



JAPAN Winter 2005
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Japan Evangelical Missionary Association

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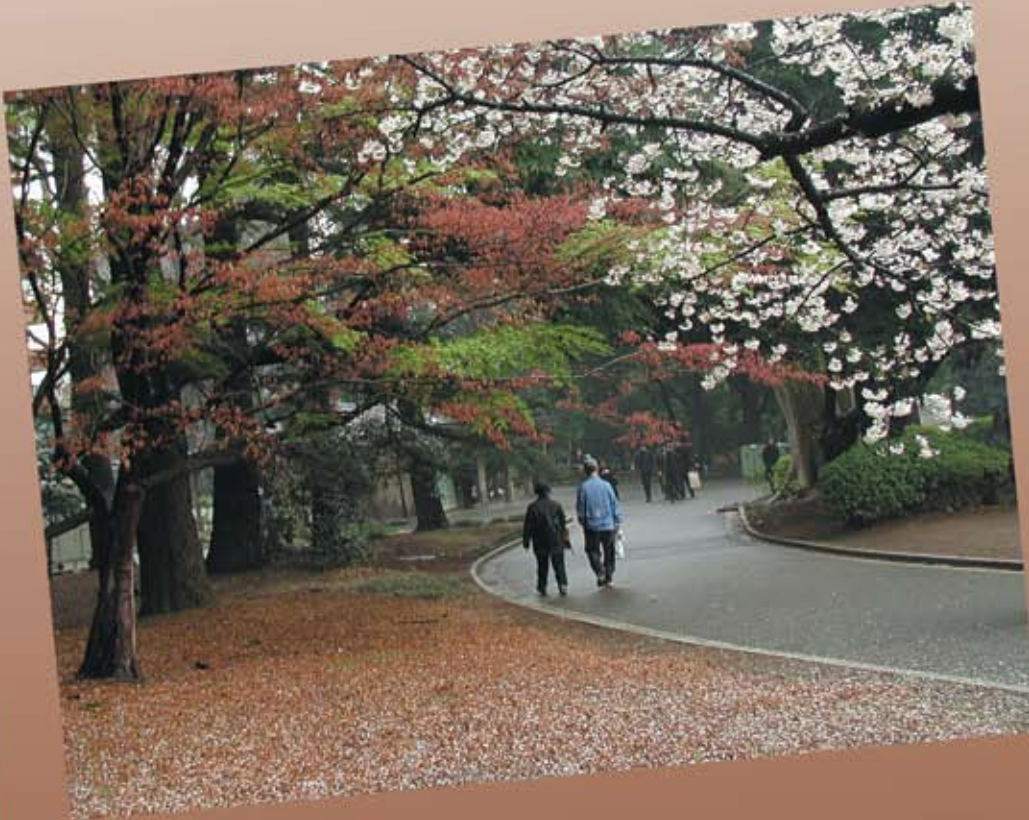
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2005
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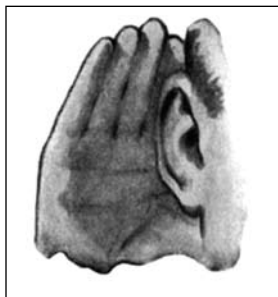
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JAPAN HARVEST

Volume 56 No. 3 / Winter 2005

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(Norwegian Shinsei Senkyodan)
Cover Photo: Rev. Berndt Bohman D.D.
Member of All Japan Alpine Photograph Association

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The Japan Harvest is the official publication of the Japan Evangelical Missionary Association. It is published quarterly to promote primarily the cause of the evangelical church in Japan, and secondarily the ministry and activities of the association. Individual articles or advertisements express the viewpoints of the contributor and not necessarily those of JEMA. The editor welcomes unsolicited articles.
Price overseas is \$ 25.00 per year.
Price in Japan is ¥ 2,800 per year,
Single copy is ¥ 750.

Postal Transfer: Japan Harvest, Tokyo 00130-4-180466

ORDER BLANK-inside back cover

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YESTERDAY

The God of Israel will be your reward, Isaiah 52:12.

SECURITY FROM YESTERDAY.

God requireth that which is past. At the end of the year we turn with eagerness to all that God has for the future, and yet anxiety is apt to arise from remembering the yesterdays. Our present enjoyment of God's grace is apt to be checked by the memory of yesterday's sins and blunders. But God is the God of our yesterdays, and He allows the memory of them in order to turn the past into a ministry of spiritual culture for the future. God reminds us of the past lest we get into a shallow security in the present.

SECURITY FOR TO-MORROW.

For the Lord will go before you. This is a gracious revelation, that God will garrison where we have failed to. He will watch lest things trip us up again into like failure, as they assuredly would do if He were not our reward. God's hand reaches back to the past and makes a clearing-house for conscience.

SECURITY FOR TO-DAY.

For ye shall not go out with haste. As we go forth into the coming year, let it not be in the haste of impetuous, unremembering delight, nor with the flight of impulsive thoughtlessness, but with the patient power of knowing that the God of Israel will go before us. Our yesterdays present irreparable things to us; it is true that we have lost opportunities, which will never return, but God can transform its destructive anxiety into a constructive thoughtfulness for the future. Let the past sleep, but let it sleep on the bosom of Christ.

Leave the Irreparable Past in His hands, and step out into the Irresistible Future with Him.

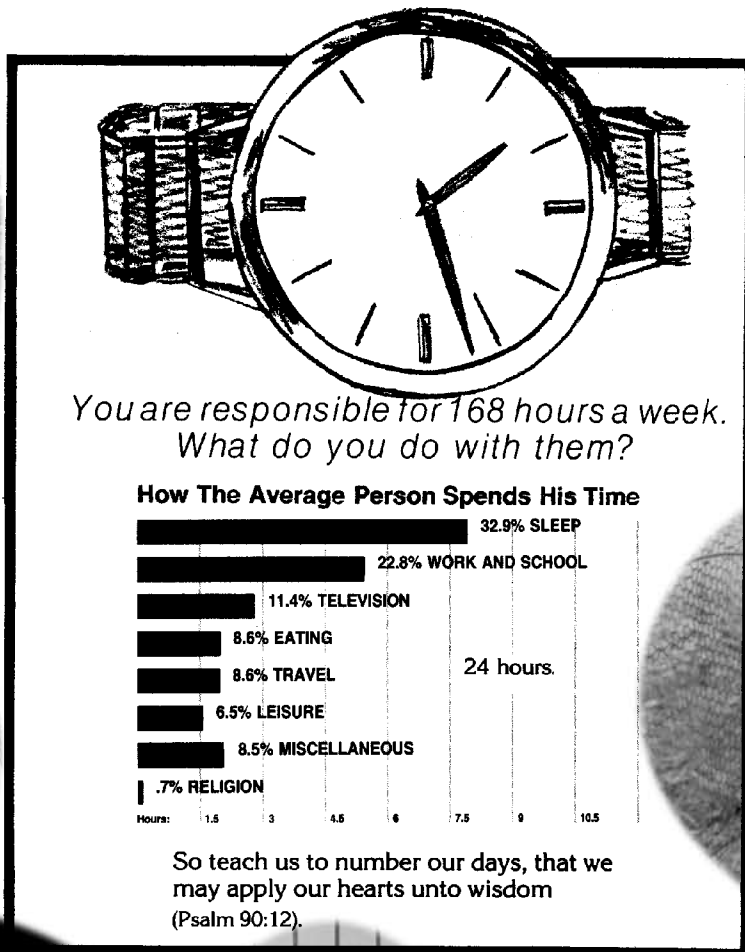
My Utmost for His Highest

Oswald Chambers, Classic Daily Devotional

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Who will we meet TODAY & TOMORROW

The urgency of Kingdom ministry takes us to every section of Japan and to every segment of her society. We will meet:



The Eschatological Hope & the Missionary Mandate

By Henry Harder



Nugget from the Past

Japan Harvest Volume 38, No. 4, 1988/89

The Lord's last words to His disciples, before His departure (ascension) were, You shall be my witnesses...to the end of the earth, (Acts 1:8). There's the missionary mandate. In view of the material in the Book of the Acts of the Apostles, especially such a passage as 10:42, I believe these words of the Lord to contain a command, not just a statement of fact. In fact, these words, You shall be my witnesses...to the ends of the earth express the theme of the book. This command was carried forward by Peter (to the Jews), and by Paul (to the Gentiles). The gospel was carried from Jerusalem to Rome.

The disciple on that Olivet slope that day heard these parting words of their Lord. Then He disappeared. He ascended. He left our dimension, our space/time continuum, and entered the dimension of eternity. Perhaps the disciples kept looking up. Perhaps He would reappear as He had done before. But He didn't.

He had called them to be His witnesses to the ends of the earth. The word "witness" is derived from the Greek word "martus" from which we get "martyr." Little did these disciples know what an appropriate word that would become for some of them, and for countless millions in the future. Not many years after this, Stephen, James, Peter, Paul and others laid down their lives because of their witness for the Savior. They were martyrs.

Now, why were the apostles and the early Christians willing to witness to their Lord regardless of the cost? What was the incentive that drove them on? Was it desperate NEED? Was it just humanitarian? Hardly! What drove them to the ends of the earth and to the end of their lives? I believe the answer to be, at least in part, here in the opening verses of the Book of Acts.

The command had been given. The Com-

mander had disappeared. What would drive the disciples to fulfill the command? Two angelic messengers suddenly appeared to these disciples. They said, This same Jesus...will come back." There is the eschatological hope! It was the anticipated but certain return of the Lord that became the great incentive for the fulfilling of the missionary mandate. I have not seen this point developed in any of the commentaries on the Book of Acts. I'm working through this book on our broadcast "What's New," and I came across one brief comment regarding this point in only one of the twelve commentaries which I regularly consult as I prepare for the radio messages. Yet here it is.

These disciples needed to be convinced that the Lord would return, so God gave two witnesses. The disciples had interacted with the risen Lord, so they knew the resurrection was a fact. They had just witnessed the ascension. They knew that had happened. It was after all, after the fact. But the return was still future. They needed to be sure of that, too, so God sent two witnesses. Since they came from non-temporal eternity, they had already witnessed the return of the Lord. These angelic beings weren't bound to time. They were authentic witnesses. Furthermore there were two of them. The law required that by the mouth of two witnesses the truth be established and recognized. These two messengers could be believed. While the disciples had witnessed the resurrection and the ascension, these two angelic messengers had witnessed the return. I believe that, without the conviction that the same Jesus would return, the missionary mandate would have floundered. If built only on Jesus' command, or on His resurrection or on His ascension, the missionary mandate would have failed. It was the certainty of the return that drove them to the ends of the

earth—to Rome, the capitol of the empire.

It has been said that the anticipation of the return of the Lord stifles missionary activity as well as social action. Did it? Does it? The mandate to witness rests not only on the risen Lord's command, You shall be my witnesses, nor only on the ascended Lord's living presence in heaven, but it rests on His promised return. The anticipation of His return does not paralyze or stifle witnessing or social involvement. It isn't a deterrent; it is rather the final great incentive.

The question needs to be asked, "How is the return of the Lord an incentive to fulfill the mandate?" The answer deserves a lot more time and thought than I have given it. But let me surface several observations to stimulate your thinking.

In the first place, the certainty of the return of the Lord tells us that God has a program, which He began with Christ's coming and the birthday of the church. The Lord began it; it is to be carried on by the church in the power of the Holy Spirit, and it will culminate at His return. The missionary task wasn't man's idea. It wasn't Paul or Peter who planned it. God has a program. It's His! His return confirms it, and His return concludes the program of witnessing.

His return tells us secondly, that there is an end. History, as we know it, will one day close, and it will close climactically with the return of the Lord. Therefore the time to witness will come to an end. One day the last person will be saved. One day the day of grace will end. The return of the Lord gives us a deadline. We humans need deadlines. Time is moving to a goal. It is only the longsuffering of God that keeps the day of grace open.

A third observation is that the return of the Lord tells us that there is another dimension—a

Continued on Page 30

DAI-YE-NU (We would have been satisfied)

Dai-ye-nu is the Hebrew word for “we would have been satisfied.” I found a reading in a little book containing instructions for a “Christian” Passover that used the word. The reading went something like this: “If You had created the world and not made us a special people for Yourself, *Dai-ye-nu*. If You had made us a special people and not led us out of Egypt, *Dai-ye-nu*,” and so on, all the way up to Jesus’ Return and the promise of Heaven.

Then a few months ago I was walking in the hills and came upon a stand of poplar trees. It was one of those magical, windy evenings, and as I looked up into the reddening sky through the canopy of poplars, I was deeply impressed that all things are connected, and I had a proper place, appointed just for me, in God’s universe. I felt so thankful, that I composed this little poem on the way back to the car.

DAI-YE-NU (We would have been satisfied)

Dai-ye-nu, Dai-ye-nu

It would have been enough
To kneel before You as my God
I would have thought Your grace was infinite
Your mercy without limit

But You became my Father
You loved me as Your child
You made Yourself my Savior
My Shepherd and my Friend
My Comforter to share my every pain

Dai-ye-nu, Dai-ye-nu.

It would have been enough
To have my basic clothes and food
I would have thought my wealth was infinite
Provision for all time

But You are my Provider
You gave me everything
The leaves, the sky, the tigers
The spinning galaxies
The Cherubim in Heaven, all are mine!

Dai-ye-nu, Dai-ye-nu.

It would have been enough
To have You always by my side
I would have thought your love was infinite
My Shepherd and my King

But You became the Hero
In the ultimate romance
You gave Yourself to buy me
You arranged a wedding feast
My white-horse-Knight, You’re coming any day!

Dai-ye-nu, Dai-ye-nu.

It would have been enough
If there were only You and me
I would have thought I really had it all
My God and I alone

But you filled the halls of Heaven
With a multitude of men
Uncountable companions
To share eternal bliss
Then You told me to invite my friends as well

*Dai-ye-nu, Dai-ye-nu,
It would have been enough
I would have been quite satisfied with less
Much less*

*Dai-ye-nu, Dai-ye-nu
The riches of this world
The plasticity of wealth and fame
What could they possibly matter
When I think of all You’ve done? Dai-ye-nu,*

Dai-ye-nu You come, too.
It isn’t quite enough
Until you’ve joined us and you see
The meaning of the cross
Till you take Him as your Savior

The Source of all that’s good
Till you fall in love with Jesus
And you’ve joined the family

Heaven will be complete
All will be enough
When you’re there, too,
Dai-ye-nu, You come, too!

*Written by Debbie Penner
Missionary & Founder of FreeJapan*

How is Your

Last spring we spent a few days with my wife's sisters. We soon discovered that Georgie was not totally involved. In fact, some things she didn't get at all and made no responses. We knew it was her hearing, and so we were quite pleased when she told us she was going to have her hearing checked when she returned home to California.

Her doctor quickly recommended a hearing aid, and, as some of you know, hearing aids don't come cheaply. But God provided for Georgie through an anonymous donor who had set up a foundation for retirees of the Los Angeles Times, where Georgie's late husband had worked. How excited she was when she called and told us how much better she could hear, and how good the Lord was to give her this unexpected benefit to pay for her hearing aid.

We all recognize how critical it is to be able to hear well. Jesus said that hearing well spiritually is a requirement for life and growth in His kingdom. In fact, the Bible says a great deal about our spiritual ears. Why do you think the slaves in ancient Israel had their ears pierced? It wasn't to put rings or diamond stickpins in them. It was to show their complete devotion and obedience. Ears stand for the kind of hearing that leads to trust, faith, and obedience to the Lord God Almighty.

