

**JAPAN** Fall 2005  
**HARVEST**  
Japan Evangelical Missionary Association

**Producing Reproducing Disciples  
in Japan** *by Kelly Malone*

**Aichi World Expo**  
*by Ron Capps & Ron Stoller*

**22nd European Japanese Christian Conference**  
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*by Jim Reapsome*

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## DEPARTMENTS

### JEMA/JEA

- 1 From the President's Pencil  
*by Ray Leaf*
- 2 Editor's Greeting
- 4 Readers Respond

### Translations & Language Lab

- 9 Christian Shimbun  
*by Mizuko Matsushita*
- IBC Language Lab  
*by Miriam Davis*

### Worship & the Arts

- 16 Japan's Narnia Outreach Network  
*by Paul Nethercott*

### Modern Tech

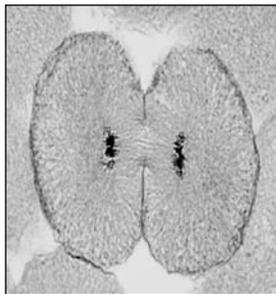
- 26 Electronic Kanji Dictionaries  
*by the Missionary Geek*

### The Reader

- 28 Book Reviews



- 6 Aichi World Expo



- 10 Producing Reproducing Disciples in Japan



- 22 The Battle for the Walls of Jerusalem

## FEATURES

### Inspiration

- 6 Aichi World Expo  
*by Ron Capps & Ron Stoller*
- 10 Producing Reproducing Disciples in Japan  
*by Kelly Malone*
- 14 I Just Wanted to Borrow the Laptop Computer!  
*by Angela Shih*
- 15 The Last Dinosaurs Part 2  
*by Eyvind Haraldseid*
- 19 Questions & Answers with Mark Joseph
- 20 The 22nd Annual European Japanese Christian Conference  
*by Mary Anketell*
- 21 Thinking Theologically about Church Planting  
*by Dale Little*
- 22 The Battle for the Walls of Jerusalem  
*by Jim Reapsome*
- 25 From Black to White in 50 Years Times Two  
*by Kenny & Lila Joseph*
- 30 Prayer Resources  
*by Karol Whaley*

# JAPAN HARVEST

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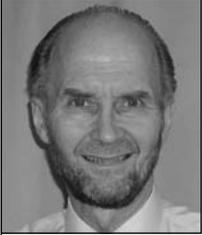
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This past August the sixtieth anniversary of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki atomic bomb tragedies again inspired demonstrations and prayers for world peace. We hear much of peace and as Christians we should delight in the desire for world peace. When our Lord was born, the eager listening ears of the shepherds heard the choir of angels sing, “Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace among men with whom He is pleased” (Luke 2:14 ASV). The prophet Isaiah named the Messiah, “Prince of Peace” (Isa. 9:6). Jesus spoke of peacemakers as the children of God (Matt. 5:9). He promised His disciples a portion of His peace, “Peace I leave with you; My peace I give to you; not as the world gives, do I give to you. Let not your heart be troubled, nor let it be fearful” (John 14:27). The Gospel is called the Gospel of Peace (Eph. 6:15).

Peace reigns when there is no conflict between nations, a truly idealistic goal in a world ruined by rebellion against its Creator God. Conflict is real between men and between men and God. The Gospel of Christ is the message of reconciliation between God and men through the Cross. The apostle Paul wrote, “Therefore having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ” (Rom. 5:1). The conflict we have with God is brought to an end through the Cross. We have peace in our relationship with our Creator. Regarding our mission as workers for peace the apostle Paul wrote “Therefore we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were entreating through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God” (2 Cor. 5:20).

The desire for world peace is a noble goal. How to attain that goal is a much more complicated task. As missionaries in Japan, I believe that we must first be convinced that the Gospel of Peace is a message of reconciliation with God through the Cross, and secondly we must be convinced that the fruit of reconciliation with God is reconciliation between men. The humanistic approach is always the reverse. First it is thought that we must have reconciliation between men and then we naturally have peace with God. This is not the Biblical understanding on how to attain peace.

I think of the testimony of Captain Mitsuo Fuchida, the Japanese naval aviator who led the attack on Pearl Harbor. Miraculously he survived the war and was embittered by the war crime trials he considered as mockery. Determined to find out the truth about atrocities of Americans against Japanese prisoners of war, he interviewed 150 recently repatriated Japanese prisoners of war at the receiving camp at Uruga Harbor near Yokosuka.

He interviewed a returned prisoner whom he had known on ship, Kazuo Kanegasaki, who had been presumed dead at sea. Kanegasaki couldn't tell any stories of atrocities, but he told Captain Fuchida a story of a young woman, Margaret (Peggy) Covell, who visited the camps and ministered to them. The prisoners were surprised at her kindness and asked her why she did these things. She said, “Because Japanese soldiers killed my parents.”

Her parents were missionaries in Yokohama before the war and had fled to Manila where they thought they would be safe. Eventually they had to hide in the mountains when the Japanese invaded. Later when they were discovered they were tried as spies, convicted and beheaded. She believed that her parents had forgiven their captors before their execution so she decided to work with Japanese prisoners of war.

Upon hearing this story from Kanegasaki, “Fuchida was thunderstruck. ‘This beautiful story overwhelmed me and made me ashamed,’ he reflected. He had come to Uruga with hate in his heart. What he found was goodness that he could scarcely comprehend.” This was the beginning of Fuchida's journey to faith in Christ.

It was the testimony of another pilot and prisoner of war, Jacob DeShazer, that finally gave the impetus to Fuchida's reading the Scriptures and finding Christ. “DeShazer spent most of his prison years in various camps in China. During that time, his captors beat and tormented him and his fellow prisoners. They were kept on near starvation rations and suffered severely from malnutrition and disease. DeShazer's hatred for the Japanese grew into an obsession and almost drove him out of his mind.” Through reading a New Testament that was in circulation in the camp, he came to Christ. After the war, he eventually returned to Japan as a missionary.

Fuchida was particularly interested in this testimony of a former tough airman, because he could identify with him. As a result, Fuchida read the New Testament and was converted when he read the story of Jesus on the Cross and Jesus' prayer for those who crucified him. “Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing” (Luke 23:34). Fuchida went on to become an evangelist and toured both Japan and America preaching the Gospel.

Fellow laborers together in the Gospel, I urge you to preach the Gospel of Peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. If you do this, be assured that you are contributing to the most important task of bringing true and lasting peace to Japan and ultimately to the world. ✠

*Ray Leaf, President*



## Transitions

Transitions. Life is full of them. Unsettling? They can be. Revitalizing? That, too. This issue marks the beginning of a year of transition in this publication—as you get used to my style in managing the Japan Harvest, and the magazine inevitably begins showing a bit of my personality. But no matter how the content is organized or presented, the purpose remains the same—to encourage and empower all of us in sharing the love of God with the Japanese.

So how can we do our job better? One of our dreams is that rather than using this magazine as a main communication channel, we can encourage each other in using a myriad of channels to spur each other on. Over the course of this coming year we'll be intentionally pursuing ways we can improve our interaction as a community through online resources, internet forums, and other avenues we expect the Lord to reveal. Together we can chip away at the roadblocks to our effectiveness.

Related to that, I am convinced that within our numbers we have all the gifts necessary to do the work God is calling us to do. But too often, we just don't know what resources are already available for our specific needs.

During this next year, let's encourage, challenge, stimulate, motivate, resource, network, and sometimes even provoke each other! (Iron sharpens iron, right?)

Of course, the best way for us here at Japan Harvest to know whether or not we're doing our job is to hear from you. We've already received some feedback, as you may have seen in our new "Readers Respond" section. That's one place you can have a voice. During the course of this year, we'll also be conducting internet-based surveys to help us develop an even better understanding of your key needs and interests. Please take the time to respond to any questionnaires we send in your direction!

Oh, and by the way—did you know that all JEMA resources are produced almost entirely by volunteers? If you have a professional skill that is related to media in any way and would be willing to donate some time to our current or future media ministries, it's very possible we'll be able to use you in some way! In a day of mass email communication and the growing use of internet-based phone services, you can be practically anywhere and still be in contact without running up an exorbitant phone bill.

So what are some ways in which you can be involved immediately?

As you would expect, we're always looking for insight-

ful writers who can communicate effectively with pertinent content that encourages, challenges, stimulates, motivates, resources, networks, provokes... (Sound familiar?) On the other hand, perhaps you studied illustration or graphic design in college and have let that training sit dormant. We really could use the donation of some of your time in illustrating articles throughout this magazine as well as developing the "look" of online web pages. Are you a closet cartoonist? Poking fun at ourselves and our mistakes in trying to reach across cultures can bring a smile and encourage us to keep on learning. Send us some samples and ideas, and we'll see how they might fit. Experienced in the technical side of designing and keeping websites up-to-date? During the coming months we'll be actively planning for a more comprehensive online presence. (Of course, figuring out the best way to make some of our resources available online—and actually getting them there!—will be a major undertaking.) Have a totally off-the-wall content idea for the magazine? Let us know, and we'll seriously think about it.

Yes, the ways to be involved are innumerable, and your talent may be just what is needed to take us to the next level. I'm excited about what's ahead as we spur each other on in the mission of helping our Japanese friends and neighbors fall in love with Jesus.

Your fellow pilgrim in sharing the good news of Christ,

P.S. Not only have we shifted the locations of some of our regular features in this issue, we're also experimenting with some of our content. Your candid feedback will be crucial as we seek ways to increase the worth and usefulness of this publication. Be sure to let us know your thoughts—both what you like and what you don't! Just drop me an e-mail at [editor@jema.org](mailto:editor@jema.org)

***Dick and Janice Kropp** transitioned back "home" this September after over seventy combined years of ministry in Japan. Thanks, Janice, for these past six years of leading the JEMA publications ministry—making my transition easier! Don't miss the tribute to long-term missionaries on page 25 by former Harvest editors Kenny & Lila Joseph (1961-1966), highlighting the mixed feelings of transition, and our ultimate Homegoing.*



Event	Date	Time	Place
Annual Women in Ministry Day of Prayer	October 24	10:00 A.M.	OCC (Room 901)
Fresh Encounters with God (Kansai Prayer Fellowship)	November 7	9:00 A.M.	Light of Christ, Central Osaka
JEMA CPI Conference	November 8-11	3:00 P.M.	Fuji Hakone Land Hotel
Fresh Encounters with God (Kansai Prayer Fellowship)	January 16, 2006	9:00 A.M.	Light of Christ, Central Osaka
JEMA Mission Leader's Consultation	February 20, 2006	10:00 A.M.	OCC
JEMA Plenary Session	February 21, 2006	10:00 A.M.	OCC
JEMA WIM Retreat	March 8-10	3:00 P.M.	Megumi Chalet, Karuizawa



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# Readers Respond

## From One Dinosaur to the Next?

Japan is a very conservative culture. Those of us from the West tend to think of ourselves as walking forward into the future, with our goals and objectives in sight before us. We keep on the right path by keeping them clearly in sight. Japan however, like most cultures in the world, sees everyone as walking backwards into the future. The future is an unknown and can be no guide to us. The only sure guide we have is what has gone on in the past. It is by keeping the events and traditions of the past clearly in sight that we can ensure a safe future. What we need to do is keep doing what has always been done, and fight against change as much as possible.

Of course, sometimes new things may be introduced from the outside, but once they have been assimilated it becomes everyone's responsibility to see that they are maintained just as they were when they were originally introduced.

Thus it is possible to dig down like an archaeologist through the various layers of recent church history by visiting Japanese churches in the right order. You can experience church life as it was in 1960's America or 19th century England or whatever, as long as you visit a church that was founded at that time by missionaries from that culture. I'm exaggerating a little but I think not too much.

What do you do to create change in that context? Now, of course it is possible, as Eyvind Haraldseid suggests (Summer 2005, *The Last Dinosaurs*), to set up new structures to deal appropriately with current needs and social realities. Certainly that is easier than changing already existing structures, and I think there are times when we should do it. However, there is a catch. In a few more years, those new structures themselves will become out of date, but yet not be able to change, and we will have only succeeded in putting down one more 'layer' of church history in this country.

There is another approach, however. We need to teach the Bible better.

This may seem a bit odd, because as evangelicals we place a lot of emphasis on the Bible. I fear, however, that much of this is often little more than lip service. If Japanese Christians are to struggle with bringing the

gospel to bear amid new and changing conditions, they require a profound understanding of the Bible and the message of the cross. If they have that foundational knowledge themselves, then they can start to break out on their own from the tendency of traditional culture to simply reproduce the past. After all, the West's own emphasis on the future is a direct result of the teaching of the Bible in that culture over centuries.

