JH
Japan Harvest
Winter 2019

WORKING TOGETHER

Contents

Japan Harvest

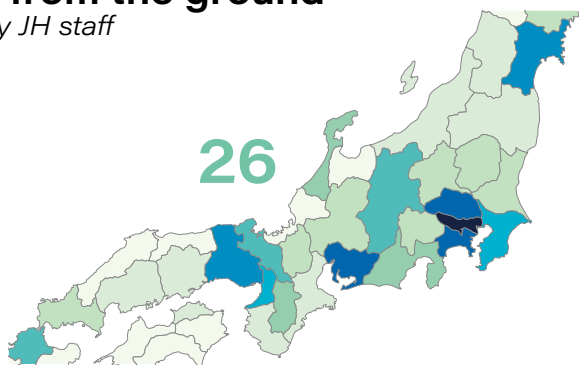
Winter 2019

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

Forward

General Articles

Feature Articles



Regulars

January

WIM Winter Day of Prayer

January 15, 2019
Japan Alliance Mission Chapel
Higashi Tokorozawa, Saitama

February

JEMA Connect

February 25-27, 2019
Ochanomizu Christian Center, Tokyo

March

WIM Annual Spring Retreat

March 6-8, 2019
Fukuin no Ie, Okutama

Hokkaido Christian Women's Fellowship Day Retreat

March 9, 2019
OMF Hokkaido Center, Sapporo

Kansai Christian Women's Conference

March 11, 2019
Kobe Union Church

May

Okutama Prayer Summit

May 14-17, 2019
Okutama Bible Chalet

Kansai Prayer Summit

May 20-23, 2019
Nosegawa Bible Camp, Kawanishi, Hyogo

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

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

Cover photo: Pastors and church workers at a two-day prayer summit in Kochi (contributed by Ken Reddington)

JH Japan Harvest

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From the Editor

Working together

Helen Keller once said, "Alone we can do so little, together we can do so much."[1] This is true across many areas of life, from school projects to great sporting achievements.

As an Aussie who enjoys watching sport, I can't resist a sporting story here. Our eldest is a wrestler and was undefeated in his senior year at CAJ. When he was in year nine, CAJ had some seniors who'd been wrestling together for several years and who formed a solid core for the team. Two of them were excellent and rarely beaten. The rest we watched struggle—sometimes winning, sometimes losing.

I had the privilege of seeing their last tournament together. One by one these young men made their way closer to getting a medal. In the end, our team of eleven wrestlers ended up with two golds, two silvers, two bronzes, and one sixth place. CAJ's wrestling team is always relatively small, but that year especially, they achieved beyond what you might expect of a comparatively small school. Part of it was the camaraderie the guys had developed as a team.

Wrestling doesn't seem like a team sport, but it very much is. They literally can't train alone. And in a high-pressure competition, your mental approach is important. Having teammates that support you, and wrestle well themselves, makes a huge difference.

Believe it or not, the analogy applies to ministry. How much more can we do when we have others who are working alongside us—supporting and encouraging —as well as working together with us?

As the Teacher in Ecclesiastes tells us:

> "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labour: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. . . Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken" (Ecc. 4:9-10,12 NIV UK).

Working together in Japan

There are many obstacles to working with others, of course, and these only increase when you're working in cross-cultural teams.

This issue looks at two different aspects of working together: teamwork amongst missionaries and working with Japanese ministry partners. Peter Dallman has written a biblical perspective on teamwork, and John Edwards gives us a succinct list of five essentials for teamwork.

Two of our editors, Rachel Hughes and Simon Pleasants, have interviewed both Japanese people and missionaries about their experience of working with each other. Our proofreader, Ken Reddington, has written the Voice of Experience column about handing over churches he and his wife have planted to Japanese pastors.

Working together on *Japan Harvest* magazine

As I've written in my Good Writing column, I work with a lot of people to get this magazine into your hands each quarter. It's both a rewarding and challenging experience. I value the writers who contribute each time, but I especially appreciate the varied skills that our magazine team possesses. Together we're able to produce this valuable resource for the missionary community.

At present we're searching for a new team member: a fact checker. We take great pains to ensure we produce a magazine that you can rely on, that makes sense, and that doesn't make unverified statements. Perhaps you are known as a bit pedantic about details, or you like to look things up to check if they are actually correct? If so, maybe you'd be a good fit for this volunteer position. Please contact me for more information.

I pray that you'll be encouraged, inspired, and equipped by this issue of *Japan Harvest*.

Yours in Christ's service,
Wendy
Managing Editor

The themes for the upcoming issues are:
Spring 2019: Returnees (submission deadline January 10)
Summer 2019: Engaging the Community (submission deadline March 31)
Autumn 2018: Thriving in Japan (submission deadline June 30)
Winter 2020: Seize the Day (submission deadline August 30)

1. Quote investigator: https://quoteinvestigator.com/2014/04/21/together/ Accessed October 17.

Japan Har

Volume 70 No. 1 WINTER 2019 Isaiah 52:7

Promoting life through music

Christian Shimbun, July 15, 2018
Translated byTomoko Kato, photos submitted by Christian Shimbun

According to a White Paper on Suicide Prevention published by the Ministry of Health, Labour, and Welfare in May, Japan ranks sixth highest for number of suicides among 90 countries and regions of the world. Suicide is the leading cause of death among youth in Japan, and the country has an alarmingly high suicide rate for a developed nation.

Fūka Yazaki, a gospel singer based in Gunma Prefecture, explains, "I got into music because I wanted to reduce the number of suicides in Gunma." Yazaki herself struggled with suicidal thoughts from when she was in primary school, and she now wants to use her songs to share a message of hope with those suffering through the same thing. At her first live solo performance on May 12, at a concert hall in Takasaki, Gunma, 70% of the audience were non-Christians. Yazaki said, "What I like best is singing for God and showing people who I really am," so the second half of the concert featured mainly gospel music.

Brought up in a Christian home, Yazaki didn't question the existence of God, but wondered, "Why do I have to live in a world where there's more sorrow than happiness? It's too hard for me to fit in, and even though I know God, I don't enjoy being alive, so isn't it better to die?" Five people close to Yazaki have committed suicide, so, "Suicide was not a distant matter to me. I felt it could happen any time."

Yazaki began playing the piano when she was 10, and at 15 she formed a band with some friends. At their school festival, they performed one of her original songs with the message that, "You were born to be loved." A girl who listened to Yazaki's song came to her in tears afterwards, saying, "It was great. Thank you." But sadly the girl took her own life the year that Yazaki finished junior high school.

In her second year of employment, Yazaki suffered from depression. "Dying was all I could think about each day." However, she got through that period by remembering the words of 1 Corinthians 10:13: "God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear" (NIV). Although Yazaki struggled to believe in God while she was depressed, she nevertheless thought to herself, "If God is real, things will come out as he wants. I'll manage, somehow, if he is with me."

"I got through that time and recovered, so I feel like now I have to share my message of hope and survival." She bought a keyboard and an amplifier and started singing in front of Takasaki Station. Her original songs were well received, and a passerby told her about other places she could perform, giving her the opportunity to start singing in restaurants and bars as well.

Yazaki began having her music played by the local FM radio station, and released her first CD only a year after her debut. She became a regular performer on local TV, and even ended up with her own radio program. She's written more than 50 original songs covering a wide range of themes—from messages of hope for people contemplating suicide, to songs of lost love, humorous songs, and songs praising God. "I write various kinds of music so that my message reaches people who do not know God."

Yazaki was 11 years old when, at a church camp, she had a vision of Jesus on the cross, and found herself among the crowd shouting "Crucify him!" "Then I realized that Jesus was crucified because of my sinfulness," she said. "Back in those days, I was always quarreling with people, but I repented." She wrote a song called *Passion of the Christ-Thank you* about her experience coming to understand the meaning of the cross. Along with her desire to reduce the suicide rate, Yazaki hopes that people who listen to her music will take an interest in the Bible and church. ■

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!"

Lessons from Japan's early Christians

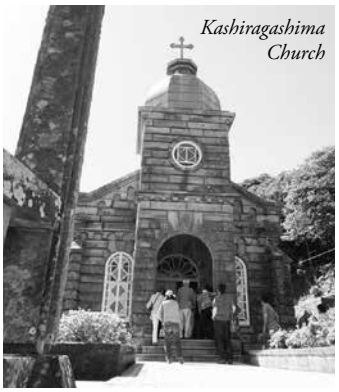
Christian Shimbun, August 26, 2018
Written by Yasushi Tomonō, Senior Pastor of Tokiwadai Baptist Church
Translated by Nobue Tachiki, photos submitted by Christian Shimbun


Former Gorin Church

Last year, I joined a tour of the filming location for *Silence*, a movie based on Catholic writer Shūsaku Endō's historical novel about Jesuit missionaries facing intense persecution in 17th-century Japan. A Protestant curator of the Twenty-Six Martyrs Museum in Nagasaki showed us crosses that had been carefully kept hidden for generations and statues of the Virgin and Child in the guise of Kannon (a Buddhist deity). She said, "I sometimes ask myself, if Protestantism had been introduced in that period of persecution, would it have been passed down in the same way that Catholicism has?" Those words have been ringing in my ears ever since.

In 2016, UNESCO rejected a bid to World Heritage-list churches and related sites in Nagasaki and Kumamoto, but a more recent nomination was successful, reframed as "Hidden Christian Sites in the Nagasaki Region," with a focus not on architectural beauty, but rather on the communities of early Japanese Christians who endured severe persecution for almost 250 years.

The World Heritage listing covers 12 sites: from the remains of Hara Castle, where local Catholics clashed with the Tokugawa Shogunate during the Shimabara Rebellion; to Ōura Cathedral, where hidden Christians were miraculously discovered. Until the local government started maintaining sites related to hidden Christians due to their World Heritage listing, most of them had been neglected and forgotten, not even appearing on local tourist maps. I see their new level of recognition as an indication that the Christian faith has finally been accepted in Japanese society. I rejoice that God's time has come at last, and that Japan's history of Christian suffering and faith can be utilized for preaching the gospel.


Kashiragashima Church

The recognized sites are so spread out around Nagasaki and Kumamoto that it would be difficult to visit all of them in one trip. Here are some reflections based on my own experience of visiting a number of them over my 14 years living in Nagasaki.

From the perspective of a Protestant, it's a great opportunity to humbly learn from history. There were undoubtedly human-rights violations and discrimination issues during Japan's period of national isolation (*sakoku*) and the ban on Christianity. Yet we can't deny that persecution was partly caused by the way missions were conducted back then—the policy of church-state unity, intolerance of other religions, and discord and infighting within missionary groups. These are not issues confined to the past, and we should seek God's guidance as we consider our approach to local mission today.

I also recommend visiting churches that aren't included in the World Heritage listing—those that were built from the Meiji Era onward with joy at the return of Christianity from hiding. For example, Tabira Cathedral is not just a beautiful building—constructed with bricks baked one-by-one by its poverty-stricken members and with its stained-glass windows—it is also a powerful witness to those who held onto their faith through a time of silence. Since the Reformation, the Protestant church has shifted its focus away from the appearance of buildings and sought simplicity, but I cannot help thinking that Catholic churches like this one provide a stepping stone for the unreached to encounter God's love in a visible way.

In 2002, during my ministry at Nagasaki Baptist Church, we organized a 100th anniversary concert to reach youth through gospel music, and gathered a choir of 100 people. The first applicant was a woman working at City Hall in Shimabara—home to the ruins of Hara Castle, which were long shunned by locals as a cursed place and had not even been excavated when I visited around 2000. This lady became a Christian following the concert, and later even ended up directing our church choir. When UNESCO's World Heritage announcement was broadcast live from Bahrain in July, she performed a hymn she had written and publicly professed her faith. She said, "I was asked if I am a Christian, and I said 'yes.' I was given an opportunity that day to stop being a hidden Christian and proclaim my faith."

I hope that the World Heritage listing of Christian sites in the Nagasaki region will go beyond just recognizing the faith of Japan's early Christians as a thing of the past. May we learn from history, and humbly and boldly proclaim the gospel of Christ's love to the world. ■

By Peter Dallman

Paul's team on Crete: Working together in ministry

Paul's letter to Titus reveals travel, rootedness, mutual support, and affection

On the island of Crete, the apostle Paul worked in ministry with a group of people. Let's call them Paul's Crete Mission Team. Based on a short account of these people in Titus 3:12–15, this article examines what's involved in working together for ministry and how we can do it too.

Who was on Paul's Crete Mission Team?

We don't get the whole list, just some names of the people Paul worked with:

Titus. Paul's faithful delegate, sent to Crete and Dalmatia (modern Albania). He was a Gentile, a solid, faithful man of God.

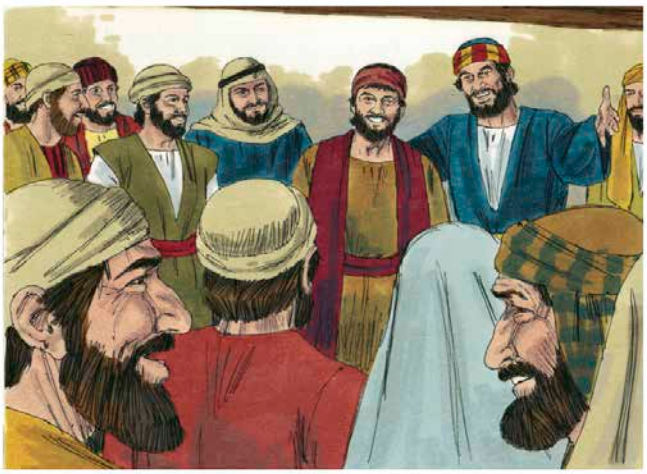
Artemas. This is the only biblical reference to this man, but Paul thought him a worthy replacement for Titus so he must have been a faithful, mature man of God, willing to serve.

Tychicus. He travelled with Paul at the end of Paul's third missionary journey. Later, he was with Paul in Rome during the apostle's imprisonment. He carried Paul's letters to the Ephesians and Colossians; we have those letters because of him! He was willing to suffer and travel for Christ.

Zenas. He may have been a Gentile lawyer or a Jewish expert in the Mosaic Law. But this clever man sacrificed his work to go on a mission trip to Crete. Clearly, money and fame were not his aims in life.

Apollos. A great public speaker who came to Ephesus. There, some of Paul's other co-workers, Priscilla and Aquila, took him aside and taught him the way of God more accurately (Acts 18:26). The fact that he listened shows he had a humble, teachable heart.

Other Christians. In Titus 3:14, Paul refers to the Christians in Crete as "our people" (NIV). Paul's view is that he is working together with all the believers on Crete. That's a bigger view than most of us have. We don't know where Paul was when he wrote this letter; he may have been in Macedonia or Achaia. But we know that he was not alone, as he writes, "all with me" (v. 15). Paul was staying at a church, and they were working with him too.



What a diverse, talented, godly, and widely-spread group of people! We can imagine they might have had differences of opinion. They had different skills, backgrounds, and experiences. Besides this, they were all still tainted by sin. This description does not seem too different to the people we work with, does it? Perhaps they were really learning to "say 'No' to ungodliness and worldly passions" and were living "self-controlled, upright and godly lives" (Titus 2:12).

What did Paul's Crete Mission Team do?

They travelled.

All the individuals named in this passage were travelling for the gospel: Paul and Titus to Nicopolis; Artemas or Tychicus to Crete; Zenas and Apollos came from Paul and were going somewhere else. The gospel message has movement in it. Christ himself travelled from heaven's glory to earth's sin. As we carry the gospel, let's not be surprised if we, too, have to travel.

They stayed in one place.