Moses chided the Israelites because they did not have eyes to see or ears to hear, in spite of all the Lord had done for them in bringing them out of Egypt. Proverbs tells us to turn our ears to wisdom. At least nine times Jeremiah charged Israel in words like these: "Obey me and I will be your God and you will be my people. Walk in all the ways I command you, that it may go well with you. But they did not listen (hear) or pay attention. Instead, they followed the stubborn inclinations of their evil hearts." The King James Version says, "hearkened not, inclined not their ear."

So it should come as no surprise to read that Jesus declared of the people of His day, they see but never perceive, they hear but never understand. He told a very simple story to illustrate what it means to be hard of hearing spiritually. He gave a very clear warning about the perils of hearing but not obeying.

Look at the story Jesus told by the seaside of Lake Galilee. He sits in a small boat surrounded by a huge crowd. He tells parables, stories about life and nature that carry a spiritual truth. Here's a very simple story: A farmer goes out and sows seed on four different kinds of soil, and he got a crop from only one of them. Jesus started and ended this story with powerful commands: Listen! Hear!

Why? Because He knew their ears were plugged spiritually. They either had something like wax buildup or a chronic breakdown in their hearing mechanism. Later on, when Jesus explained what His story meant, He illustrated the kinds of things that keep us from hearing, understanding, and following Him productively.

The seed of course was His Word, His message, His good news of salvation, forgiveness, and God's kingdom. Now it's very important to notice that the four different kinds of people represented by the four kinds of soil all heard the message. They all heard. So, we have four different kinds of hearers.

Jesus then pointed out what caused their hearing to be unresponsive, unproductive, and sterile. They heard but they did not produce, except for those identified as good soil.

Some of them just didn't get it. They are like seed sown along the path. Their failure was attributed to Satan's work. Some others got it, and sprouted, but quickly withered, like seed sown on the rocky soil. They had no spiritual roots and could not stand troubles or persecution that came

their way because of the Word. Still others heard, but like seed sown in the thorns, they were also unfruitful. Worries, money's deceitfulness, and desires for other things simply choked the Word. Finally, those represented by good soil, bore fruit, 30, 60, and 100-fold.

Diagnosing our physical hearing problems is no simple task. Our ears gather sound vibrations that pass from out there to in here, where our brain controls our hearing. Sound waves cause our eardrums to vibrate. These vibrations are carried across the middle ear to the oval window, the opening between the middle and inner ears. Sounds cause the footplate of the bone—the stapes—to plunge in and out of the window. This moves the fluid in the cochlea, a 1 1/2 inch tube wound up like a snail's shell. It contains our sense organ for hearing, the organ of Corti. Sound waves are turned into nerve impulses inside the cochlea. 24,000 fibers cause a vibration in the cells that make up the organ of Corti. These nerves send messages through the auditory nerve center of hearing in the brain, which classifies and interprets the sounds.

Well, Jesus is our spiritual diagnostician who tells us what's wrong with our hearing.

1. We should all know that Satan actively prevents and discourages our hearing. He uses many means. That's why we should pray that whenever we are exposed to God's Word—in church, Bible class, or personal devotions—we should not be distracted. Let the phone ring. Let your work go. Make some tough resolutions to listen quietly and unhurriedly to God's voice.

We have to learn to filter untruth, Satan's lies. We have to teach our children how to discern truth and error. We have to seriously reduce the number of messages that clamor for our ears. Constant bombardment of our ears dulls our hearing, physically and spiritually. When the

Hearing?

by Jim Reapsome



organ of Corti is overloaded, God's Word—the good seed of hope, encouragement, salvation, and everlasting life—cannot get through. It's physically impossible to carry so many channels, scientists tell us. So, the answer to this illness, is turn it off and turn it down. Give God a chance to get through.

2. We should all know that nothing grows on rocky soil. Jesus' hearers knew all about rocky soil. Any visitor to Israel will tell you that the country is blanketed with rocks big and small. Where do you think rioters get all those rocks? When I was a kid working on my grandfather's farm, if there was nothing else to do, he told us to hitch up the horse and wagon and go out to the field and pick stones. We've got some serious stone picking to do.

Jesus identified trouble as the culprit, not just any trouble, but trouble because of His Word. His Word gets us in trouble. I have a friend, a former newspaper reporter, who was fired because he dared to live by what Jesus told him to do. He was not obnoxious, he was quietly obedient and he got fired. He got the last laugh. God took care of him. He now heads the journalism department at the University of Nebraska.

Watch out for these rocks. Listen for them with your spiritual ears. Know they are coming. They will stifle fruit bearing for Jesus.

3. We should know that our spiritual ears will be plugged by innocuous things like money and stuff. We worry about the stuff that fills our houses, garages, and storage bins. We think more money will make us happy. We are assaulted by advertising that causes us to desire things. The average American is bombarded with at least 3,000 marketing messages daily, ranging from radio jingles and billboards to clothing logos, internet banner ads, free samples with your newspaper wrapper, and on your door knob, ads gliding

along the airport baggage carousel, your rental car's front bumper, and a corporate logo pressed into the freshly swept sand at the beach.

All of this falls into what Jesus called money's deceitfulness and the desire for things. How can we fight off this stuff? How can we keep our children from becoming uncontrollable consumers? Only by purposefully making some decisions that we will no longer tolerate being choked by things and worries. I do not need this and I will not buy it.

A friend of ours asked her children what they needed in the way of back-to-school clothes. She got the usual requests, except for one girl who had been to Haiti on a mission trip. "Only one thing, mother," she said. Her startled mother asked her, Why? "Because you asked me what I needed, not what I wanted. I don't need anything."

4. We should know that listening to Jesus—really listening and absorbing His words—brings fruit. Our lives will be marked by fruitfulness. How much fruit, or what kind, is not important, but we must produce something, or we listen in vain. Jesus did not tell us what the harvest looked like.

What is the key to bearing fruit? Jesus said: Receive the Word in good soil. Hear the Word and welcome it. Accept the good news and delight in it. First, this means repentance and faith. Then it means a life of obedience, following Jesus, denying ourselves for His sake, and doing good works for His kingdom.

Fruit-bearing Christians are compared to fruitful trees in Psalm 1. They do not wither, they prosper and bear fruit. Why? Because these people have sharp ears. They delight in God's Word and meditate on it continually.

We must first look within ourselves, because the Holy Spirit's fruit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and

self-control. Then we can invest our time, energy, and prayers in other people, starting with our children and wives, husbands, friends, neighbors, and fellow workers.

In his novel, *Streets of Laredo*, Larry McMurry tells about a cowboy who got into a fight. A shot grazed his head and he felt blood streaming down his face. He reached up and discovered that his ear was hanging by a thread. Not knowing what to do, he pulled it off and stuck it into his shirt pocket. He reached town and people wanted to know where his ear was. In my shirt pocket, he said. Thereafter, he was known as the cowhand with his ear in his shirt pocket.

Let's not keep our ears in our shirt pockets. We need all the help we can get to hear what God wants to say to us. We need both ears, fully attuned to Him and His words.

Let's aim for 30, 60, 100-fold fruit for Jesus. Hear Him. Listen to Him. Do what He says.

Pandita Ramabi Mukti left her Indian Brahmin upbringing and could find no hope or peace in Hinduism. She determined to follow Jesus. Because she did, thousands of Indian women were delivered from horrible fates. Yes, she faced troubles and persecution, but she kept on hearing Jesus. She died in 1922, but her legacy of fruit lives on. A Hindu editorial writer in a Bombay newspaper, said, "There were no horizons to her thinking, no limit to the good deeds she kept performing, providing help to women in distress."

That's what comes from really inclining our ears and our hearts to Jesus. **H**

Death, Dying and Resurrection:

Two Contemporary Perspectives

from Japanese Film and Television

by Gary Fujino

Physical resurrections of those actually dead yet with the involvement of nothing divine? A choice of destiny in the afterlife directed not by St. Peter but by a young woman, Izuko, the spirit of an aborted fetus? These themes arise out of two massively popular media events in Japan over the past several years. The first is from the 2003 cinematic release, “*Yomigaeri*” (“Resurrection”), a story of mysterious sightings of already dead people alive again in a small, Japanese mountain village. The second is from the highly rated “*Skyhigh*” television series, where individuals determine where they will go after death as they examine the circumstances of their lives just before they die.

Death and the afterlife as a “combination” are much talked about in today’s Japan, especially among young people. These are trends which we, as propagators of the only true Gospel of life and death, cannot afford to ignore. Many “haunted” and evil-themed releases are also being done in like fashion but for the purposes of this article I will only focus on these two popular “positive” hits of 2003-2004—*Yomigaeri* and *Skyhigh*.

Plot synopses

Yomigaeri opens with a series of happenings in a remote town in southern Kyushu that defy scientific explanation. Persons deceased for short and long times begin to return to the places where they were last seen or to their loved ones. A high school boy bullied into suicide comes to his own funeral. A deaf woman, who did not survive the birth of her firstborn, meets her daughter three decades later. An elementary school boy, who died after getting lost in the forest during World War II, returns to his home unable to believe that his young mother is now an octogenarian. The government team sent to investigate, headed by Heita Kawata (SMAP’s Tsuyoshi Kusanagi), is baffled. DNA tests prove that these are the same persons who had died days, months, even decades earlier. But more and more people are being resurrected and no one can explain it.

The weekly plot of *Skyhigh* is formulaic but fascinating in the way it is worked out. Every episode someone dies and shows up at the *Urami no Mon* (the Gate of Offense, or “begrudgement”). Each person who meets Izuko is a victim of sorts, either because they were murdered or met an “unfair” death, such as an elderly man and two pre-school sisters killed in a rollover by a drunken bus driver. Suicides and natural deaths do not “count” at the Gate. But every disembodied soul who does come to *Urami no Mon* is offered three different paths to the afterlife. They can: 1) accept their destiny (how and why they died) and go to heaven to prepare for rebirth; 2) not accept their death and, thus, wander endlessly as a disenfranchised spirit upon the earth; or 3) return to the

earth once more for the purpose of cursing and killing a living human. The last choice, however, beckons only a journey to hell with no hope for reincarnation.

Popular repercussions

Skyhigh was so popular in its original ten-episode format that a film for theater release was made based on it and a second series for 2004, *Skyhigh 2*, was broadcast in early 2004. Since June of 2004, this second series has been available for video/DVD rental. *Yomigaeri* was initially slated for a three-week run in 2003 but ran over three months, long for a movie in Japan. Since *Yomigaeri* was released as a rental video/DVD in August 2003, the movie has consistently been in the top 10 rentals list. On Valentine’s Day 2004, seven months after coming out in video, the film was at number three in rentals for the week. “Resurrection” is a topic for lovers!

Thinking about what this means

Shinto and Buddhist priests have complained in recent days of how Christian concepts have distorted the ‘pure’ ideas of what they teach in their own tenets. But it is not only the influence of Christianity, but also the popular media itself that has brought this about. For example, the phrase I wrote above, “go to heaven to prepare for rebirth,” is a syncretistic mix. The actual word in the television script is *tengoku*, (heaven) the same term used by Japanese Christians to describe heaven, whereas “rebirth” harkens back to Buddhist and Hindu ideas of reincarnation. In *Skyhigh*, heaven actually functions like a pseudo-purgatory (as does the Gate itself).

In the appearance of the high school suicide at his own funeral in *Yomigaeri*, traditional Buddhism is turned on its head. Why? Because the boy’s body has already been cremated and his bones and ashes placed in an urn; thus, it would be impossible for him to appear physically apart from these, according to standard Japanese religious thought. But the boy comes back in a corporeal, “DNA-testable” form, with legs even (seeing a person without legs is a telltale sign that you are seeing a spirit or ghost)! Everyone knows that he can’t be the same person. But he is; a physical examination and blood tests prove this.

So, what does all this mean? Essentially, these media efforts promote the idea that one’s sense of the spiritual, and the afterlife, can be just about anything you want it to be. The young women who sold out theaters to see *Yomigaeri* did not mind that this did not make sense logically or that it went against some Japanese tradition, nor did the weekly viewers of *Skyhigh*. They liked what they felt about these shows. These consumers can hope that all that is portrayed is possible,

even probable, so they continue to fork out money to see them over and over again.

A Biblical and Incarnational Response:

Our Lord focused heavily upon “knowing your audience.” Being God incarnate, He could see into the hearts of men and women (Mk.2:28; Lk. 5:22). Thus, He lovingly but truthfully related to people according to what He knew about them. And He often did this from their perspectives using their terminology and worldview. Space does not permit expansion of this idea here but the rich young ruler (Mt. 19) and the Samaritan woman (Jn. 4) are examples of this. The same was true of the apostle Paul. He got through to Felix so convincingly that the Roman procurator became “afraid” (Acts 24:25) and sent Paul, his prisoner, away!

We are not Jesus, nor are we Paul. But we are called to an incarnational ministry that demands we “know our audience.” If we continue only to react from our worldview and our comfort zone, we can never know well those we are trying to reach, or be known by them. While it is true that we can never be 100% “native”, neither should we be content to stay 100% “non-native.” One way we can begin to identify with the Japanese, whom we love, is to explore their worldview and attitudes toward spiritual realities through the lenses of today’s popular media, like *Yomigaeri* and *Skyhigh*.

I believe this is part of what Paul was talking about when he said, “I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some” (1 Cor. 9:22). *The Message*, Eugene Peterson’s dynamic translation of the Bible, renders verses 22-23 like this:

I didn’t take on their way of life. I kept my bearings in Christ – but I entered their world and tried to experience things from their point of view. I’ve become just about every sort of servant there is in my attempts to lead those I meet into a God-saved life. I did this because of the Message. I didn’t just want to talk about it; I wanted to be in on it!

Robert K. Johnston, who wrote in this magazine on this very topic asks, “Could the Japanese church learn in the current situation from Japanese cinema? And how might such insight prove effective evangelistically?” (*Japan Harvest*, Spring 2003, p. 22). The answer to the first question is an emphatic “yes!” and to the second, “powerfully so” if appropriated correctly. Which brings us to our final point, application, since the point of all this is, as Peterson says above, to help bring about “God-saved lives” among unregenerate Japanese.

Lessons Learned and Applying them to Ministry in Japan:

We need to remember that how this life is lived matters more to a Japanese person than debating where they will go after death.

Yomigaeri deals with scientifically impossible resurrections of people who have actually died. The weekly plot of *Skyhigh* shows how the recently deceased will decide where they will spend their afterlife. Yet, ironically, these two productions have been incredibly popular because both have intentionally brought to focus the value of how life should be lived now, before death.

At the end of *Yomigaeri*, those resurrected must face the fact that they are being called back to death again by the same mysterious power which brought them to life in the first place. The story deepens as each person who died is forced to again face the realities of both the life that they lived before their death and, now, the life that they have had while resurrected. In one poignant scene a father, who died trying to stop a drunken brawl, views videos of his three-year-old daughter, born after his sudden, violent death, is regarded as a stranger. He must reconcile this reality within himself and also with the man who took over the *ramen* shop that he owned, because the man has fallen in love with his wife. As she faces surgery for a malignant and life-threatening tumor, the husband entrusts her to this man, knowing that he is being called back to death and will never see his wife or daughter again. The new shop owner resolves to support and love the wife and daughter as his own for the rest of his natural life.