This requires good theological training for us as missionaries and patience in spending time (lots of it) with individual Japanese Christians studying God's Word with them. Modeling is also very important here. Not simply modeling a godly life style, but modeling how our own lives and decisions are ultimately based on God's Word. If Japanese Christians could copy that instead of the latest style of singing or whatever, we would have given them something truly worth maintaining into the future.

All of this takes patience and is a mile away from many of the quick-fix solutions that seem to proliferate in missionary circles. Nonetheless, I believe it is vital if we want to help the Japanese church (or our own work) become more than simply a dinosaur in this country.

*Philip Miles, Amagasaki-shi, Hyogo-ken*

## Can't Forget the Spiritual Dimension

My wife and I agree 100% with the things shared in Haraldseid's article. We find it especially hard to plant a new church in Japan when long time Japanese Christians participate, because they seem to be stuck on doing things only one way, the old traditional way, which as the article said, is totally foreign to the culture of non-Christians.

We also do not think it is reasonable to expect to have a pastor for every 25 members. There needs to be a real emphasis on lay leadership that can lead without having to have a seminary degree. Then maybe one seminary-educated pastor could mentor 5 or 6 church leaders. Yet some in-house training is obviously needed for lay leaders. There is a good article on church leadership trends in the last *EMQ* that came out [about] how it is not going to be possible to supply pastors for churches around the world even at the ratio of one pastor to every 150 church attendees in the future.

The other JEMA articles on compassion

ministries were also "right on." That has been a burden of ours for years to see the church begin to think outside of themselves in Japan and be a source of compassion and service to the community.

But there is a spiritual dimension that we cannot forget. In other countries there seems to be far too much western influence in the church and yet God works and the churches grow. No matter how good and culturally relevant our methods and church structures/organizations might be, it seems we still need a major outpouring of the Spirit of God for church movements to take place in Japan. We have to keep praying in faith for that to happen.

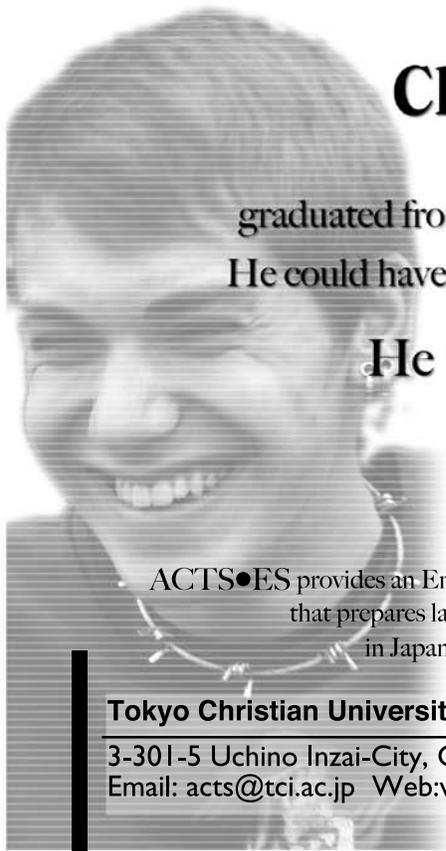
*Chuck and Jan Burwell  
Ube-shi, Yamaguchi-ken*

## Good to Remember the Bad

Thank you for the good article on evil in the summer issue of *Japan Harvest*. I think it is important that we all realize that death, pain, thorns, and thistles were not a part of God's original creation. Well, I'm not sure about pain. Probably Adam & Eve felt pain when they stubbed their toes, but pain in the sense of emotional pain or pain from animals eating each other—that kind of pain would not have been there. If God is going to restore the earth to its original state, I sure hope death is not a part of it. But if we accept millions of years of evolution and try to fit them into the Bible, then we are struck with this very difficult problem—because death, disease, pain, etc. are an integral part of that worldview. It's good to know that God is in control, and during these middle years when Satan has some freedom, they are just temporary. It may be a long interlude, but it will end and death will be vanquished once and for all.

*Jim May, Saginuma,  
Kawasaki-shi, Kanagawa-ken*

*Readers are invited to respond to articles published in the Japan Harvest, and/or express their thoughts and opinions on topics relevant to spreading the gospel to the Japanese. Submissions will be edited for clarity, appropriateness and length, and should include the writer's name, city, and prefecture (or country, if from outside Japan). They will be published at the editor's discretion as space allows, unless marked "Not for publication." Email submissions should be directed to editor@jema.org. Letters should be sent to the editor in care of the JEMA office. ✠*



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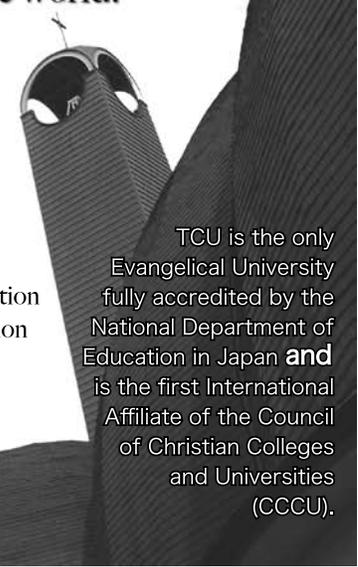


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# Reaching Out Through the Aichi 2005 World Exposition

March 25 — September 25

*By Ron Capps and Ron Stoller*

Christians throughout the Aichi region began meeting over two years ago in a season of prayer for the six month long 2005 Aichi World Expo from March 25 to September 25. This resulted in a cooperative ministry called Gospel Promotions that would coordinate strategic outreach events, Christian witness, and the sharing of the gospel among the over 20,000,000 people who would attend this 2005 World Exposition taking place in the Nagoya area. Pastors and missionaries across denominational lines pooled their gifts, talents, finances and the involvement of their church members, desiring to make Christ's name known to both the Japanese and to visitors from the 122 nations present throughout the six months of the Expo.

A key "open door" was the platform ministry of PacRim Japan (International Mission Board - SBC) who mobilized Christian volunteers and created a partnership with Habitat for Humanity for the 185 days of the Expo. PacRim Japan and HFH worked through official Expo channels and mounds of paperwork for one and a half years to receive an official invitation to be one of 235 NGOs (Non-Government Organizations) inside the 2005 Aichi World Expo. Ron Capps became the HFH site director at the Expo and the liaison with Expo officials throughout the 6 months as well. (Thank you, Junko Tam of Cornerstone Christian Church, Nagoya for all the assistance and hard work! Ron C.)

## Gospel Promotion on the Streets of Nagoya

The Gospel Promotions group (made up of pastors and missionaries from eastern Nagoya) created a gospel tract in conjunction with the Expo and had 420,000 printed by Every Home Crusade to be used at train stations and by local churches throughout the Nagoya area. These Japanese fliers about God's creation were distributed not only to share God's Word, but to also make the cities, prefectures, and nation of Japan—as well as the entire world—aware that God's Church in Japan has its door open to all. In addition to its inclusion of website information, this was the first time that a cell phone bar code was printed on a Japanese tract, making it possible to get immediate access to a list of the churches of Japan! Monthly Gospel Promotions prayer meetings kept the network of churches working together.

A variety of special outreach events took place during this time:

- Special evangelistic meetings were held in local churches.
- A model of the Gutenberg press came for an "evangelistic visit" to churches in Aichi.
- Hope International had various events on and off the Expo site, which opened doors of opportunity to the business world of the city as well as to VIPs at the Expo site.
- University students from North America



came to interact with university students on Japanese campuses, in churches, at summer camps and at the Expo site.

- Families who had hosted Japanese students in the past few years in the USA came to Japan to visit those families and to take them to the local churches.
- Performances by a Christian ballet group, concerts by solo gospel singers, an orchestra and a big band, and sports clinics were held in 14 churches, a shopping mall, Japanese and international high schools and community centers across Nagoya as well as on-site.
- As these groups traveled on and off the Expo site and on the trains of Nagoya, they were able to make great contacts with thousands of people through their written testimonies, fliers, tracts, badges and pins with websites and messages of "Hope - Jesus Christ loves you."



### Gospel Promotion Inside the World Expo

Inside the Expo at the Seto meeting area, over 350,000 Expo visitors received fliers distributed by 500+ volunteers explaining the



Christian core values of Habitat for Humanity. Though the rules of a World Expo are somewhat restrictive about sharing the gospel, witnessing opportunities were a daily face-to-face experience with hundreds of Expo visitors from around Japan and Aichi each week. Other outreach opportunities included the following:

- Thousands of people personally made

miniature bricks while hearing about the needs of people around the world who are ready to work with HFH volunteers to build their homes. The staff could often be heard to say, "Mankind is created

in the image of God and has intrinsic value. Everyone needs to see and hear of Christ's love." Approximately 450 Japanese signed up for volunteer work overseas with Habitat and although most of them are not yet believers, they agreed with

the message and made a decision to help. Pray for the "gospel seeds" planted in the hearts of the masses and for the follow-up that is underway.

- Hundreds of people were engaged in one-on-one discussions with Christian volunteers who personally extended invitations to know Christ and provided contact info for Bible study groups and

churches in Aichi, across Japan and in various countries.

- Concerts by SBC volunteer mission teams, churches and individuals were presented on the open air stage in the Seto area of the Expo as well as on the Nagakute Pavilion stage.
- Local and national NHK TV and radio interviews as well as newspaper articles with the Expo HFH staff were aired and printed some 20 times over the 6 months.
- Panel discussions were held in the nearby Civic Pavilion where Habitat volunteers were able to give a strong witness.
- International VIPs from other Expo pavilions were introduced to the work of Habitat and heard about the gospel as they visited the site.

### Food for the Hungry Shares about World Hunger

For three weeks (September 1-25) Food for the Hungry was housed at the Nagakute Expo area meeting site. FFH was able to present the overwhelming necessity to assist mankind with basic food needs in our world today. The six seminars conducted each day clearly conveyed the imbalance between the availability of basic foods and world hunger. There was also a creative Biblical presenta-



tion by Christian staff leaders from Tokyo and the local area to all who attended.

### **A Multitude of Volunteers, Groups, and Churches Involved**

Volunteers came from Aichi and all across Japan as well as the USA and Canada. They were simply awesome! The local team consisted of Pastor Koike and church family, Pastor Uchimura and church family, Ron and Joan Stoller and their volunteer teams from the US and Canada, Pastor Willie Gonzales and church family, Japan Presbyterian church network, Reinhard Berns and the German Alliance church network, Japan Harvest church, Campus Crusade for Christ, and Habitat For Humanity Japan teams. PacRim Japan, SBC, helped make up the core team at the Habitat for Humanity Expo site with the involvement of Bill and Nancy Walker, Hank and Linda Lee, Elizabeth Westlund, Wang Lee, Rick and Barbara Phipps, Jeff and Lori Loomis and Ron, Joan & Alicia Capps.

The creation of the HFH site booths, as well as dealing with logistics issues relating to them, was handled by PacRim Japan missionaries Bill & Nancy Walker. The expertise of architect Karl Studnicka, a construction team from Master's Services Japan, and design graphic input from HFH Asia Pacific resulted in an effective site that powerfully communicated the HFH story to the masses visiting the Expo. Two model homes built by a class at Christian Academy in Japan gave visual emphasis to the work of Habitat.

Over 230 Christian volunteers from the USA and about 300 Christian volunteers from the Aichi area were mobilized. Vol-

unteers who spoke various languages or provided sign language assistance were a welcome presence. Approximately one hundred Habitat For Humanity volunteers and office staff assisted as well.

Here are a few testimonies of some of the people who have been changed by Expo:

- "We have seen God develop relationships between the ministry teams and the Expo staff, the pavilion employees, repeat visitors to the Expo and key merchants around the Expo stations."
- "I came from Seattle to share my faith. The wordless book pin that I wore daily drew questions from people to whom I passed out fliers and this gave me the opportunity to share my faith and the wordless book with them."
- "As we were folding local church fliers and inserting them into the blue Expo tracts, a Japanese girl who visited our friend three years ago in Oregon and was visiting us here in Japan was reading the tract and asked if it was true that Japanese could not become Christians. We told her that was not true; she asked if she could then become a Christian immediately. We stopped folding fliers and folded our hands to pray a prayer of salvation with her. Wow, now we have a new sister in the Lord and we thought we were only folding fliers!"
- "It was great to pass out 600-1000 fliers a day when we volunteered at the Habitat booth. We get to talk with so many people and tell them that we are missionaries and that there is a church in their community. Many are surprised

that 600 Japanese volunteer to go overseas each year to build homes with Habitat. It has been a great experience!"

The impact does not end with the Expo having come to a close on September 25. Many Christians will be on the Habitat builds for years to come with non-Christian Japanese who signed up at the Expo to help. New volunteer interest groups have the potential of starting in communities and churches to help prepare for these builds and to continue sharing the message of the saving grace of Jesus that inspired the Habitat founder, Millard Fuller. Non-Christians have the opportunity to work beside Christian volunteers, seeing faith in action and hearing their personal testimonies over and over. Pray for the continued impact of Expo outreaches!