Others stayed in one place. Some believers Paul worked with put down roots in a community and began to see that community changed by God's power. The gospel message also has a rootedness about it. Jesus comes to dwell with us. As *The Message* puts it: "The Word became flesh and blood and moved into the neighborhood" (John 1:14). As we work with people in Japan, we too may become deeply rooted in a Japanese neighbourhood.

They supported one another and the ministry.

This seems to be the main reason for all the travelling. If we put the pieces together, we get a picture like this: one of Paul's co-workers travelled to do ministry; that ministry was an encour-

agement and a support to the local church; that church then supported Paul's team member, sending them on "with everything they need" (Titus 3:13). And it may well be that the pattern was repeated. This is not surprising—perhaps they saw themselves as members of the body of Christ, not separate members (1 Cor 12:12ff).

Do we support other people's ministries this way? How can we support one another across the JEMA community, for instance? Do I ensure that the people I work with have everything they need for their next stage of ministry?

They learned to do what was good.

Paul said, "Our people must learn to devote themselves to doing what is good, in order to provide for urgent needs and not live unproductive lives" (Titus 3:14). And Titus was to set the example.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer called doing good "the ministry of helpfulness". He said, "This means, initially, the simple assistance in trifling, external matters." And that "Only where hands are not too good for deeds of love and mercy in everyday helpfulness can the mouth joyfully and convincingly proclaim the message of God's love and mercy."[1] How can we be helpful to those we work with? It is important if we are to work together well.

They greeted, loved, and prayed for each other.

I can imagine Paul, as he is writing this letter, being interrupted by people he is with. They knock on his door and say things like, "Send my greeting to Titus, will you?" or "Sorry Paul, but I just want you to tell Titus that I remember a talk he gave. It really helped me understand Jesus." Then another and another, until Paul can't fit in all the details but can only say at the end of this letter, "Everyone with me sends you greetings."

Paul also sends greetings to the people with Titus on Crete. He describes them with an intimate phrase, "those that love us in the faith" (v. 15). This greeting is not formal; it is for family. He emphasized the unique bond between Christians, the joint faith in Christ that produces this love. Finally, Paul ends with a short greeting which is also a prayer: "Grace be with you all."

Do you sense the affection, the concern, the fellowship among those who work with Paul? It is wonderful. Do I have such affection and concern for those I work with? The honest answer is often no. I see them as co-workers when I should see them as close and dear family. What about you?

Working together in ministry means...

These few verses in Titus give a glimpse of what the Bible means by working together in ministry. It is deeply challenging to our self-centred hearts. It means being part of a widely spread and diverse group. It means some travelling and some staying. It means being a real support and serving each other in practical ways. It means having deep affection, praying for Christ's grace for each other, and being family. JH

1. Dietrich Bonhoeffer & Samuel Wells, *Life Together* (SCM Press, 2015), 76–77.

Painting (p. 8): https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Acts_of_the_Apostles_Chapter_1-10_(Bible_Illustrations_by_Sweet_Media).jpg

***Peter Dallman**, with his wife Janet, has served in Japan with OMF International since 1998. He has worked in church planting and welcoming new missionaries, and is now involved in training missionaries.*

A call to dynamic indigenous ministry

Maybe this is the divine moment for passionate, Spirit-filled Japanese ministry across the nation

By Stanley Dyer

Across the landscape of Japan, the powerful message of Calvary's cross is still changing lives and building God's church. Regardless of the soil or the circumstances, God is still guiding his church in nation-wide ministry.

However, the soil seems to remain hard and the ministry difficult. Japan's church growth over the last five decades has been slow and evangelistic efforts rather unsuccessful. We know that "God so loved the world [yes, including the islands of Japan], that he gave his only Son" (John 3:16 NIV). He looks for dynamic witness and abundant harvest.

As the total number of missionaries in Japan decreases, maybe it's time to think seriously and prayerfully about a paradigm shift in missionary purpose and objective and to consider the basic principles of indigenous church ministry.

The same God who called many missionaries to the shores of Japan can also call Japanese leaders to raise up indigenous churches across the nation.

"Indigenous" could be simply defined as that which grows naturally in its local soil. An indigenous church is one that finds within itself the ability and grace to govern, support, and promote itself.

Japan has proven its incredible ability in massive commercial ventures, industrial mega institutions, and expanding national economy. This same nation that has built Toyota cars, Sony televisions, and Canon cameras can and must produce its own Spirit-empowered pastoral leadership.

Indigenous church example in Japan

Many Japanese missionaries have heard of pioneers Charles and Lette B. Cowman. Living in Chicago, enjoying a comfortable lifestyle, they encountered Japanese evangelist, Rev. Jūji Nakada. He had come from Japan to Chicago to find the secret of Dwight L. Moody's evangelistic success.

Through Rev. Nakada's plea and the deep conviction of the Holy Spirit, the Cowmans soon experienced a compelling call to go as missionaries to Japan. In 1901 on board the ship China Maru, they earnestly prayed for Japanese souls. But they also prayed that as God changed lives in Japan, he would also call out Japanese workers for the harvest. From the beginning they worked in partnership with Rev. Nakada to evangelize the nation. Miraculously, a downtown Tokyo meeting place was secured. The Nakada-Cowman team began preaching the gospel of Jesus, telling about his power to forgive sin and to change lives. It is reported that during the next several years, up to 15,000 Japanese people came to faith in Christ.[1] Many were called into Christian ministry and trained in the Bible Institute that had been formed (it's now called the Tokyo Biblical Seminary). Japanese workers were commissioned to plant Japanese churches. These new churches were supported by Japanese congregations and multiplied by Japanese witness. This seminary continued to send out hundreds of pastors and Christian leaders.

One such leader graduated from that seminary and in about 1970 became the pastor of a church in Kanagawa Prefecture. This church, now called Yamato Calvary Chapel,[2] expanded rapidly to become a congregation of several hundred members.

Recently, I was planning to visit an engineer friend who lives near the Chapel. I called the pastor, whom I had not seen for 30 years. "On Thursday," he suggested, "come for a visit to my church. I will be teaching some members of my congregation a course in Christian discipleship. We will all eat lunch together in our church cafeteria." So about noon on Thursday, I was invited into the spacious 1,000-seat auditorium. The discipleship class consisted of about 200 church members! I was then told that the pastor conducts

three Sunday morning services to accommodate the crowds. I was utterly amazed! Could this really happen in Japan? Later I heard of a dozen daughter churches that this church had planted across the nation.

In seminary, this pastor had worked with the missionaries and Japanese professors in his Biblical training. Now God was dynamically using him to reach Japan for Jesus. What an exciting harvest! What a concrete example of working together for dynamic church growth.

Biblical church planting example

Let's look at a biblical example of indigenous church planting in Crete. The missionary is Titus, Paul's "son in the faith." When reading through the short 46-verse Pauline letter to Titus, it's easy to miss the dynamic cultural context.

Crete was famous for its debauchery, pagan immorality, and wickedness. Its many coastal inlets became favorable harbors that welcomed trading vessels plying intercontinental commerce from Europe, Africa, and Asia. Paul quotes Epimenides, one of Crete's own poets, who wrote, "Cretans are always liars, evil brutes, and lazy gluttons" (Titus 1:12).

But then came the grace of God and the gospel of Jesus. Paul, apparently, was soon called away for other ministry demands, leaving Titus alone in Crete to complete the task of evangelism.

It is thought that the island consisted of 90 towns or "Greek city states," each with its own local political independence. Paul tells Titus to commission elders to go out to every town (1:5). How would Titus find 90 elders? Would they come from Ephesus, Corinth, or Rome? No, they would possibly have been the saloonkeeper, the owner of the brothel, or some of its patrons. They may have formerly been evil brutes, drunken sailors, pagan priests, or shrine prostitutes. But the story of the cross of Christ had made a profound impact. Paul writes that Jesus "gave himself for us to redeem us from all wickedness and to purify for himself a people that are his very own, eager to do what is good" (Titus 2:14). What an incredible miracle! Cretans transformed. Lying, lazy brutes became godly pastors and church leaders. Out across the island of Crete, these messengers preached the good news and built strong indigenous churches.[3]

A more recent Japanese example

In 2014, a successful Japanese businessman felt that divine tug on his spirit to leave his business and enter Christian ministry. In seminary, Japanese teachers working together with missionaries gave this man strong tools for ministry. The program Train and Multiply (T&M) uses biblical principles of lay witness and has been translated into Japanese and adapted to Japanese culture. In March 2018 this businessman graduated from seminary and has since become a national leader in this training program, taking these God-ordained principles to pastors and churches across Japan. He has held workshops in cities from Naha to Sapporo. One man, trained by Japanese working together with missionaries to produce a leader in this dedicated Japanese businessman!

Fields ripe for harvest?

Maybe this is a divine moment for aggressive, passionate, Spirit-filled Japanese ministry across the nation. Congregations are being challenged and trained to take their witness to the streets and homes of their respective communities. As I see God beginning to raise up a national Japanese church, I am encouraged. When I see Spirit-empowered congregations take Christ to the world around the church, I am encouraged.

If we consider the woman at the well in John 4, we watch this broken lady who had encountered Christ leave the well. She turned and carried her experience with Jesus back into her city. Soon crowds were streaming from the city gates. Jesus looked up and exclaimed to his disciples, "open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest" (John 4:35).

This is Japan today—fields ripe for harvest. I firmly believe that our great God is hovering over these islands, wishing to bring his powerful message of redeeming grace to thousands across Japan. Let us trust God for an abundant harvest. Let us prayerfully, passionately work together for a new ingathering of souls for God's kingdom across this nation! To God be all the glory! JH

1. Stanley Dyer, *From the Northlands to the Nations* (Guardian Books, Belleville, Canada. 2001) 17.
2. Despite the name similarity, Yamato Calvary Chapel and its daughter churches are unrelated to the worldwide Calvary Chapel movement out of California, which also has churches in Japan, some of them planted by Japanese.
3. "History of Christianity in Crete," Christians in Crete, accessed Nov, 14, 2018, http://christiansincrete.org/history/

Stanley Dyer *ministered in Japan with OMS International for 26 years. He also taught at Tokyo Biblical Seminary. He served as Executive Director of OMS-Canada from 1990-1999. He currently lives in Canada.*

Five essential principles for effective teamwork

Some prefer bread; others prefer rice. What does it take for multicultural teams to work effectively together?

By John Edwards

"For 30 years, my husband and I have been praying for a missionary couple to come work with us." Those were Nozomi Naitō's words to me and my wife Susan when we first met her and her husband, Pastor Tomohiro Naitō, in August 2013 to discuss the possibility of partnering with them in the ministry of their church, Seaside Bible Church (now Tsubamesawa Church) in Sendai.

However, it takes more than just a heartfelt request for Japanese believers and non-Japanese believers to minister effectively together. Effective teamwork in ministry takes calling, a shared philosophy of ministry, complementary gifts, effort to understand, and mutual encouragement.

Calling

Most of the missionary biographies I read growing up were of missionary pioneers going into unreached lands with the gospel. The (usually) Western missionary came with all the resources and know-how for ministry.

But this kind of pioneer is not needed in Japan now. While the number of Christians in Japan is relatively low and there remain towns with no church, there is an established church in Japan. Many Japanese pastors appreciate not only what missionaries have done in the past, but also what missionaries continue to do. However, that does not mean a Japanese pastor is personally willing and able to work with foreign missionaries.

"We've never worked with missionaries before, but we want to." Nozomi's words were key to us. Even with uncertainty about what it would look like, Pastor and Nozomi Naitō desired to work with a missionary couple. Meanwhile, Susan and I knew we were called to work with our Japanese brothers and sisters to evangelize the spiritually lost in Japan. Since the beginning, we had intentionally sought out ministries led by the Japanese. This sense of calling, of strongly desiring to work together with Japanese leaders, is vital for a successful ministry partnership.

> Learning to understand each other's way of doing ministry is essential to successful partnership between Japanese and non-Japanese Christians.

Philosophy of ministry

In Japan, Susan and I avoided English-teaching ministry. In our minds, it was not reproducible since only native English speakers could do it and it was limited in whom it could reach. (I know a lot of Japanese people who do not like English and have no interest in learning it.) We had seen and heard about cases where the Japanese pastor relied on the missionary, usually through English programs, to attract unbelievers to the church building. I was not interested in working with a church whose mindset was for the missionaries to be the main ones to attract unbelievers to church.

In contrast, Pastor and Mrs. Naitō saw their role as doing outreach, and this attracted us to work with them. During the 2011 Tohoku disaster, Seaside Bible Church, which was also the Naitōs' home, was swept away. When they had to move inland and rent a café for services and for hosting volunteer teams, the Naitōs looked for ways to reach out to the new neighborhood. Nozomi noticed children passing the café as they walked to school. Nozomi can bake, so she put out a sign inviting children to come in and bake with her. The first week, no one came. The second week, one girl came. By the time we met the Naitōs a few months later, half a dozen children were stopping by, some with their mothers. Susan and I were impressed that the Naitōs were not inviting us to do outreach for them; they were inviting us to do outreach *with* them. That was essential to us.

Complementary gifts

Too often we assume that a shared vision or philosophy of ministry means the team will possess the same gifts and abilities—especially in a small local

church or new church plant. Thankfully, Pastor Naitō does not see things that way. He once commented, "I like rice; my wife prefers bread. That doesn't mean we have to fight. It's not that one is right and the other wrong."

It is refreshing to know that I do not have to be able to preach as well as Pastor Naitō or in the same way. The Naitōs are more comfortable with ministries based in the church building. On the other hand, my wife enjoys ministry in our house, while I really like going out into the community and connecting with people.

These differences can either become a source of conflict or a blessing of complementary gifts. Pastor Naitō does not force me to be in the church building all the time. In fact, I'm usually only there on Sundays and Thursdays. I don't even attend prayer meetings because I go to an English circle in Sendai where I'm often the only foreigner and the only Christian. I return to the Naitōs with stories of opportunities I've had to talk about Jesus in this group, and the Naitōs praise the Lord. They tell me other ways the Lord is answering prayer, and I praise the Lord.

Susan now teaches English in the church building, and as she does so Nozomi talks with the waiting mothers and children. Susan's teaching ability complements Nozomi's hospitality and evangelistic gifts. It works because we appreciate the value of each other's gifts and often see their connection for building up the church.

Effort to understand

There are two aspects to understanding one another. The obvious one is the language barrier. The Naitōs know very little English and, like most missionaries, our language ability falls short all too often. When I commented to the Naitōs about how difficult it must be for them to work with us, Nozomi said, "We feel bad. We ought to be able to communicate in English with you or communicate more clearly so you can understand." Such humility.

The second area of possible misunderstanding is when others act differently. Once, as Pastor Naitō and I were

driving down the street, I waved and called out greetings to children walking home from school. He scolded me and said that Japanese don't do that. But over time he has come to understand that I'm not Japanese, and because of that I have freedom to behave in different ways in order to connect with others. Similarly, I once thought our worship services were too formal to attract young people. How surprised I was when a non-believing high school student came and commented, "I love it here. It's so warm and friendly." I saw then that the Naitōs have worked to create a comfortable atmosphere where all sorts of people can feel welcome. Some of that is the cultural aspect of ceremony and formality mixed with warmth and fellowship. Learning to understand each other's way of doing ministry is essential to successful partnership between Japanese and non-Japanese Christians.

Mutual encouragement

Self-doubt or lack of confidence describes how we feel about being missionaries, even after more than 20 years. So it is empowering to hear a Japanese pastor say over and over how valuable we are to their church. After nearly every event, we thank each other.

I am also encouraged by the Naitōs' commitment to the church—not just in shepherding the flock but also in evangelism. Their prayers, plans, and discussions with us are often about unbelievers we know through various ministries (café, English classes, Kids Club, etc.) and others we don't know yet. They started this church over 35 years ago, and to see them still so enthusiastic encourages me greatly. They even talk sometimes about starting another church!