In *How to Reach Secular People*, George C. Hunter writes of how secular people, which describes well the Japanese population we are trying to reach, are those who “are seeking life before death.” *Yomigaeri* and *Skyhigh* reveal this sentiment. Both *Skyhigh* and *Skyhigh 2* have had their own BBS (bulletin board posting service) on the Internet, where hundreds of viewers have written in to share their feelings about the show. Respondents are invited to post their comments under one of Izuko’s three categories, that is, as ones who would either accept their fate, wander aimlessly, or curse and kill. Fascinating to see is how many choose the last as a form of revenge for something that has happened to them during their short lifetimes. Also of interest is the fact that others who write in to the BBS say they have found a reason for living, the meaning or purpose of their lives, when they look at these three choices for life after death for themselves.

Thus, the question comes for application: when we share the Gospel of life and joy with those around us, do they see our reason for living? Do they rejoice with us? Often, we as Christians come across so serious and dry that the outsider

cannot see in us the resurrection faith we claim to be living. So, the power of that which is inexplicable takes first place. In fact, the latter may be more appealing when they compare it to us! Thus, the key for effective witness to people with such a mindset is that, much before our own deaths, we “preach” well to others through our own lives, even beyond the words that we use at times. As Francis of Assisi said, “Preach Christ at all times, using words when necessary.”

There are secular parallels in today’s Japanese culture to what we teach from the scriptures. But we need to emphasize the uniqueness of the biblical worldview even as we account for the Japanese perspective.

Yomigaeri and *Skyhigh* have influenced this newest and youngest generation in a profound manner concerning things which are important to the Christian faith, like death and resurrection! What should we do about this?

I do not believe that we need to necessarily preach against *Yomigaeri* and *Skyhigh*. But I do believe that we need to be aware of these and similar things “out there.” I am giving away the plot here but a mysterious crater pulsating with Gaia-like emanations makes much more sense to the average Japanese as being the source of resurrection life than does the story of a “Western” Savior who died upon a cross in Palestine two thousand years ago. I am not saying that this perspective is correct but that we need to reckon with what people are actually thinking as we minister to them.

One of the best pieces of advice I received from a Japanese pastor early on in my ministry was his charge to simply proclaim the truths of the Gospel as they are recorded in the Scripture. Don’t compare Christianity to Buddhism or Shintoism, or even to *Yomigaeri* and *Skyhigh* for that matter! “Just preach the Gospel,” he said. Comparison implies criticism; it puts people on the defensive. The Japanese will always take the side of the non-Christian, I was told. But if we emphasize the truth of the Scriptures as they are written then the Holy Spirit can work through that. Certainly, we could still use these shows illustratively in our teaching, but there is a fine line between illustration and comparison. This should only be attempted when absolutely necessary.

This was a tremendous insight for me, being trained in culture and mission studies. Having said this, we still must be aware that what people hear about “resurrection” and “judgment” and other spiritual issues may now be colored by popular media like *Yomigaeri* and *Skyhigh*. So, we need to be crystal clear and specific when conveying definitions and truths of the faith, especially

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Personal Background

I was born in Saga prefecture, Kyushu, and grew up there until I became a senior in high school.

I had an introverted personality since I was small. I was always trying to contemplate inside my mind as if it had been my hobby. However, what I could see was nothing good but the ugliness and sinfulness of my heart. I could not give thought to others and even thought that I didn't care about what would happen to others if I were doing OK. That was to say, it was the mind of self-centeredness. When I could see such a mind, I really hated myself. Although I tried to heal this obnoxious mind with my own strength a few times, everything I did failed. In addition, I suffered from bullying from my 5th grade through 9th grade. I hated so much to go to school everyday.

Under these circumstances, I was feeling everyday, "I could die, I could die." I came to think that since I was the kind of person who could only think of myself, I did not deserve to live and that the only way I could contribute to society was to die. I sometimes went up to the roof of school. At that time, I felt how nice it would be if I jumped off from there.

On the other hand, I directed my eyes to the outside world. At that time, the Viet Nam War was in full progress overseas while Japan was forging ahead in the midst of high economic growth, which caused the problems of environmental disruption, etc., leaving some distortions in society. Also, the profit-first principle in the American style was rampant. To my eyes, it appeared that we Japanese were losing our goodness as well as the heart with which we Japanese people were naturally equipped. It was the kind of heart that valued spirit over materials, gave thought to people, and highly regarded order. It seemed to me that due to the loss of such a heart, everybody was concerned with his or her own interest only and thus became self-centered.

With all this, I thought that ideas or religions were necessary to solve the issues of both my inner and outer problems. For this reason, I read various kinds of books from my 6th through 11th grades, seeking the religions or philosophies that

would solve these issues. Among these I felt great sympathy for two things: One was the teaching of Confucianism, which highly regarded order. The other was the study of ancient Japanese thought and culture, which Norinaga Motori advocated for the restoration of a pure and sincere heart. It was said that the ancient Japanese had possessed this. I thought that these teachings would save me as well as Japan as they would solve both the issues of my mind and of society. So I believed in both Confucianism and the study of ancient Japanese thought and culture. However, as far as the issue of my mind was concerned, nothing changed since I myself still remained in the state of darkness.



A Testimony of Salvation

by *Hitoshi Koyanagi*

Encountering Jesus Christ

I considered Christianity as one of the Western religions. Thus I had no interest in such a religion. Rather I regarded it as a hateful religion, which stood for American rationalism. Nonetheless, when I took an ethics class in my high school, I got interested in Christianity and desired to know more about it. It was unexpected but a representative of the The Gideons International in Japan visited our school when I was a junior in high school. As a result, I was able to receive the Bible.

That day, I took it home and began to read it. Although I don't remember how much time I spent reading, it was very shocking to me when I read God's word, "God is love. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins"

or "I am the way, and the truth, and the life." By then, I knew of persons or books that taught me about truth or love. But I never knew of any God who was personal and said, "I am Love", "I am the Way" and "I am the Truth." Thereafter, I continued to read the Bible. It was a series of surprises and shocks.

Of course, there were many words that I did not understand. Nonetheless, what I could say for sure was that I had the intuition that these words were not of human beings but were God's word. I felt that the Bible was totally different from any other book I had ever read before. I thought that this was not of the Western religion but of the world religion. So I had the desire to learn about it in a more proper way, and searched for radio

and TV programs. Among them was the mid-night radio program called, Lutheran Hour. I looked forward to listening to this program every time. Also, I took the Bible correspondence course that this program introduced me to. What I learned through such a radio program, the Bible correspondence course, and the Bible I received from The Gideons International in Japan, was that the issues of both my mind and society are attributable to sin, which each individual has. In order to solve the issue of such sins the Son of God, Jesus Christ, came to this earth and was crucified on the cross.

Anyone who believes in

Him would be forgiven of his or her sins, and can become a member of God's kingdom and would be given eternal life. I wanted to believe in such a God.

Encountering Church

I was feeling it necessary to go to church. Something triggered me to go to a Catholic church located in the center of the city. I was attracted to the personality of the priest when I saw him at a glance. After that, I kept visiting that church for several times. Thereafter, I began to study the Christian doctrine. Until then, I had been preoccupied with the thought of death everyday as I thought that nobody loved me and I therefore did not deserve to live. However, there were a couple of things that I learned through such studies; God loved me even before the foundation of the world

had been laid out. Also, He had a plan for me. God crucified His Son Jesus Christ on the cross for my sins in order to set me free from sins. I can start a brand new life as soon as I become a child of God and so on. I remember that I was so happy that I shed tears when I found out this truth. At the same time, I learned that I was allowed to live as well as that there was One who loved me no matter what would happen to me. Furthermore, although I thought that I was finally able to find the true God by myself after several years of my spiritual journey, I learned that that was wrong. The truth was that it was God who visited and found me who was lost. This made me realize how arrogant I was. I then repented of my sins and accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior.

Baptism without Rededication

When I was 19 years old, I was baptized at a Catholic church. At that time, I made up something in my mind. It was to totally surrender myself to God in order to become a Catholic priest and serve people. I decided that this promise should be kept just between God and me, and I thought that I was going to cherish it in my prayers without sharing with anyone at all. Three months after my baptism, I came to Tokyo and entered university. My desire was to go to seminary after graduating. In the meantime, I kept on cherishing the previous decision. While I was a senior in university, I thought that the time had come for me to start seeking the seminary to which I should go. So I visited several seminaries. After that, while I was talking to the principal of a certain seminary, something happened to me. I don't remember at all what I was saying to him. However, while I was talking, I sensed that the thought that I had kept cherishing for years began to cool off rapidly. It was as if my whole body, which had been red, had gone white from top-to-toe in descending order. When this talk was over, my thought of rededication went completely cold. I still don't know what the cause was. But what I knew then was that this thought, which I had been cherishing until then, was something like a feverish disease. I then figured out that the call of God, which I had been holding, was not real.

Thereafter, I totally lost my goal and spent my life selfishly. I enjoyed teaching kids. So I became a prep-school teacher, which I used to do previously on a part time basis. I devoted myself to such teaching and continued it for approximately ten years.

Testimony of God's Call

Since 1997, I personally ran a prep school and built it up very successfully. Thus I expanded my business in 1999, and relocated my school to a prime site located in front of a station. At

that time, I borrowed about 5,000,000 yen from various sources for the relocation fee and operating funds. Assuming that the better location would ensure an increased number of students, I thought I could surely pay back the loans without difficulty. This was the motive of why I had made my decision that way. I did advertising extensively. The site was super as it was located in front of a station. So I wondered what kinds of students were going to enter into my school with my heart filled with excitement.

Nonetheless, there came no response at all, although I waited for one to two months. After that, 6 months, then 12 months passed. Yet there were almost no students who were coming to my school. Also, almost no inquiries came. We had no clue about what was going on. So I prayed together with my wife. In the meantime, my school utterly went in the red so that we had to borrow more money for our living. Furthermore, in order to pay back the loan, we had to borrow even more money. Under these circumstances, we fell into a state of running on a shoestring and we were trembling with fear when facing the several maturity dates that would repeatedly come every month. There were times that we had nothing to eat. In some situations, all we could eat was just Japanese pancakes with no fillings, and this continued for several weeks. At that time, I felt very miserable as a husband as well as a parent. As the interests advanced, our debt finally ballooned to about 8,000,000 yen, which made me think of going bankrupt or fleeing by night seriously. But it was very difficult for me to implement such ideas when I thought about my children.

In regard to this relocation, I had prayed before God and was convinced that it was the will of God. However, in this situation, I was forced to pray once again before God and came up with the following thought: "Maybe God is holding this up." There were no other reasons I could think of. Then I kept on praying to learn why God was doing so.

Then, one day, God revealed to me something while I was praying. This happened after I had sought counsel from a pastor. It was: "Maybe there is a promise, which I have made to God but have not carried out yet." At that time, I recalled the promise that I had made to God when I was baptized at the age of seventeen. It was to surrender my whole life to God. After that, I truly repented of my sins because I realized that I had not carried it out yet. Until that time, I had spent my time selfishly, and placed my pleasures in the first place. In addition, I enjoyed my job very much. However, I decided to renounce my job and live for the Lord from now on, by serving Him on a full time basis.

When I was listening to the message during

the worship service, God revealed to me the following scripture, "The Lord has need of it" (Luke 19:31), which touched my heart. Although I am stupid and incompetent like the donkey referred to in that scripture, God has need of me. It was indeed a strikingly new surprise and joy to me. I thus wanted to respond to God's call immediately.

However, I somehow had to deal with my debt of 8,000,000 yen. Under these circumstances, I realized that what I needed to do was not to think of acquiring new students but to find a way to pay back my loan step by step. So I retransferred my prep school back to the same location I used to run originally. It was located in an obscure residential area but the rent was much less expensive. In spite of the inconvenient location, I was given students one after another as soon as I relocated my school back to the old place. As far as my debt was concerned, I was able to pay it back steadily month by month, which sometimes amounted to about 200,000 yen at a maximum. It took me 4 years to pay back the whole debt. I paid off everything last November.

At that time, I praised God indeed. The reason was that when I was heading toward the wrong direction, God changed my wrong orbit. And as soon as I made up my mind to follow God, He endowed me with students one after another, and lightened my heavy burden little by little. At that time, my flesh reared up its ugly head, which filled me with the thought, "Maybe I can possibly continue this business in the future as well." This thought hit me over and over in spite of having had that bitter experience. But God forced me to repent of such a thought whenever it came up.

Although my faith is very weak, I am sincerely thankful that God relieved me from a heavy burden and has now allowed me to study at seminary in order to serve Him on a full time basis. Now I stand on a place from which I cannot turn back. From now on, I would like to cast my eyes up on the Lord only and step forward without turning my head to look back.

The Koyonagi family resides in Tsukaichi, Hiroshima Ken, while Hitoshi attends the Japan Alliance School of Theology. This article was translated by Akira Minamitani. ㊦

We are sorry
that the e-mail address
for Rochelle Potter
was not correct
in the last issue.
Her address is:
aragalixia@yahoo.com

Prayer & Fasting

by Karol Whaley

A Day of Prayer & Fasting

Growing up in church, I don't remember hearing any teaching on the spiritual discipline of fasting. It was after I became a missionary that I noticed all of the references to fasting in the Old and New Testaments. Jesus practiced the discipline of prayer and fasting and He is to be our role model in life. If Jesus did it, I decided that I needed to learn more. Participating regularly in the spiritual discipline of fasting has now become an important part of my walk with Christ. If you have yet to experience fasting in your own life, please read on.

All of us already spend time with the Lord in prayer; but with our busy schedules often that time diminishes as demands for our time and attention crowd in. Fasting causes us to turn our concentration heavenward for an appointed time. God longs to have our attention focused on Him.

How many of us have had a busy day and missed a meal without even noticing?

On those days, oftentimes, our hunger can be pushed aside. But, Satan will do whatever he can to dissuade us from fasting, even for one day. On a day that you have promised the Lord you

will fast, don't be surprised to wake up ravenously hungry and be that way all day long! Or, perhaps a friend will call out of the blue and ask you to lunch at your favorite restaurant. Be prepared to say "no" while remembering the joy that awaits you by spending this special time with the Lord.

Psalm 16:5-6 in The Living Bible, says, "The Lord Himself is my inheritance, my prize. He is my food and drink, my highest joy! What a wonderful inheritance!" The Good News Bible says it this way, "You, Lord, are all I have, and You give me all I need, my future is in Your hands. How wonderful are Your gifts to me; how good they are!"

As the scripture says, He is our food and drink, our highest joy, so what are we giving up by fasting? It is difficult to realize, until you begin this spiritual discipline, how much pleasure we humans get from eating. Not only just eating, but also choosing the foods we'll eat and when we'll eat them. He wants us to learn to thank Him that we don't live by physical bread alone, but by His word, which is food for our hungry souls.

When your fast begins, here are some suggestions:

Start your fast in prayer telling the Lord how much you love Him. Spend time remembering

demonstrate the love of Jesus Christ in practical ways to the people in Japan and around us in Asia and the Pacific region.

• **Expo is coming to Aichi**, Japan, in 2005.

Visitors from all over the world will go to the Aichi area from March 25 through September 25. Japanese Christians and missionaries, as well as Christian volunteers from outside Japan, are planning to share a witness with those who visit Expo and the surrounding area. Join us in praying that the Japanese in the Aichi area will be transformed by God's love during these six months. Pray for responsive and open ears for those who receive a gospel witness. Pray that God will receive the glory.