Photos and happenings at the Expo:  
[www.mobilizejapan.org/expo\\_2005.htm](http://www.mobilizejapan.org/expo_2005.htm)

Mall concert photos:  
[www.jeffnlori.org/photos-concert.html](http://www.jeffnlori.org/photos-concert.html)

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Translated by  
Mizuko Matsushita,  
JEMA Executive Office  
Secretary.

## Increase in Number of Church Websites

According to the Christian Databook, published annually by the Christian Shimbun, there are more than 2,300 church web sites in Japan. Among the 3,200 churches replying to the annual survey from the Christian Databook, there were 30.1% websites in 2003, 36.2% in 2004, and 39.9% by mid 2005, showing an increase of 9.8% in two years. Some denominations, groups, and regional groups try to link their church information together, making it easier to introduce churches to those who are looking for a church. Other merits of these sites are that they provide places for exchange, updates are easy, and the cost is reasonable.

## Seminar on "Rethinking Evangelism in Japan"

In July a seminar on evangelism was held in Okayama City. Rev. Yoji Horikoshi, pastor of Soai Kirisuto Kyokai of the Domei, gave a report closely analyzing the religious views of the Japanese, and proposing some practical countermeasures based on new perspectives presented. He expressed concern that it is not normal that Japan, which freely allows evangelistic activities, still only has a Christian population of less than one per cent. His analysis shows that the cause of the problem comes from everyday subconscious thought patterns as the Japanese relate to: 1) ancestor worship, 2) the ideology of myriad gods, 3) the theory of evolution, and 4) the view that man is naturally good.

His four propositions are:

The church is not a club, it is a mission. It should not be a self-satisfied body, but open to reaching out into the world to reach the lost.

We need to approach people in a positive manner. We must not deny the existence of other's belief systems by the adamant expression of what we believe. It is important to tell people about the greatness of the Creator. We should try not to use the word "kami" in evangelism, for it is often confused with pantheism in Japanese.

We need to recognize what the church can offer in meeting the needs of others: eternal life, mother's classes for safe child-care, a fulfilling life, friends, etc. If the church tries to meet the needs of others, more people will come to church.

We are now living in a time of neglect and hopelessness, so we should be touched by the greatness of the Creator and praise him with thanks. Our new vision starts when we realize that life is wonderful. Recently Rev. Yoji Horiko started a new ministry inspired by his vision "Inochi Arigato no Kai" to let people recognize the wonderfulness of each one's life through thanking and praising the Lord.

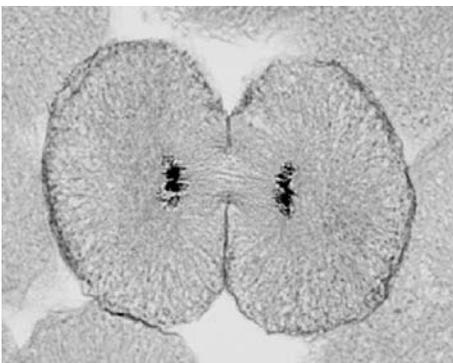
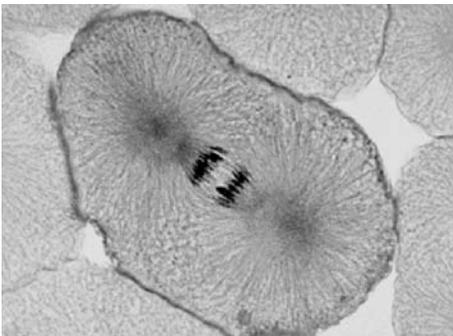
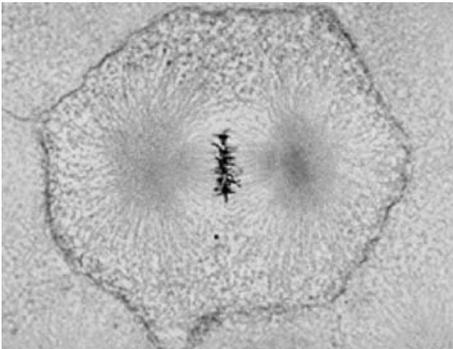
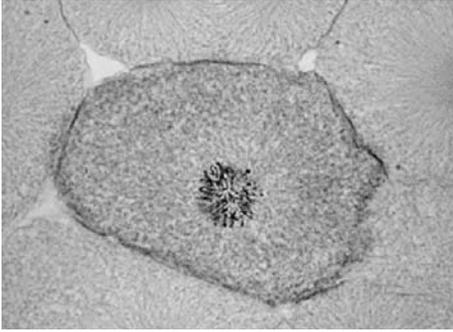
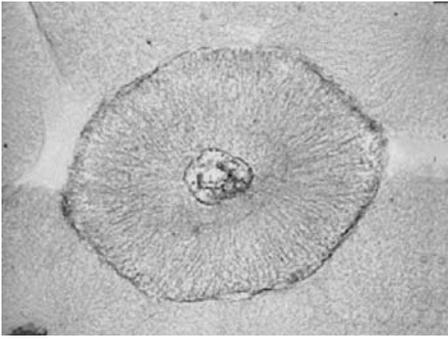
## Sports Ministry

Recently two former major league baseball players, members of Unlimited Potential, Inc., were in Japan to discuss the potential for sports ministry. They say there is a dynamite opportunity for sports ministry here, because many Japanese children are very interested in sports. By living out their testimonies in real life, players can show who Jesus Christ is. Developing relationships through sports between professional players

and churches, and then through churches to the community can be very productive. This can help strengthen the faith of players, as well as encourage children to build a personal relationship with a player by praying for them. Sports ministry can also increase the visibility of a church in a community. In many countries, Unlimited Potential has seen the birth of new churches through its ministry. "Though it will take time, there are unlimited possibilities for this ministry in Japan. We would like to have a baseball school run by Christians at the Tokyo Dome some day," the players said.

## Feeling Guilty to be Alive

Tetsu Tada, student at Doshisha University and a member of Kawanishi Lutheran Church, is one of those who survived the April 25, 2005 train accident on the JR Takarazuka Line. He normally rode the first car of the train with his friend every morning, but on the morning of the accident, he took the middle car of the train, because his friend did not come with him. Suddenly, he felt the train leaning to one side and then was thrown to the floor of the train. It was some time later that he learned how serious the accident was. His parents could not believe that their son was alive, because about 30 people in the same car were killed. When he was told that it would take a month for him to recover from his bruised hip, he felt a sense of guilt, because he was escaping death with just a light injury, whereas so many other people died or were gravely injured. However, some time later when he was told that his pelvis was seriously injured and that it would take him another month to recover, he felt a little relieved. This was because he could identify more with those who were severely injured or had died. He is a member of a Bible study class at Doshisha University and was baptized on Christmas of 2004. After the accident, he sometimes faces the skepticism of others, who ask him why he had such a terrible accident after becoming a Christian. He says there is no guarantee that Christians will not have accidents, but he is assured of the protection of God, and it means a lot to him. "Knowing God exists means that we do not have our way but let him have his way." As a middle school student, he wanted to be a philosopher. While reading philosophy books, he began reading the Bible and became a Christian. He believes that faith and reason are not opposed, and that his life and death experience has brought a great deal of meaning to his life. **h**



# Producing Reproducing Disciples in Japan

*By Kelly Malone*

A few years ago a struggling pastor told me, “I know how to preach and teach, but I cannot make this church grow by myself. I need workers to help me.” Every missionary and pastor in Japan either has had, has now, or will have this experience. The answer to this problem, however, is immediately available to us in our churches, missions and preaching points. The most important resource for church growth in Japan is spiritually mature Japanese Christians. The key is to produce Japanese disciples who are able to reproduce disciples. In the following paragraphs I would like to suggest a few factors that could help all of us become more effective in the process of producing reproducing disciples in Japan.

### People Learn More by Sight than by Sound

We live at a time when visual images have replaced the written and spoken word as the primary means of communication. The global impact of Christian films such as *The Jesus Film* and *The Passion of the Christ* suggests that seeing the Gospel now has greater impact than hearing or reading it. Young people no longer only listen to music. Instead they *watch* music on MTV, DVD’s and the internet. Music videos are now commonly used by churches that have contemporary worship services. In Japan, the best-selling books by far are *manga* comic books, which optimize the use of pictures and minimize the use of words. *Manga* versions of the New Testament are a hot item among young people—even those who are not Christians.

In this setting, continuing to use only printed materials, sermons and lectures to train believers seems woefully inadequate. At the very least, it is an antiquated methodology. People who are visually stimulated are often verbally bored. And if we cannot hold their attention we cannot teach them to obey the commands of Christ.

Jesus modeled an approach to making disciples that is both visual and verbal. Since the examples are too numerous to fully list here, allow me to mention just a few. First, Jesus began his ministry on earth by coming

*People  
who are  
visually stimulated  
are often  
verbally bored.*

to his cousin, John, for baptism. Jesus said that the purpose of his baptism was to “fulfill all righteousness” (Matt. 3:15). Jesus was providing the pattern that his disciples would later follow in order to fulfill God’s plan for righteousness. In order to understand what Jesus meant when he commanded them to baptize those who believed in him

(Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:16), Jesus’ followers had to look no further than the example of his own baptism.

On the night before he was crucified, Jesus broke bread with his disciples. In doing so, Jesus provided for all time the example of how his Church was to keep the Lord’s Supper. “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes” (1 Cor. 11:26).

While the evening meal was being served, Jesus got up from the table, removed his outer clothing and wrapped a towel around his waist. Then, assuming the role of a servant, Jesus began to wash his disciples’ feet. When Jesus had finished washing their feet and returned to his place at the table, Jesus said to his disciples, “Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set an example that you should do as I have done for you” (John 13:14-15).

In order to make disciples who will do

everything that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:20), we must not only teach them the commands of Christ. We must also provide an example of doing everything Christ has commanded. People must see what it looks like for a person to live in obedience to Christ. Very simply, in order to train people how to pray, to study God’s Word, to witness and to serve, we must be doing all of these things consistently ourselves. These are the basics. But there are also other fundamental aspects of Christian living that are more difficult for us—humility, forgiving one another, putting the success of others ahead of our own success, joy, patience, and confidence in Christ, to name only a few. These character attributes are the fruit of a life that has been changed by the power of the Holy Spirit. And it is these characteristics of a growing Christian, more than any of the activities I previously mentioned, that will draw people to faith in Christ and then challenge them to grow spiritually.

This reminds me of the testimony of a new believer who said, “I had heard the Gospel many times. I knew all of the stories. I knew who Jesus was and what he had done for me on the cross. I loved Jesus. But it is

only when I was in trouble and another Christian helped me that I finally understood how much Jesus loved me. Then I knew that I had to follow him.”

### Authentic Discipleship Occurs in the Context of Relationships

Recently, when I was teaching an evangelism seminar at a local church, I asked the participants how many

*When it comes to  
making disciples,  
spending time  
with people is not  
the main thing.  
It is  
the only thing.*

of them had become a Christian as a result of the influence of a close friend or family member. Almost every hand in the room shot up. This is not unusual. Repeated studies have shown that throughout the world over 90 percent of evangelical Christians have come to faith in Christ through the witness

of family or a close friend.

Christianity is a relational faith. It emphasizes salvation that comes about as a result of *trust* in Jesus. Jesus said, “Now this is salvation: that they may *know you*, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent” (John 17:3, emphasis mine). Those who believe in Christ become God’s children, born into the family of God. They are called out to live in a community of faith in which each person serves one another on the basis of their spiritual gifts and abilities. In this community, the basis for all relationships is to have a Christ-like love for one another. “Love each other as I have loved you,” Jesus said. “Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends” (John 15:12, 13).

In order to produce reproducing disciples of Jesus Christ, we have to pour time into people. At one time in Japan this would have also meant pouring a lot of *ocha*. Where I live these days, however, it means drinking a lot of coffee (or *kocha* for non-coffee types like me), listening to people talk about their lives, and then continually pointing them to Jesus as the One who can meet their needs. It means *being Jesus* for them until they have experienced his transforming power in their lives. It is only when people have been changed by Jesus that they are able to help others change by *being Jesus* for them as well.

This transformation process is not complete at the moment that a person decides to trust in Christ. Evangelism that results in conversion is not the fulfillment of the Great Commission. It is only the first step. Produc-

ing reproducing disciples begins with conversion and ends with developing believers who “obey everything” that Jesus commanded (Matt. 28:19-20). Total obedience to Christ’s commands leads to the Christ-like character that is the mark of a spiritually mature Christian.