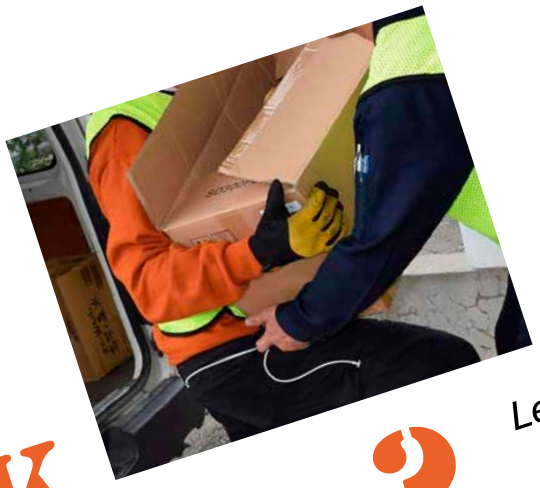
To survive and thrive, we need encouragement. Certainly, Scripture gives it to us. But we also need it from the body of Christ. It shouldn't be just one way; it should be both ways—from missionary to Japanese pastor, and from pastor to missionary.

We have served with the Naitōs for five years now. What has made this such a rewarding time of ministry in Japan and a successful partnership? I've concluded that it has been these major contributing factors: a shared calling to work together; our compatible ministry philosophy; our complementary gifts; the effort we take to understand one another; and mutual encouragement.

Now a third couple is working with us—from Hong Kong. Partnership continues to be great! JH

John Edwards *and his wife, Susan, have served in Japan since 1993 with Hi-BA and now with SEND International. They grew up in rural New York. They currently lead the Tohoku D (discipleship) House internship and cooperate with Tsubamesawa Church in Sendai.*

Can We Work Together?



By Robert Adair

Lessons learned about missionary placement following the Tohoku and Kumamoto earthquakes

I am interested in discovering how our various models, theologies, and cultures can effectively work together to see more Japanese people come to know Christ. I believe there is a way for us to be more intentional and collaborative in our placement process as we respond the spiritual, emotional, and physical needs of people in Japan.

After the natural disasters in Tohoku (2011) and Kumamoto (2016), multiple mission organizations responded by placing missionaries in partnership with Japanese churches. These two events were the first time in Asian Access' (A2) 51 years in Japan that disasters have determined placement strategy. In both cases, A2 leadership dialogued with local networks of Japanese churches, Miyagi Missions Network (MMN) in Tohoku and Kumamoto Missions Network (KMN) in Kyushu, to make placement decisions. Though we are still in the midst of responding to needs in both regions and do not know what the long-term results will be, we see several themes that impact how we place missionaries in the context of these networks.

The word "partnership" carries a wide range of meanings. Even within the context of missions, there is a difference in nuance and emphasis. I encountered an example of this while working on my testimony in Japanese. I wanted to say that my wife and I desire to partner with the church's vision. I wrote 教会のビジョンと協力します (*kyōkai no bijon to kyōryoku shimasu*). My Japanese teacher told me that に (*ni*) would be better than と (*to*) in this situation since と implies that I am an equal in defining the vision of the church whereas に shows a posture of alignment with the vision of the church. Changing one particle modifies the perception of how we approach partnership. Both stances are valid, but both may not be equally appropriate when considering a potential partnership between a specific missionary and church.

Responding to needs in Tohoku

There is a tension between responding to needs promptly and taking the necessary time to make wise decisions. After the triple disaster in March 2011, A2 was one of many groups that placed staff in Tohoku to help respond to the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs. My wife and I were two of the first three A2 missionaries to move to Miyagi in March 2012. The MMN introduced us to several churches, and missionaries in our agency also used personal connections to find their ministry partners. We were relatively fast in our response, but in retrospect, that response largely happened independently of dialogue with other groups and organizations. During this time, other organizations were placing large teams in the region as well.

We enjoyed running into other people who had relocated to Tohoku at MMN meetings and would often share updates about our ministries and teams, but there was little strategic dialogue across group lines. As we look back over the last seven years, there have also been several "if we had only known" moments. In his book *Well Connected*, Phill Butler discusses this tension between speed and intentionality: "We usually don't choose to take the long road. Life is a journey on which, all too often, we look for shortcuts." Anyone in Christian ministry know that it's no different with God's people. "All of us wish there were an easy way to overcome barriers, build relationships, develop trust and common vision, and see wonderful outcomes." But, Butler goes on to emphasize that taking shortcuts in the early stage of partnership isn't wise. "Make your strategic investments of time, prayer, and energy here, and you will see rich dividends later."[1]

In retrospect, the timing of various missionaries' arrival often drove the timeline of our placement process. We would work through our relational connections to have a place to send them when they arrived. I am proud to have been a part of the local church's response to the Tohoku disaster and am happy to continue to serve there today. I also want to learn from our experience and do better in the future. Could

we have taken our time, asked missionaries to wait, and been more fruitful in the long run?

Working together in Kumamoto

In the fall of 2017, I sat at a table with several people: the Japanese leader of the KMN, the representative of an organization sending missionaries from a closed Asian country, an A2 colleague, and the national director of A2 Japan. We discussed how we could most effectively respond to the spiritual needs from the Kumamoto earthquake and help catalyze church multiplication. We had spent a day meeting with multiple potential partner churches and discussing next steps. The local leader gave us his insight and recommendations, but it was a genuine dialogue between all of us about how to practically work together. Joshua Hari, our current national director, invited us missionaries to the table. The Kumamoto Church Build Project (the church-multiplication subnetwork of KMN) was birthed out of the Christian response to the 2016 Kumamoto earthquakes. There was an exciting synergy as we, missionaries and pastors from different groups, dreamed together. It was a new process: meeting with potential partner pastors with a representative from another mission organization hoping to place missionaries. But there was a definite sense that trying to work together in this way was pleasing to God.

When I think about the difference between mission organizations working together after the respective disasters in Tohoku and Kumamoto, the image of my two-year-old son comes to mind. Sometimes he acknowledges the other children in his space yet plays alone. Other times he tries his best to communicate with the children around him and build something together. In Miyagi, as mission agencies responded to the need, we served in the same area yet rarely actually worked together. In Kyushu, we see the beginning of collaboration—seeing how God may be leading us to work together on a deeper level.

The way that A2 initiates partnerships has shifted over the last two decades. We had a season where we placed missionaries in a pool of churches defined by our Japanese leadership, a season where our field leadership placed missionaries independent of our Japanese colleagues, and now our Japanese and missionary leadership prayerfully considering the best fit together while in dialogue with other organizations. The logistics are complicated and the decisions are difficult, but these in-depth discussions between organizations are worth the effort.

Can we work together?

Over the last year, one of my main questions has been: Can we work together? This question applies both across the missionary/Japanese church divide as well as across the gap between mission organizations. With all of the differences in theology, language, culture, and philosophy of ministry, it is difficult. At the same time, I believe that a more unified expression of the church would be pleasing to God.

How can we partner more effectively with the Japanese church in the future? How do we reconcile the independence of our organizations and the autonomy of a local church to build a strong ministry team? There are real difficulties associated with partnerships between missionaries and Japanese churches, but they are worth overcoming for the kingdom.

Another question, and one that's potentially more difficult, is how different agencies in Japan can better collaborate in the placement process. How can I practically prioritize the broader work in Japan over my organization's slice of the pie? How can I be excited about placing a missionary from another agency in a "better" setting than one from mine? I look forward to seeing how we can creatively collaborate across these real divides and to be a part of a more unified expression of the church here in Japan. JH

1. Phill Butler, *Well Connected* (Waynesboro, GA: Authentic Media, 2005), 121.

Photos from CRASH Japan's Facebook page (not directly related to author's activities)

*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 three energetic boys. He enjoys spending time in the mountains.*

A better way to plant churches

Churches are more likely to survive and thrive if they are planted by teams including both Japanese and missionaries

By Shelley Carl

With the "less than one percent Christian" statistic haunting missionary work in Japan for decades, we are continually reminded that the greatest days for the Church in Japan still lie ahead. Timothy Keller believes that "the vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for the numerical growth of the body of Christ."[1] While I wholeheartedly agree with Keller, I have been asking myself recently whether there is a better way to plant churches in Japan than the method I learned when I first came to Japan.

When I joined my mission team in Japan 32 years ago, nearly all our missionaries were in church planting. The system was that a missionary would plant the church, and then after the church had enough members to sustain itself, the missionary would transfer the church to the national church who would assign a national pastor. That was the pattern I followed in Hokkaido and Hokuriku. In some cases, this system worked well. In other cases, the churches struggled to transition from an American missionary to a national pastor. In worst-case scenarios, the churches actually closed.

In recent years, a new trend is emerging where the missionary works with a Japanese pastor to pioneer a new work together. I have recently begun using this ministry pattern and am already sensing the great benefits of working as a team. Having experienced two ways of church planting, I would like to share about the benefits of working with the national church from the beginning.

The two case studies below are drawn from my experience. The two churches are not "American" churches or "my" churches but truly are Japanese churches sown using current Japanese trends, methods, and styles.

Case study 1: Tokyo Blessing Church

In 2016, I learned that Pastor Hiromasa Amano (lead pastor of Riverside Chapel in Sōka, Saitama) was eager to begin a church plant and that God had already provided the rental location in Ochanomizu. Two years earlier, God had shown me a multistory building in a dream and said, "I have already prepared the building." We excitedly formed a team and began meeting in a room at the Ochanomizu Christian Center from January 2017. We have been able to rent the room for three hours on Sunday mornings.

Our initial team consisted of six people: a young Japanese first-time pastor and his wife, a Japanese believer from Riverside Chapel, a retired pastor and his wife from America who had come to serve for two years, and me. Our goal was to build each other up, pray for the start of the new church, and get used to working in that building. The two pastors and I took turns preaching, and team members took turns leading worship. We worked together to find the name "Tokyo Blessing Church" and the church's slogan, which is "Blessed to bless." This church is an official branch of Riverside Chapel. The mother church covers rental expenses, while my missions account covers other expenses such as honorariums and supplies.

We held our official opening service on April 16, 2017, Easter Sunday. Each team member had family or friends who came to the opening service, allowing for a glorious mix of missionary and national connections.

The American pastor and his wife later moved to their permanent assignment elsewhere in the country, while the three Japanese and I are continuing the work. From the outset, I wanted the church to carry more of a Japanese flavor than an American one, so I requested that the Japanese pastor preach three times a month and I only once a month. The church is growing slowly but steadily. If I needed to leave, I believe the church could continue on its own.

Tokyo Blessing Church

Opening of Garden Hills Church; Pastor Amano is front 2nd from left

Case study 2: Garden Hills Church

Although Tokyo Blessing Church was doing exceptionally well for a young church, I found myself anxious to do more. Since I had many more hours available to serve, I talked with Pastor Amano about the possibility of opening another church—one that meets on Sunday afternoons. He was thrilled and introduced me to three members of his church who were ready to dedicate themselves to a new ministry.

We began to meet weekly in my home, and then rented a place in Aoyama on Sunday afternoons. We agreed to target university students. One team member had already been going to that area to do prayer walking every Sunday for four years. His prayers had tilled the ground and prepared it for this new season of sowing seed. We held our first official service on April 8, 2018 with a special guest singer and over 30 people in attendance.

After only two months, the team needed to be reshuffled. As Riverside Chapel is the mother church, they put together another powerful team. The new team now consists of a recent Bible school graduate (who is the associate pastor at Riverside Chapel), a current Bible school student and his wife, a university student, an associate pastor in his forties, and me. I serve officially as the pastor. Focusing on students, our team has discovered that special events work well to attract people. We regularly have guest speakers and singers, and add delicious food to the mix. Thanks to social media, new people often show up.

As with Tokyo Blessing Church, Riverside Chapel foots the bill for renting Garden Hills Church's room three hours each Sunday afternoon. Likewise, my missions account covers additional expenses that arise out of ministry needs. Our team meets monthly at my home to pray and strategize about how to best reach university students. This is an age group I have never specifically worked with, and I am amazed that after three decades of ministry in Japan, I am being stretched to new levels because of team ministry.

Indeed, we are better together. Each team member is well aware that we are not competing with one another but, rather, completing one another. We are remembering to include that most important letter "L", which stands for love.

Key benefits to working together:

- Each team member is able to do so much more than they could possibly do alone.
- Blending the God-given talents and spiritual gifts of team members works organically to expand the reach of the church.
- The only star of the team is Jesus Christ. The church is not riding on a personality or one way of doing things. There is truly a cooperative spirit to fulfil the Great Commission.
- The national church has ownership in the work from its inception. Therefore, if the missionary needs to leave the field, the church will survive.
- The stress level of each team member is significantly lower than if we were all going solo. The burden is lighter in all areas of ministry, including financially.

As an aging missionary, I am keenly aware that the day will come when I will no longer be serving the Risen Son in the Land of the Rising Sun. Working with the national church in teams to plant churches is a better way. It assures me that when the harvest comes—when the revival that we have all been longing for is on the horizon—workers are already in place to make disciples who will make disciples. I am continually praying for more workers, with the understanding that some of the greatest workers for the nation of Japan are already here. What a great privilege it is to work as a team to reach this nation with the gospel. JH

1. Tim Keller, "Why Plant Churches?" Redeemer City to City, accessed 13 Nov, 2018, https://www.redeemercitytocity.com/blog/why-plant-churches

***Shelley Carl**, an ordained minister, is from Rochester, New York, and has served with the Assemblies of God Missionary Fellowship in Japan since 1986, primarily in church planting in Hokkaido, Toyama, Kyushu, and Tokyo.*

Working together with Nobuji Horikoshi (1926–2017)

Rev. Horikoshi was an inspiration to my brother and me as we partnered with him in church planting

By Stephen Young

During a sermon in 1980, I recall Rev. Nobuji Horikoshi mentioning that Japanese people might be under a curse by God for the many years they have been unfaithful to their Creator. If there is any Japanese pastor who analyzed the Japanese people and their thinking, it would be Rev. Horikoshi. The son of a Shinto priest and very inquisitive by nature, he knew the Japanese mind. In one of his many books, he talks about the four major barriers that keep the Japanese from accepting the Christian faith: a lack of understanding of an absolute and holy Creator God; difficulty in comprehending sin and absolute truth; a keen loyalty to and dependence on ancestral spirits; and satanic enslavement through idolatry and deception. Despite these spiritual barriers, Horikoshi never gave up on the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. He believed that there were many more of God's children in Japan that needed to be saved.

Partnering to plant churches

My brother Bruce and I were greatly privileged to be mentored by Horikoshi while seminary interns. After finishing seminary training, we returned to partner with him with our wives: Bruce and Susan helped start a daughter church in Kita Yokkaichi in Mie Prefecture, while Sarah and I helped plant a daughter church on the other side of Yokkaichi, in Suzuka City. As we worked together in church planting, Horikoshi trusted us and gave us freedom to serve as we felt led. In Suzuka, he preached every other week for the first two years. We also attended weekly Bible studies and prayed together. He was happy to enlist American and Australian short-term missionaries to teach English in the three churches, including Rev. Wayne Newsome in Nagoya who was called to long-term service and Teresa Sherrill who was called back to Japan as a missionary as a result of these efforts.