• **Free Japan**, the nationwide prayer walking movement that took place in March, 2004, has an updated website (www.freejapan.org) with maps of unchurched areas made available by Church Information Services. Available now to be downloaded from the website, free of charge, are four prayer posters to use at your church or in your small groups. Please pray for God to

His faithfulness to you in the past. Thank Him for the relationship you have because of Jesus' sacrifice on Calvary. Think for a moment how your life would have turned out if you hadn't trusted in Jesus as Savior and Lord. Continue by thanking God for His grace and mercy in your life. Ask Him to make your relationship new and fresh. Ask the Lord to show you the things that He wants you to think about and act upon. Ask for an obedient and willing heart as you serve Him daily. Pray for people or issues that the Holy Spirit brings to mind. End your special prayer time by telling God that His Word is true.

Spending focused time with Jesus is better than the best food you and I will ever eat!

(Next issue will deal with a one-week fast.) H

Karol Whaley

3 Helpful Hints for a First Fast

- 1 Tell your family or a colleague of your plan to fast. Ask them to pray for you and hold you accountable.
- 2 Drink water often to keep hydrated. If you get shaky, drink fruit juices.
- 3 Keep a prayer diary. Record what the Lord teaches you while you are intently listening to Him.

use the Free Japan prayerwalking movement to continue focusing the hearts of Christians in Japan and around the world on the spiritual needs of Japan. In March, 2005, please consider participating in a Free Japan "anniversary walk" by returning to one of your 2004 prayerwalking locations and doing it again. Also, pray about taking along someone new to prayerwalk with you. Thank God for all of His answers to our prayers! H



Karol Whaley, with her husband, Tom, has served since 1984 with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. Karol serves as area prayer advocate for Japan and Australia in the Pacific Rim Region. They live in Tokyo.

Prayer Requests for the Harvest in Japan

- **Please continue to remember the victims of the Niigata area earthquake.** Pray for children in particular. Many are suffering from fears, not wanting to be alone. One church in Tokyo recently sent items to minister especially them, delivering crayons, paper, and hot dogs. One Japanese volunteer working with a church team, prayed to receive Christ. Pray for him and for other new believers, that they will grow and share their faith. JEMA related donations exceeded 760,000. Praise the Lord.
- **A Ship for Japan** is being initiated by Marine Reach (www.marinereach.com), a ministry of Youth With a Mission. The vision is to see a ship ministry from Japan taking the gospel and relief to our neighbors in need. This God-sized vision will need a broad base of prayer. For more information, please contact john@somers-harris.com Pray that God would use this ship to

What's New in the Areas of:

TNT—TRANSFORMATION NETWORK TEAM page 13

CAN—CHRISTIAN IN THE ARTIST NETWORK page 14

WIM—WOMEN IN MINISTRY page 15

CLTC—CHRISTIAN LEADERSHIP TRAINING CENTER page 16

CPI—CHURCH PLANTING INSTITUTE page 17

TAC—TOKYO ACADEMY OF COMMUNICATIONS page 18

OBI—OCHANOMIZU BIBLE INSTITUTE page 19

Do you get the sense that God is doing a new thing in Japan? In the last ten years new, vibrant, far-reaching ministries have come into existence. May you be blessed with the reading of what God is doing. If at all possible, “plug in” to these ministries, and, by all means, let your friends know!

What's New in Missionary, Japanese and GCC Partnerships?

On January 16, 2004 the Lord of the Harvest began a fresh work among several missionaries living and serving in the Machida and northwest Kanagawa area. The Father had placed a deep burden upon the heart of Buddy Brents, co-leader of FamilyLife Fellowship Japan, to gather God's servants together for intensive corporate prayer on behalf of spiritual awakening in the surrounding area around Machida. So on this day Buddy called a meeting at TGI Fridays (restaurant) in Machida.

Those in attendance at the meeting were Tim Turner, Kevin Boone and Phil Kornegay of the Machida Christ Church, Jeremiah Boek and Todd Howard of Machida Horizon Chapel, Ruessell Hale of Atsugi Chapel, Keith Croom of Zama Chapel, Rick Conrad of Faith Baptist Church Sagamihara, Buddy Brents, Victor Morrison, Josh Park, Bill & Toshiko Pigford, Shelly Webb and Linda Morman of FamilyLife Fellowship Japan. Everyone agreed with the need for united prayer on behalf of awakening in Japan. This was also during the time when the Free Japan prayer campaign was being promoted, so it was serving as a catalyst for the meeting.

After this, meetings were held monthly from January through June at Horizon Chapel, Machida Christ Church, Faith Baptist Church in Sagamihara and the home of Buddy and Melanie Brents. Gradually the participants increased from just missionaries to include Japanese and interna-

tional pastors, house church leaders and members from various churches. Pastors who participated included Pastor Yoshio Aso of Tamagawagakuenmae and Pastor Uchimura of Evergreen Chapel in Naruse. Many other Japanese church members also participated.

The agenda was simple. There was first a time of praise. This was led by various ones within the network who had gifts in music or abilities for leading in worship. Then the group would watch one or two case studies in the Transformations video series. This two-part series tracks various community or city-wide awakenings that have occurred around the world and points to united prayer as the key in each case. Then, after watching the video, those gathered would join together in prayer for their cities and communities. On March 20, in conjunction with the Free Japan emphasis, the group gathered for a special day of fasting and prayer.

Since the prayer network began by watching the Transformations video series, it was agreed to name the new partnership, “TNT”, or Transformation Network Team. One of the original visions cast from the scriptures for the group came from Acts 13:42-52 where a community or city-wide awakening took place in Pisidian Antioch and spread throughout the surrounding region. The TNT was praying for the following to take place in Machida, Kanagawa and beyond:

1. Intense hunger among the lost for the Word


of God (Acts 13:42-43)

2. Whole cities coming together in unity for the glory of God (Acts 13:44,48)

3. Fearless and aggressive evangelism by the people of God (Acts 13:45-48, 50-51)

4. Unlimited expansion of servants on mission with God (Acts 13:49-51)

5. Overflowing disciples filled with the Spirit of God (Acts 13:52).

Although the network has not been able to gather together again since the summer break, it has fostered a continuing spirit of unity and partnership with missionaries and nationals joining together for such things as outreach related to the Passion movie, evangelism through joint golf events—the Josh Olsen tournaments and clinics, a fall session for couples (marriage enrichment seminar), and some are currently partnering together to co-host a Christmas concert featuring Japanese Christian artist Yurie Kokubu on December 26 at the Ajsai Kaikan in Sagamihara. So... the unity and the passion for souls goes on! 

Submitted by Victor Morrison, FamilyLife Fellowship Japan, IMB, SBC victorjodi@ybb.ne.jp

CAN—Christian in the Arts Network holds a four-day seminar

CAN (Christians in the Arts Network) holds a four-day Worship Seminar each fall. Unless you attend there is no way you can believe how great it is! (Janice Kropp) The 2004 CAN Worship Seminar was held from October 8-11 at Christian Academy in Japan, Higashi Kurume, Tokyo.



Seminar Vision Statement: *To see a growing movement in Japan (and beyond) that will result in a multitude of people turning to passionate worship of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

Rain, like Tokyo hasn't seen in a while, reminded us that a big typhoon was ripping through the area, but that didn't seem to dampen attendees' spirits. Around 240 came from all over Japan and beyond (five from Myanmar)—younger and older, believers and ministers. It was wonderful! You won't want the people in your church to miss the seminar next year! Under the fine leadership of TEAM missionary and CAN director, Paul Nethercott thirty-eight staff members made the four days an opportunity for exposure to new and creative ideas, and to meet God! Starbucks was there with hot coffee and very hot tea! (I burned my tongue, badly!) Daily corporate worship was held with outstanding speakers. Well-known musicians sang and played instruments. There was time to net-work. Six workshop time slots spread over two days provided resources and answers questions. Performances given by attendees! All this and more filled the Christian Academy auditorium and class rooms with activity and music!

Workshops were held in the areas of Creative Arts, Pastoral/Leadership, Music, and Multimedia/Video/Production. You will catch the spirit of the seminar as you read what attendees say:

I am amazed and thrilled at what I saw and

believe this is a "new thing" that the Lord is doing in His own people in Japan. It was a foretaste of heaven, for we are told that we will see people of every nation, tribe, and language gathered around the throne of God, singing and praising His holy name. It brought tears to my eyes to see faces

from many countries (Japan, Africa, Australia, and the United States) yearning for God, hands lifted in submission and surrender, hearts of worship and adoration that long to be filled with the Holy Spirit. The Lord was there. His presence was honored and glorified, and we got to enjoy the diversity of gifts and abilities and expressions of worship by the hands, voices, and people of many ages from various backgrounds. (Beth Denton)

I became a Christian from this year and wanted to know more about 'Worship.' I'd like to dance in worship someday. This seminar hit me very much and it was so wonderful. (Tomoko Jo)

I am the pastor of Tsutsujigaoaka Church near Shinjuku. I attended the CAN worship seminar and I was especially impressed by your (Byron Spradlin's) teaching. It was God's grace to me to be able to attend the worship seminar. I thank God for this type of gathering. I definitely want to attend again next year. (Pastor Izumi Kondo)

The Best News: Shintarou, our electric guitarist at New Wine Gospel, committed his life to Jesus after one of the main sessions. Also, after attending the conference, Kumiko wants to use her musical gifts for the Lord. (Pat & Holly Bell)

Nearly 50 people attended my dance workshop and I met lots of people at CAN seminar who are interested in performing arts including professional theatre and film. This workshop helped us connect with each other for a bigger vision. (Yasuko Fleming)

Even though a typhoon came through Tokyo during the seminar, there was no doubt the Holy Spirit was really blowing a fresh wind of encouragement and inspiration to every participant. The messages, worship times, workshops, and

networking were powerful and exciting. There is a sense of renewal and creativity to fall in love with Jesus so we can be effective in our ministries. (Ken Taylor)

Again, I cannot tell you how thankful I am for the opportunity to be part of the Japan CAN worship conference team. Thank you beyond measure. The LORD is doing something very new in Japan, and you are a big part of it. (Byron Spradlin)

I believe that the Lord is working and using the CAN activities in Japanese society. I mean, CAN makes it possible to equip Christian artists to perform not only among Christians but to have access outside of church activities. (Tony Takahashi)

The worship seminar was very meaningful and it was a fulfilling four days. I thank God for the staff. (Mr. Yamagishi)

Thank God for CAN and for how God is using it to equip Japanese disciples to lead others in worship! Masato Tanoue, one of six lay leaders from Family Life Fellowship who attended CAN, has spoken often of the new e-mail network for CAN participants. They are connecting and exchanging resources beyond the conference. God's vision is for this nation to worship Him at the Throne. May those worshipers increase by the millions. When I asked



Masato Tanoue what his vision was he replied, "I would like to see Tokyo Dome filled with people worshipping the Lord." (Victor Morrison)

For the 2005 seminar date go to www.japancan.com and look under "worship seminar" H



WIM—Women In Ministry

By Elaine Mehn

The old saying for weddings goes, “Something old, something new, something borrowed, something blue.” This year Women in Ministry has the old and the new – no borrowed or blue. With several retirements and others on home assignment we are a new committee. We are looking forward to serving women in the JEMA community. Although the committee members have changed, the goal of the Women in Ministry commission stays the same. ***We are committed to the purpose of equipping, encouraging, and enhancing missionary women in their ministry roles by providing resource materials, workshops, seminars, retreats, and a forum for communication.***

The JEMA Women’s Retreat is coming March 2-4, 2005. Our speaker, Jean Barsness, was here in 2000. She was very well received and we are excited to have her back again. She served in Latin America both as a single and as a married woman, suffered the violent loss of her husband while on the field, has taught at Briercrest College, remarried and has served with her husband at the headquarters of Gospel Missionary Union. (For more details see the flyer insert or call the JEMA office.)

In America’s Old West land was distributed in one square mile sections. When the settlers first built their houses, they built them in the middle of their piece of land. It wasn’t long before they

discovered that living so isolated and alone was not healthy. This was especially true for the women. They either moved back to where they came from or the wife hid her feelings. These suppressed feelings of isolation often became repressed resentment, anger, and depression. It wasn’t long before houses were then built in the corner of the land. This allowed them to have neighbors. As more people went west, towns appeared. With the coming of neighbors and towns came quilting bees. These were times when the women got together to make quilts. Quilt making does not require a group of women. One woman at home can make a perfectly good quilt, but this was a good excuse for gathering together to talk and enjoy friendships. Women need

friendships – friendships of all kinds. We need lots friends that let us talk about the things that we enjoy. We also need a few friends with whom we feel safe enough to open our hearts to laugh and cry together. The JEMA Women’s Retreat is a time of sharing laughter and tears, of making friends, and deepening old friendships. H

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自分なりの目標を持って、働きながら学びたい人のためには、こういった授業形式が参加しやすいと思いません。講義を受けて終わりではなく、それぞれの信仰の問題をぶつけ合い、励まし合い、支え合うためのメンタリング・プログラムがあり、「福音に生きる」ことを身に付けていくことができます。
(講師：森恵一先生)

- ‘3H’ (Head, Hand, Heart) バランスの取れたプログラム!
- 働きながら学べる2年間コース
- 関東キャンパス：中野駅(3分歩)
- 文化に適応したカリキュラム
- 充実した内容、経済的な授業料
- 新しいアプローチ!
- 学びやすい履修期間
- キリスト者の生き方を導き、教会とその地域に影響を与えるプログラム

お問い合わせ&無料学校案内

CLTCの事務所：
〒203-0013 東京都東久留米市新川町1-2-12-107
Tel/Fax: 0424-58-7107
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Website: www.japancan.com/cltc

新学期を来年の4月に控え、現在既に入學願書を受け付けています!

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Website: www.japancan.com/cltc

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*A balanced program! Contextual curriculum! A fresh approach!
Convenient schedule!*

There seems to be a rumbling of revival in Japan even though there is still less than one percent Christians, sluggish church growth, aging Christian leaders, and few Bible educational options. God seems to be moving and many are becoming Christians in certain areas like the business sector (VIP), Returnees (to Japan), and in the area of music and arts. There is a desire and hunger for more training. And as missionaries & pastors, there is always the challenge of equipping future leaders.

In search for a strategic and long-term solution to this issue, a new school began in 2004 with 18 fulltime students. CLTC brings a fresh and bold approach, a balanced program (Head-Heart-Hand), a curriculum developed for the Japanese, a suitable 2-year schedule for the busy adult learner, in a convenient location (3 minute walk from Nakano station).