Let me give you a rather imperfect example of what I am trying to say. Every month I make it a point to have lunch with two or three pastors. Formally, I call this “peer mentoring.” This means that I am learning from them and, hopefully, they are learning a little from me. But what is more important than this cognitive exchange is what takes place on the spiritual level. As we open our hearts, share about our problems and concerns, pray together and encourage one another, the Lord does something in us that we could not do on our own, either alone or together. He grabs a corner of our frayed hearts and brings healing. He enables us to see Jesus in each other and shapes our character so that we become a little more like Jesus. Then Jesus sends us out re-armed and better equipped to serve, to lead and to disciple others.

This same sort of process should not only occur between missionaries and pastors. It

should take place everyday, everywhere as Christian believers sit down together over cups of coffee or bowls of ramen and open their hearts. This is how disciples are made. When it comes to making disciples, spending time with people is not the main thing. It is the only thing!

### Discipleship Takes Place Best in Small Groups

Small groups allow people to experience the true meaning of a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through personal interaction with other believers. Howard Snyder (1996, 150) writes: “Small group meetings are

essential to Christian experience and growth. The success of a church function is not measured in body count. Without the small group the church in a high-tech society simply does not experience one of the most basic essentials of the gospel—true, rich, deep Christian soul-fellowship, or *koinonia*.”

The students at the Christian Leadership Training Center meet

twice each month in small groups to mentor each other for spiritual growth. These groups use a Japanese translation of Gospel Transformation (2002) developed by World Harvest

There is  
unlimited potential  
for this kind of model  
for producing  
reproducing disciples  
to be replicated  
throughout Japan.

## Living It Out

*The things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, practice these things; and the God of peace shall be with you (Phil. 4:9).*

*But you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium and at Lystra... (2 Tim. 3:10-11).*

Paul’s life was multiplied in the lives of his

disciples for the same reasons that the investment Jesus made in the lives of his followers continued on beyond his time on this earth. He spent time with them. He loved them. He trained them. He sent them out.

The same thing is happening in Japan today!

Let me tell you the story of Koichi Okita. I first met Mr. Okita and his wife, Yukari, in Yokohama in 2000 through a marriage enrichment program simply called “Couples.” This was the beginning of a long journey that we were to make serving the Lord together.

I invited the Okitas to join us and another missionary family, the Brents, in starting a new house church called FamilyLife Fellowship. The Okitas came to the house church, met the Lord, were baptized, and began to grow in faith. Eventually, Mr. Okita became a house church leader.

But what was going on behind the scenes, building up this man with a heart for God? Every Saturday night I would meet with the Okitas and three other laymen, Terry Shirai-shi, Masato Tanoue and Toru Kumasaki. At first, we used Bible studies published by The Navigators (<http://home.navigators.org/us/>),

Mission as the basis for their discussions. What typically happens in these groups is that the discussions begin with the Scriptures and the written material, but quickly move into how the students need to apply the principles of the Gospel to their everyday lives.

The key is the process. Students encourage each other to take the principles of Scripture and apply them to life in a way that brings about transformation. Small groups in which members encourage one another, pray for one another, and hold one another accountable provide the best environment for this kind of growing discipleship to take place.

There is unlimited potential for this kind of model for producing reproducing disciples to be replicated throughout Japan. These small groups can meet anywhere—in classrooms, churches, coffee shops and restaurants. They can take place among church members, Christian student groups or Christian co-workers in offices.

Also, a number of excellent materials for small groups are now available for use in Japan. In addition to Gospel Transformation, which I have already mentioned, the recent Japanese translation of the book, *Purpose*

*Driven Life* (Warren, 2002), is an excellent place to begin with small groups. Other small group materials are available in PacRim Japan's Training Toolbox (JBMTTools.org) and from Jesus Lifehouse International Church in Tokyo.

### **Small Groups Are Most Effective When They Are Led by Lay People**

The belief that small groups can only be led by seminary-trained professionals will squelch the potential for multiplying disciples through small groups before you even begin. If you trust the Lord to save those who believe in him, you can certainly trust him to guide their spiritual growth. Teach your people to trust the Lord and live in obedience to his Word, then turn them loose to experience spiritual growth in small groups. These small groups will need your wisdom, guidance and advice from time to

time. They will need training and encouragement. But they will not need your control.

By leading small groups, believers are encouraged to grow into leaders who can disciple others. They learn to trust the Holy

*The belief that small groups can only be led by seminary-trained professionals will squelch the potential for multiplying disciples...*

but later we began to just take turns selecting a portion of Scripture the Lord was using to speak to us—introducing it to the group, and then talking together about the meaning and application of the passage.

Early in our time together, I noticed that Mr. Okita had a great interest in arranging camps just outside the city where both Christians and non-Christians could talk and study together. All of the learning, teaching and witnessing took place in the context of relationships. He showed a strong desire to reach out to whole families, working hard to get not only the mothers and the kids to the

camps, but the fathers as well.

I agreed to work with the Okitas until July this year, hosting an unusual mixture of outreach classes in community centers in Yokohama on Saturdays. The outreach includes English classes for kids from five non-Christian families, with a focus on positive character traits, Bible stories, games/crafts and contemporary praise music. While the kids are in their class, there is a class for the adults that is rooted in Biblical principles, such as "The Purpose Driven Life," or parenting studies.

Last week I again joined the Okitas to

Spirit to guide them rather than leaning on their pastor or missionary to serve as an intermediary for God's truth. Also, they learn by experience that they can understand God's Word and apply it to their everyday lives. When this understanding takes hold, spiritual growth takes off. While lay people do not automatically become spiritually mature, they quickly become growing disciples who have a vision to reproduce the life of Christ in others. They become bolder in sharing their faith. They also gain confidence in using their abilities and spiritual gifts to help other Christians grow.

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*Kelly Malone and his wife, Molly, have served with the Southern Baptist International Mission Board in Japan since 1992. They have two children. Kelly is Academic Dean of the Christian Leadership Training Center. He has a Ph.D. in Systematic Theology from Southwestern Baptist*

*Theological Seminary. He can be reached by email at [ksmjapan@gol.com](mailto:ksmjapan@gol.com).*

help out with a weekend camp for their Saturday families. I was amazed as I watched Mr. Okita witness to one of the fathers. And this morning I received an e-mail from Mrs. Okita, telling of her excitement over discipling one of the mothers from their Saturday class. At least two adults have come to Christ through this group, and I'm sure this is just the beginning. How many missionaries do *you* know who are reaching five non-Christian families each weekend?"

—Victor Morrison, International Mission Board, SBC

# On the Frontline

## Real Life Ministry Experiences by Real Life People

### *I Just Wanted to Borrow the Laptop Computer!*

By Angela Shih



Since my own laptop computer has been down for a few weeks, these days I've been relying on the church's laptop in order to get my work done—but tonight the church laptop has been busy. So now it's 10:00 p.m., and no one in their right mind would still be at the church—would they? Sure, Gospel Choir was tonight, but that ended three hours ago! "I can pick up the laptop and leave," I think.

I open the door and step into the sanctuary to find a few of the women who had been at the rehearsal still sitting and talking. And one of them is sobbing pretty hard.

I ask someone to quickly fill me in. But they've been talking for at least half an hour already, and to have someone briefly summarize in simple Japanese what's been happening is almost impossible. After trying to understand what they're saying, I interrupt, "So, is she crying out of joy or pain?" "Both."

Uh, that really helps!

She gave her life to Christ just a few weeks ago. That fact, and her name, is pretty much all I know.

She's still sobbing, so I put my arm around her. The other women move on to other subjects, all the while listening with one ear, waiting. Then something magical happens.

"Um..." I hear myself say.

Immediately all conversation stops (in mid-sentence, mind you!). One woman jumps out of her seat and positions herself closer. In a split second, everyone grabs their Bibles and all eyes are glued on me!

"Wait, what just happened?" I think to myself.

This is amazing to me—their reaction. What if I were to say, "I'll be right back, I

need to go to the bathroom"? What would they think? As I chuckle to myself, I am also touched to know that God has allowed me to have the reputation of someone who uses the Word in counseling others! Moments like this are times I truly cherish.

Now, it doesn't all go smooth sailing. As a matter of fact, after two years, I still struggle a lot with the language. But once again, God amazes me with his sovereignty. Of course, God has divinely placed Oda-san, Kumiko, Taka-something-something-san (you'd think I would have memorized everyone's name that goes to Gospel Choir already...well, okay, there's like, 60 people!...) all here to love her, listen and share with her. Tonight, there are three specific words I can't remember how to say in Japanese—"resurrection," "enemy," and "Acts of the Apostles." Well, every time I need to say one of them, Oda-san jumps in and translates for me. She's like an electronic dictionary, only faster!

But all kidding aside, God always provides everything we need as a community of believers to love and care for one another and to work together to spread the gospel. I've

loved experiencing this! Developing leaders and multiplying churches. In a funny way, this is exactly what I'm helping do! What could be better?

Anyway, with God's help and with the help of the community of believers, we got to speak God's truth and love into this new believer's deep hurts. She was encouraged and so was I. God reminded me that it truly is he who does the work, he who shows us love, he who binds up our wounds and we who get to respond to his call. What a beautiful work we get to do! To serve God in the country he has called us to, and to be able to witness first hand his movement in the lives of people who have never experienced the love of Christ in their own lives. Praise Jesus! H

*Angela Shih is a church multiplication associate serving with Asian Access in Ibaraki-ken. After having extended her original two-year ministry commitment to three years, she will return to the U.S. in March, 2006, for further training. She hopes to return to Japan in the future for long-term ministry.*

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# Reaching Japan with Compassion Via a Reality Check Part 2

The Last Dinosaurs—a comment on Church & Mission in today's Japan

By Eyvind Haraldseid

*In Part 1 of this article (Summer 2005), Eyvind Haraldseid shares his experiences as a new missionary trying to fit in and adjust to “the Japanese way” of “doing church” and his growing frustration with trying to pour new wine into old wineskins. He ended last time with the conviction that, just as innovative*

*churches around the world are rethinking what “church,” in the Biblical sense, is really meant to be, there also needs to be a new Japanese church for a new era.*

I have come to the conclusion that the Japanese church needs to be reinvented. How? I do not know yet. But my experience tells me that Japanese society, along with the rest of the world, has entered a new era and is in the postmodern age. We, the church and the missionary community (myself included), belong to the modern age, but the world has moved on to the next stage—the postmodern age. In that sense, we are the last dinosaurs! The best way to build the kingdom of God in Japan today is not by creating more churches for dinosaurs and sending more dinosaur missionaries. A new type of church and mission is needed. Are we ready for the challenges that this new era is giving us? Are we really meeting people where they are, or are we quietly expecting people to find their own way over into our territory?

I personally think Brian McLaren gives us excellent advice as to how we can get started on this mission in his well-known book, *The Church on the Other Side*. He suggests, among other things, that we “de-bug [our] faith from the viruses of modernity” before we reinvent the church for the postmodern world.

It is easy when writing on a subject like this to end up with a black and white view of the situation, although it is probably mostly gray. And it certainly is not our goal to tear down old churches and replace them with café houses. My point is the need for significant change in the Church in Japan. We as a mission association and individual missionaries can play a key role in this process by serving as windows through which Japanese churches can see what God is doing in the rest of the world. There are people walking ahead of us on this path who can advise us as we move forward.

I, personally, have just started exploring this terrain. There is no question that I am a real amateur, easily lost, but it is a rewarding path to take. Although I am a dinosaur, I can still learn and develop new skills. More than anything else, I seek to become the kind of servant God wants me to become today!

For two weeks last year I had the pleasure of hosting a team of five people in their

twenties from Norway. Over a period of several years, they have been able to establish their own church in Oslo—with the intriguing name of SubChurch (referring to both the many suburbs of Oslo and the rock/punk/metal music subcultures making up their ministry target). It's quite an untraditional church in my eyes—more like a rock club! And I'm sure it won't surprise you that these young people taught me a great deal about young people in Japan. In just two weeks they were able to open doors into people groups I hardly knew existed in my city. As a result of this eye-opening experience and blessed help, during this past year I have been able to meet more people who are hungry for Christ than I have during all my previous years in Japan.

I think Robert Webber makes an accurate observation of the challenge before us when he writes: “The clash between twentieth and twenty-first century evangelicals is not over truth but over the cultural garb in which truth is clothed. The commitment to construct an evangelical faith for a new cultural setting refocuses the way truth is presented, explained, and lived out.” (*The Younger Evangelicals*, p. 17)

Postmodern Japan is here today, but the development of postmodern churches and postmodern mission outreaches have not yet become major movements. Are we ready to fill the enormous needs around us? Will the new generation find a way into our church fellowships and into a meaningful relationship with our Lord? Is the Japanese church on the way to becoming what it was meant to be? These, I think, are some of the issues with which we as a mission association need to be grappling in the days to come.

God's blessings to all of you fellow workers for Christ!