As a mentor, Horikoshi showed us how a humble servant can have a great vision. He gained respect in the community and developed relations with people outside the church by starting a Christian kindergarten and serving as its principal and Bible teacher. He helped form the Japan Creation Society and strongly believed that God needed to be known as the Creator and that evolution could not be trusted as a theory. Horikoshi also wrote many books to help others understand the Bible and the challenges that the Japanese have in understanding the truth. His books dealt with practical issues such as raising children in the Lord, church management, other religions and cults in Japan, and developing good relations. Others of his books explained the Bible in simple terms with diagrams and illustrations. The practical nature of his books was the fruit of having spent hours with people in discussion. I remember him saying that he desired to train children to respect others and develop good relationships more than he wanted them to excel in their studies and get good grades. With that being said, his son is now one of the most influential Christian psychologists in Japan, holding a doctorate from the United States.

Horikoshi started an evening Bible school and recruited others to teach: I taught New Testament survey and Sarah taught a general course on Christian counseling. Our team even helped to conduct Christian funeral and wedding services.

An ongoing relationship

Bruce and I were called to other church-planting ministries, but we continued our relation with Horikoshi as he was happy to travel to Nashville in the US and Melbourne and Perth in Australia. He spoke at churches and church camps where Bruce and I were privileged to serve as interpret-

ers for him. After a summer camp run by a Japanese church in Melbourne, the Lord led a couple, Andrew and Yuri Williams, to join Horikoshi's church team. Andrew worked as an English language teacher and coordinator, while Yuri taught music in the kindergarten and led the church music program. The Williams continue to lead in these roles at Yokkaichi Presbyterian Church.

Horikoshi (left) with some seminary classmates

A wide-ranging ministry

Although he lacked confidence in his English-speaking ability, Horikoshi visited many foreign countries to serve the Lord. Even with health issues, he courageously left home and spoke where he was invited. His role with the Japan Creation Society gave him many opportunities to speak about the one Creator and creation. In later years, his connection with Korea enabled him to open a creation museum and strengthened his vision of building a replica of Noah's Ark outside Yokkaichi. He was fascinated by fossils in unexpected areas, rock formations in the Grand Canyon, and stories from different cultures of a worldwide flood. Horikoshi studied science and natural evidences to use anything he could to try and convince people that the Bible is true and there is a Creator behind it all. He was instrumental in publishing the *Japanese Creator Bible* with additional inserts about creation and evolution. Horikoshi enjoyed working with others and had a great passion to reach the Japanese for Christ.

From Shintoism to Christian ministry

Horikoshi was the second son of a Shinto priest in Gunma Prefecture. His mother died when he was 11 years old. The shrine had been in his family for many generations and his older brother was to be the next priest. Before World War Two broke out, Horikoshi entered the Army Engineer Corps and trained to be an officer as a civil engineer. But before he could graduate and serve his country, the war ended and he felt very uneasy about being an enemy of the Allied forces. The fact that one day he was considered a hero and the next an enemy made him think deeply about truth.

One day he heard Japanese evangelist Tomohiko Kagawa preaching. The message about the Christian faith caught his attention. After the meeting, he went up to Kagawa and asked him some questions. He was then invited to Kagawa's home where they had more discussion. While there, he was impressed with all the books in his library, and Kagawa invited him to come back and read them. After days of doing this, he was led to buy a Bible and study it. He was very interested in the creation story and the Creator God. Gradually his doubts were removed and his questions answered, and he came to Jesus for his salvation.

He wanted to know more about creation and the Creator, so he enrolled at the Japan Christian Theological Seminary in Tokyo, where my father, John M. L. Young, taught him. He went on to become the first full-time pastor of the church that our father and Rev. Foxwell had helped start in Yokkaichi. Before Horikoshi left seminary, his older brother died, his Shinto priest father became a Christian, and the shrine was bulldozed. The property was sold, and with his wife and father, he moved to Yokkaichi to pastor a church and establish a kindergarten with the money from the shrine property. Later, he assisted Bruce and me to work together as a team in the same church to start two daughter churches. The Lord wants his servants to work together and unite different spiritual gifts to glorify Jesus Christ.

We were honored to know and work with Horikoshi for a number of years. As of last year, he has graduated to heaven, but his vision for the expansion of God's kingdom in Japan lives on. He witnessed many blessings from God and knew that the nation of Japan was not cursed. There are more in the nation who will come to Jesus as their Savior. JH

Bruce Young with the Horikoshis

Bruce and Stephen Young have been missionaries to the Japanese since 1976. While in Japan, they worked in church planting with the Japan Presbyterian Mission.

Working together: some views from the ground

By JH staff

Insightful interviews with missionaries and Japanese leaders

To discover what cross-cultural cooperation looks like in Japan, we've interviewed three missionaries and six Japanese leaders. Here are their stories.

Kent: A triumph of grace over a difficult experience

Kent Muhling has been a missionary for 13 years with Asian Access. Their philosophy is to help Japanese pastors plant and grow churches. "We're placed in a Japanese church under the authority of its pastor," explains Kent. "We serve that church in whatever way we can."

Kent's first placement started well. "We hit it off really well with the pastor and his wife and thought they would be great partners and mentor couple for us as first-term missionaries. We were looking forward to working with them."

But then Kent started experiencing problems in his relationship with the pastor.

"It was a combination of cultural differences, personality differences, and sin," Kent explains. Complicated hierarchical relationships proved to be one of his biggest struggles. As a former naval officer, Kent thought he understood authority, but submission in Japan looked different from what he was used to in the US military.

Kent compares the experience to learning from a sushi master who expects the student to be passive: "You don't have to understand what I do; you don't have to think; you don't have to ask questions—just be quiet, obey, and you will learn." Things got so bad that the pastor decided to terminate the relationship. "I kind of got fired, I guess," says Kent.

Fortunately, that wasn't the end of the story. After a restorative eight months as regular members of a different Japanese church, Kent and his family moved to work with a church in Sendai. Now they have a very good relationship with their current pastor, who is easy to talk to in situations of conflict or difference of opinion. "He understands grace," Kent says. "He's able to forgive. And that's good because there are any number of things that I've had to ask forgiveness for. He has a very shepherding heart and he's pretty humble."

Kent's family and his pastor's family, the Kimuras

When asked what advice he would give to new missionaries, Kent stresses the importance of developing trust.

> Building trust is extremely important. But it takes a lot of time, so patience is required. Come ready to serve humbly and be patient: wait until you've earned the right to be heard because you've demonstrated that you are trustworthy, humble, faithful, and dependable.

Another missionary said that serving in a traditional Japanese church "feels like dying."

> As Americans, we come to a traditional, conservative, small, maybe struggling, inward-focused Japanese church and we would be like: Wow! The problems seem so obvious to us. Not that everything we think is right, just so different. To come and just serve for two years is so hard for Americans who tend to think they know it all and want to share their many "good ideas".

But Kent says it's worth it in the long term.

> It changes you as a missionary. Partnering together can help prevent the church becoming a transplant from Western culture. It is a great demonstration of our unity in Christ. In some ways, I think it's harder; it would be easier just to do your own thing your own way. But I'm not convinced easier is always better.

Bernard: Total immersion

Bernard Barton's mission, the Church of God Mission, also has a policy of always partnering with Japanese churches. He has served in Japan for 42 years.

Bernard can't imagine not working closely with Japanese leaders. For him, the benefits are amazing, including knowledge of the culture, the land, the language, and the church itself. "And so they [Japanese leaders] are my teachers," Bernard says. "They help me know how to serve the church."

> When I was in Kobe, I received more support, help, information, and acceptance from the local pastors' fellowship than my own denomination. So I think getting involved in the Japanese churches' work is important. I love missionaries, but I don't actively seek out missionary fellowship because I feel like I'm more a part of the Japanese church. I feel comfortable in that setting. I feel like that's where I need to be. I've been greatly blessed.

The biggest challenge he faces is the fact that he will never be Japanese. Although his Japanese is very good, he will never be a native speaker. He also notes that being Caucasian can be a mixed blessing: it can help establish relationships with Japanese people, but sometimes Japanese leaders do not fully accept him because they view him as a foreigner. Bernard explains, "That means you're not always used as you hope you could be. Sometimes your opinions and ideas are discounted because you're not Japanese. People can assume you don't understand what's going on here because you're not Japanese."

However, this lack of acceptance is an opportunity to show grace.

"It's a matter of forgiveness and patience," Bernard says. As a firm believer that quitting solves nothing, he believes that by seeking healing, peace, and acceptance, with others, the same grace will be shown to him.

Bernard's advice for missionaries is to "be humble learners and find Japanese people you can relate well to and learn from."

Bernard Barton with Pastor Shinji Numa and his wife Kazuko

He advises Japanese leaders to:

> Be patient with us please! I've been shown a lot of grace by Japanese leaders as well as acceptance, love, support, and concern. I appreciate that so much. Missionaries are not infallible or invincible. We need a lot of care, support, and help. So please continue to provide that. And try to look a little beyond the exterior and accept us as co-workers in the Lord.

Yoshito Noguchi: Working together in community

Yoshito Noguchi, pastor of Soma Fuchu Church in Fuchu, west Tokyo (part of the Acts 29 global church network), never intended to work with missionaries, but God had other plans. "It was kind of amazing," Noguchi says. "We had no plans to call missionaries, but people overseas heard about our work and came." Today, his church has about eight missionaries. But his church's approach to partnering with missionaries differs considerably from that of most Japanese churches.

For a start, the church turns down most applications from potential missionaries, filtering candidates by talking to their pastors and others to learn more about them and their families. Noguchi says, "We've learned from past mistakes. Now when someone from overseas comes, we don't initially give them any leadership responsibility since that can put them under a lot of pressure. Instead, we get to know them and they find out about us." Their only tasks are to join in the life of the church, become a member of the missional community, and live as a family member and servant, which is true of all church members. They are not given any special treatment or a higher status than other church members. Rather, the church gets to know them and supports them as a family member. Only when it becomes apparent that a person fits well into the community and is suitably gifted do they become a part of the church leadership.

Noguchi emphasizes that it is vital to provide a nurturing environment for overseas people: "We don't 'use' missionaries; rather our responsibility as a church is to love and support them so that they can, in turn, support Japanese people and send them out."

He gives one example of an American missionary who now serves the church in a leadership role. When he first arrived in Japan, he lived with Noguchi's family for one month. After that, he moved to his own house and continued to be actively involved in the church. Only after two years, when everyone saw that he was a good fit for the church and met the biblical criteria for eldership, was he made a leader.

Noguchi believes that the benefits missionaries offer vary from individual to individual, just as they do for Japanese church members. Someone from America and someone from Aomori should be treated the same and be encouraged to use their own unique gifts to build up the church.

Noguchi recalls a time when he became frustrated with a missionary at his church because he wasn't able to do a certain task. But on reflection, he realized that he wasn't viewing the missionary from the viewpoint of the gospel.

Instead of evaluating the missionary's worth in terms of what he could or couldn't do, Noguchi should have considered him as a dear brother loved by God. That evening, he repented and apologized to the missionary for his attitude.

Noguchi believes local churches play a central role in both sending and accepting missionaries. Missionaries should be trained and nurtured by their home church and the same should occur when they arrive at a church in Japan. Noguchi worries that some missionary organizations don't sufficiently evaluate the relationship that candidates have with their local churches and in some cases they send people who aren't fit to serve, even in their home countries. Much damage can occur when such people are given positions of responsibility. He also has concerns that some missionaries are not seeking to nurture Japanese leaders.

Cultural differences do occur, but the key is to build a relationship of trust grounded on the gospel. In that way, differences can be worked through and the relationship is strengthened. That is why it is so vital to have the gospel at the centre of everything.

Sugimoto interpreting for a missionary

Reiko Sugimoto: A fruitful partnership

Reiko Sugimoto co-pastors a church in Machida with her husband. Over the 30 years they have been at the church, at least 10 short-term missionaries have come and served, mostly for two or three years at a time. The missionaries mostly help with English classes, informal friendship ministries, and the church's bilingual service on Sunday afternoon.

The benefits of working together extend beyond what the missionaries do for the church. "We become friends. I don't feel lonely and we can pray for each other," says Sugimoto. She appreciates their spiritual maturity. "Missionaries are sacrificing their lives to come to Japan and devoting their lives for Christ. So I can share some of my struggles and spiritual prayer requests with them." Almost all the missionaries attend the mid-week prayer meeting—something that is hard for many Japanese church members to do because of long work hours. "The missionaries almost always sacrifice their time to join the prayer meeting, which is such a blessing and encouragement for me." They also help the church financially, through the English class tuition fees.

There are some challenges. Some missionaries are more flexible than others, and Sugimoto says it can be difficult when someone limits their work to a preconceived vision or calling. Despite being familiar with Western culture, Sugimoto still struggles with it sometimes. "Japanese very rarely come out and say 'no' directly; they find a sensitive way to indicate that they would rather not do something," she says. "But some missionaries say no very straightforwardly. I sometimes feel a bit puzzled and hurt by that."

Another challenge is when missionaries have health problems and need medical consultation. Most doctors cannot speak English, which makes it stressful for the missionary. Medical terminology is difficult, and treatments seem different from those in the missionary's home country. Sugimoto recommends missionaries get a health check-up before coming to Japan and bring prescription medicine if necessary.

But she believes the benefits of working with missionaries far outweigh the challenges. For any Japanese pastor considering working with missionaries, Sugimoto says, "Just go for it!" Many Japanese leaders worry about not being fluent in English, but the language barrier is much lower today since there are smartphone apps to help with communication.

Isaac Saoshiro: A valuable perspective

Isaac Saoshiro is a pastor with Immanuel General Mission, which has 115 churches in Japan. The organization works in partnership with missionaries, offering advice about placements and working in partnership with Japanese pastors in Japanese churches. Saoshiro sees the main role of his denomination as providing a place where missionaries can minister.

Saoshiro served as a missionary in Kenya for 18 years and has worked with missionaries in Japan twice: once in 1976–1979 in Sendai and then in 1999–2003 on returning from Kenya. The missionaries' main role in these cases was to help with evangelism through English services, and conversation and Bible classes.

Saoshiro thinks that missionaries are helpful because they bring a fresh perspective. He says, "Sometimes it makes Japanese people uncomfortable, but I think we need another point of view. They occasionally gave good advice about church planting, ministry, and meetings." One example

Sendai church plant, 1976
(Teruo & Hiroko Saoshiro on the far left)

Saoshiro gives is that the Japanese style of leadership can be quite autocratic, whereas Western missionaries tend to be more democratic.

Rachel: Trying new things and rethinking old beliefs

Rachel Hughes has been a missionary in Japan with the Church Missionary Society since 2012. Her husband Dene works in student ministry, while she leads bilingual Bible studies, teaches music and English, and helps with a monthly evangelistic event at church for all ages called Bible Adventure.

"I couldn't possibly achieve anything on my own!" she says. "My understanding of Japanese language and culture is so limited and my brain is so slow to learn. I am constantly aware of my need to be working together with Japanese ministry partners at every step of preparation because I think so differently to them. This also means I feel like I'm gaining a whole new perspective on biblical ideas and a whole new way of thinking about God's goodness to us."

Rachel as funny scientist for Bible Adventure

Rachel has found language to be a huge barrier, which is exacerbated by cultural differences. She explains that expectations are culturally rooted, and that her first years were full of disappointment and hurt due to failed expectations. She says, "I'm discovering that expectations go both ways—I often realise too late that Japanese leaders had expectations about me that I haven't met. There are also times when theological differences can be difficult."

She has worked through those challenges by experimenting with new approaches, including active, game-based learning for youth Bible study. One of Rachel's first friends at church was Megumi. They took up jogging together and chatted about Rachel's ideas for Bible study. Megumi was eager to give those ideas a go. So they started Bible Adventure. "It's been really freeing to start something new that doesn't have a set shape," Rachel says. "When youth weren't coming, we were easily able to change the purpose and restructure into something more evangelistic for all ages."