The 3 ‘H’ Balanced Approach:

HEAD – Bible & Theology courses are offered in 8 sessions meeting once a week on Thursday nights from 7-10 pm. (for full time students only)

HEART – students go through a mentoring program in small groups where issues of the heart are addressed. (for full time students only)

HANDS – skill development & practical courses are offered in seminar or workshop format. These are normally 1-day seminars conducted on a Saturday during quarter breaks. (available to anyone interested for audit)

There are some very exciting workshops and practical seminars being offered in the Winter quarter 2005 (all courses in Japanese only):

Feb 5 (Sat) COUNSELING SEMINAR (Dr. Andy Meeko)

Mar 5 (Sat) WORSHIP TEAM DEVELOPMENT (Teaching team)

Mar 5 (Sat) RELATIONSHIP DISCIPLESHIP (Dr. Kelly Malone)

Full time student applications are now being accepted for the school year beginning April 2005. For a free school catalog and information, call the CLTC office 0424-58-7107 or email cltcjapan@yahoo.co.jp or visit the website <www.japancan.com/cltc>

CLTC Core Values:

- Grace-centered, Gospel-driven perspective
Bible-based truths that transforms and compels us to love God with our mind and emotion and will.
- Principle-based teaching
Teaching methodology that will enhance creative and critical thinking.
- Mentoring/Coaching program
A focus on the issues of the heart is interwoven throughout the whole program.
- Holistic and balanced approach
Coursework that integrates academic learning with practical ministry and spiritual life development. A head-heart-hand approach.
- Worship-centered environment
Various forms of worship (e.g. prayer, music, etc.) will be explored, exercised, and experienced in the classrooms.
- Qualified faculty practicing in the area of expertise
Teachers shall be educated, experienced, and effective in the subject matter of the course.
- Internship Program
Practical, supervised ministry experience designed to prepare students for an effective ministry.
- Modular & Mobile curriculum
Reproducible lessons designed for student's immediate use to teach and apply in their own ministry contexts.
- Adult education and accelerated approach
A 2-year program that is fast-paced with a creative schedule for the busy person.
- Master's Series
Special seminars by famous speakers & artists.
- Network and Resources for ministry
Faculty and students from various denominations and other cooperating institutions create a wide network and synergistic environment.
- Reasonable Tuition Fees and Scholarships
Affordable rates. Financial assistance will be made available. Students can access designated funds for new ministries or start-up projects.

Project X and Beyond

By John Mehn & Karol Whaley



to understand and live out the gospel in our relationships. Many participants noted that they expect their relationships to change.

Times of worship and prayer together were highlights of last year's meeting. Both sides of the worship hall became "prayer walls" for the meeting. The "prayer walls" were lined with posters from each prefecture. Over 400 people were asked to go and

part of their honeymoon at the conference!

"Tool boxes galore!" We introduced the new ideas laboratory in the elective system to highlight innovation and creativity in ministry. We were blessed with an expanded "Consulting Center" of 4 counselors and 3 medical doctors. Early reports say there were over 200 formal appointments made.

Again wonderful audiovisual materials were produced. There are three DVD sets along with two audio CDs. All can be ordered through the JEMA office.

A 22 year old "veteran" said, "I grow and am challenged every year at CPI. It is a highlight in my yearly schedule. I expect God to teach me something new every year. He does without fail."

CPI was celebrating its tenth year in 2004, but our focus was not on the past but on the future God has for Japan. Of the approximate 500 people gathered at Fuji Hakone Land, about 30% were Japanese, and over 80 agencies and denominations were represented from 29 prefectures. Overseas attendees were from the US, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Sri Lanka. One spoke for many saying, "CPI births transformation and vision in my life!"



The CPI Conference continued to envision people for ministry. "CPI is a vision casting platform. It always broadens my vision and refreshes my faith." In addition to the joint sessions on vision, there was a training track on church planting movements led by Bill Smith and Duane Hughes. Participants were challenged to apply practically lessons they learned after the conference.

The conference also stimulated spiritual renewal. "It opened doors to understand the last 25 years of my life. It is where God utterly disrupted my life to begin beautiful healing." Another said, "I want to be a repentant Christian." Spiritual renewal principles of the gospel were driven deeper by a focus on relationships. There was one joint session and an entire training track led by Stu Batstone and his wife. The Peculiar People Drama Team participated by illustrating practically how

stand at the "prayer wall" that represented where they were currently serving. What a beautiful sight to see how the Lord has placed His people throughout Japan! Standing at the "prayer wall," everyone then broke into small groups to pray, asking God to reach Japan for His glory! God is at work and is bringing the body of Christ together in order to see this land come to Himself!

Kingdom relationships and networking for partnerships were taken to new levels. Two people met for the first time at the conference and found out they were relatives. Two years ago two participants met for the first time, fell in love, got married spending



2005 CPI Conference is scheduled for November 8-11.

If you have never been before why don't you come? If you have been before plan to come back. "This is one of the best conferences in Japan. You can confidently bring Japanese co-workers knowing they will receive both the tools and the encouragement to be a part of a church planting movement in Japan." One Norwegian missionary said, "It's all bilingual! It's not a

missionary conference. Your world will get bigger, your heart will be hotter, and your friends will multiply. You will get real-life practical input for your ministry." H

Tokyo Academy of Communications

LOCATION: OCC Building Ochanomizu
2nd Floor

DIRECTOR: Hideo Takahashi

LANGUAGES TAUGHT: Japanese & English

More and more these days we are hearing the term coaching. Currently, the Church Planting Institute (CPI) is using the method to encourage spiritual growth and development.

The concept is fascinating, breaking with what we normally associate with learning-----a great teacher and a smart student produces an outstanding result.

Coaching assumes that the student is more than able to learn!

Coaching places the language learning on the student, who is actually the best solution to the process. Language learning does not rest in the traditional approach that the expertise lies with the teacher. In coaching the teacher delegates responsibility to the student who ends up speaking and actually enjoying it!

Coaching is done from the point of how he/she (the coach) can make the best use of what the student has to offer.

Mr. Takahashi says that in language learning 90% is motivation; 10% is ability. So the key to learning a language is to keep students so motivated that they clip along at a fast pace to fluency! That is exactly what is happening at TAC! Mr. Takahashi says one only needs one year of training to be fluent in Japanese. In one year a motivated student can learn also 2,000 kanji. Believe it or not!

Who is Hideo Takahashi?

Trained in the west, Hideo graduated from Regent College with a degree in Christian studies after studying Business, anthropology, linguistics and philosophy at Meiji and Kyoto University in Japan. After teaching at a university for 6 years, he became independent and established TAC in 1985. since then he has taught extensively in colleges and academic institutes as well as at his institute. He was trained in the coaching method, accomplishing in one month what others did in two.

He came from a family whose mother was a

great encourager. Takahashi attributes much to her influence on his life. Just to talk with him, leaves you encouraged!

In 1994 Alexander, one of the leading business-coaching companies based in London, launched a new method of language learning in Tokyo. They chose Mr. Takahashi to head the academy. Here is what he has to say:

Students learn the syntax of vocabulary they need as they practice language actively. They then begin to feel confident in their ability and away they go.

This new approach of language learning was introduced on a major radio channel as the "Takahashi Method" in 1992.

In the classroom, sessions are given privately or in a group.

Textbooks are only handouts and Japanes By THE Total Method by Dr.Brannen as reference.

Each course is designed upon interview with the student.

There are professional sessions on writing reports, preparing and giving presentations, leading discussions and receiving feedback. Courses are designed to cover material on the "Japanese Proficiency Test." Workshops are held and debates take place. Courses are on the basic, intermediate and advanced levels. There is a full-time program. There is a one-year program for missionaries, embassy personnel and business people. Each term is twelve weeks. All teachers are experienced and use innovative approaches.

Dr. Noah Brannen, author or Japanese language course for former JMLI (Japanese Missionary Language Institute) is the supervisor of TAC and has given Mr. Takahashi all rights to his course text, Japanese by the Total Method.

Winter term begins January 11 through March 31, 2005.

Spring term begins April 11 through July 4, 2005.

The summer intensive classes run from July 18 through August 13.

Class size: from 3 to 10 students

Hours: from 9:00 for 4 hours

Days of the week: Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. Wednesdays are for self-study.

Religious and business terms are taught. There are special discount rates for Christian workers.

If you would like more information please contact the TAC office at: 03-5281-1968 or

e-mail: tacjp.takahashi@nifty.com

It is my great pleasure to introduce Mr. Hideo Takahashi to you.

Janice A. Kropp, Japan Harvest editor.



A word from Takahashi: Don't teach the Japanese language to your clients! This is the philosophy I share with our instructors. Simply because the language is just a means. To draw out the best

in them and support them how demonstrate it in handling people and situations beautifully is our job. You will experience a spiritual and intellectual journey as you create your own art called "my speech". I hope you enjoy the process of it with us as facilitators. H

IF you attended a church meeting without fear of harassment, arrest, torture, or death, you are more blessed than almost three billion people in the world.

IF you can read this article you are more blessed than over two billion people in the world that cannot read anything at all.

IF you can hold someone's hand, hug them or even touch them on the shoulder, you are blessed because you can offer God's healing touch.

IF you have money in the bank, in your wallet, and spare change in a dish someplace, you are among the top 8% of the world's wealthy.

IF you have food in your refrigerator, clothes on your back, a roof over your head and a place to sleep, you are richer than 75% of this world

IF you hold up your head with a smile on your face and are truly thankful, you are blessed because the majority can, but most do not.

Sleeping Giants Come Alive at OBI!

By Rev. Dr. John Y. Masuda, President

Inspiring Testimonies of students:

The exciting experience of finding new needs within the church has become an integral part of our ministry at OBI. One very needy area, we have found, is among pastors' wives. Unfortunately, this need has existed for many years. Furthermore, no one seemed to have picked up on the issue. When pastors' wives started to enroll in our classes we became aware of many issues. Wives were reserved, yet very enthusiastic in their studies. With their positive and eager attitudes they contributed greatly both inside and outside the classroom. We have become conscious of their enormous potential, which seemed to be waiting for release.

As they came to enroll in our Institute, they expressed the common feeling that their husbands had graduated from theological institutions but they had had no such opportunity or privilege. They had to raise their children and/or work. Now that the children were grown, they could start studies to equip themselves to serve the Lord together with their husbands.

In this issue I would like to introduce two such pastors' wives, and let them share their heartwarming stories.

First, let's hear from Mrs. M.

"I grew up in a Christian home. Since there was not a pastor, my parents assumed pastoral care and responsibilities. As a child I enjoyed going to Sunday School with my brother and friends. It was in my junior high school days that I really became convicted of my sinfulness and understood the meaning of the cross. I repented and was baptized.

At the age of 23, I married a Christian young man and we had three sons. However, for some reason my husband stopped going to church. The Lord was gracious to bring him back to church life. God performed a miracle in his life after the death of his mother. He quit his teaching job of thirty-one years to enter full-time ministry. The Lord saw us through the three years of a seminary course.

Upon graduation my husband felt called to church planting. The Lord blessed our new move and outreach. I also came to a decision to quit my work of thirty-six years with the NTT (the prestigious Nippon Telegraph & Telephone Company) to be of a help to my husband and to serve the Lord. It meant that I, too, should receive training for the ministry. It was OBI that provided the needed training.

For three years I commuted 5 hours daily to study at OBI. The distance, long hours, and train fares were more than compensated by the challenging studies, exciting new friends and inspiring teachers I found there. I never had the privilege of meeting OBI's kind

of people in any other place. Indeed I would say, "My three years at OBI were jewels in my life!"

It has been 2 years since my graduation. We have had a trial of my husband going through a cancer operation. His surgery was successful, and he now preaches on Sundays. Praise the Lord! Meantime, we were led to pray toward building our own church. Miraculously, the Lord answered our prayers and provided a piece of land (200 tsubo) and the thirty million yen needed for purchasing the land and building a church on the property."

Our second testimony is from Mrs. H.

"In my high school days at a Summer Bible Camp I realized my life of sin and repented, accepting Christ as my personal Savior. Then, I heard a voice saying to me, "The Lord needs you (Matt. 21:3)." Finally, I made a decision to dedicate myself to Him. After graduating from college and marrying a pastor, I had an increasing desire to study the Bible. When we moved to a new location in Abiko, I was afforded the opportunity to begin my study of the Bible and related courses at OBI. It was a great uplifting experience to study N.T. and O.T. Survey, N.T. and O.T. Books, Geography, Homiletics, Pastoral Care, etc. Each class began with a hymn and prayer. My heart just rejoiced with joy unspeakable. The teachers had 'the fragrance of the knowledge of Christ,' which encouraged me to seek after more truth.

Since I have been rather weak all my life and suffer with rheumatism, commuting once a week to the classes was not easy. I had to get up before five o'clock in the morning, make breakfast and box lunches for all five family members, and do all the household chores. Then, I rode my bicycle to the station. There were days when I did not feel like going, but my husband would push me out the door with encouraging words, even giving me a ride to the station. His cooperation was invaluable. Looking at me doing my own homework, the children were challenged to do theirs. So my whole family cooperated with me during those days. Finally, after studying six years, I was able to graduate. "Praise the Lord. Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; His love endures forever" (Psalm 106:1).

At present I bring messages to the upper classes (4th - 6th grades) of the church school, Home Bible Classes for Young Mothers, and at a kindergarten (once a month for 170 children). Also, I contribute a few daily devotions for 'the Light of the Word' a few times a year. It is my earnest and sincere prayer that I would be a clean, useful vessel of the Lord in His work." H

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• Reconciliation	Rev. Kanemoto
• Missiology	Rev. Yamaguchi
• First Corinthians	Rev. Kawamura
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P R E S I D E N T ' S P E N C I L

Can you believe it? A brand new year is before us--welcome 2005! Have you recovered from your Christmas festivities and outreach events? I hope that as you read this winter issue of Japan Harvest, you are staying warm and catching up on some rest. Let us not forget to take some time to quiet our hearts and listen to what God has planned for us this coming year in our lives, families, and ministries.

Due to Ray Leaf's temporary absence (see note below), I have had the humble privilege to be more involved with JEMA activities. As the new kid on the block, I am so thankful to be able to witness and experience firsthand the moving of the Spirit of God within JEMA. It is exciting to see the cooperation and partnering among missionaries and member missions.

Celebrating its 10th year, the CPI Conference last November was again a testimony of God's faithfulness in breaking the walls of separation and gathering us all together (including many Japanese participants) to focus on bringing forth God's agenda for Japan. It was refreshing and inspiring. Surely, you will read reports and testimonies in this and future issues.

In very practical ways, JEMA resources (Directory, magazine, website & news, JEMA office, etc) have been an invaluable tool for our ministries. Another exciting new development is the increased interest in Overseas Associate Membership (OAM). To date, there are about a dozen OAM members who minister to Japanese abroad and request membership with JEMA.

As we look globally and into the 21st century, I had the privilege last October to attend the 2004 Lausanne Forum for World Evangelization in Thailand. I was involved with the Redeeming the Arts group. Among 1,500 delegates worldwide, there were over 25 that came from Japan and it was stimulat-

ing and encouraging to hear the issues, desired outcomes, and strategies that were presented. One interesting note is that the Executive Chair of Lausanne Committee for World Evangelization has been passed on to Doug Birdsall, once missionary to Japan and now head of Asian Access.

I hope that the articles in this issue will inspire, inform, and encourage you. Enjoy and stay warm in your relationship with our Savior and Lord Jesus.

Have a blessed New Year!

Ken Taylor, vice-president

Note: Ray Leaf (JEMA president) is currently on home assignment and is due back in May. Ray is scheduled to be in Japan to preside over the 2005 JEMA plenary meeting in February 22. H

2 0 0 5 J E M A D A T E B O O K

Event	Date	Place
JEMA Prayerwalk	January 10	OCC
Mission Leaders' Consultation	February 21	OCC
JEMA Fellowship Evening	February 21,	OCC Chapel (Everybody is cordially invited)
JEMA Plenary	February 22	OCC
CPI Women Coaching Seminar		
Kansai Seminar	February 25,	Osaka Christian Center
Kanto Seminar	February 28	Ochanomizu Christian Ctr
Women In Ministry Spring Retreat	March 2-4	Megumi Chalet Karuizawa
Prayer Summits		
Kanto Prayer Summit	May 10-13	Okutama Bible Chalet
Kansai Prayer Summit	May 23- 26	Hiruzen Bible Camp



Japan Evangelical Missionary Association

November 29, 2004

Kenneth Taylor, Richard Kropp, Russ Epley, David Scott, and Traugott Ockert, met as the JEMA Executive Committee. Janice Kropp attended ex officio, representing the Publications Commission. Ray Leaf is on home assignment, but will return for the Mission Leader's Consultation and Plenary in February. The treasurer's report, including the Balance Sheet and Profit & Loss statement for October 2004, were accepted.