## Recommended reading:

*The Post-evangelical*, Dave Tomlinson  
*Church Next*, Eddie Gibbs  
*Postmission*, Richard Tiplady  
*The Younger Evangelicals*, Robert E. Webber  
*Making Sense of Church*, Spencer Burke  
*Soul Tsunami*, Leonard Sweet  
*The Emerging Church*, Dan Kimball

SubChurch website: [www.subchurch.no](http://www.subchurch.no)  
(Website in Norwegian only) ☩

# Japan's Narnia Outreach Network Prepares for Release of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

by Paul Nethercott

In 2003, Ken Taylor (vice-president of JEMA) and I met in Tokyo with Mark Joseph, former Japan M.K. ("missionary

kid"). Now a widely networked professional in the U.S. entertainment industry, Mark is passionate about using media of all

kinds to communicate spiritual truths to the Japanese. He shared with us the news that Walden Media, for whom he has worked for

## Questions & Answers

- Q: Disney is distributing the Narnia movie. What about the boycott of Disney, the one organized by Christians?
- A: "After initiating a boycott against the Walt Disney Company in 1996, AFA (American Family Association) has decided to end the campaign, citing new challenges in the culture wars and some positive signs at Disney" (AFA Web Site).
- Q: Is the movie going to be faithful to the original story by C.S. Lewis?
- A: The stepson of C.S. Lewis, Douglas Gresham, is co-producer of the movie. It is a labor of love for him and he is deeply committed to making sure the movie is done "right."
- Q: Is this movie primarily for young children?
- A. No, young children will be frightened by it. Much like *Lord of the Rings* (realistic looking monsters and battle scenes), this movie is for older children and adults.
- Q: I have ideas for other Narnia-related outreaches in Japan. How can I let people know about them?
- A: The blog connected with this article provides opportunity to post comments. Go to: <http://worshipandthearts.blogspot.com/> and follow the instructions.
- Q: When will the movie be released?
- A: December 9, 2005 in the US, March 2006 in Japan.
- Q: Will a large number of Japanese see this film?
- A. This may be one of the biggest blockbusters of all time. Millions of Japanese, young and old, will probably see this movie.
- Q. Is this a big-budget movie?
- A. The budget will exceed 150 million dollars.
- Q. Is this a "Christian" movie?
- A. It is a mainstream movie based on a story created by the author C.S. Lewis, who was a Christian. It contains Christian images and themes but it is not explicitly a "Christian" movie.
- Q. Who is the director of the movie?
- A. Andrew Adamson (co-director of *Shrek*).
- Q. Is there concern about Christians misusing this opportunity?
- A. Yes, there is a danger that explicitly Christian responses to this movie will alienate rather than draw Japanese to Jesus. We need to figure out how we can present the gospel in a winsome, non-threatening manner that is "in tune" with the original story by C.S. Lewis. This will not be an easy thing to do.

**"Any amount of theology can now  
under the cover of romance with**



over four years, would be making *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* (the first book in *The Chronicles of Narnia* series by C.S. Lewis) into a feature-length movie. Mark was instrumental in the film's early development and in Walden's partnership with Disney, the film's distributor. This conversation led to the formation of Narnia Outreach Network (NON), an ad hoc group realizing the potential of media to communicate the gospel ef-

fectively to millions of Japanese who are not being reached by other means. By promoting creativity, cooperation, communication, and collaboration, NON is mobilizing the Christian community to respond effectively to the opportunities presented by the Narnia movie.

NON is discussing many exciting possibilities for outreach in Japan related to the Narnia movie (see side bar). Disney, distributor of the movie worldwide, has expressed willingness to work with the Christian community in Japan; we don't know any specifics yet, but

there is an open channel of communication at high levels and assurances of cooperation.

Several issues, however, could reduce an effective response to this opportunity. The issue of most concern is that Christians in Japan and around the world will fail to catch a vision for how God can use this story by C.S. Lewis to soften the hearts of the Japanese. Full of redemptive themes, with clear analogies to the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, this movie could have a profound spiritual impact on Japanese who understand the parallels and respond to the truth behind the story.

Another issue that could potentially

be smuggled into people's minds  
without their knowing it." (C.S. Lewis)

#### Quotes by C.S. Lewis

"...art can teach without at all ceasing to be art."

*(A Letter to I.O. Evans)*

"Christ died for men precisely because men are not worth dying for; to make them worth it."

*(The World's Last Night)*

"'You would not have called to me unless I had been calling to you,' said the Lion."

*(The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe)*

"Poetry too is a little incarnation, giving body to what had been before invisible and inaudible."

*(Reflections on the Psalms)*

"'Yes,' said Queen Lucy, 'in our world too, a Stable once had something inside it that was bigger than our whole world.'"

*(The Last Battle)*

"'Safe?' said Mr. Beaver... 'Who said anything about safe? 'Course he isn't safe. But he's good. He's the King, I tell you.'"

*(The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe)*

"Then instantly the pale brightness of the mist and the fiery brightness of the Lion rolled themselves together into a swirling glory and gathered themselves up and disappeared."

*(The Horse and His Boy)*

"When a willing victim who had committed no treachery was killed in a traitor's stead, the table would crack and Death itself would start working backwards."

*(The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe)*

THE VIEWS EXPRESSED HEREIN DO NOT NECESSARILY REFLECT THOSE OF DISNEY ENTERPRISES OR WALDEN MEDIA.

reduce a positive Christian response is an old Disney boycott that had been organized by the American Family Association. Actually, that is now a non-issue. The boycott is officially over (see Q & A side bar for details).

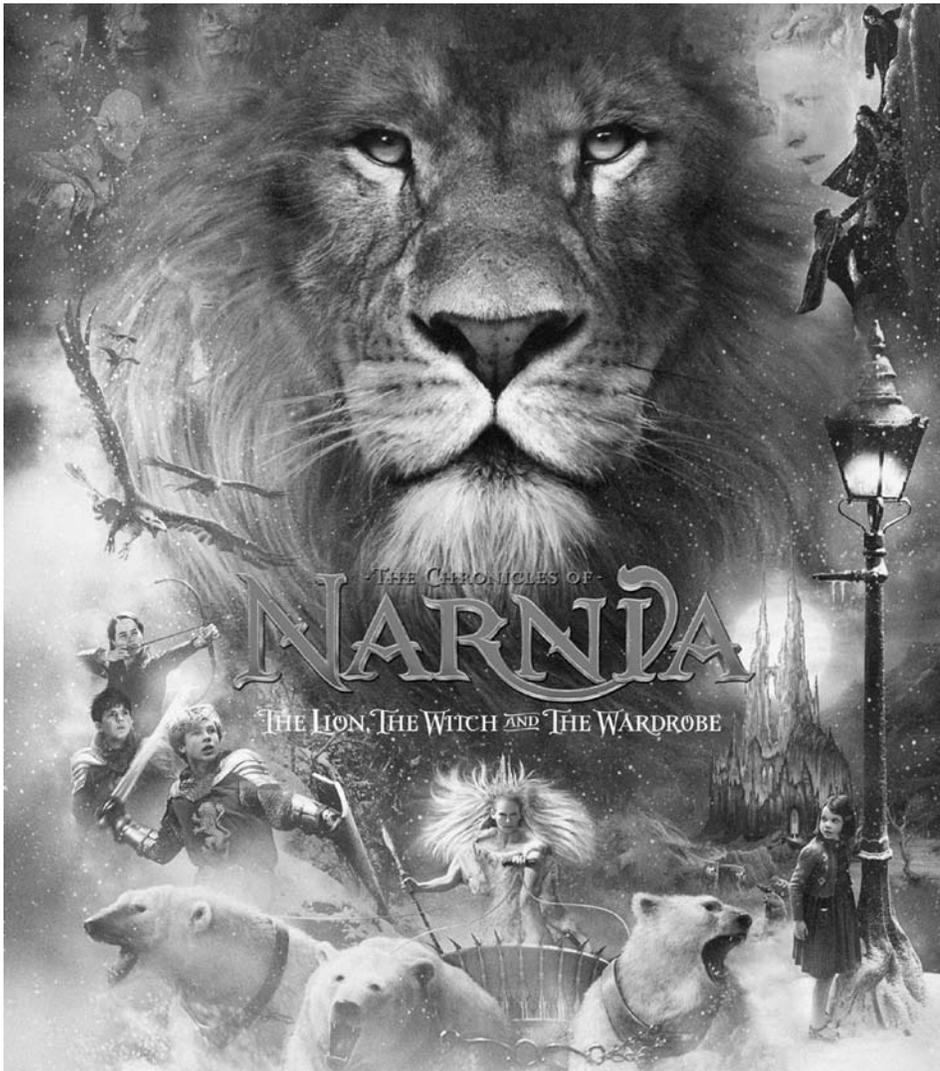
The theology of C.S. Lewis has been another concern. Ray Leaf, President of JEMA (Japan Evangelical Missionary Association) addressed the issue this way:

“I have read many of C.S. Lewis’ works and have always appreciated his unique way of approaching people with the Christian message. By using stories and myths to open their thinking to the possibility of realities beyond materialism, C.S. Lewis is a brilliant apologist. The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe is one such story that powerfully speaks to unseen realities. I would classify him as an eclectic Anglican/Arminian. I don’t think that he is consistent in his mixing of

theology, mythology, and philosophy. He allows himself that kind of intellectual freedom by disclaiming any authority as a theologian. I believe that we need to take Professor Lewis as he presented himself without trying to fit him into a mold that satisfies our theological concerns. In the essentials of the faith he was orthodox, and for that we should rejoice.”

Think of it, a few months from now millions of Japanese will be going to see a movie that has the potential of leading them into a relationship with Jesus Christ. Let’s be praying, let’s dream big, let’s use our creativity to respond in ways that will be effective. H

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Post comments, get updated information and links to key Narnia related web sites at: <http://www.worshipandthearts.blogspot.com/>

## Initiatives/Ideas:

### Print Materials:

Check for Narnia-related Japanese language resources through your favorite Christian bookstore. Some that are being planned or are currently available include:

- Several articles featuring *The Chronicles of Narnia* and C.S. Lewis in the November 2005 issue of *Hyakumannin no Fukuin* (Gospel for the Millions) magazine.
- A translation of Christine Ditchfield’s *A Family Guide to Narnia* (Crossway) by CS Seicho Center.
- Tracts based on a Narnia theme. These will be available from a number of organizations, including Every Home Crusade, Word of Life Press, and New Life League, Japan.
- A guide to C.S. Lewis and Narnia by a Japanese author, specifically oriented toward non-Christians (Word of Life Press, Forest Books division)

### Websites:

- Japan Campus Crusade for Christ (JCCC) is planning an interactive Japanese Narnia website that will include materials on what the story means, as well as a message board for readers to post comments.
- Buena Vista Pictures Distribution/Walden Media LLC is freely licensing a wide variety of high-quality downloadable movie posters, postcards, bulletin inserts, fliers, web banners, IM icons, desktop wallpaper and screen savers for non-profit, non-commercial use. This is mainly to help schools, churches, and other organizations in promotion of the U.S. movie release, as obviously, all of the materials are in English. However, these materials could be used creatively with English classes, in international churches, etc., in preparation for the Japan release.  
[www.narniaresources.com](http://www.narniaresources.com)

### Practical Ideas:

- Distribute tracts at theaters that are showing the movie.
- Loan or give away articles and books available in Japanese.
- Invite the Australian Ballet Company of Tokyo to do their Narnia-inspired ballet in your community.
- Organize a book discussion group to read *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe*. Relate C.S. Lewis’ story to Biblical themes. Plan to go to the movie together and have a discussion afterwards.

*Before being involved in the development of The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe with Walden Media, and serving as a catalyst in the formation of the Narnia Outreach Network, Mark Joseph was involved with another major movie: The Passion of the Christ. This was by way of a CD tie-in entitled The Passion of the Christ: Songs (Original New Songs Inspired by The Passion of the Christ). When we were in touch with Mark recently, we asked him to fill us in on some of the behind-the-scenes activity that goes into getting a media ministry idea from concept to production.*

**Q:** You produced the only artist CD with songs that were actually inspired by a viewing of *The Passion of the Christ* movie. How did that come about?

**A:** A friend of mine who worked for Mel Gibson and knew of my background in music asked if I'd come in and meet with him at Mel's office to discuss a CD. Halfway through our meeting Mel dropped into the meeting and sat down next to me. It was a little surprising to say the least. We immediately connected. Knowing nothing of my background he said something like "The Japanese are going to love this movie." I looked at him for a moment, nonplussed as to why he was telling me this. It was eerie. So I told him about my background growing up in Japan and spent about 10 minutes giving him a short history of Japan and Christianity. He just nodded as if to say, "I knew it." It seemed to confirm what he was feeling about how the movie was going to impact Japanese viewers.