Cross-cultural partnership has also forced Rachel to re-evaluate her own beliefs and thinking, especially when it comes to church, worship, baptism, and discipleship. Sometimes, Rachel adjusts her thinking or challenges the thinking of others, whereas other times she goes along with a plan she disagrees with for the sake of working together.

She advises missionaries to be patient and work at developing friendship. She encourages them to read the Bible together, pray for each other, and "give it a few years to begin to gel."

Rachel asks Japanese leaders to be patient with missionaries, because missionaries often offend without realizing it: "We just don't know how to behave appropriately—when, what, and with whom to communicate—and we have no idea of Japanese leaders' expectations!" She also asks that leaders consider their ideas despite these setbacks, remembering that ultimately, "we are here because we really do want to work together. Let's read God's word, learn and grow together so that he may work through our partnership for his glory."

Megumi: Bringing excitement to the Bible

Megumi became friends with Rachel at church, and together they run a monthly evangelistic event, Bible Adventure. Megumi is inspired by Rachel's ideas for creative evangelism, saying, "I think that Japanese people tend to focus on the limitations of what we can do, but Rachel comes along with big ideas, like 'Let's do science experiments in the church building!'"

Megumi (center) in fellowship

Megumi also finds Rachel's views on worship and church liberating.

She used to believe missing church meant she wasn't worshipping God, but Rachel pointed out that we can worship God anywhere. "At Bible Adventure we talked about how church is God's people, not a building. Rachel has helped broaden my thinking about lots of things like this," Megumi says.

However, she sometimes struggles to communicate Rachel's ideas cross-culturally. "Rachel always has her mind full of what she wants to communicate," Megumi says, "but I think that the message everyone receives is different." Sometimes Rachel wants to communicate complex ideas, and often Megumi finds it hard to translate them into understandable Japanese, particularly for kids. Megumi says, "Sometimes it doesn't work in Japanese. I know she really needs my help to communicate."

For Megumi, time spent jogging with Rachel helped build up their relationship. Together, they could laugh

at their miscommunications and come up with ministry ideas. "Now we feel like we can make changes if we want," she says, "and we can laugh at each other's mistakes. The more time we spend together, the easier it gets to guess what each other means."

Left: The soccer club
Below: Masa, Chie, and their kids

Masa and Chie: A different mentality

Masa and Chie run a bilingual, evangelistic soccer club and minister with their local church. They have cooperated with dozens of missionaries through soccer ministry and disaster relief over the last two decades. Like Megumi, they find Rachel's outlook and theology expansive and encouraging. Many Japanese people have conceptions about what it means to be Christian, but Rachel and her husband Dene have shared new ways of thinking about Christian life, church, and worship. Their influence has impacted Masa and Chie, who say, "For them, it's not about keeping rules or a fear of failing at something—they have a fun and positive image of church, based on God's promises in the Bible. We tend to think that missing worship at church is bad; they think coming to church is great. Both views lead to the same outcome, but one focuses on the negative while the other focuses on the positive."

Masa and Chie also find that missionaries tend to have a refreshingly different outlook on ministry and church life. Missionaries from Western cultures encourage Japanese people to consider the heart of ministry more than the form.

They say: "There is a different mentality and an expectation that knowing God is love will have a practical impact on your everyday life, and that in fellowship we will understand and experience God's love." Japanese people are often afraid "of getting out of sync with others at church or making mistakes (like not praying properly), and so they are afraid of doing the wrong thing in the church community. They also fear what others will think of them and can put the authority of their pastor above their personal relationship with God." Masa and Chie were careful to explain that, "We know in our heads that God is love, but in our hearts we often feel like God is scary and strict. I think this comes from our experience of church life."

But their cross-cultural partnerships haven't all been easy. Masa explains that foreigners and Japanese people alike have trouble reading each other's facial expressions, and communicating clearly takes time. Expectations are also a major problem. He says, "They have an idea about what they want to do and I have in mind what I want them to do. Often they want to move faster, but we worry and feel pushed."

They have found that working through these difficulties and ensuring communication is happening and flowing both ways is important. "It is not very Japanese to address problems directly," Masa admits, so they strive to become better listeners and to be the kind of people who always ask how people are doing.

Masa and Chie ask that missionaries not worry about how many people are being saved, saying, "Please don't worry about numbers. Don't be concerned with how many people are saved 'by you.' Salvation is God's work; it's enough for us all to be sharing the gospel."

Missionaries should also be aware of cultural expectations, including the condition of the Japanese church and Japanese Christian mentality. Sometimes it's tempting to assume everyone holds the same ideas of what being a Christian means, but Japanese Christians generally have limited knowledge of Christian history and understanding of the Bible. Masa and Chie say, "Some people think attending church = worship = being a Christian."

Masa and Chie also advise Japanese leaders to be conscious of cultural differences, and suggest that problems often arise from miscommunication, rather than the intention to cause trouble. They believe it is important for both sides to discuss motivations and expectations.

They encourage missionaries and international Christians to join in the life of their community. They believe it is great to have Christians coming to live in Japan, and not necessarily as missionaries. "Simply living as a Christian in a local community is valuable," they say, "whether joining in with local events, sending your kids to the local school, or sharing life with neighbours, we Japanese Christians will see that you think God is worth leaving the comfort of your own country and the education your kids might have had, and we are encouraged. Building relationships takes time; it's like raising kids! But opening your house and spending time with people is a very practical and powerful way to build relationships and open doors to the gospel." JH

Letter to the editor

Dear Wendy,

First of all, I want you to know that I really appreciate Japan Harvest, which you and others work so hard to make attractive, interesting, informative, and above all, glorifying to God. God bless you all.

Having said that, I am not up to seeing my name in print, nor do I feel worthy to write an article myself.

However, noting the theme of this present issue of *Japan Harvest* (Working Together), I just wanted to pass on a wee note of thanks to the Lord, as well as to our dear Japanese brothers and sisters. Over long years, we have always had the privilege of serving the Lord together with Japanese brothers and sisters wherever a new work has started and then seeing it develop as a self-contained, Christ-centred fellowship, shining as a Light in a dark place. It is not what we have done, but all of what the Lord has done. All praise to his Name.

God bless you,

One who has lived and served with our dear Japanese people for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God

Missionaries in Japan: A snapshot in space and time

These infographics show how Protestant missionaries are distributed in Japan and Tokyo and how their numbers have varied over the past seven decades.

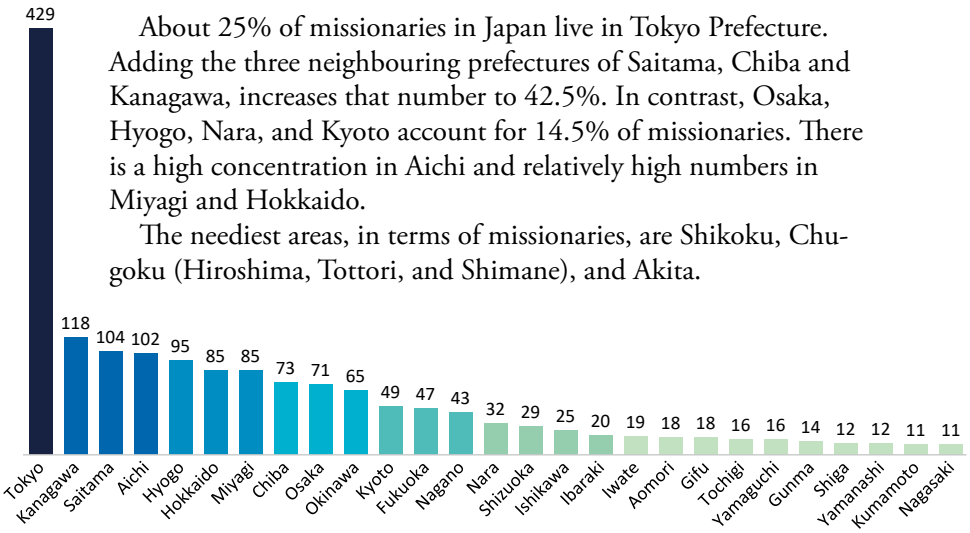
The maps and bar charts in sections 1 and 2 are based on data from the 2018 *JEMA Directory*. The directory lists nearly 1,800 missionaries, which include both JEMA members (59%) and non-members (41%).

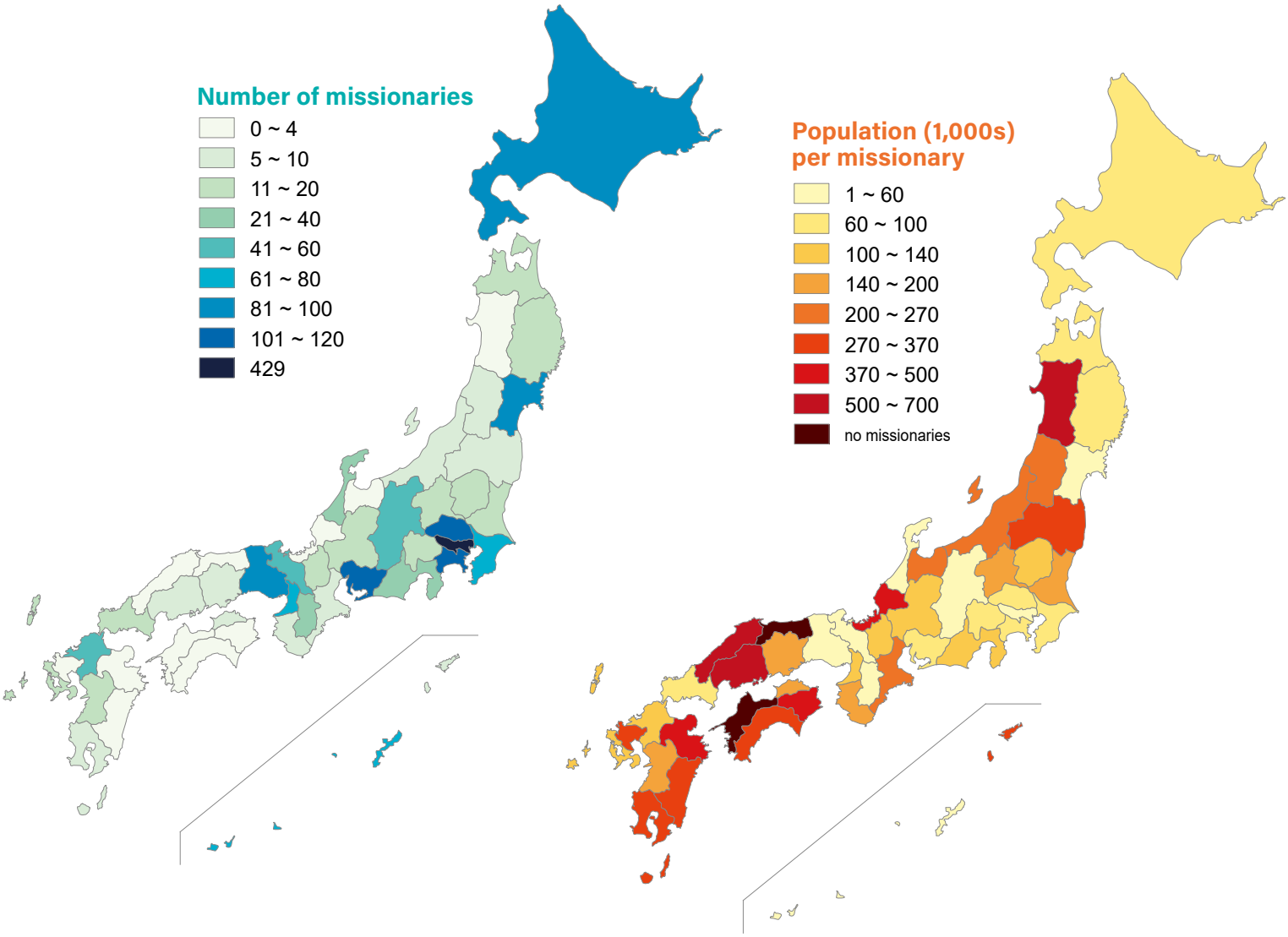
The green-blue maps show the absolute numbers of missionaries in each prefecture and region of Tokyo, while the yellow-red maps show how many thousands of Japanese people there are per missionary.

1. The distribution of missionaries in Japan

About 25% of missionaries in Japan live in Tokyo Prefecture. Adding the three neighbouring prefectures of Saitama, Chiba and Kanagawa, increases that number to 42.5%. In contrast, Osaka, Hyogo, Nara, and Kyoto account for 14.5% of missionaries. There is a high concentration in Aichi and relatively high numbers in Miyagi and Hokkaido.

The neediest areas, in terms of missionaries, are Shikoku, Chugoku (Hiroshima, Tottori, and Shimane), and Akita.

