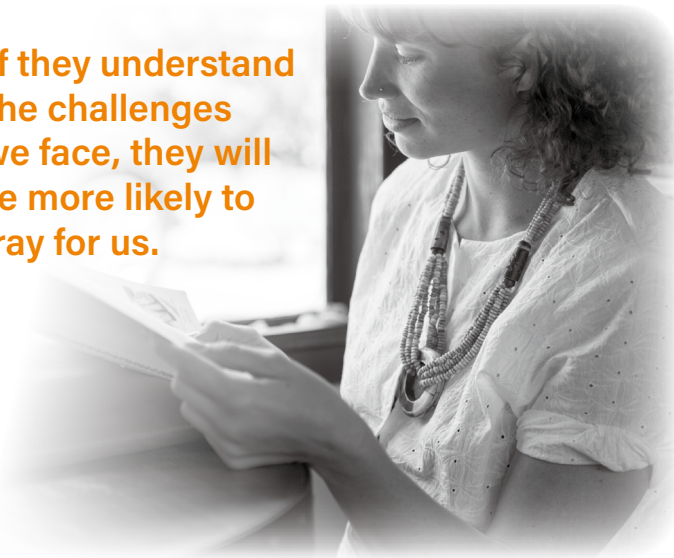
Knowing why you write helps you to decide what to write

Our first answer to the question of why we write prayer letters might be: because our mission said we have to. Maybe we write because we want to thank people for supporting us or to be accountable to them. Perhaps our motivation is the fear that people might stop supporting us if we don't write. Other reasons why we write might include a desire for more prayer or a yearning for people to understand the challenges we face.

Identifying why we write will change what we include and the format we use. It will also influence how often and how much we write.

I'm passionate about communication, particularly using the written word. That's how I've ended up as an editor and writer. I'm especially passionate about writing good prayer letters. We receive prayer letters from a number of missionaries in various ministries and locations. We pray most often for the ones we receive prayer letters from frequently (usually monthly) and whose prayer letters are

If they understand the challenges we face, they will be more likely to pray for us.



the easiest to read (i.e. they are not 15 pages long with prayer points buried in the middle).

I'm also passionate about writing as honestly about our lives and ministry as possible. My desire is that our prayer supporters understand that our lives aren't perfect or easy, yet God works in and through us. If they understand the challenges we face, they will be more likely to pray for us. It is a difficult balance to find, but I continue to seek it.

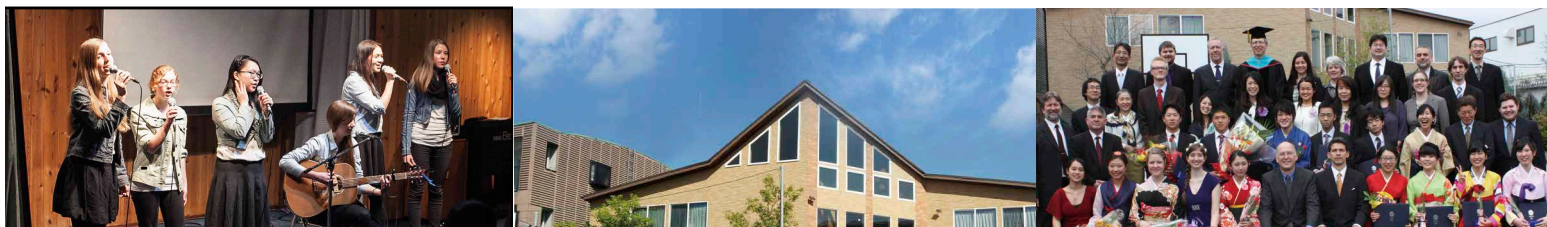
So why do I write prayer letters? Because they keep us in touch with our supporters and when we stay in touch with them, they are more likely to support us—in prayer and other ways too. Why do you write them? **JH**

For further thought-provoking material on this topic see: <https://www.edifyhub.com/blog/why-write-missionary-prayer-support-letters/>

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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You too can create a website

Free tools like WordPress and low-cost site builders can help anyone have an online presence

Do you wish there was a website for your church, outreach, or even just yourself as a missionary, but think you'd have to pay someone to make it? You might be surprised at how easy it is to make a website yourself, even with no technical skills. Here are the basic steps.