Commission Reports

John Mehn's report on the CPI Conference stated that attendance included 426 adults, with about 30% of those Japanese. A special 10th anniversary event was held one evening. The new "consulting center" was a big hit, with around 200 formal appointments.

Ken presented this year's plan for the MLC and the Fellowship Dinner. At the MLC we will be hearing from a missionary and a Japanese pastor on the topic, The Key to Church Growth in Japan.

The Publications Commission is planning to publish a CD-ROM containing the *Harvester's Handbook*, *Step Inside*, and *Operation Japan 2000*, as well as other materials. Don Wright is almost finished with the new *Operation Japan booklet*.

JEA still needs to find an editor for the *Japan Update*. Mr. Gushiken has agreed to do the next issue.

The purchase of Adobe CS software was approved. Although this was not in our budget for this year, the committee sees the value in obtaining this software that is needed for production of our publications.

Miriam Davis' Language & Culture Commission report stated that they would like to explore language training offerings at a future CPI conference.

Kean Miller (JBM) and Janet Kunnecke (SEND) were ap-

pointed as members of the L&C Commission.

Traugott will represent JEMA at the JEA board meeting on Dec. 27. To date, 864,090 Yen has been collected from the JEMA community to be passed on to JEA for the relief work in Niigata.

Committee Reports

Mizuko Matsushita and Ken Taylor were appointed as members of the JEMAnet committee, with David Scott as chairman. David will submit a written proposal for the official JEMA position on JEMA e-mail news and paid e-mail advertisements.

Other Business

The L & M Commission will meet Dec. 14. Final preparations will be made for the MLC.

The Korean Missionary Fellowship has invited JEMA to speak at their Jan 5. annual meeting about missions in Japan.

Three new Overseas Associate Members were received: Keith Casner (USA), Marvin & Joni Eyley (USA), and Trevor Howard (UK).

The plan to have a consultant review and assess JEMA as an organization was discussed, and possibilities were looked at.

The next meeting will be Wednesday Feb. 9 卐

JEMA Annual events to be held over two days at Ochanomizu Christian Center, 8th Floor

Monday, February 21 from 10 - 5:30 Mission Leaders' Consultation (Present & Future Leaders) Registration Necessary, please call JEMA Office @ 03-3295-1354

Details February 21 Mission Leaders' Consultation: Special Presentation on the theme The Key to Church Growth in Japan Speakers: Rev. Joshua Ogawa (JEA Chairman & Senior Pastor of Tokyo Musashino Evangelical Free Church) Scott Parrish (Missionary Strategist

ASIAN ACCESS)

Fellowship Dinner & Evening Program begins at 6:00.

This time for dinner and worship is open to everyone. (Please bring your obento. Dessert and beverage will be 500 yen.) The program for the evening will be Worship, Testimony, and a Prayer Time.

Tuesday, February 22 beginning at 10:00 Annual Plenary Session for Member Missions. Quorum necessary

You won't want to miss these events!



Translated by
Mizuko Matsushita,
JEMA Executive Office
Secretary.

Megumi Chalet Opens Facilities to some Niigata Earthquake Survivors

Concerned for the physical, emotional and spiritual welfare of Niigata earthquake survivors who are Christians, Megumi Chalet sent invitations for free stays in their facility.

With widespread destruction and winter weather, the peaceful surroundings along with Christmas illumination were sure to bring peace and rest for these weary peoples. When the Kobe earthquake hit the Kansai area, Megumi Chalet also extended help to victims.

BBN Celebrates Their 3rd Anniversary

July 2004 marked the 3rd anniversary of the Bible Broadcasting Network in Japan. Approximately 5,000 hits are made daily to the BBN homepage and 1,000 of these listen to the broadcast. There are four full time Japanese staff members who produce their own program in collaboration with PBA, Harvest Time Ministries, Christian Reformed Media Ministry, Japan Gospel Mission and Ibaraki Gospel Church. Many are being saved through this program.

BBN is a Christian Radio and Internet work started in 1971 and is headquartered in Charlotte, North Carolina (USA). BBN is the second largest Christian Radio network in the States. There are broadcasts in 14 countries with more than 6 million listeners worldwide. A broadcast for the Russians began in October. Other languages are English, Japanese, Portuguese, Spanish, Chinese, Korean and German.

Shaberiba (Chattering Site) Sponsored by JEA

Evangelism and Women's Commissions of JEA (Japan Evangelical Association) organized a two-day seminar in September for young people. Participants from their teens to thirties attended and freely exchanged thoughts and ideas about daily life. There were six workshops on such topics as: Gift and Mission, Evangelism, Consecration, Sex, Love and Marriage. Secretary General of JEA Mr. Gushiken is behind the concept and recommends that churches and denominations have such seminars at the regional level.

Lausanne 2004 Forum

The first Lausanne Mission Conference took place in Lausanne, Switzerland, in 1974. The pledge adopted at that conference has exerted tremendous influence among evangelical churches, denominations and mission organizations around the world. World famous theologian and evangelist, John Stott and Billy Graham, were actively involved.

At the Pattaya Conference held in Pattaya, Thailand, in 1980, mission leaders, theologians, and church leaders discussed the concrete problems of the generation based on the Pledge of Lausanne and issued the Lausanne Occasional Papers, which have influenced the Christian world.

Pattaya II was held in Pattaya in late September and early October last year with 1,530 participants from 130 countries.

Lively discussion was on the uniqueness of Christ in the post-modern era of pluralism, globalization, nationalism and much more. The Lausanne Committee designated Dr. Doug Birdsall as the CEO. Birdsall is CEO of Asian Access (formerly LIFE Ministries) and former missionary to Japan from 1980-1997. We extend our congratulations to Dr. Birdsall.

Mrs. Sakie Yokota Gets Support

Friends of Mrs. Sakie Yokota, mother of Megumi Yokota abducted to North Korea, held a meeting to encourage her at Tokyo Chuo Church in November. Mrs. Yokota testified that Psalm 119:71 was her great encouragement.

Christian writer Philip Yancey was the guest speaker. In his message he told of how God uses people in enemy territory, as God used at least 15 such people in the Bible. He spoke of the cases of Joseph and Daniel and said that it is possible that Megumi is also being used in intercession for the salvation of North Korea. He stressed the importance of fervent prayer!

National Diet Prayer Meeting

Started in 1960 by Christians in the Diet, prayer meetings were held until 2002. Because the key member was not re-elected, prayer meetings were suspended only to begin again last November. Christian Diet members felt strongly that the prayers of Christians for national politics and Diet members were essential. Prayer meetings are held on the 3rd Wednesday of the months when the Diet is in session.

Yodobashi Church Celebrates 100 Years

The Wesleyan Holiness Yodobashi Church celebrated its 100th anniversary in 2004. Started from the Chuo Gospel Center in Kanda, Tokyo, in 1901 for the training of evangelists, it moved to Yodobashi in 1904 and became the Yodobashi Church. Key persons playing important roles in the holiness movement are Shuji Kurumada, the church's second pastor and Juji Nakata, its third. Tomiji Obara, who experienced persecution and imprisonment during WWII, served for 58 years at pastor. Rev. Hiroshi Mineno has been serving as pastor and has the vision of forming an Agape Community. For many years the key speaker at Japan Keswick Convention and now with the Lord, Dr. Steven Olford loved this church as his mother church. **h**



Miriam Davis came to Japan in 1975 from the UK and taught English in schools and universities in Nara Prefecture, Nagoya and Osaka for 8 years. In 1986 she joined OMF International and moved to Sapporo to do church planting and English teaching. Since 1990 she has been Language Advisor to OMF.

「電池が切れるまで」 or “Till the battery dies”

By Miriam Davis

This was the title of a 10 week drama series by Asahi Television in the spring of 2004 which had me glued to the screen week by week with a tissue at hand to wipe away the tears. The drama is built around the true stories of children battling with serious illnesses in a children’s hospital in Nagano prefecture. Key figures are the teachers who help them to keep up with their studies in the hospital classroom and the doctors and nurses who care for them medically. Running through the story is a poem written by Miyakoshi Yukina (宮越由貴奈) just 4 months before her death at the age of 11. It is published in the book 「電池が切れるまで 一子ども病院(びょういん)からのメッセージ」すずらん会 編 (へん) 角川書店 (かどかわしよてん) ¥ 1, 200.

いのち
命

命はとても大切だ
人間が生きるための電池みたいだ
でも電池はいつか切れる
命もいつかなくなる
電池はすぐにとりかえられるけど
命はそう簡単にはとりかえられない
何年も何年も
月日がたつてやっど
神様から与えられるものだ

命がないと人間は生きられない
でも
「命なんかいらない」
と言って
命をむだにする人もいる
まだたくさん命が使えるのに
そんな人を見ると悲しくなる
命は休むことなく働いているのに
だから、私は命が疲れたというまで
せいっぱい生きよう

Through the book and drama Yukina’s courage is said to have touched the hearts of many people and given them the will to live. However, as I watched the drama and heard the poem quoted frequently, I found myself wanting to cry out “But this life is not all there is! It does not just end like a battery going dead!” In the last scene of the drama, a young girl called Kaoru lies dying. The doctors have done all they can. Kaoru herself feels the end is near and whispers to her teacher 「もう・・・だめかも・・・ごめんね。」 Hearing this, Kaoru’s mother cries out in despair 「薫！ あきらめないで！ お願い！ 頑張っ！ 生きててくれればそれでいいの！」

Perhaps you may be able, as I have done, to use this drama and the poem ‘inochi’ to illustrate the contrast between non Christian and Christian attitudes to death, to show that death is NOT a case of the battery of life fading out without the possibility of replacement, but rather the gateway to a glorious future and fullness of life that no human mind can ever comprehend.

More information about the drama and related topics in Japanese with pictures can be found at http://www.tv-asahi.co.jp/denchi/index_top.html For those interested in easy reading material in Japanese, the book of poems is written with elementary school children in mind and all but the simplest kanji have furigana on them. ♪

Happy New Year 2005

May this New Year be the best yet! How glorious are the thoughts of “newness”—new opportunities, new risks, a second chance to love, forgive again and again, and say, “thank you.” What a great God we serve! I hope you are as encouraged as I am! And speaking of new opportunities and new responsibilities...

I know that you know that this magazine doesn't just happen. Someone is always looking for articles, someone is continually writing, someone is faithfully and carefully carrying out all the technical aspects,—just some of what goes into the makings of a publication!

Several years ago I was challenged to form an editorial staff. With all our busy schedules and different living locations, how does one accomplish its forming? I am so happy to announce that there are those who have agreed to come on board the Japan Harvest Editorial Staff. It is my pleasure to introduce or re-introduce to you:



5-year Member Jim Rew is the *Japan Harvest* Production Manager. With over 17 years experience with Scripture Press (Wheaton, Illinois), Jim's expertise has been invaluable. He and Alice have two grown daughters and have served with SEND since 1998. The Rews live in Higashi Tokorozawa, Saitama Ken.



New Member Karol Whaley with her husband, Tom, has served since 1984 with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board. Karol serves as area prayer advocate for Japan and Australia in the Pacific Rim Region. They live in Tokyo. Karol and Tom have two grown children and two grandchildren.



Proofreader and continuing Member Cindy Dufty has been in Japan since 1992. Her husband, Lonnie, is the Japan field director of MUP (Mission to Unreached Peoples). Cindy and Lonnie live in Funabashi.



Rev. Dr. Andy Meeko is a second-generation missionary to Japan, whose parents arrived after WWII in 1947. Andy directs Campus Crusade for Christ's FamilyLife Japan. He and his wife, Junko, have four children and live in northern Japan. Andy earned a doctorate in Spiritual Formation from George Fox University in Portland, Oregon, and specializes in ultra-high stress problems related to families. He has been published globally in many languages in both religious and secular realms.



Continuing Member Don Regier serves with Word of Life Press Ministries. He and his wife, Martha, first came to Japan in 1980 with TEAM. Don and Martha live in Nerima. They have two grown children, Deborah and Matthew



Ray Leaf serves on the editorial staff as JEMA President. He has faithfully written the President's Pencil and has been most supportive of *Japan Harvest* magazine. He and his wife, Ruth, came to Japan in 1972 with SEND and have three grown children and one grandchild. The Leafs are presently on home assignment.



Continuing Member Janice Kropp has served as managing editor for five years. She and Richard came to Japan in 1969 with the Christian & Missionary Alliance and presently live in Yachiyo City, Chiba Ken. They have four married sons and eight precious grandchildren.

*Thank you for praying for us as we continue to serve YOU.
A blessed New Year to all of YOU from ALL of us!*

What has *Japan Harvest* been up to?

Four magazines a year doesn't seem like a whole lot, but it does add up to work on many levels. In this winter 2005 issue, we would like to thank all of last year's writers and give the titles of their articles. With these inclusions, we offer our Big Thanks to each one for helping to make our magazine very special!

Winter 2004

- Roberta Stephens wrote along with Ann Borquist the article, "The Blood of Martyrs"
- Stephen Kaylor "Pastoring in Hope"
- Charles Shepson "10 Antidotes for an Anxious Spirit"
- Dawn Wyatt "No Storm, No Story"
- Nancy Sorley "Omiia Revisited" & book reviews for each issue
- Ed Smith "Our Challenge---Using the Laity"
- Don Wright "Missionary Evangelistic Methods ---Tools, Fads, or Stumbling Blocks?"
- Debbie Penner "FreeJapan Prayer Focus"
- Ray Leaf wrote the President's Pencil for each issue
- Dale Little, regular contributor, wrote on "Priority of the Word of God in Church Planting"
- The CPI Leadership Team wrote "Renewing Vision & Being Renewed"
- Mizuko Matsushita, regular contributor, gleaned from the Christian Shinbun for each issue
- Miriam Davis, regular contributor, wrote on "Lessons from a flower"
- Karyn Zaayenga wrote a report on the CAN seminar
- Donald Schaeffer writes book reviews regularly

Spring

- "CPI: A River of Movements flow Through Japan" by Gary Fujino
- "CPI's first decade 1994-2004" by John Mehn
- "The First JEMA CPI Leaders' Summit" by Pat Hansen
- "Our Japan CPI Vision" by John Mehn
- "Casting Our Nets on the Other Side of the Boat" by Deborah Ruth Trotter
- "Street Musicians---A Case Study" by Louis Lau
- "Where is the Church?" by Dale Little
- "First Touch" (a poem) by Andy Meeko
- "Donna Te? Nanbeya San?" by Miriam Davis
- "Worship & Music: Taking the Pulse of your Congregation" by Gary Bauman, regular contributor
- "Software for the Missionary" by the missionarygeek
- "See-Hear An AV Update" by Kenny Joseph

Summer

- Jim Reapsome "Certainty in an Uncertain World"
- Andy Meeko "Wake Up Time"
- Don Thomson "Need a Simple & Effective Tool for Winning the Japanese?"
- Karol Whaley "An Open Letter to Participants of FREEJAPAN 2004"
- Scott Parrish "CPI Research Network: An Important New Tool for Advancing God's Kingdom in Japan"
- Dale Little "Motivational Energy for Church Planting"
- Gary Fujino "2004 Asian Church Congress---Affirming Evangelical Identity & Need for Renewal"
- Alice Rew "English Camp: More than Fun, Food and Fellowship"
- Miriam Davis "Haruurara- the Sunshine Horse"
- "Language & Culture"
- Gary Bauman "Singing a New Song"
- Missionarygeek, regular contributor, "WiFi" (wireless networking)
- John Mehn wrote a book review on *Planting New Churches in a Postmodern Age*

Fall

- "Simeon and Anna" by Jim Reapsome, regular contributor
- "Understanding Conversion" by Mark Harris
- "Missionary Adjustment to Japan: A Reality Check for Leaders & Mentors" by Sue Plumb Takamoto
- "Making the Japanese Bible Mine" by Diana Reuter
- "A Leap of Faith" by Rochelle Potter
- "FreeJapan: The Next Step" by Debbie Penner
- "Prayer Focus Japan" by Karol Whaley
- "Hidden Implications" by Miriam Davis
- "Christmas Outreach" final article by Gary Bauman
- "Security---Good Habits to Keep Your Computer Safe" by Missionarygeek
- "Lady Garcia: A Samarai Wife's Love, Strife and Faith" reviewed by Cindy Dufty
- "Homeschooling---Our Journey" by Hilary Lynch
- "A-bu-su-te-nan-su" by Tim Cole

Just in case you want to know:

Deadline for Summer issue will be February 15.
Theme: Compassion Ministries

Deadline for Fall issue will be May 15.
Theme: Christmas Ideas, Worship & Music Teams

Deadline for Winter issue will be August 15.
Theme: The Forgotten Ones & Their Healing (widows, elderly, emotionally wounded, kids who won't go to school, etc.)