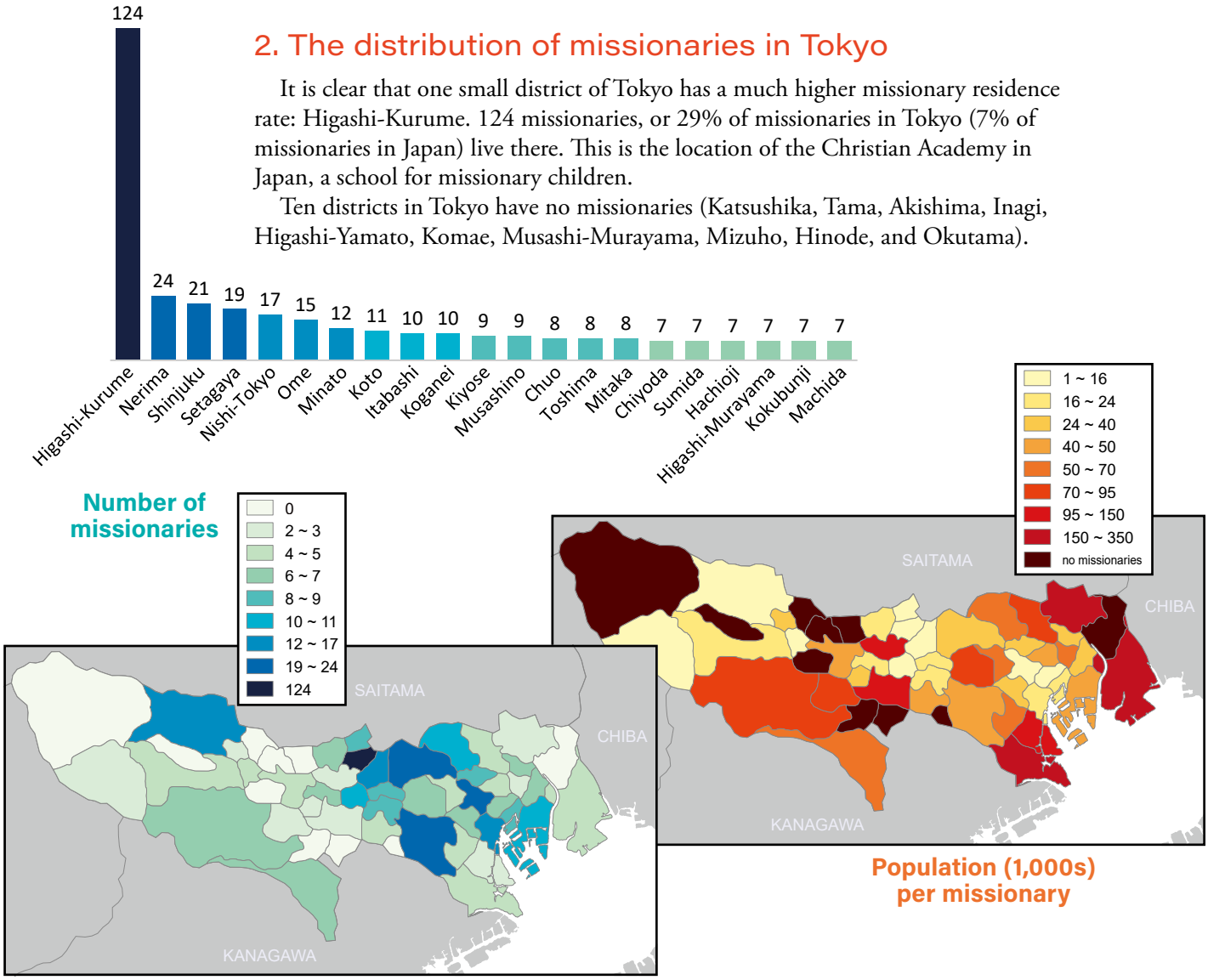




2. The distribution of missionaries in Tokyo

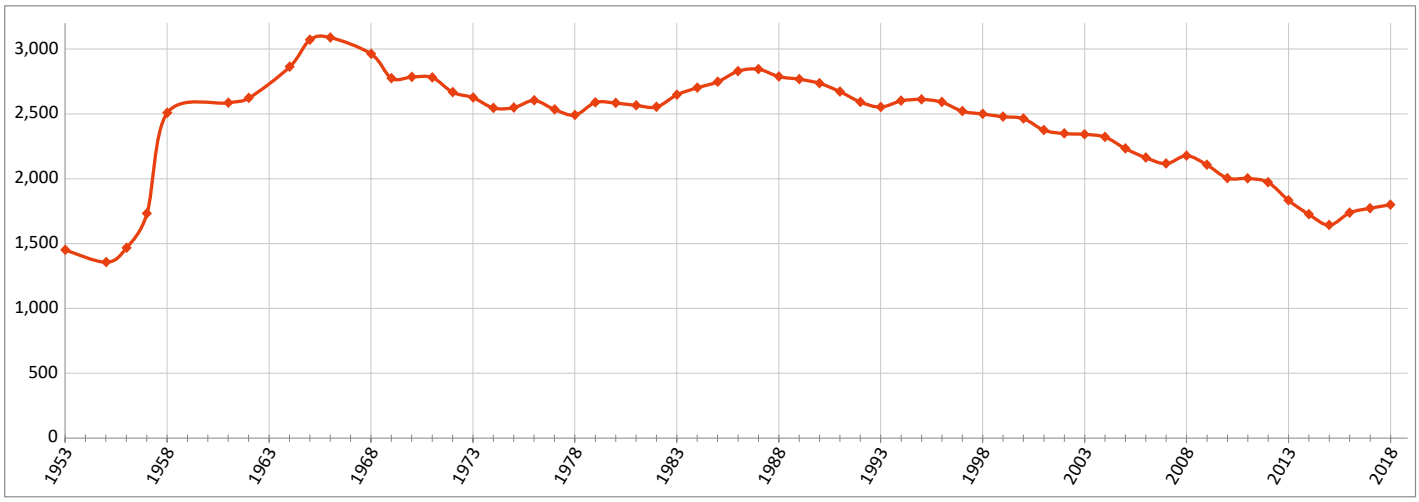
It is clear that one small district of Tokyo has a much higher missionary residence rate: Higashi-Kurume. 124 missionaries, or 29% of missionaries in Tokyo (7% of missionaries in Japan) live there. This is the location of the Christian Academy in Japan, a school for missionary children.

Ten districts in Tokyo have no missionaries (Katsushika, Tama, Akishima, Inagi, Higashi-Yamato, Komae, Musashi-Murayama, Mizuho, Hinode, and Okutama).



3. The trend of number of missionaries over the years

The number of missionaries (including those on home assignment) grew rapidly in the late 1950s and early 1960s, nearly doubling in the decade 1956-1966. They were relatively stable for the next three decades, hovering above 2,500. After peaking at 2,844 in 1987, the numbers consistently declined over the following three decades. This decline stopped in 2015, possibly due to the effect of the triple disaster in 2011.



Data is from totals in available JEMA directories from 1953 to 2018.

Top 10 Reasons to Study at Tokyo Christian University

by Randall Short, Associate Professor of Biblical Studies

1. You love Japan.

2. You want to build lifelong friendships with Japanese and international students from Asia, Africa, Europe, and America.

3. You want to live in the Greater Tokyo Area, the world's most populous metropolitan area.

4. You want to speak Japanese fluently.

5. You want to understand Japan, Asia, and the world.

6. You want to learn deeply and widely about Scripture, theology, church history, and Japanese religion.

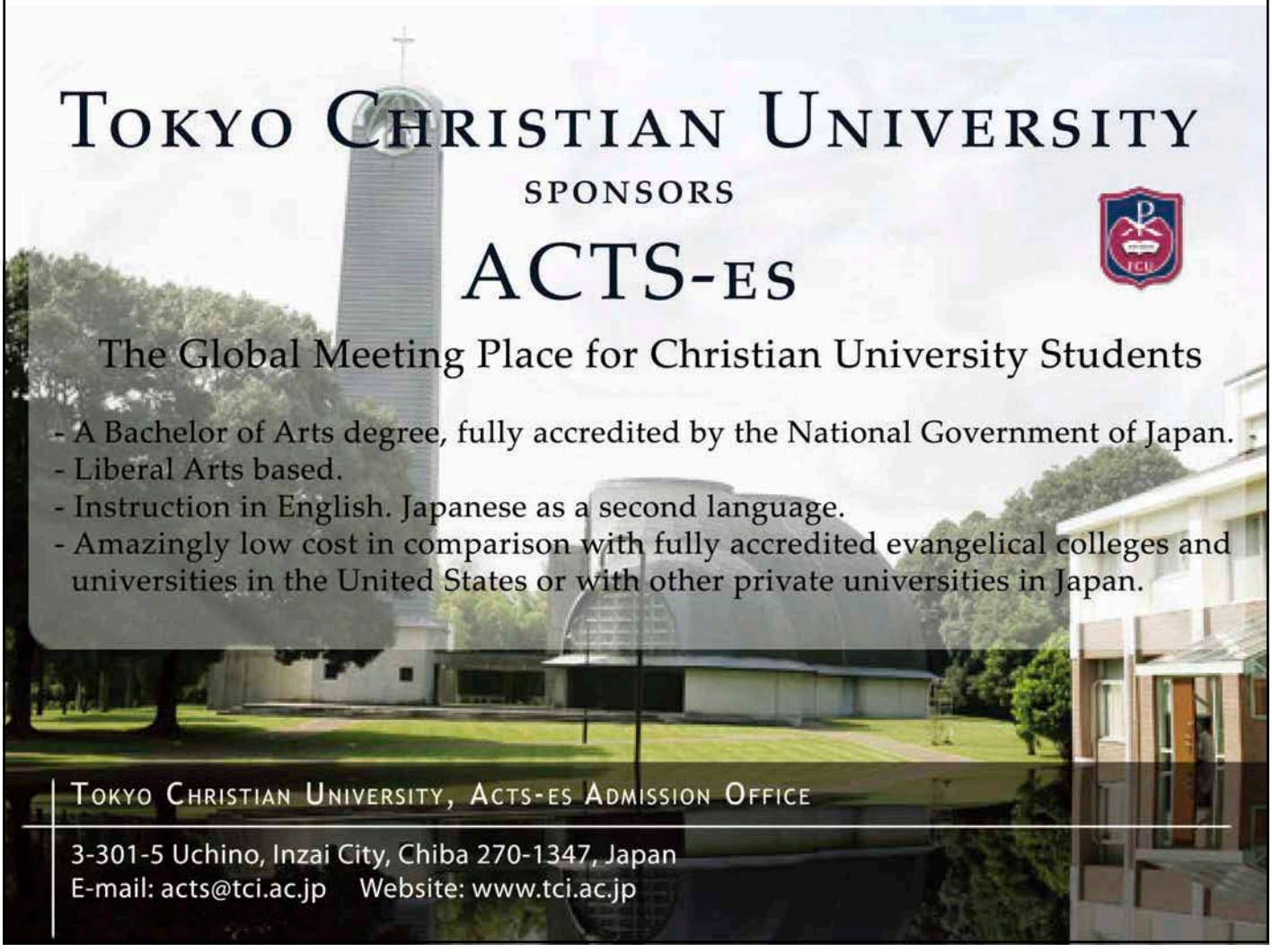
7. You want to study subjects like philosophy, history, linguistics, anthropology, and education without ignoring the most important questions you have about life, faith, and God.

8. You want to go to a school of "big learning" (the literal meaning of *daigaku,* the Japanese word for college) without getting lost in the system.

9. You want to get a college degree without taking on debt that will take years and years to pay.

10. You want to network with today's and tomorrow's Christian leaders in Japan, and to work with them to solve problems facing Japanese church and society.

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



New regular column: As many of JEMA's members are involved in church planting, *Japan Harvest* will now include regular articles from the Church Planting Institute.

I will build my church

Jesus' promise in Matthew 16 is a great encouragement to church planters

One of the most encouraging activities in the church planting training sessions run by the Church Planting Institute is when participants are asked why they are engaged in church planting. The answers are varied, but many have said that they find great encouragement in Jesus' promise: "I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it" (Matt 16:18 NIV). This promise strikes a chord in my heart, and I've meditated on it throughout my Christian life. Why is it so important to many church planters?

A personal promise of Jesus

Many ask me whether the church is growing in Japan. Overall the Protestant church is declining. However, some churches and networks have been continually growing. Many are unaware of healthy, growing, multiplying churches in Japan. Did you know that over 100 churches in Japan have multiplied themselves at least three times? I recently heard of a church that has already started three churches in its 14-year history. Though these mini-movements are not well-known, they affirm the promise of Jesus, "I will build my church."

The church's assurance

There are many implications of "my church" in Matthew 16:18; here are just three.

First, what is the church? The word "church" is only used in two places in the gospels: in Matthew 16 and 18. Matthew's use of the word "church" (*ecclesia*) implies a believing family who are bonded together for a common purpose.

When Jesus says "my church", it means we should not add baggage when defining the church. In Japan, three requirements are often added. If you are trying to establish a religious organization with a building and full-time paid pastor with formal theological training, then maybe you are making church planting harder than it needs to be.

Second, whose church is it? Jesus says it is "my church." It is not the denomination's church or the pastor's church. It is not your church. It is Christ's church. If you have a modicum of success, it is not because of you. It is Christ's work. Humbling, isn't it?

Third, it is his church, so we do it his way. I recently heard of two growing church plants. In response to growth, one started an additional worship service while the other moved to a larger space. They could have taken the easy way and just sat on their "success." But Christ calls us, whether in difficulty or not, to follow him in his way. Exegeting the Bible as it relates to your ministry context and yourself is a daunting task. Could Jesus be calling us to radically change our way of doing church?

The church will triumph

While we long to see Japan have as many churches as convenience stores, the task of planting 50,000 effective churches is colossally intimidating from a human perspective. But Jesus promises us that the church will overcome. Instead of taking a defensive position, the church should take courage in Jesus' promise. Church multiplication is challenging—a minefield of discouragements and setbacks—but nothing will prevail against Christ's church.

Still, a cloud of doubt can neutralize this promise. Unbelief is contagious. Sometimes I meet people who are risk-averse and doubt any positive outcome. At times, I have entertained doubts about the church; maybe you have too. However, like many other promises in Scripture, we know how history will end. The Bible is full of promises claiming God will triumph. And Japan is full of Christ followers who believe this to be true.

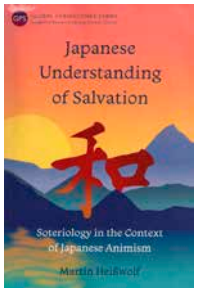
In some places, the church is growing remarkably. People are discovering afresh the truth of Matthew 16:18 for Japan. In obedience, many are boldly stepping out in faith. Jesus said: "I will build my church and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it." What a tremendous promise. I believe that the reason some Japanese leaders can start four churches in only five years is that they believe these promises. Meditating on God's promises increases our faith and vision for ministry. I think this is what those church planters were feeling. What do you think? JH

John Wm. Mehn *has served in Japan with Converge since 1985 in church planting and leadership development. He is the chair of Church Planting Institute (CPI), a JEMA ministry. He is the author of* Multiplying Churches in Japanese Soil *(Wm. Carey Library).*

Japanese Understanding of Salvation: Soteriology in the Context of Japanese Animism

Martin Heisswolf (Langham Global Library, 2018). 702 pp.

Heisswolf, a German missionary to Japan since 1991, shares the fruit of his research for his doctoral thesis. He discusses Japanese views of gods, implications of the Japanese concept of soul, and ancestor veneration in relation to Christian beliefs. In this encyclopedic study, Heisswolf begins by exploring the context of salvation. He presents word studies on *kami* (神; god) and Japanese words for the soul. Part 2 focuses on "Peace as a Central Concept of Soteriology." Here, Heisswolf considers the Japanese concept of peace, *wa* (和), before looking at the biblical concept. Part 3 is a wide-ranging discussion of "Four Aspects of Salvation in the Context of Japanese Animism," which covers the theological aspects of the concept of sin as well as the cosmological aspects of divination and shamanism. He then considers the sociological aspects of the concept of shame and the anthropological aspects of sin and impurity. The final section discusses the dimensions of salvation. Here, Heisswolf discusses the animistic focus of salvation in this world ("this-worldly benefits") and the differences with the Christian understanding of salvation.



The bibliography lists resources in Japanese, German, English, and French, with entries as recent as 2016, including an abundance of resources in German. We are indebted to Heisswolf for translating this book into English. He has a 33-page subject index, a Scripture index, and an 18-page index of Japanese words (both *romaji* and *kanji*). I appreciated the helpful discussions of ancestor veneration, collectivism, shame, and sin. The book contains an incisive analysis of Kazoh Kitamori's "pain of God" theology. At times, however, I wished for a bit more integration (in the discussion of peace, for example). Heisswolf acknowledges the lack of practical application and says this is "the call for another book. This book-to-be must correct the bias of this present book on theory, if it wants to venture into missiological, pastoral, and social praxis" (p. 486). I look forward to Heisswolf's next book. **JH**

Reviewer rating is 4 of 5 stars ★★★★☆

Third Culture Kids: Growing Up Among Worlds

David C. Pollock, Ruth E. Van Reken, and Michael Pollock (Nicholas Brealey, 2017, 3rd edition). 460 pp.

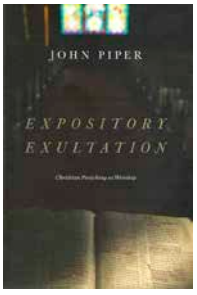
Van Reken and Michael Pollock (son of the late original co-author) have updated this global classic (1999). Skype and Facebook were not around when the book first came out. This new edition addresses the impact of technology and cultural complexity, and it has an expanded section on transition. Michael focuses on how parents and organizations can develop a "flow of care" that "will support families from the first day of their cross-cultural assignment through reentry and resettlement" (p. xvi). They look at new strategies to help today's third-culture kids better maximize the strengths of their upbringing. They have added a new section ("Expanding our Vision") in most chapters as well as questions that can be used for personal reflection or group discussions. The book has a helpful list of resources (organizations; websites; blogs, forums, chats, and Facebook pages; publishers; books, including books for children and teens; DVDs; movies; and plays). This book is for all mission organizations, third-culture kids, and their parents to learn from. Adult TCKs and their spouses will also benefit. **JH**

Reviewer rating is 5 of 5 stars ★★★★★

Expository Exultation: Christian Preaching as Worship

John Piper (Crossway, 2018). 328 pp.