To include additional information and clickable links, I have put a post on my own website to go with this article:

<http://L4JP.com/easy-website>

1. Choose an identity: domain name

The domain name is the most basic part of the website address, like jema.org or danellrick.com. You can register one for about US\$15 a year. With a domain name, you not only can create a website, you can make your own email addresses, like jema-info@jema.org or karen@proverbs2525.org (that's me!).

Brainstorm ideas for a domain name and then check to see what is available. It's best to do your checking on a site that has no commercial interest (otherwise eavesdroppers may register a domain when you show interest and try to sell it to you later). A safe place is InterNIC (www.internic.net), the US government agency that monitors registration. Go to the site, click on "Whois," type your dream domain name, and click "Submit,"—if it says "No match," the name is available. Once you've decided on a domain name, you can register it at the same time as you do the next step.

2. Rent a room: hosting

Next, you need a place to put the site—this is called web hosting. Some hosters claim to be free, but there is always a catch, so it's better to pay a little. You can go two directions at this point:

All-in-one website builder service: Well-known ones are Squarespace, Weebly, and Wix (listed in my order of recommendation). They include hosting and their own drag-and-drop interface for creating your site. They cost slightly more and have less flexibility, but if the rest of this article sounds daunting, consider a website builder service. See my web post above for more information.

Self-hosted WordPress: This is how I build websites—I get a basic hosting account and run Wordpress on it. This gives you complete control over your site. A basic but good hosting account typically costs US\$8–10 a month. Most hosters offer a lower price (e.g. US\$3–5) for the first period you choose to pay up front (e.g. one to two years), and most will also give you a free year of domain registration. Hosters vary in terms of quality of

support, reliability, and other factors. A few hosters I think do a pretty good job are InMotion, SiteGround, BlueHost, and HostGator. If you need a hoster in Japan that provides support in Japanese, check out Sakura Internet.

3. Start the engine: WordPress

WordPress is not the only free "engine" available for managing the text, images, and layout of websites, but it's far and away the most popular—a quarter of the internet is running on Wordpress. Any good hoster will offer a quick installation of Wordpress (called "one-click") and in less than a minute you have the start of a website.

4. Express yourself: content and appearance

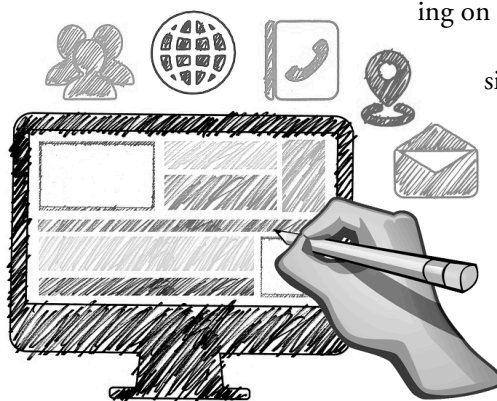
At this point, you'll have a website but only a bit of sample content. Now the fun begins—you'll replace that sample content with what you want to say and choose what's called a theme to give it an appearance you like.

There are tons of WordPress tutorials for beginners. The official documentation is at <https://codex.wordpress.org> and has many written guides covering every aspect. In addition, many people have recorded video tutorials, with more appearing all the time. I have selected a few recent YouTube videos to get you started—see my web post for the links. And don't be afraid to experiment and learn as you go—try something, and if you don't like it, try something else.

You'll hear the terms "page" and "post", and a common question is, "What's the difference?" Pages are static content, like ministry descriptions, contact forms, directions, bios, etc., which normally appear on the main menu. Posts are time-based pieces of writing published on the website, like articles on a blog, and are also useful for displaying ministry updates, event announcements, and sermons—anything that gets added over time. The *Japan Harvest* website (japanharvest.org) is a good example of how to use both: the items on the dark blue menu are pages, but all the magazine articles are posts. You can choose whether or not to also allow comments on your posts, depending on the kind of site you are building.