**Q:** How did it affect Japanese viewers?

**A:** In different ways. I immediately got in touch with the distributor in Japan and they were very unsure of how the film was going to do. I told them of Mel's words and that he had a premonition of some kind that it was going to be a hit. They were surprised and happy to hear this. He even gave an interview to a Japanese station—I think it was the only international interview he ever gave. I even suggested that he go to Japan but he didn't want to do any travel to promote *The Passion*. But the film opened unexpectedly strong—#5 the first week and then #4 the second week. I think it just created a lot of confusion in many Japanese minds—who was this man and why was he being beaten? What

had he done to deserve such savage treatment? Now some Christians would say, "If people left the theater confused, what good is that?" But one of Mel's goals was to create interest by first creating confusion. He often talked about one of his lawyers who saw the film on a Friday and came back on Monday and told Mel that over the weekend he had read all four Gospels because of what he had seen. That was his idea of a success story.

**Q:** You spent lots of time with Mel. What did you learn about him and the film?

**A:** I was reminded that art and ministry need to work hand in hand, but one shouldn't try to be the other. Mel saw that his job as an artist was to raise questions that he hoped ministers would then answer. I was in his boardroom for many meetings with top evangelicals like Rick Warren, Chuck Smith, Tim LaHaye and others. And many, many times pastors would ask him if he couldn't be more explicit at the end of the film and offer an invitation or have an address where people could write for more information or whatever. But Mel would wave them off and say that as a filmmaker he could only go so far—he couldn't lead people to a conclusion like that—and then he threw it back at them—saying that he couldn't but they could, encouraging them to develop tracts and strategies to evangelize. It reinforced in my mind that actors shouldn't preach and pastors shouldn't make films, but each should play the role they've been given in life. Mel understood his limitations as an artist and never overreached.

**Q:** What did you learn about his faith?

**A:** He's a very devout Catholic, but one who has certain reservations about the leadership of the Church of the last 50 years. We had lots of great conversations about a wide range of topics like the theology of Martin Luther and the reformation, end times issues, and I got a better understanding of his objections to Vatican II and his desire to have the Latin Mass. He's a very deep thinker who has this public persona that doesn't reflect that. And of course I got all of my Braveheart questions answered—like whether William Wallace was a stand in for Christ in the manner in which he was executed.

**Q:** How did the missionary community and the Japanese Christian community work in presenting the film?

**A:** I think they did a good job. I was able to channel information through my colleague Susumu Matsumoto, who mainly helped mobilize the Christian community by providing information and helping to connect them with the film company. They gathered several times and coordinated their response. Some published books, some printed and/or distributed tracts, and others like Pastor Marre Ishii (Committed Japan) and missionary Steve Clark (Japan Campus Crusade for Christ) created websites and forums where people could come with questions. And the film created lots of questions in viewers' minds.

**Q:** How did the CD turn out?

**A:** I spent about 17 months of my life working on that CD. It was a challenging, but good, experience. We won a GMA Music Award for it, so that was nice. My goal was to produce a CD that would work both in the mainstream and Christian markets and I think we accomplished that. Two of our artists were on the Jay Leno show and the lineup was strong: Lauryn Hill, Creed, POD, Kirk Franklin, MxPx as well as Third Day, Steven Curtis Chapman and MercyMe. The CD was released in Japan through Sony. Working with all of those artists was an honor. Still, I was disappointed that I lost some artists who wanted to be on but couldn't for various reasons—artists like Bob Dylan, Bruce Springsteen, Switchfoot and Matchbox 20.

**Q:** The CD almost didn't happen, right?

**A:** Right. One day all of those around Mel had basically decided that it wasn't going to happen. So I sat in his office that day with the producer, basically thinking that it was not going to happen. A few minutes later Mel walks in and the first thing out of his mouth was "So how's our CD coming along boys?" My jaw almost hit the floor and I told him it wasn't. He was furious and pounded the table and said it had to happen. So we were back on again. It was a small miracle. **H**



# The 22nd Annual European Japanese Christian Conference

by Mary Anketell

## Four Days of Bible Teaching and Fellowship

During the past four years, my involvement in ministry to Japanese in the UK has led me to make a trip each summer to an interesting destination in Europe. Four years ago I traveled to Vienna and for the past three years I have visited various small villages in Germany. The reason for these trips has been to attend the annual European Japanese Christian Conference (*Yoroppa Kirisutosha no Tsudoi*) where Japanese Christians gather from all over Europe to enjoy four days of Bible teaching and fellowship. Each year there are also a few foreigners such as myself—mainly retired missionaries and those back in Europe on furlough, but also some married to Japanese or involved in other ways in ministry to overseas Japanese.

## From the North, South, East and West

The conference is now in its twenty-second year, and has grown from small beginnings to its current size of more than 300 participants, including many children, teenagers and young people. It is organized by lay members of Japanese churches located in many of the major cities in Europe with the aim of providing teaching and encouragement, particularly for those Japanese who do not normally have the opportunity to worship and listen to messages in their native tongue. From the north, people come from as far as Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki. From the south they come from Barcelona, Madrid and Milan, and from the east there are a handful from Romania and Prague. Large numbers attend each year from well-established churches in London, Paris, Düsseldorf and Frankfurt. Some are recent believers, and some have been Christians for many years. Many came to faith in Europe, while others have home churches back in Japan. It is a wonderful

mixture of people from many different backgrounds, all sharing a love for Christ and a desire to learn more of him.

## Blessed Are the Peacemakers

This year the conference was organized by the Cologne/Bonn Japanese Church and was held in central Germany near the small town of Paderborn. The theme was “Living in Peace,” and talks covered a wide range of subjects that included war and conflict in the Old Testament, peace with God through Christ, our role as peacemakers, and the need for unity in the Church. Coinciding as it did with the 60th anniversary of the dropping of the atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, many speakers also reflected on the fact that before real peace can be achieved with its neighbors, Japan needs to focus not only on its experience as a victim, but also face up to its role as an aggressor during the war.

## “Different from Anything I Have Attended in Japan”

Although a different church organizes the conference each year, every gathering that I have attended has been characterized by certain qualities and values, which are often sadly lacking when Christians meet together in Japan. This difference is conveyed well by the comments of a Japanese Christian worker who attended the conference for the first time last year. “This conference was different from anything that I had attended in Japan. I have a fairly outgoing personality so I usually make the first move to talk to people, but I found that people were coming up to me instead! I discovered that Japanese people are much more friendly and open when they are away from their home country. I was also impressed by how the conference was organized by ordinary church members, rather than the pastors and full-time workers doing everything. Above all, I was

encouraged by how people were able to put aside their denominational differences and enjoy their unity in Christ.”

## Breaking Down the Barriers

It is interesting to see how these comments touch on three of the main areas that many view as barriers to church growth in Japan – namely a lack of warmth and openness in relationships, the great divide between ordained and lay people and the lack of fellowship and cooperation between denominations. Indeed the comment that I often hear each year from those who attend is, “If only we could be like this back in Japan!” Unfortunately, however, this is often uttered in a tone of resignation that assumes this would never be possible. But the European Conference shows people that things can be different. Japanese pastors from various denominational backgrounds can work together. Lay people can take the lead in initiating and organizing programs. And Christians who have never met before can share together openly and honestly, both informally over meals and also in small group sessions. Please pray that those who return to Japan from Europe would take these precious lessons and experiences with them and that they would be used by the Lord to bring about change in his Church in Japan.

*The 2006 Conference will be held in Switzerland August 3rd-6th. If you know of Japanese Christians living in Europe who may be interested in this gathering, please contact Mizuko Matsushita at the JEMA office for more details.* H

*Mary Anketell lives in Sevenoaks, Kent, UK, with her husband, Selvan Anketell, the Director of Japan Christian Link (formerly the Japan Evangelistic Band) and their two sons. See [www.jclglobal.org](http://www.jclglobal.org) for details about JCL's work in Japan and among Japanese in the UK.*



# Thinking Theologically about Church Planting

## Church Planting as God's Missional Re-Creation

by Dale Little



It is possible there are fundamental incompatibilities between current Japanese culture and the Church of Jesus Christ birthed in Japan through the gospel. For example, vertically structured Japanese culture seems to exhibit a tendency toward leadership by control. So Japanese pastors naturally tend to lead through control, which makes the pastor central to ministry, rather than leading by empowerment, which emphasizes the significance of lay ministry sourced in spiritual gifting.

This culturally-rooted, controlling leadership style raises theological questions, not only about personal leadership style, but also about decision-making in the local church. Congregationalism is leadership of the many. It might be emerging as the predominant decision making structure among evangelical churches in our postmodern world. It has strong Biblical support. By contrast, Japanese culture tends to push pastors toward leadership of the few or even leadership of the one.

For instance, teamwork between pastors and lay leaders requires good two-way communication and open discussion. But the vertical structure of Japanese society reflected in many Japanese churches tends to undermine open communication because the role of the pastor is to lead through control. A healthy local church requires a pastor who understands that his gifts are complemented by those of others on his team and who releases other people for ministering out of their spiritual gifts. Although happy exceptions can be found, it seems the culturally acceptable tendency in Japan is for pastors (and often lay leaders too) to control those they lead. This propensity makes leadership of the many (congregationalism) a hard sell in Japan.

Similar examples of the tendency toward leadership of the few or the one can be seen at denominational levels in Japan. It seems acceptable for Japanese church leadership decisions at the national level of an association of churches to be made by the one or the few.

Does this apparent Japanese inclination toward controlling rather than empowering leadership erode our energy for church plant-

ing in Japan? Does it undermine what we as church planters (and waterers) are trying to do? If so, where do we find the motivation to keep going? Talking with one another, both other expatriate church planters and Japanese pastors, about the Biblical and theological factors at stake is certainly part of the answer. Should these discussions end on a positive note, encouragement can result. But if the outcome of such dialogue is less than positive, where then do we find encouragement to keep going? This is where thinking theologically about church planting can provide bedrock motivation.

Van Gelder has pointed out that Genesis 1-2 and Revelation 21-22 are the bookends to the rest of the biblical narrative. The first two chapters of the Bible tell of the original creation. The last two chapters prophesy the eschatological consummation. He classifies all the biblical material in between as God's re-creation, necessitated by human sin which marred the good creation. Van Gelder goes on to point out that the Church is to be God's "missionary people," created and sent by our "missionary God" to become the place where God carries out his redemptive work.<sup>1</sup>

If Van Gelder is correct, the essential purpose of the Church is missional. And if so, then it is not enough to simply recognize that the Church needs to be conscious of its missional role and thus become more missions minded. It is not simply that our ecclesiology needs to be better informed by its missiological purpose. It is not enough to develop a "missiological ecclesiology" (a popular catch phrase in some missiological circles) that reminds us of the importance of mission for the Church. This kind of approach results in making mission one more special interest of local churches, alongside many other particular interests, because priority is given to the Church over the mission of God. After all, "missiological ecclesiology" is more about ecclesiology than mission. It is mission in the sphere of the Church.

What we really need is an "ecclesiological missiology" which recognizes that the Church

lives, moves, and has its being within the mission of God. The Church is God's missional agent, raised up by our triune God to carry out his redemptive work of re-creation so that he will receive global glory. This gives priority to mission over Church. It places ecclesiology in the context of missiology.

By implication it can therefore be argued that church planting is the ministry of birthing more locations where God can redemptively re-create as part of his global mission. Church planters can then in faith consider themselves to be missionary founders of divine "re-creation places," working at the very center of God's mission because the Church is functionally central to God's mission. Church planters who think theologically in some such manner as this can acquire for themselves motivation for their ministry.