In this book, Piper asks, "What does it mean to preach [God's] word, and how should we do it?" (p. 15). Piper aims to show "how preaching becomes and begets the blood-bought, Spirit-wrought worship of the worth and beauty of God. . . God's purpose on earth will advance through Bible-saturated, Christ-exalting, God-centered churches, where the gravity and gladness of eternal worship is awakened and rehearsed each week in the presence and power of expository exultation" (p. 21). Piper's book will encourage and challenge all who preach God's Word. As he states, "Preaching is not everything, but it affects everything. It is the trumpet of truth in the church" (p. 307). As Sinclair Ferguson's endorsement notes, "Here is a book about preaching in which God himself takes center stage. . . [This book] makes us want to be and do better for God. It is simply a must-read for every preacher of the gospel." **JH**



Reviewer rating is 5 of 5 stars ★★★★★

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

Prayer accompanied by action

A prayer room can help youth learn to pray and encounter God

In our church, we have a prayer room just for young people.

I had heard about an ongoing prayer chain in European countries called 24-7 Prayer (www.24-7prayer.com). On one island with a lot of crime, some young people prayed 24-7 and the crime rate decreased. The young people prayed, listened to voice of the Lord, and went out to evangelize and meet the needs of the area.

A Christian who doesn't pray will always be weak. A Christian who prays but keeps all the blessings to themselves will also be weak. Just as a river that does not flow will stagnate, the benefits and blessings we receive from God must flow out to others. As the church is blessed, the congregation grows and its ministry expands, but problems also arise. We need to receive solutions and strength directly from God through prayer. And that experience will add meat to the bones of our faith.

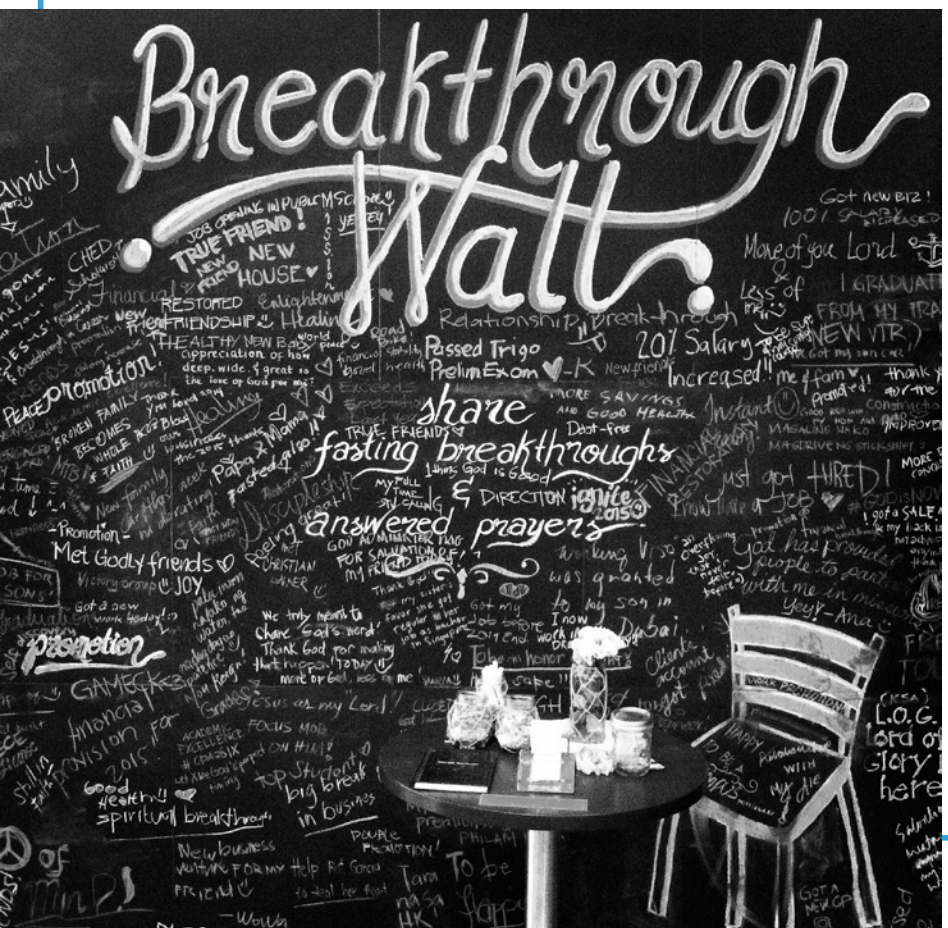
But just providing people with a room and telling them to pray does not ensure that they will pray. For that to happen, we have done various things.

In the youth prayer room, we have set up a stereo so they can listen to hymns, spiritual songs, and sermons. We have it stocked with construction paper and colored pencils so they can put into pictorial form the visions that God gives them. We let them hang these pictures on the wall. There is a huge map of Yokohama city so they can pray for the area. There is also a mailbox where they can place letters to God and a wastebasket for disposing of notes on which confessed sins have been written.

> **"Prayer is our Christian duty. It is an expression of submission to God and dependence upon Him. For that matter, prayer is arguably the most objective measurement of our dependence upon God."**
>
> *— H. B. Charles Jr. —*

Prayer is communication with God, so singing, drawing, and confessing sin are all types of prayer. It is important to realize that prayer is not just a one-way thing where we talk to God—it is also taking time to listen to what he has to say to us.

Once preparations have been made, we try to have 24-1 prayer (a one-day prayer chain) or 24-3 prayer (three days of continuous prayer) whenever there is a long vacation. Each person who signs up prays for one hour. It's amazing how quickly the time slots fill up, especially for nighttime hours. Those who go to the prayer room at night stay overnight at the church.



The young people who enter the prayer room at night come out beaming. "The minute I entered the room, I knew God was there." Or "God heard all of my prayers." At any rate, they are all changed by that wonderful experience. There are some who find the solution to their problems. Others make important decisions in a godly way. And many have made the decision to be baptized. Above all, when they pray for others, they are changed so that they can listen to the heart of God.

This can only happen because of the work of the Holy Spirit. As long as this flame of prayer continues, I am certain that revival in Japan is imminent. JH

From the December 2008 issue of *Inochi no Kotoba*, a mini-magazine by Word of Life Press Ministries. The article is part three of "Observing the Times 171: The Church that Meets the Needs of the Community." Translated by Ken Reddington.

Keishi Ikeda *was the youth pastor of Hongōdai Christ Church (JECA) when this article was written. He is now lead pastor.*

God's grace is sufficient

Starting life in a new culture can feel disempowering, but that can be a good thing if it causes us to rely on God more

It's been three months since we arrived in Sapporo, Japan, to start our journey into long-term missions. I feel we have adjusted well overall, but I would be wrong to say that it's always been easy. I want to share what has been the hardest aspect to deal with during this transition phase but first a word about culture shock.

Culture shock is a natural sense of anxiety or confusion caused by adjusting to life in a foreign country. It usually kicks in three months after arriving in a new country. Before this happens, however, there is the initial arrival stage (the honeymoon phase) where you will typically hear phrases like:

"I love snow."

"Japanese people are so polite!"

"The sushi is amazing!"

"Look! A device that instantly wraps plastic around your wet umbrella!"

"The streets are so clean!"

This phase is soon followed by a period of frustration when you will more likely hear these instead:

"I hate snow!"

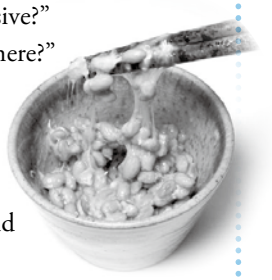
"Why is owning a car in Japan so expensive?"

"Why do KFC and Coke taste different here?"

"What's the point of going to church if I can barely understand a word?"

"What's up with this old-fashioned banking system?"

"Why do high school kids stare at me and shout 'harro, harro!'?"



Hello, culture shock!

Language learning, not fitting in, being stared at, and not having many friends are all things that I've been able to cope with pretty well. I like to think of myself as fairly adventurous and adaptable. The hardest thing for me, however, is perhaps not something that people commonly think about. If I'm to be completely open, the toughest thing has been the feeling of status loss. In South Africa, I was a pastor of a church. I preached often, led worship and Bible studies, I spoke at youth meetings, I led mission trips, and I taught at camps and events. I had a fantastic time and felt energized by all I could do to serve God. I enjoyed the feeling of being appreciated, being wanted, being needed; I enjoyed having a leadership role. I enjoyed the need to get up early, work late, and that feeling of actually contributing towards something and seeing the effects.

Since coming to Japan, I feel like I have lost those privileges. Right now, my role with OMF International is to be a learner. I don't have the language capabilities to preach, lead Bible studies, or lead anything at all. I can't even read the letters in my post box! This has been a difficult reality to come to grips with. I have lost my own notion of status, and my ego does not like it one bit. Is this part of culture shock? Am I a bad missionary? Am I just whining? Should I just build a bridge and get over it?

The amazing thing, though, has been to see God's hand in the midst of these feelings. A senior missionary encouraged me to focus on leading my wife and myself well, and the rest will come over time. I should find joy in my current situation because God knows all about it and will use me regardless. Other missionaries shared stories of how God used them in spite of their language handicap. God has also been gracious in giving me small glimpses of what could come in the future. Being able to read two verses from the Japanese Bible in front of an audience, being able to introduce myself in Japanese to our new church, spending time with Japanese university students and being able to communicate somewhat, talking to my barber about the weather and his work in Japanese. In all these moments, I can sense the good hand of God upon me. He has not left me.

Last week, God encouraged me from 2 Corinthians 3:4–6 (ESV):

> Such is the confidence that we have through Christ toward God. Not that we are sufficient in ourselves to claim anything as coming from us, but our sufficiency is from God, who has made us sufficient to be ministers of a new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit. For the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Cross-cultural ministry in Japan has revealed to me how insufficient I really am. I have come to a place where I can accept that fact. But I also rejoice that my sufficiency comes from Christ. He equips, he enables, and he makes me a sufficient minister of the new covenant, which is all about grace in the Lord Jesus and life through his Spirit. I've lost no real status—I'm still God's child, still a privileged minister of his grace. I've simply been reassigned.

So, if you are feeling like ministry is tough and overwhelming, remember that God will always be your loving Father and will grant you everything you need to do his will and fulfil his purpose for your life.

If I can keep learning these lessons because of culture shock, then shock me more! JH

An edited version of the post that first appeared on the author's blog: https://calledeast.com/2018/08/15/3-months-inis-aj-getting-culture-shock/

***AJ Meiring** is married to Aven. He served as a youth pastor in South Africa for eight years before moving to Japan in 2018 to work with OMF. He and Aven are currently studying the Japanese language in Sapporo.*

Wi-Fi cameras for home security

Features to look for when considering a camera to keep an eye on your home

Do you need to keep an eye on things at your house while you are away? Do you worry if the kids have made it home from school or practice? Has your package arrived yet? Would it be helpful to check in on an elderly parent a few times a day? These are just a few reasons people give for needing to call or rush back home during the day. Adding a Wi-Fi camera to your home could be a way to relieve your worries, limit those trips, and give you an instant peek into what is going on. Here are a few considerations to keep in mind when shopping for an internet-connected camera.

Security

Recent news of exploited Wi-Fi cameras is enough to make anyone leery of adding an internet eye to their home. Therefore, security is the first thing to consider when shopping for something to boost your surveillance at home. Name-brand cameras, while they may cost a bit more, are constantly providing updates to their security software. Bad publicity means loss of sales. No-name companies, especially out of China, may not be as compelled by bad publicity to update their product. Amazon, NEST, NETGEAR, Samsung, HiKam, and RING are a few of the better-known brands that have been well reviewed.

The history of public surveillance cameras in Japan is fairly short. "In 2002, Tokyo police introduced their first street surveillance camera in the Kabukicho entertainment district of Shinjuku Ward, as a deterrent against crime. Soon, cameras were installed in the Shibuya district and other urban areas upon requests from local residents.

Around that time, thefts were soaring in number, and Japan was experiencing its highest postwar crime rate.

Many people resented the fact that police could monitor their private lives. But the mood changed once the number of crimes started to drop."

By Masataka Yamaura, The Asahi Shimbun, May 27, 2018

If you do choose a lesser-known brand, always read reviews by other users and do an internet search for any warning signs. Another reason to lean towards name-brand Wi-Fi cameras is that they often come with better support. If you are having problems, if there are security updates, or if you need general assistance, it is usually easier to get help when dealing with larger companies.

Features to consider

As you research, some features to consider are storage, sound, and software. Some cameras have built-in SD cards so video can be recorded and saved locally. It allows you to view everything that happened after you return home. This could be useful for things like pet sitting or just general surveillance where you do not need a live stream. Other cameras save to a cloud server and store your video for various amounts of time. This is useful if you are away from home for longer periods of time but want to check in on things from the past week or so.

Live streaming is also a common feature. With live streaming, you view and hear what is going on in real time. Some manufacturers have mobile apps that allow you to communicate directly through the camera to someone on the other end.

Another consideration is what features the software has available. Live streaming cameras can offer notifications of movement if you prefer to only know when something changes. Some devices even have facial recognition and can inform you when specific people come to the door.

Setting it up

Once you have made your purchase, you will want to keep yourself and it secure. Never place a camera in a position where it allows the viewing of private things like bill statements or computer activity. Consider connecting it to a separate and invisible Wi-Fi network in your home so it is not visible to guests on your internet. When setting up accounts for viewing your camera's live stream, always use strong passphrases.

By doing the research, reading the reviews, and following these simple steps, you can stay secure and also benefit from having an internet eye in your home. JH

Product images from their respective websites

Jared Jones *lives and works in Takasaki, Gunma. He's a church planter for the International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. He's been in Japan since 2009 with his family. He and his wife have five children.*

The secrets of happy people

Happiness is linked to caring for the body, soul, emotions, and relationships

Happiness is one of the most elusive of emotions. David G. Myers believes that there is no foolproof way to be happy, but he suggests we can learn the following lessons by studying happy people.[1]

Savor the moment. "Happiness," said Benjamin Franklin, "is produced not so much by great pieces of good fortune that seldom happen as by the little advantages that occur every day."[2] Unhappy people see today as only a means to the future. Happy people learn to enjoy the little things in life today.

There is no relationship between having money and being happy. Myers points out that "wealth is like health. Although its utter absence breeds misery, having it is no guarantee of happiness. Happiness is less a matter of getting what we want than wanting what we get."

To feel happier, take control of your time. "One way to feel more empowered is to master our use of time," says psychologist Mike Argyle. For happy people, time is "filled and planned." For unhappy people, time is unfilled, open, and uncommitted; they postpone things and are inefficient.[3] Myers recommends breaking down big goals into daily aims as this will help you to accomplish your goals. Meeting goals provides "the delicious, confident feeling of being in control."[4]

Happy people act happy. As crazy as it sounds, if you want to be happy, act happy. People with happy lives exhibited three traits: they like themselves, they are positive thinkers, and they are outgoing. If you don't have these qualities, you can practice them and actually become happier. In a recent study, people who were told to go around smiling wound up being happier than those who went around scowling. Strangely enough, going through the motions can trigger the emotions.

Seek work and leisure that engage your skills. Challenges at work and home can leave us stressed. The trick is to be involved in activities that interest us. The experience of being absorbed in this interest is called "flow" by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi.[5] To stay in flow, we might choose to take a lower paying job that we find more interesting and challenging. Alternatively, we could take up a stimulating hobby. "In every part and corner of our lives, to lose oneself is to be a gainer; to forget oneself is to be happy," noted Robert Louis Stevenson.[6]

Join the "movement" movement. Physically fit people are more self-confident, less stressed, and in better spirits than those who don't exercise.

Get rest. People who are energetic and cheerful make time to get enough rest. Studies show that there is less depression among people who get seven to eight hours of sleep a night. Some research shows that people who get a good night's sleep have better self-control.

Give priority to close relationships. It is no surprise that close relationships are an antidote to unhappiness. People with several close relationships are healthier and happier.