So what are you waiting for? Missionaries are communicators, so go ahead and use the web to get your message out, and have fun doing it! If you have questions, feel free to contact me. **JH**

Karen Ellrick and her husband Dan have been in Japan since 1996. Karen's specialty is developing resources for churches and ministries (see a few at L4JP.com). She is also designer and production editor for Japan Harvest.



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by Randall Short, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies

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Life-changing internship

Short-term missions have changed since the '70s, but God has not

Between my second and third year of seminary (in St. Louis, Missouri, US) I was given the opportunity to go to Japan for a foreign mission internship. I was seeking the Lord as to how I was to serve him after graduating. That was 44 years ago.

I grew up in Tokyo as a son of missionaries but had reservations about being a missionary to the Japanese myself. I was insecure as to my abilities and also had an indifference to the spiritual needs of the Japanese. The Lord had to take me to Japan so that he could open my eyes and heart. At the end of the year in Japan, I was convinced that I was to serve Christ amongst the Japanese.

My short-term experience

I was one of six English teachers with a group called Life Ministries and they began their first ESL “Scrum Dendo” that summer. A Japanese seminary student served as the chaplain, and as a team we ministered in a small church in Shizuoka. The idea of the rugby scrum was that it was to be a team effort—a good lesson to start out with.

During my internship I was invited to serve on the summer hi-b.a. camp staff in Chiba and participate in the lives of the campers. The opportunity for high school students to invite their non-Christian friends and be under the Word of God for a week was an effective way to introduce them to Jesus. Friendship, Bible study, and fun for teenagers that led to conversions were very encouraging.

The church in Nagoya that I attended wanted to reach out to the youth on Saturday afternoons. The pastor and I passed out invitations to attend English classes and watch Moody Institute of Science films. Many of those I met through this church on weekends encouraged me to come back as a career missionary. The same thing happened when I spent three months with another church and assisted the pastor there.

Influential men

Matsubarako Camp in Nagano Prefecture offered an ice skating and English week with Bible instruction. I was invited to help out one week, and on that particular

occasion Rev. Jim McAlpine was the guest speaker. He was a veteran missionary in Japan and used a Japanese interpreter for his teaching.

While in Tokyo, I was able to join Rev. David Martin in some of his classes as he was involved in church planting. As we rode the train together he would often recite chapters of the Japanese Bible.

Both of these men, though very different, were faithful to Jesus and expressed their love of Jesus well. The Lord used them wonderfully in Japan.

Reflecting on my experience

I am full of thanks to the Lord for the way he placed me in these different ministries. Most of the men I worked with have now graduated to glory. By writing this article, I pay tribute to their faithful witness for Jesus and their being a help to open my spiritual eyes.

I needed to learn from 2 Corinthians 12:9–10 that the Lord uses weak servants who will trust in Jesus, and it is only this reliance that makes them strong in Christ. I needed to learn from 1 Corinthians 3:7–8 that the Lord uses some to sow the truth of Christ’s words and others to water or add to that teaching, while only God can give the spiritual life and growth. I also had to be shown that Japan needed many more witnesses for Jesus because the numbers were few.

My calling to reach the Japanese for Christ remains strong all these years later. My wife and I have served in six Japanese churches—two in Japan, two in Australia, and two in the US. We are now in Nashville, Tennessee, serving Japanese through a multi-cultural church.

It’s been said that “The strongest power a person has is love.” The act of accepting others as they are and being kind to them is an entry way to a person’s heart. The Christian missionary can show the love of Christ in many different ways. The Spirit of God needs to work to open the heart, but in my experience it seems that those who had some earlier contact with Christianity tend to be more receptive. This truth remains: some sow and some water, but growth is through the work of the Spirit applying the power of the Word.

Many years have passed since I went to Japan on a short-term trip. I’m glad I listened to the suggestion of my brother Bruce to go. I am thankful to Rev. Phil Foxwell for setting up the ministry schedule and grateful to the Lord for that life-changing internship. **JH**

Stephen Young was born in Tokyo, a third-generation missionary kid. Since receiving his M.Div. in St. Louis, Missouri, he and his wife have been ministering to the Japanese for forty years with MTW.

Matsubarako Winter Camp in 1975



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