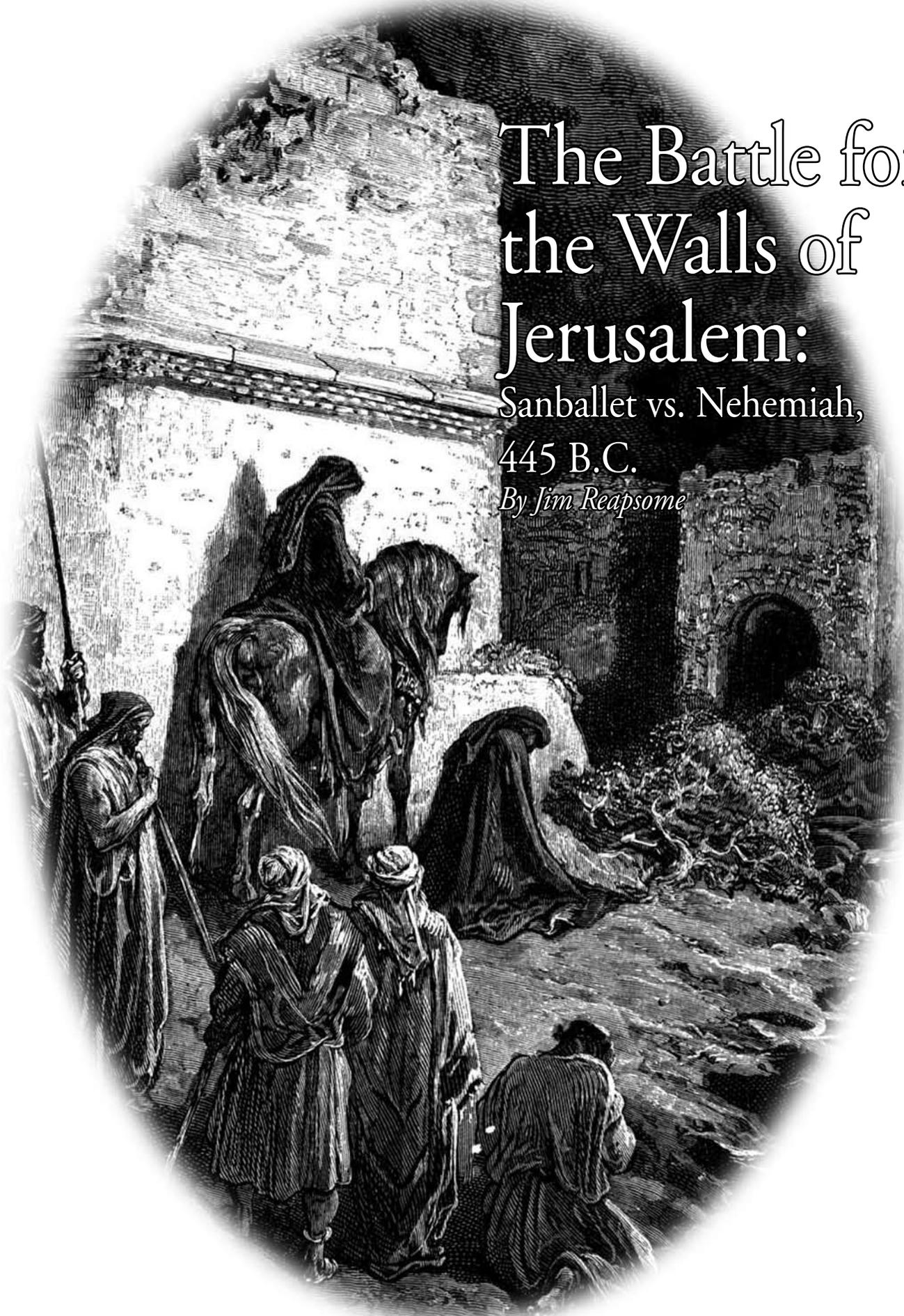
Our church planting in Japan may be done in the midst of significant cultural differences, which might give rise to theological disagreements. This kind of cultural and perhaps theological dissonance might undermine our vigor for church planting. As part of the solution, may we learn to derive energy from a theologically sound understanding of our church planting ministry. May we not only plant healthy churches, may we also plant churches in a theologically healthy manner. ■

<sup>1</sup> Craig Van Gelder, *The Essence of the Church: A Community Created by the Spirit* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker 2000), 89-90, 96-100.



*Dale serves as a cooperating missionary at Sunrise Chapel in Higashi Murayama-shi, Tokyo, a church which he and his wife led through the church planting stages. He holds a PhD in systematic theology and is a lecturer in theology*

*at Japan Bible Seminary in Hamura-shi, Tokyo. He was born and raised in Japan as an MK, and returned as a missionary in 1984. The Littles serve under the Evangelical Free Church of Canada Mission. This series of articles can be found on his website: <http://www.cptheo.net>.*



# The Battle for the Walls of Jerusalem:

Sanballet vs. Nehemiah,  
445 B.C.

*By Jim Reapsome*

Heavyweight champ Muhammad Ali fought two great fights overseas. In October, 1974, using his famous “rope-a-dope” strategy, he knocked out George Foreman in the 8th round in Kinshasa, Congo, central Africa. This fight was called the “Rumble in the Jungle.” A year later he and Joe Frazier traveled to Manila for their third and final bout. Boxing historians called it one of the greatest fights of all time. It went 14 rounds and Ali won by a technical knockout. Boxing fans called it the “Thrilla in Manila.”

I tried to come up with a similar title for one of the greatest bouts in Israel’s history. But Jerusalem doesn’t lend itself to easy slogans, so I just called it “Duking it out for the Walls.” Actually, this was not a prizefight, but it was a tense, exciting battle for control of the city’s walls. Something far more important than a boxing championship was at stake. The issue here was the future security of God’s people in their ancient homeland, to which they had returned after 70 years of captivity in Babylon. Could they summon faith, courage, prayer, and hard work to rebuild their walls? Could they overcome their opponents’ clever tactics and trust God to see them through?

Here’s how the fight unfolded between Nehemiah and Sanballet:

**Nehemiah:** See what trouble we are in because Jerusalem is in ruins and its gates are destroyed! Let’s rebuild the city walls and put an end to our disgrace. God has been with me. He helped me gain favor and permission from the emperor to do the work.

**Narrator:** The people responded: Let’s start rebuilding. And they got ready to start the work.

**Sanballet:** What do you think you’re doing? Are you going to rebel against the emperor?

**Nehemiah:** The God of heaven will give us success. We are his servants, and we are going to start building. But you have no right to any property in Jerusalem, and you have no share in its traditions.

**Narrator:** The Jews went to work and started to build the wall, section by section.

**Sanballet:** What do these miserable Jews think they’re doing? Do they intend to rebuild the city? Do they think that by offering sacrifices they can finish the work in one day? Can they make building stones out of heaps of burnt rubble?

**Nehemiah:** Hear how they make fun of us, O Lord. Let their ridicule fall on their own heads. Don’t forgive the evil they do and don’t forget their sins, for they have insulted us who are building.

**Narrator:** The people went on building the wall, and soon it was half its full height, because the people were eager to work. Sanballet and his gang heard about it and became very angry. They plotted to attack Jerusalem and create confusion. But the Jews prayed and kept men on guard against them day and night.

**Nehemiah:** Don’t be afraid of our enemies. Remember how great the Lord is, and fight for your countrymen, your children, your wives, and your homes.

**Narrator:** Sanballet heard that the walls were finished, except for the gates.

**Sanballet:** Nehemiah, I would like to meet you in one of the villages in the plain.

**Nehemiah:** I am doing important work and can’t go down there. I am not going to let the work stop just to go and see you.

**Narrator:** Sanballet sent the same message four times and each time Nehemiah sent the same reply.

**Sanballet:** I have heard a rumor that you and your people intend to revolt and that is why you are rebuilding the wall. I also heard that you plan to make yourself king. The emperor is certain to hear about this, so I suggest that you and I meet to talk the situation over.

**Nehemiah:** Nothing of what you are saying is true. You have made it all up yourself.

(Prayer): Oh God, make me strong!

**Sanballet:** Let’s send a messenger to Nehemiah and tell him that we are coming to kill him, and that he better lock himself in the holy place of the temple.

**Nehemiah:** I’m not the kind of man that runs and hides. Do you think I would try to save my life by hiding in the temple? I won’t do it.

(Prayer): God, remember what Sanballet has done and punish him.

**Narrator:** After 52 days of work the entire wall was finished. When Sanballet and the enemies of the Jews heard this, they realized they had lost face, since everyone knew that the work had been done with God’s help.

Let’s take this battle round by round. We must do this for two reasons: (1) We must be able to recognize the tactics of our enemy, who wants to keep us from winning whatever battles the Lord sends us. (2) We must learn from Nehemiah how to win. What did he do that made the difference between success and failure, between winning and losing the fight? This is important, because whatever we do, God wants us to win, to grow stronger in faith, courage and hope; to trust him when the going gets tough; to make us more like Jesus every day.

For a short time, everything went well, but as usually happens in God’s work, the building project was challenged. Neighboring tribes became jealous. Their forefathers had told them about Jerusalem’s great power in earlier days. Who could tell what these Jews might do? They were a menace, so they had to be stopped.

When people see God working in our lives, some will feel threatened and challenged, especially if our habits are a rebuke to theirs. Even something as simple as going to church every Sunday irritates some people. Not everyone in town was happy when they heard we were going to build a new church. Who knows what these Christians will do if they get their way? Of course, we are to be winsome, loving, courteous, and tactful, but sometimes if Jesus really shines through us his light will expose some darkness.

In Nehemiah’s story, the enemies first tried ridicule. They laughed at the hopeless task of the Jews, trying to build with rubble.

Ridicule may be the first thing we face. It starts in the early days of school and it springs up at various times, and from various sources, all along our way. It's not easy to handle, and sometimes we retreat in the face of it.

Ridicule does not always arise from avowed enemies of Jesus. It can also come from friends and family, especially when you declare that God wants you to do something that seems a bit weird to them, or risky, or outside the box, as we say. Something that seems to fly in the face of accepted wisdom, or common sense.

The second round in the fight for the walls of Jerusalem took the form of threats and slander. Sanballet told Nehemiah that he was going to report him to the Emperor Artaxerxes. Construction like this could be a threat to the Persian Empire. Sanballet and his gang were officers of the king and their report would carry some weight. For good measure, Sanballet said that he had heard that Nehemiah was going to make himself king in Jerusalem.

Rebellion was a capital offense. The Jews had tasted the sharp edge of Persian retribution more than once. Well might they tremble now, but they did not waver.

Threats and slander have been part of Christian experience from day one. Religious and political tyrants have spread vicious rumors. The Romans said the Christians were cannibals, eating the flesh and blood of Jesus. Christians have been accused of sedition, spying, and fomenting revolutions. Of course, the ultimate recourse has been the threat of death. Recant or die, Christians have been told—not just long ago but also in recent times as well.

Of course, lesser threats and slander also plague us: false stories about our character and motives; threats that if we do not go along with business, we will be demoted or lose our jobs. I know Christian professionals whose entire careers have been wiped out because of malicious lies.

Nehemiah's enemies tried a number of sneaky tricks. Once they sent fake messengers to the workers, telling them to quit and go home. They tried bribery. Sanballet hired a man to prophesy against Nehemiah, telling him that some men were on their way to assassinate him. But the Jews kept on working.

We need to listen to stories about all of the subtle attempts the enemy has made to sabotage our faith and obedience to Christ and his will. These are the kind of stories we need to tell our children, to prepare them for their spiritual battles.

None of these tricks worked, so Sanballet proposed a compromise. Four times he tried to entice Nehemiah to the conference table, but each time he saw through the ruse.

I would guess that in today's cultural environment, compromise has worked better than anything else has to subvert the church. "Let's talk over our differences. Let's dialogue about this." That's the key word.

I'm all for talking with people about important issues, keeping in mind that there are no bargaining points when it comes to the cardinal doctrines of our faith. Right now, in our explosive atmosphere, we're supposed to yield on some things that offend people of other religions. "Don't be so dogmatic," we're told. "Let's learn from each other and stop trying to make converts."

Yes, I'm thankful for all that I have learned about other religions, but compromise is not the way to go. No religion worth its salt wants to compromise anything. I attended the World Parliament of Religions in Chicago a number of years ago. Among the hundreds of lecturers I never heard of one who said, "Yes, we're wrong about this, and we're going to accept your way." Mutual understanding? Yes. Compromise? No. Religious warfare? No? Making converts? Yes.

Compromise is a slippery slope. Watch out.

In the fourth round, Sanballet and his gang decided to attack Jerusalem. They planned to take the workers by surprise and capture and kill them. But word leaked out and some workers were scared. But Nehemiah met this threat with prayer and guards.

Outright assault on the church is still a heavy-handed tactic by our enemy. The number of martyrs worldwide is in the thousands every year. Churches and Christians often are the targets of terrorists, as well as of repressive governments.

While we enjoy peace and safety, we are called to stand with our sisters and brothers who face incredible dangers and hardships almost every day.

Let's stop a moment and answer this

question: How many different Sanballets can you identify in your life? Is he the one who suggests that your task is too hard and your resources too small? Is he the one who tells you that you will get in trouble if you push your Christian faith too far? Is he the one who tries to spread fear and worry and doubts? Does he suggest that today it's better not to be so open about your Christian life and witness? Has Sanballet threatened to take your life, your family, your job, your health?

You see, the clearer we are about who Sanballet is, the better we are prepared to lick him. The key to Nehemiah's success was that he knew exactly what his enemy's tactics were. He met each one with courage, faith, prayer, and careful planning. As we would say, he perfectly blended his spiritual and secular skills. He always prayed first, then he took action and posted guards with weapons to protect the people and the walls.

Nehemiah never wavered in his mission because he knew God. His prayers reveal an astounding walk with the Lord. I would encourage you to study them.