Take care of the soul. C. S. Lewis said, "Joy is the serious business of heaven." More and more studies are showing what Christians have known all along: there is a relationship between faith and well-being. In a recent Gallup survey, highly spiritual people were twice as likely as those lower in spiritual commitment to declare themselves as "very happy."[7]

While happiness may be elusive, we can become happier by developing the above qualities of happy people. JH

1. David G. Myers, "Pursuing Happiness," Psychology Today, 1 July 1993, https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/199307/pursuing-happiness
2. Benjamin Franklin Quotes, goodreads.com, https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/30129-happiness-consists-more-in-the-small-conveniences-of-pleasures-that
3. Myers, Ibid
4. Myers, Ibid
5. Myers, Ibid
6. Robert Louis Stevenson Quotes, goodreads.com, https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/658144-in-every-part-and-corner-of-our-life-to-lose
7. Deborah Jordan Brooks, "Running Down the Road to Happiness," 8 October 2002, https://news.gallup.com/poll/6943/running-down-road-happiness.aspx

Eileen Nielsen *is the Member Care Facilitator for TEAM Japan and a counselor at Tokyo Mental Health Clinic. She leads seminars on using MBTI (Myers Briggs Type Indicator) for team building, conflict resolution, and personal development. Contact her at:* eileenpnielsen@gmail.com

Good Writing

Working together in writing

Our writing gets better when we treat it as a team effort

As an editor, I work with a lot of people. On this magazine, I work with up to 40 people each issue, including authors who submit their writing and the Japan Harvest team who works not just to edit the material submitted but also present it appealingly to our readers. This entails both attention to detail as well as relating to people (even if a lot of communication is via email).

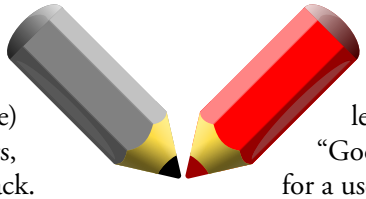
Early on in my writing and editing journey, I learnt that it was vital for me to work with others in order to produce excellent work. To this day, I am surprised at how many things I miss when editing other people's work and when writing my own articles. I'm very happy when people kindly point out my errors. Alas, not everyone is used to others critiquing what they write, and it can be hard to take. Here are a few pointers:

As a writer

- It's always worth finding a second (or more) pair of eyes, but look for discerning readers, not just people who will pat you on the back.
- Try not to take critique of your writing personally.
- Listen carefully to what the other person is saying—they offer a different, fresh perspective and probably have something good to say.
- Listen very closely if they are an editor of a publication you are writing for. They know things about their publication that you may not.
- Don't cherish your words too highly. Sometimes it's the things we love most that need to be removed to create the best piece of writing.

As an editor (be particularly careful if you've not been asked for your opinion)

- If you have a correction to make of someone else's work, do it with a kind and gentle spirit and give clear reasons.
- Keep in mind that it is not your work but the author's.
- Listen to the writer, especially if they come back with complaints about what edits you've made or suggested.
- Often, making suggestions rather than changes is a better path. Let the author make the revisions.
- Pay attention to more than just the small details (like spelling and punctuation). The big picture—is the story cohesive or does it leave unanswered questions—matters, too. (See "Good Writing" in *Japan Harvest*, Summer 2017, for a useful editing checklist.)



Let's work together to produce the best writing we can! JH

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

Voice of Experience

Passing the baton

Learning from mistakes in handing over a church to a Japanese pastor

I grew up as a missionary kid in Yamanashi and 40 years ago came back to Japan as an independent missionary. I want to share a couple of experiences I've had in handing over a church to a Japanese pastor.

In May of 1981, I started Asakura Yorokobi Kirisuto Kyōkai (Joy Christ Church) in my home in western Kōchi City, Shikoku. The next year, I started Ikku Nozomi (Hope) Kirisuto Kyōkai in eastern Kōchi City.

Both churches now have Japanese pastors and are completely out of our hands with their own land and buildings. But how we passed the baton was very different.

Early mistakes

From the very beginning, the Ikku and Asakura churches were considered one church, meeting in two locations. In 1986 the Ikku church only had one member, with three to five people attending on a Sunday. Asakura had five members, with about ten coming each week. We were running full programs at both churches.

That year, the assistant pastor of a large church in Takamatsu (northern Shikoku) asked if he could pastor the Ikku church. As a church, we decided to invite him to come to serve as pastor of the church. We didn't feel it was fair to have him come to just Ikku, but the income from both churches could support him.

So, he came in April that year. The understanding was that he was to be the pastor of the church and I was to continue as the missionary. We decided to meet about once a week, to discuss church policy and evangelism, etc. Nothing was written down, though, and nothing was done about dividing the duties. This turned out to be a major mistake.

At first, I preached more than he did. Gradually, we took turns preaching every other week. As time went along, though, a rift developed between us. The pastor seemed to always be strongly forcing his ideas on us. Our times together seemed to consist of him presenting an idea that didn't sound like it would work and me trying to talk him out of it.

There are many reasons why things did not work out between us. One was that although I had experience in church planting and he had none, he was older than me. In Japan, you usually defer to your elders. However, in this situation, I was the one with experience, so, to my understanding, I felt it would have been natural for him to be asking me about things. Instead, he tried to force his opinions on me.

Another major reason it didn't work out was one of my own making. Since I'd never worked with a pastor, I was naïve. I thought that we had invited him as the pastor, and that I was still the missionary of the church. But there was no real delineation of what either a pastor or missionary was to do. In fact, everything that I thought a missionary should do, he thought a pastor should do.

Of course, each of us came with a set of pre-conceived ideas about what we should be and do. But we never talked about those. As it turned out, his ideas were vastly different from mine. It seemed like we could never come to a consensus. By the fall of 1986, we had separated in all but name. The church continued to support him, not by giving him a salary but by paying his rent and utilities.

We separated one year after he arrived. The Ikku church could not really support the pastor with only one member. But the Asakura church could. Since most members had cars or lived on that side of town, we asked all the members of the Asakura church to go to Ikku. They agreed, with all five members and the other churchgoers going to the Ikku church. The Ikku church still continues, with its own land and building, though its membership is drastically reduced. They are an independent church, but very loosely affiliated with a national group of churches.

The separation left a bad taste in everyone's mouth. I feel it was a mistake that could have been prevented, but how? What could we have done? What did we learn from this mistake?

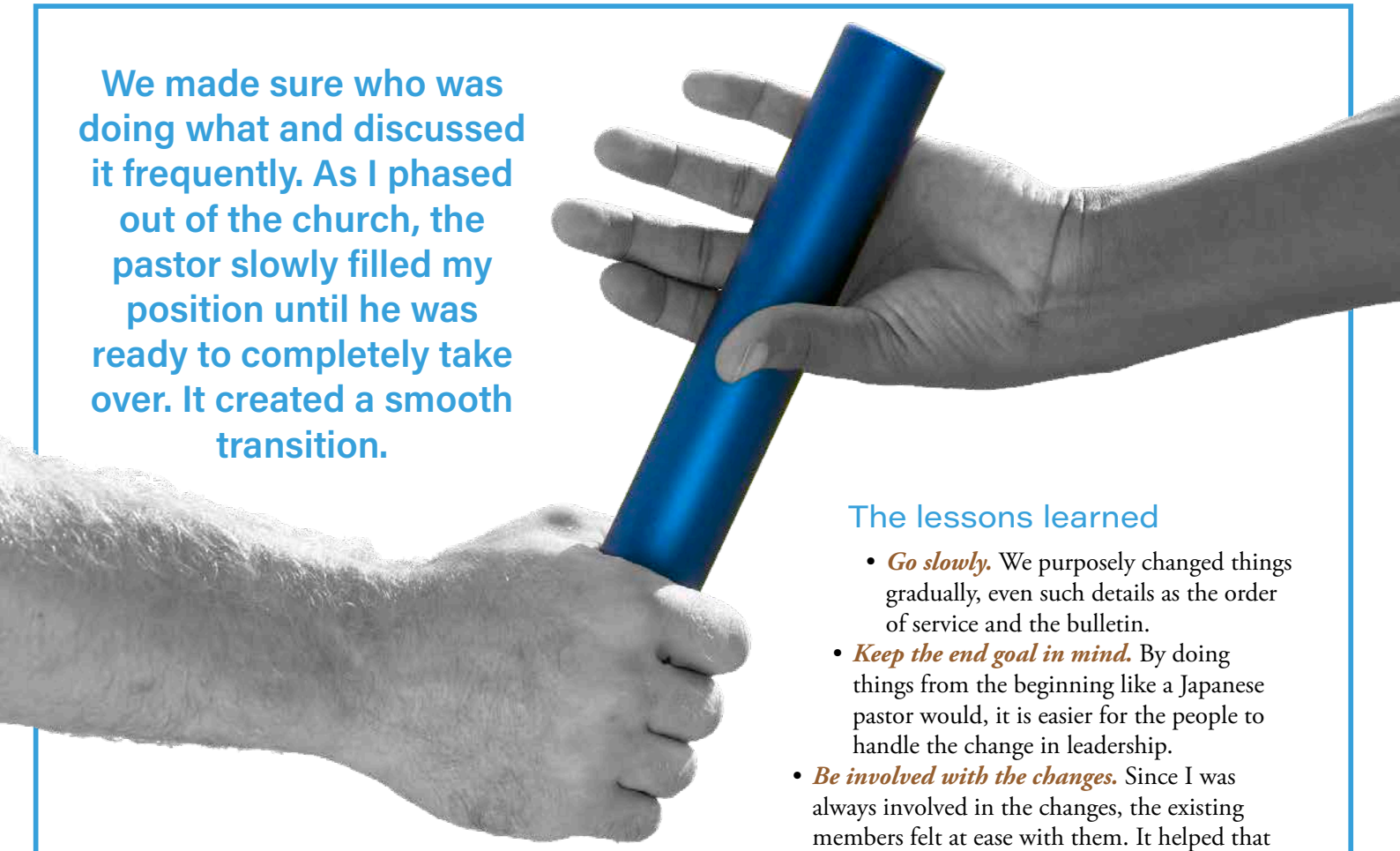
A better attempt

Our "success story" involves the Asakura church again. After restarting from zero in 1987, we had about five members by 1991. Close to ten people plus our family of six were attending worship regularly and our living room was feeling small. In January of 1992, we moved the church to a new location, very close to Kōchi University. Working in Japan, you never know when there will suddenly be growth. After ten years of ministry and only four baptisms, 1992 saw seven people baptized.

By 1993, I knew I wanted to hand over the church to a Japanese pastor. A Dōmei church in Okayama was moving along the lines we were thinking of (elder rule), so I began going to the Dōmei Kansai Block Pastors Meetings and attending area events. As a result, the Asakura church joined the Dōmei in 1994.

In April the following year, the Dōmei Board of Directors recommended a pastor. The first thing we did (the pastor and I with our wives) was sit down and discuss how things should operate. From the very beginning, I made it clear that I would give full responsibility to the pastor. The church had called him to be their

We made sure who was doing what and discussed it frequently. As I phased out of the church, the pastor slowly filled my position until he was ready to completely take over. It created a smooth transition.



pastor, so I would follow his lead. He surprised me by saying that he wanted me to relinquish my duties to him slowly. He also wanted us to learn from each other, so we could present a united "front" to the church members.

We met together with him and his wife weekly to discuss how to run the church and what we wanted to do in the future. There seemed to be a camaraderie among us that made it easy to work together. It helped that we were a similar age and had almost equivalent pastoral experience.

By the fall, he was gradually taking over many responsibilities. I only preached once a month. In July, my wife and I started a new work in our newly-built house in Ino, just west of Kōchi City, called Tennō New Life Chapel. Though I had not expected it, the pastor applied to the Dōmei for our new work to have *dendō-sho* status, making it a daughter church. Over the next four years, we gradually shifted our focus (and participation) away from Asakura to our new work. Thus, we began to extricate ourselves from the Asakura church. As of 1999, the Tennō church has been totally independent from the Asakura church.

In 2001, the original pastor transferred to Saitama and another pastor and his wife took his place. In 2009, the church found land and built a building. And five years ago, that pastor was replaced by another man. The church we started is now a fully independent church led by Japanese.

The lessons learned

- ***Go slowly.*** We purposely changed things gradually, even such details as the order of service and the bulletin.
- ***Keep the end goal in mind.*** By doing things from the beginning like a Japanese pastor would, it is easier for the people to handle the change in leadership.
- ***Be involved with the changes.*** Since I was always involved in the changes, the existing members felt at ease with them. It helped that we continued to be present in the morning service at Asakura for the first two years.
- ***Be willing to completely let go.*** This was the major difference from our earlier mistake. Because I was willing to give the pastor all the responsibility, he felt comfortable enough to ask me to continue with many of my responsibilities.
- ***Know who you are calling.*** Of course, being a member of a church group and having the board of directors recommend him made things easier. Personality-fit also makes a great difference.
- ***Define and discuss roles.*** We made sure who was doing what and discussed it frequently. As I phased out of the church, the pastor slowly filled my position until he was ready to completely take over. It created a smooth transition.

In conclusion

I realize that every situation is different, but perhaps there are things you can learn from my experiences. May God continue His work of building His church in our needy country! To God be all the glory and praise.

"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen" (Ephesians 3:20, 21 NASB). JH

Image: "Hands Passing Baton at Sporting Event" by flickr user tableatny

Ken Reddington *and his wife, Toshiko, are church-planting missionaries in Kōchi-ken. Ken is an MK who returned to Japan as a missionary from the US in 1978.*

学ぶ

Never stop learning!

Keep pushing yourself to extend your knowledge of Japanese language and culture

After learning Japanese and being immersed in the culture for many years, you will probably reach a stage where you feel more or less comfortable with your language proficiency and knowledge of the culture. While you might not be able to discuss quantum physics in Japanese, you can do everything you need to without breaking into a sweat, and life in Japan can feel more normal than life back 'home'. That's a great stage to reach as it means you can focus on doing ministry, which is, after all, the goal of all the preparatory learning.

But don't stop learning the language or the culture. While language learning may no longer be the priority it once was, don't neglect it altogether. Your language level will plateau unless you actively make efforts to improve. This doesn't mean you need to devote hours to learning—brief daily sessions can often be enough—but it does mean developing a mentality of continually striving to improve. That is important since improving language and understanding will add greater depth and perception to your ministry.

Tips for improving

Seek feedback from native speakers. If you're preaching or leading Bible studies, ask one of the Japanese listeners to jot down any recurring mistakes you make or unnatural expressions you use and share them with you afterwards. For any emails you write in Japanese, ask receivers to point out one or two revisions in their replies.

Strengthen your weak points. Identify areas you are weak in and work on them. If your ministry mainly involves listening and talking, spend some time on reading and writing.

Challenge yourself. Put yourself in situations that stretch you. To extend your comprehension and vocabulary, watch programs and read books on unfamiliar topics. Even though my wife is Japanese, I regularly take free talk lessons on Cafetalk.com, a website that connects language learners with teachers. I need the discipline of not having the option to speak English because it's too easy to slip into English when talking with my wife about difficult topics. Also, she can understand my garbled Japanese, whereas other Japanese speakers might not.

Keep asking hard questions. Improving cultural understanding is as important as enhancing language ability, since the more you comprehend the culture, the better you will understand the people you are ministering to and how to reach their hearts. Continue to ask probing questions about the culture and the way Japanese people think. Why are Japanese people more likely to hand in a lost wallet than Westerners are? What do they think about the supernatural and what happens after death? Why do they tend to be risk adverse? And the ultimate question—why are there so few Christians in Japan? To find answers to these questions and others, discuss them with Japanese friends and consult books on Japanese culture. 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

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