Articles on testimonies and ministry successes are always needed. Poems, photos, letters to the editor, and whatever else you can think of...send to your editor at dikropp@gol.com send photos at high resolution to your Production Manager at therews@yahoo.com H

With our thanks, the editorial staff

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16. Chinese Art Calendars - from each October. Cheaper in quantity ¥150

WRITE OR CALL

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Thanks to all our writers!



Odds & Ends

No particular theme this time, just a few odds and ends that you might find helpful.

Ever wonder how those “international warranties” work out when you buy a computer in the US, and then try and get it fixed in Japan? Just had the family Dell laptop fixed. It’s not easy, but if you persevere, you’ll probably get it serviced. First, you have to call Dell in Japan, and they’ll have you fill out a request online to have the warranty transferred from the US to Japan. This is a chore since all the info on the site is in Japanese, but the form must be filled out in English (even your Japanese address). Needless to say, plan on spending an afternoon getting this done correctly. Next, you wait four days while it’s “processed”. Then, another call to Dell. I probably had a total of ten calls during this whole ordeal, and every time I had at least a ten-minute wait to describe the problem(s). After going through all the obvious cures, the company finally agreed to fix it. Two days later, an empty box is *takkyubined* to your house, and you put your computer in the box and off it goes to Dell. A week later, it’s returned. In our case, one problem got fixed (dead keyboard), but the second problem (dead soundcard) was totally ignored. Another call with another ten-minute wait, and another round of describing the problem and assuring them the drivers are installed correctly etc. Then twice *takkyubin* went to the wrong address to pick it up. The company still has it, almost a month later. I guess I’ll finally get it back, but this is not a process for the faint of heart, or for those that don’t speak, read and write Japanese well. Maybe an IBM next time?

I hate to pay for software.....Somehow it doesn’t bother me to shell out money for hardware, but with all the free and almost free software out there, I try to pay as little as possible. Three programs that I’ve used lately have proven to be well worth the money.

1) Tax software—I’ve done my own US taxes for years, and never used a computer program. However, last year I bought and used H&R Block Tax Cut. There are several programs like this for about \$20-\$30 each. I wasn’t sure how they would handle an overseas return. It worked great! You answer a series of questions, about income, family size etc., and in the end all your forms print out, including 2555s etc. I did all the family members’ returns, as well as a few fellow missionaries’ returns with this program. You have to re-purchase the program every year, but, in my mind, this was money well spent.

2) Will-making software--Every missionary should have a will. Probably your mission board requires it. Ours was out of date, and it was time to redo it. I bought Quicken Lawyer, one of the programs that will help you write a will, and was very impressed with the results. Again, you answer questions about family members, how you want your assets distributed, and your home state (this is important because laws are different from state to state). In the end, you have to follow your state’s requirement for witnesses or notary signature. Since our estate is simple (divide it equally among the children) we felt this was very adequate, and we saved several hundred dollars in legal fees. These types of programs run from \$25-\$50.

3) Spam eliminating software—If you’re like me, your e-mail inbox is flooded with SPAM! I have tried a couple of

programs in the past but have not been pleased with them. I just downloaded Cloudmark’s Safety Bar (www.cloudmark.com) program, because PC Magazine recommended it. I’ve been using it for a few days now and am very pleased with the results. The first day it caught 43 spam e-mails! There’s a 30-day free trial, and after that it’s \$39.99 per year, but you get a license to use it on two computers. You have to be using Outlook or Outlook Express to run it, and it puts detected spam in a separate spam folder. So if you’re still using dial up, it doesn’t cut your time on line.

If you use Yahoo BB as your broadband provider, maybe you miss having access to Usenet Newsgroups. These are still some of the best places for information on a specific topic. I like alt.support.headaches.migraine for info on migraine headaches, and 24hoursupport.helpdesk for advice on computer problems from all over the world. You can go to www.news.individual.net and sign up for free usenet access. This is run by a college in Germany, and it takes a few days, but they’ll give you access.

One word of advice on burning CDs. If your data is important, be sure you test the readability of the CD on a different computer. One of our missionaries recently took home a power point presentation, that they had spent hours on, for use in churches. They left their old computer in Japan, and took only the CD they burned. When they got to the US, they discovered that the CD was bad, and the old computer was in storage in Japan!

As always, let me hear from you, what you’d like to hear about, what’s been useful.....missionarygeek@yahoo.com H



E-Mail Etiquette

Dear Miss Internet Manners,

"I sure like to use e-mail. I keep in touch with my friends around the world. A lot of my work depends on it. I want to do it right. Can you give me any hints on e-mail etiquette?"

Signed,
Missionary from Taiwan

Miss Manners says: "Thanks for your question, missionary. In your line of business, you do want to make sure you put your best digital foot forward. You wouldn't want to "byte" the hand that feeds you!"

Let's go through a typical email step by step and see what we can do to make sure you are doing your best to make e-mail enjoyable and fun for others. Ten points were good enough for Moses, so we'll try keeping it to that number."

• **1-Should I really be e-mailing this person?**—

Before you even get started with your e-mail, ask yourself if a phone call or personal visit may be better. It's too easy to use this impersonal medium to avoid personal contact. If there are some sensitive issues to handle, call or visit.

• **2-Write a New Message**—This looks simple enough. Our main choices are plain text or html/rich text. Plain text is what it says it is, standard text that can be read by anyone, even without the latest computer. Html allows you to use different fonts, colors, backgrounds, pictures, etc. Miss Manners urges you to be careful with your use of colors and fonts. Don't use too many. And please choose pleasant combinations. If you don't have the kind of gifting to determine what is pleasing, check with a spouse or child who does. Many systems allow pictures to be added to the e-mail so that they show up in your friend's e-mail program. That's very convenient but see below for pointers on formats and size. There's one final point for those who write from a computer that has a Chinese or Japanese operating system. Under format, choose Western/English encoding

if you are sending to other westerners. The type will look much better to the sender.

• **3-CC or Copies**—This is another convenient function if used properly. Just make sure that you don't leave out that important person, or include the last person in the world who should see the message. Miss Manners knows of some bad situations caused by creative copying. So be careful, especially when dealing with sensitive matters in a group mailing setting.

There is one pet peeve that Miss Manners has in regard to CC:. Sometimes I receive an e-mail that has been sent out to a group of people. All of those people are listed in the CC, or even as the main recipient. It may be better to use the BCC (blind copy function).

• **4-BCC**—If I send an e-mail to Friend A and don't want him to easily know that I am also sending a copy to Friend B, then the blind copy is great. Not all uses of BCC are devious. If you are sending out a large mailing, and it's not important that everyone know you have 254 friends with e-mail, then send to Friend A and then put the 253 other friends in Blind Copy. Each will receive his/her own copy and when your valuable message is printed out the first page will not be comprised of 254 e-mail addresses.

• **5-Clear subject line**—Miss Manners enjoys mystery, but does not appreciate mysterious e-mails without a subject. Miss Manners also appreciates something more creative than "hi".

Have you noticed that junk e-mailers are very ingenious at making their mailing look like they are replying to your email? They will put in something like: "Re: your letter." When I'm scanning my e-mail, good clear subject lines get my attention. They also show that I put some thought into the message.

• **6-The e-mail body**—Finally, we get to your message. First of all, DON'T WRITE IN ALL CAPITAL LETTERS. It looks like shouting! Most people have overcome this habit, but Miss Manners just needs to remind you of what you already know. Miss Manners like to see e-mails with a proper title. "Dear" may seem a little old-fashioned, but it's always in good taste to be polite. Recent wide scale use of instant messaging has blurred the distinction between messages and e-mail. If it's a message, perhaps the "Dear" and "Yours Truly" (or equivalent) aren't so important. Maybe Miss Manners is a bit old-fashioned, but I still see the word "mail" in e-mail.

One of the things to be careful of in e-mail, as most of you probably know from experience, is sarcasm, irony, etc. An email has no eyebrows, no

eyes, no hands or body language. What we might consider cute in everyday communication may not be understood via e-mail. You may convey an entirely different message than you suppose.

Two last concerns are using smiley icons—cute but for friends and only in moderation—and automatic signatures added to your e-mail. KISM (Keep It Simple, Missionary!)

• **7-Attachments**—E-mail has made it easy to attach files and picture files. That's true for hackers also who love to send out infected attachments. With so many viruses, it's just hard to trust attached files. Miss Manners very rarely opens an attached file, even from a friend's computer, unless I am expecting it. Why? Someone may be using my friend's address book to send me a virus. So if you must send attachments, e-mail me first and let me know. If I have any doubts I may contact you first.

The other concern with attachments is size. This is often a problem with friends who just bought digital cameras and are eager to share their photos with others. Not everyone has high-speed Internet connections. Miss Manners loves to receive photos, just make sure you save your image files as JPG files. The size difference compared with the other standard, BMP, is phenomenal. Another way to save download time is to first reduce the photo size to 640x480. Unless your friend wants to print the photo, you can also adjust the photo resolution to 72 or 96dpi. Your computer screen won't show any higher resolution than that.

• **8-Send**—When I first started using computers Miss Manners was afraid of touching some button that would cause it to explode. It has never happened literally. There is a button, however, that can cause untold trouble. That's the send button. Click it too soon after writing an overly emotional e-mail, and you're likely to end up in a digital cold war. A friend once had an add-on program that read and rated the heat of email content by using hot peppers. If you hit three red hot peppers, it told you to cool off and try writing later.

Save the mail in your drafts folder. Wait a while before sending. One thing you can do is set up your e-mail program to queue your message and not send it out immediately. Give yourself some time to consider what you just wrote. Then send.

• **9-Replying**—How soon should I reply to an e-mail? Does fast e-mail require a fast response? Without a doubt, e-mail has made us less patient. If the email is of some importance, you may send

Continued on page 30



Getting Along with the Japanese

Reviewer: Nancy Sorley and her husband are with the Baptist General Conference and are planting a church in Nara City.



Getting Along with the Japanese

By Kate Elwood
ASK Co., Ltd. 2001 96 pages

Each week I look forward to Elwood's column on the Japanese language and culture, "Cultural Conundrums," in the Daily Yomiuri. I finally decided to check out her book and I found it contains a wealth of helpful insights. Elwood, a writer and lecturer on intercultural communications, communicates in an easy format and style not only obvious differences in Japanese and Western culture but also subtle differences that often leave us confused.

Section one gives "Twelve Key Words Useful in Understanding the Japanese". Words like gaman, tatemae, wa, and giri, make up some of the core values of the Japanese people. She gives concrete examples of situations that may bewilder a foreigner, but make perfect sense to the Japanese whose behavior is determined by the meaning of words.

The next section, "Face to Face with the Japanese," covers ways to greet people, pay the bill when eating out with a group, give gifts, address people according to age and rank and other daily situations. These are topics that are great for the orientation of first-termers in Japan. It also includes two pages of illustrations and explanations of essential-to-know ways of non-verbal communication.

The final section takes areas we get involved in the longer we are here. These include weddings, funerals, school entrance ceremonies and other "Important Life Events." Her suggestions for participation in some events may, however, conflict with Christian views.

Though Elwood wrote this book with business people in mind, it is an excellent resource for anyone eager to understand Japanese people. She begins each topic with actual situations foreigners experience. After clearing up the confusion, she ends the section with helpful vocabulary words. I recommend this book for every new missionary, but veterans may also learn a few new things that may help them to get along with the Japanese better, too. H



A moving and sensitive story of a woman of great principle who discovered Christian faith amidst the mires of feudalism in 16th century Japan.

A Samurai Wife's Love, Strife and Faith
Lady Gracia

By AYAKO MIURA
Translated by Susan Tsumura

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Continued on Page 9

in the application of the Gospel.

Important themes for Life are tied to the way in which death is viewed. We can incorporate these themes to help focus our ministry.

Key themes relevant to ministry surfaced in *Yomigaeri* and *Skyhigh* which reverberate throughout society. The three that stand out are relationships, revenge and restitution.

Relationships: In *Yomigaeri*, it is not only the mysterious pulsations which bring people back to life but also the continuing affection the bereaved hold toward those who are deceased.

In an early episode of *Skyhigh 2*, the themes of relationship and revenge mix in an unusual manner. After the elderly gentleman and two preschool sisters are killed by a drunken bus driver's negligence, his initial "wish" was to return to the earth with one of the girls to curse and kill both parents so that the whole family could be together again, even if it were in hell! This sounds perverse to non-Japanese ears, but it is clear that the old man was motivated by compassion for the two children who were lonely and disoriented—even in death—without their parents. Later, he finally chooses to avenge his own death and that of the two sisters by cursing and killing the bus driver, now in jail. The idea of relationships extending beyond this life is still a powerful challenge to mission work in Japan.

One of the criticisms of the Christian witness here in Japan has been that it is a "cold" religion since the saved individual is separated from their lost, loved ones after death. Thus, some have said they would rather spend eternity in hell with their family and ancestors rather than be separate in heaven. But is this a correct perception? Interestingly, as in the sleeper hit, *The Sixth Sense*, the dead of *Yomigaeri* and *Skyhigh* do not know that they have died. They 'awake' with the belief that they are still alive; they have no memory of their death. The assumption is that the afterlife is so like this life that one cannot tell the difference.

The most vivid life after death section in Scripture, Luke 16, gives the real picture. With full consciousness of where he is and what has put him there, the rich man begs Abraham to send Lazarus to his relatives, "Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment" (v. 28). Is there a choice in judgment? 2Corinthians 5:10, Hebrews 9:27, Revelation 20:12 and other passages would speak against this. As we account for the value of relationships in this culture, even beyond death, we must also lovingly seek to give an accurate picture of what the afterlife is truly like, as revealed in the Scriptures.

Revenge: The need for retribution is strong

among both the living and the dead. The second choice of wandering upon the earth in *Skyhigh* borrows from the concept of *muen-botoke*, the folk religion idea of an "unconnected" spirit wreaking havoc upon the living. This is a spirit's way of getting back, especially at living relatives who do not take care of the grave or perform the proper rituals. The thought of revenge seems to be in the minds of many living Japanese as well. One BBS correspondent to the *Skyhigh* homepage wrote, "Wouldn't it be fascinating to kill your own parents?" This was a minority voice on the bulletin board, to be sure, but a reflection, nonetheless, of the hearts of not a few.

In her timeless classic on the Japanese culture, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Ruth Benedict pulls out the example of indignation in a Japanese man who felt that he and his wife had been ridiculed by a missionary, whom they had respected greatly. His words were pointed as he noted, "Even murderers I may forgive according to their condition. But about sneering, there is no excuse. Because one cannot sneer at innocent people without intentional insincerity." Benedict notes that "Since it is not proper to forgive, one possible reaction to a slur is revenge" (p. 161). The famous true story of the avenging forty-seven *samurai*, or *Chushingura*, is still so popular in Japan because these *ronin* did take revenge and did not forgive the insult upon their lord.

How many of those with whom we work have been slurred by us, or by others, whether intentionally or not? The desire for revenge in Japan is more prevalent and underlies even Christian culture more than perhaps we are aware. So, there is also a great need for forgiveness and grace in Jesus Christ.

Restitution: One of the most interesting things tied to death in both these dramas is the need for some form of apology and restitution of some form. "Say it", cried the wife at the *ramen* shop in *Yomigaeri*, "Say that you're sorry for dying and leaving me alone to fend for myself these past two and a half years." Bewildered himself at having come back to life, 'I'm sorry' becomes one of the first words the man utters as he reunites with his freshly aggrieved wife. The newly resurrected high school boy approaches his tormentors after he returns to his classroom and apologizes to them. "Sorry that I died on you because of your bullying", he says. These are foreign actions to non-Japanese. But the need for apology and the sense of indebtedness manifested by these words are deeply embedded into the Japanese psyche, living or dead! The Westerner feels uncomfortable saying, "I'm sorry", or uses it improperly. But this phrase and the accompanying feeling is a powerful tool for relationship building and restoration in Japan.

In *Skyhigh*, too, the dead often look back on the life they lived and say, *warukatta* ("I was wrong" with the nuance included of "I'm sorry"). Benedict and others after her have noted that these feelings arise out of a sense that every Japanese is "a debtor to the ages and the world." Something is owed. Nothing comes freely and is rarely overlooked freely either. Mental accounts are kept and apology is often the key to balancing these books. But the idea of apology is less about works than it is about equilibrium. Both in this life and the next, things must be "fair." The three choices from *Izuko* at the Gate give the opportunity for both payback to that which made the former life miserable and satisfaction for the life to come.

In death, the need for restitution is heavily upon the one who leaves, that is, the dead person. "He just died" is not an acceptable excuse, especially if the sense of indebtedness has not been repaid yet. Thus, the bereaved can stay angry at the deceased for a long, long time in their own *urami* or begrudgement. The biblical reality, of course, does not speak of things evening out but rather of judgment and of forgiveness. Since grace and forgiveness are so difficult to grasp in this environment, a gracious and forgiving lifestyle is perhaps a better witness to these biblical realities than any words we could say.

Resurrection without God and a choice of how you are judged are two "big" themes in Japanese society today. There will be more such challenges coming our way. The core of our witness and response depends largely on our willingness to change, our ability to listen before speaking (Prov. 18:13; James 1:19), and the life that Christ Himself is living within and through our lives. In such a complex and errant world, let us live life to the max to the glory of God and the advancement of His kingdom in this land! ❖

Gary Fujino has served in Japan along with his wife, Lynn, for nine years with the International Board of the Southern Baptist Convention. Gary is a trainer for church planting movements in Japan and serves as Vice Chairman for JEMA-CPI. Along with his involvement in a church plant in Senegawa, he teaches and serves on the board of CLTC (Christian Leadership Training Center). He and Lynn have four children.

Continued from Page 4

dimension called eternity where all humans are headed. If eternity for a person depends on that person's relationship to Jesus Christ, then it would be criminal to keep the good news to oneself and not to witness.

Fourthly, the coming of the Lord will bring with it rewards for faithfully discharging our responsibility. This may sound selfish, but I don't think it is. These rewards, whatever they may be (crown? etc.) are not given for our possession to be exhibited for everyone to see and admire. They are given to be placed at the feet of the King of Kings and the Lord of Lords. Is it selfish to want something to place at His feet for His glory? I think not.

Continued from page 27

a quick note to acknowledge receipt. Or, if you are a sender, you might request a response by such and such a date. You might also set up your e-mail program to request an automatic receipt of mail.

Miss Manners has a suggestion when you reply to an e-mail. The e-mail program usually quotes all that the previous sender wrote. There's generally no reason for me to read in quotes that I just wrote. It's up to me to either entirely remove it, or at least edit out all but the most important points to which I'm responding.

I believe we fall short of fulfilling our mandate if we fail to be future oriented—if the mandate rests only on the past, or on the present humanitarian needs. It was after these disciples were convinced that the same Lord they had known would return, that they left the Mount of Olives with great joy (Luke 24:52), went to Jerusalem and spent days in praise and prayer as they waited. And after the coming of the Holy Spirit, they went out and began their missionary task and the church exploded. I believe historians have not done justice to the rapid expansion of the early church. That chapter has not yet been accurately researched and written. Recent research reveals that the church grew far more rapidly than past research has indicated.

One final point on replying to a message sent out to a group. If you just want the message to go to one person, be extra careful that you are not sending out personal or sensitive information to people who don't need to know or shouldn't know. Check the "To:" line in your e-mail to be sure.

• **10-Forwarding messages**—Miss Manners would like all of you to think twice before forwarding messages to large numbers of people. Common subjects are either frivolous—for example, a science project to see how many

In order to go effectively to the "ends of the earth" we need that absolute conviction that our Lord will return. The missionary mandate is based on our eschatological hope. Unless that incentive is included and properly emphasized, the church will fall short of fulfilling the Lord's command.

Henry Harder is/was the radio pastor of the program "What's New" which was aired on ten stations worldwide, 40 to 50 times weekly. He was the Karuizawa JEMA Summer Conference speaker in 1988. H

countries this message can go to—or erroneous, something like: "Forward this message and someone will give \$\$\$ for someone." I'm afraid these are probably urban legends. There is enough real junk going around that we do not need to add "fringe" junk mail.

Happy mailing,

Miss Manners

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Potpourri & Promises

by Janice A. Kropp

What's New?

Grace!

Yes, it is true! Grace is new each time the sun sneaks above the eastern horizon! Grace is as wide, as deep, and as high as it was yesterday. Today it touches all things that breathe. It extends to all of nature in its dynamic beauty. Our God is a God of marvelous grace. This being true, the subject is far too immense to begin to approach in such a short article, but I am constrained to do so. Constrained because I have the deep conviction that as grace flows richly to me, it must also flow freely from me. I am horrified by my failings to pass it on. I feel constrained to write because I see all the needs around me. Constrained because I sense your needs and my need for extending grace to you. Constrained because I crave the extension of your grace, too!

Let's pause for a moment to consider again the marvelous expression of God's grace, abundant and free. Simply put, grace has been defined as unmerited favor. The parable of the prodigal son is one huge picture of an undeserving son and his father's lavish grace. Oh, the grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ!

Last year I heard a thought-provoking slant on grace. Someone has said that the extension of grace leaves the other person better. I rather like that, and that is exactly what Jesus did. Jesus always made people better, whether it was a healing, a forgiving, or a tongue-lashing. This has been my recent challenge: leaving persons better than I found them. Let's think about this in terms of Scripture and then in terms of our human extension of grace.

What Scripture records:

The universe, created in minute perfection, was

complete. The placement of a man and a woman in a garden so lush that toil was unnecessary, staggers my imagination. Love, harmony, joy and service for the other must have been something to behold. God was certainly pleased with His creation! All brought instant glory to the One of glory! So what's with grace? Mankind didn't keep God's reserves waiting very long. Plunged into the ugliness of what independence brought, any God with less grace than our God would have swept all away to start over again, or perhaps drop the entire idea! Furthermore, when God came to walk and talk with his two fallen "angels," He did not blast them off the earth in a rage. No, He asked several simple questions, "Where are you?" followed by "Who told you that you were naked? Have you eaten from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?" God speaks from the limitlessness of His grace, which is stronger, wider, deeper and higher than any Niagara or Victoria Falls!

And then what did God do? Well, He said a lot of things, but He actually did something for the two. He made them clothes. He left them better off; leaves would have dried and crumbled far too quickly! And this was only the beginning of the extension of His marvelous grace. The Old Testament, though full of warnings and judgment, flows with the grace of God reaching ultimate depths and heights to win back His lost possessions!

And look at our world today. With all the recent natural disasters of the last weeks, people wonder why a God of love would not prevent a 9-point magnitude earthquake. I say, it is a wonder that there are not more disasters; if indeed, these are acts of judgment. I don't necessarily believe they are. I rather think of disasters as a world straining under sin to reach out for God's healing touch—grace. At the same time, mankind, myself included, has tried the patience of God for so long now, yet, our God waits. Our God blesses. Our

God pours out grace wider and stronger than ever. His patience with Israel blows my mind, and I shake my head at their stubborn wills; then, I take a look at myself. God's grace to me continues to be rich and full! Am I stingily reserving it for me, or am I unreservedly opening the gate to let it flow?

Human extension of grace:

The Apostle Paul was overwhelmed by God's grace! He writes about it, thrills in it, and encourages it throughout his writings. Consider the following portions of Scripture:

1 Timothy 1:2: To Timothy my true son in the faith: Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord. Fathers to sons, take heed!

1:12-14,16: Paul knew well he was a wretch, and he thanks God saying, The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus.

Let's know what we were like and what we are now!

Ephesians 2:4-10: And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus. For it is by grace you have been saved...For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.

God has done it from beginning to end! God is on display, not us; we are His workmanship! Let's live in ways that shows that!

Romans 12:3: For by the grace given me I say to everyone of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you.

Am I humble? Am I careful?

Colossians 4:6: Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.

Are my words well seasoned or do my words spill out hurt, wounding and depressing others?

Titus 2:11-13: For the grace of God that brings salvation has appeared to all men. It teaches us to say "No" to ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright and godly lives in this present age, while we wait for the blessed hope—the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ."

Is grace constraining me to live a life of godliness and self-control? Am I as patient with others as God is with me?

And I could go on but space won't permit. Consider these additional verses: Psalm 45:2, Luke 2:40, John 1:14,16,17, and II Corinthians 12:9,10. Be blessed. Be challenged!

"Oh," we say, "I extend grace!" That's great news, but I hardly believe it. I have been in Japan a long time and have found grace runs in narrow outlets of kindness and is filtered through eyes of self-centered perspective. I look at myself and I see that I have limited God's grace to others. I repent and I open myself to channel God's grace in more of its fullness this New Year.

Several months ago I volunteered to speak at one of the churches I love. I volunteered because I heard that the believers were finding it hard to accept a fellow believer who had fallen into sin. My heart pained to think that the body of Christ would "reject" or "stingily" extend elements of grace. When I went to the church I took with me my message and a test—a grace test. As I wrote the test, I challenged myself. How about that! It is my pleasure to give you the GRACE test. I don't want you to lose the opportunity for a good "tune-up" for your soul.

Grace Test

1. When someone comes into the church with long hair, ear rings, and has tattoos, I
 - a. warmly welcome him/her

- b. avoid him/her
- c. force myself to give a greeting
2. When someone gossips about me, I
 - a. stop going to church
 - b. feel angry
 - c. seek God for strength to bear
3. When I am told of my weaknesses, I
 - a. cry and cry
 - b. draw on God's love and grace
 - c. defend myself
4. When I reach out to a fellow Christian and he/she does not respond, I
 - a. continue to reach out
 - b. talk about him/her to others
 - c. get angry
5. When telling someone about Jesus and they refuse my words, I
 - a. feel hurt
 - b. ask God for another chance with the same person
 - c. won't try to talk to him/her again
6. When my children disappoint or do something I don't like, I
 - a. pray for them more
 - b. cry and cry
 - c. become depressed
7. When my spouse forgets an agreement, I
 - a. yell
 - b. withhold my love
 - c. forgive and talk about the matter
8. When my viewpoint is ignored or misunderstood, I
 - a. don't ever speak up again
 - b. gracefully continue
 - c. nurse my hurt
9. When I am forgotten and not thanked for something I did well, I
 - a. don't give it a further thought
 - b. sulk
 - c. wonder why I am not appreciated
10. When I sin, I
 - a. cannot forgive myself
 - b. quickly confess to God and/or others
 - c. am afraid of what people think
11. When someone else sins, I
 - a. am harsh with him/her
 - b. encourage him/her in grace
 - c. push him/her away, hurting him/her more
12. When I hear something bad about someone in the church or outside the church, I
 - a. seek to bring healing—extending grace
 - b. become embarrassed
 - c. avoid the person
13. When I think of myself, as God's child, I
 - a. see my worthlessness
 - b. feel valued only when I do the right things
 - c. know God always and forever loves me

Give Me a Couple Smiles

During last year's baseball playoffs between the



NY Giants and the Boston Red Sox my three-year-old grandson had been keeping his eyes on the guys' feet. Returning to the living room from a brief venture to elsewhere, he asked, "Who's winning? The Red Socks or the Black Socks?"

Then my three-year-old grand daughter, who had fallen off the swing the day before, encouraged her mommy by saying, "Mom, I won't not hold on!" And hang on she did! YES! H

ment of being with friends. Six days later she was dead from a viral infection of her heart.

We are all stunned by the suddenness with which she was taken from our lives. She died early in the morning on Wednesday, August 4th, at the Nagano Nisseki (Red Cross) hospital. On Friday, August 6th, 2004 about 150 of her classmates and teachers from Hirose Elementary School in Isesaki, where she was a third grader, came to say their goodbyes at a short informal service at the Isesaki Covenant Church. Her funeral was held at the Isesaki Seien on August 7, 2004.

Although it may seem strange, we have found great comfort in these words: "The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Job 1:21 And we know that there is a time for everything under heaven, and though we mourn the loss to us of her precious life now, we praise the God who will turn our mourning into dancing on the day we meet again. H



KARISA....a time to mourn and a time to dance.....

One sunny spring morning in 1996, the phone rang as we were getting ready to leave for worship in Takasaki, Gunma prefecture. I was packing the diaper bag for our one-year-old son, and my husband was going over his sermon notes in Japanese one more time. Tim came out of his office

and said, "I think we have a baby girl!" and that is how Karisa, whose name means an undeserved gift from God, came into our lives at the age of 11 days.

Karisa was a force to be reckoned with—not about to be overlooked, underestimated or outdone, a vitality radiated from her that all who knew her appreciated. She was passionate about all she did, and no one around her was ever bored, because she was creative, fearless, and constantly in motion.

This summer Karisa went to camp at ABC on Mount Akagi. She was very excited about going, because it was her first time to attend Elementary Bible Camp. Her best friend, her brother and two of his friends, and her dad went along to help with music. She had a great time, but on the way down the mountain felt carsick and feverish— we assumed she had overextended herself because of the excite-



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