He was forthright, truthful, and courageous. Nehemiah stands as a strong model to follow, whatever bouts of faith and work we may be engaged in.

And be encouraged and strengthened by the words of the Apostle John: "The one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world." Jesus Christ in you, our hope of glory and victory. H



*Jim Reapsome is associate pastor of Western Springs (IL) Baptist Church. He was the editor of Evangelical Missions Quarterly, 1964-97, and of World Pulse, 1982-97. He is the author of Final Analysis (EMIS, 1999) and numerous Bible study guides. He and his wife Martha live in Wheaton, IL.*

## From Black to White in 50 Years Times Two

By Kenny and Lila Joseph

Jane's hair was white. Dave's was salt and peppery. "We're packing," she sighed.

"Furlough?" I asked.

"Not just a furlough. This is it! Retirement. We're on our way home for good. Fifty years is enough."

Dave piped in, "Hey, that's a century combined!"

But Jane's smile was still there. Her voice showed excitement. They'd get to see more of their married children, grandkids and family.

Where did the years go since Jane and Dave ventured to Japan for missionary work? Young, adventuresome, gung-ho! God and General MacArthur called for 10,000 missionaries. Five thousand went. They did.

Jane's and Dave's hair was dark then.

What did they do, really? Well, first they gave themselves to God. But then they

literally gave the best of themselves—their youth—to and for Japan. They gave up their familiar culture for a foreign one. They gave up a language which was second nature to live and work with one of the world's most difficult languages. They gave up the joys of family weddings, graduations, reunions, births, and yes, even funerals.

They gave up the comfort of being lost in a crowd for sticking out like a sore thumb and feeling like Gulliver and his wife at times.

They gave up the "old shoe" feeling for "Hey, look a funny foreigner."

One hundred combined years of service for Jesus and Japan.

But they'd be the first to say they didn't really give up anything. They made hundreds of wonderful friends. They thrived in a different culture. They felt proud to converse and evangelize in a different language.

And best of all, they planted seed. God's seed. In different ways. All through the years. And they saw fruit for their labor of love. A

church building. Souls saved.

Sure they made mistakes. It wasn't all smooth. There were many rough spots.

But now they've gone back to their homeland. That welcome doesn't compare with the one that's waiting over There.

When President Teddy Roosevelt returned to America from an African hunting trip, thousands welcomed him as their Head of State. On the same ship was a missionary couple also returning from Africa. No one was there to meet them. Sensing her husband's disappointment, the wife encouraged, "But we're not Home yet."

Dave and Jane aren't Home yet either. So keep on, singing:

*Souls for Jesus is our battle cry;  
Souls for Jesus we'll fight until we die;  
We never will give in,  
While souls are lost in sin,  
Souls for Jesus is our battle cry. H*



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## Electronic Kanji Dictionaries

Greetings again. In this issue, we are going to finally talk about Electronic Kanji Dictionaries (to save space, we're going to abbreviate this as "EKD"). I say "finally" because I've wanted to write about these for some time. However, I don't know very much about EKDs, and apparently YOU don't either, based on reader feedback. I've asked for your comments, experiences and opinions a couple of times, but there hasn't been much response. Several of you, however, *have* asked *me* questions about which one to buy.

First the disclaimers...I still don't own an EKD. I've done some research, and played with several of them in the stores, but I can't speak from *real* first hand experience. However, I have made up my mind about which model offers the best answer to a missionary's language challenges.

OK, the main thing to keep in mind about these gadgets is that they are *not made for you!* They are made for Japanese people who read and write kanji (unlike you and me). There are not enough of us studying Japanese to make it profitable to market a machine that is targeted at foreigners; however, some models are more gaijin friendly than others. Another point is that these are not for the casual traveler, or short-termer who wants to know how to say a few words. These machines are expensive, and the learning curve is quite high. They are for the serious learner.

Several companies market EKDs, including Sharp, Casio, Seiko and Canon. In addition to these, most PDAs (Palm Pilot, Clie etc.) offer some of the same features. The prices range from a few thousand yen up to fifty thousand yen. Since the future of PDAs is a little uncertain, as they are being replaced with more advanced cell phones, I'm ignoring them for this article (if you don't believe me, try to buy a Sony Clie).

We all use EKDs a little differently, but for me, one of the main features is the ability to input an unknown kanji via a stylus, and have it tell me the reading/meaning. If you just want to know the meaning of a word you hear, you can buy a cheap paperback dictionary. However, most of us see lots of words written, and we don't know how to pronounce them, so we can't look them up. You can use a Nelson's dictionary for this, but it weighs 100 pounds, and it'll take until tomorrow to find what you want—or, using an EKD, you can draw the kanji, select it from a list, and get the reading/meaning. However, unbelievably, most EKDs don't have this function. That's because most users (native Japanese speakers) can already read the kanji, and they just want the English translation.

Therefore, (drum roll please) the only EKD to consider is the new Canon Wordtank V80. This machine will set you back about ¥30,000 or more, but if you want an EKD, it's the one to buy. Once you draw in, and find the

kanji you want, you just tap it with the stylus to get the English (or Chinese) definition. You can find extensive reviews on line (just do a search for the model number), so I won't try to list all the features. You can shop around for the best price, and then when you've bought it and taken it home, call the Canon customer service center at 050-555-90025 and ask them for the English manual. They'll send it to you free (I know because they sent me one). You can find a few stores downtown that might have the English manual in stock, but most won't. You can also set the menus into English quite easily.

Now, while we're on the subject of learning Japanese, you should definitely check out Dr. John Paul Loucky's web site [www.call4all.us](http://www.call4all.us).

Dr. Loucky works at Seinan Women's University in Kitakyushu, and this web site is an amazing collection of language learning resources. Click on "J" to get a list of the helps for learning Japanese. There's lots of info about teaching English as well.

Also, check out [www.wwwjdic.com](http://www.wwwjdic.com). This is a site run out of Monash University in Australia. There are several useful features to this site, but the one I use the most is "Translate Words in Japanese Text." You can right-click to copy up to several pages of Japanese text, and then paste it as a block into a window. Immediately, you'll get a rough English translation, but even better, you'll get the readings for all the kanji you don't know. Try it the next time you get a long e-mail in Japanese that you can't read.

Now finally, here's a totally unrelated tech tip. We all love our Yahoo BBPhone. You can call the US almost free, and it is free to call anyone that also uses Yahoo as their internet provider. However there are some problems. Occasionally you'll find a number that always give you a busy signal. Mostly these are toll free numbers within Japan, but also sometimes when you are trying to send a fax to a number within Japan. The answer to this is to dial 0000 (four zeros) before the normal number. This essentially "turns off" the BBPhone, which means you're paying normal NTT rates for the call, but at least you can fax in that monthly expense report to the mission office.

That's it for this issue. Write me with suggestions for things to write about, or with info or questions, in order to make this column as useful as possible. ♪

[missionarygeek@yahoo.com](mailto:missionarygeek@yahoo.com)

# Sleeping Giants come alive at OBI!

**Celebrating Our Fifteenth Year**—By *Dr. John Masuda, President*

“Our society is a mosaic, composed of all different kinds of people,” said Dr. Donald McGavran, a leading missiologist of the past generation. Each element in the mosaic has distinct needs that demand attention and should be met. Another church leader stressed this point in a similar way by saying, “Find the need and fill it.” These two men, along with others of the same mind, impressed upon us of the existence of a distinct group of lay people, who had God-given abilities and qualifications and were capable of developing into invaluable leaders in local churches, thus contributing to the spread of the gospel in Japan.

However, they needed to be trained. From time to time they would say they had no confidence in themselves in getting into outreach work, because they had not received adequate education in the Bible, nor training in the practical work of the church.

Research into the effect of outreach efforts has shown that the majority of Christians are led to put their trust in the Lord through friends, acquaintances and family members. This means that lay people are instrumental in God’s saving work. So then, if we have well-trained lay people, churches will be more able to respond and to move on to fulfill the Great Commission: “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matt. 28:19-20).

As we faithfully began to try to accomplish the Great Commission, we immediately came to realize that it involves many aspects of lay education and training. The magnitude of the task was staggering. Yet the sense of His calling was pressing upon us and the need for such a work was challenging us to move ahead. Then we recognized the existence of a significant group within the people-mosaic, lay people, known for many years as “Sleeping Giants.”

As a result of eight years of work in the Educational Department of the Ochanomizu Christian Center, and an ensuing fifteen years as the Ochanomizu Bible Institute, we have become clearly convinced of the “slumbrous state” of this great group of “Giants,” and have been challenged more than ever before to give ourselves to waking them up and equipping them. The Lord has graciously helped us to produce 148 graduates, so indeed many Sleeping Giants have been awakened and are serving the Lord in His churches and mission organizations in various capacities and roles: as pastors, missionaries,

church assistants, Sunday School teachers, church secretaries, organists, vocalists, and more.

As we celebrate our fifteenth year, we present these fruits of His work, along with those who are now studying, before the throne of God for His glory and honor. Each succeeding year, God surprises us anew by revealing the unique gifts and talents in each student He has entrusted to us. They have a deep love and utter dedication for Him, His work, and His Church. And they heartily support His work. As a result, with excitement, inspiration, and gratitude to God and His people we commend these students to His service. It reminds us of Apostle Paul’s statement about the Thessalonians being “our hope, our joy, or the crown in which we will glory in the presence of our Lord Jesus when He comes.” (I Thessalonians 2:19) We are also led to refer to our graduates and students alike as “our hope, our joy and our crown.” Not only do we refer to them as such but also we consider each other in such a manner and enjoy fellowship accordingly. Naturally a mutual respect is produced and loving care for each other results. When we started the Institute we had no way of knowing or perceiving what outstanding blessing the Lord had in store for us.

Furthermore, our open, flexible policy has resulted in attracting retired business executives to be equipped with the Word of God. The amazing thing is that even these former executives are not so sure at the beginning whether they will be able to keep up with their studies. It is an eye-opening experience to find such hesitation on the part of these highly qualified, successful former businessmen. Here again is a reason for the existence of such a Bible Institute as ours. Now, after spending time in our Institute, they become strong and confident servants of the Lord. Then, their churches harvest a vessel who is well on the way to becoming an approved “workman who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth” (II Tim. 2:15). We are so grateful that we are being used to produce His “workmen.” In addition, we too get our share of blessing as some of them become board members of the Institute and help us in our management and administration with their executive insights and expertise.

As we celebrate our fifteenth year, we renew our covenant with our Lord that we shall be faithful to the Apostle Paul’s admonition to Timothy to produce “reliable men who will also be qualified to teach others” (II Tim. 2:2).

May God so help us fulfill this covenant with the help of His people.

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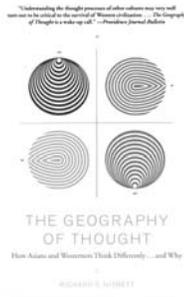
**The Geography of Thought**

Reviewer: Peter Thomson came to Japan in 1988 and serves as the Director of Japan Missionary Personnel for Asian Access. Peter and his wife Wendi met in Japan and are church planting in Sanda, Hyogo. They have four children.



**Praying God's Word**

Reviewer: Nancy Sorley has been in Japan since 1976. She and her husband Bob are church planters in Nara City. They are with the Baptist General Conference.



**The Geography of Thought**

How Asians and Westerners Think Differently... and Why  
Richard E. Nisbett, Free Press, 2003, 263 pages

I still recall with fondness the first “all-church meeting” I attended as a newly arrived missionary in Japan. With great joy I took my place in the circle of believers, eagerly anticipating the opportunity to join in the life of my new church. By the time it was over, all I could think was, “Someone owes me three hours of my life back.”

What happened in that meeting was much larger, and infinitely more complex, than a simple language barrier. I had entered terrain unlike any I had encountered before. My pre-field preparation, including years of university study, as well as training by my mission, seemed to crumble and flutter through my fingers like brittle parchment paper. My map was gone. I was lost.

Do I see a smile of recognition on your face? A nod of the head that says, “Been there, done that”? A tear of frustration rolling down your cheek from a similar experience just yesterday?

Perhaps it is safe to assume that just about everyone who has ministered in an Asian culture can relate to my surprise initiation into Japanese church life.

Richard E. Nisbett in *The Geography of Thought: How Asians and Westerners Think Differently... and Why*, brings fresh perspective to the area of cultural differences, and hope for cross-cultural understanding. While far from being a definitive work on all things East and West, it provides excellent insight into two very different systems of perception and thought. Such insight is invaluable to those seeking to live as incarnational ministers of the gospel.

Nisbett currently teaches at the University of Michigan, having previously taught at Yale University. He has received several scholarly awards and is the author and editor of a number of other works in the field of psychology. The conclusions presented in *The Geography of Thought* are based on social science research conducted by Nisbett and colleagues from a variety of disciplines, along with Nisbett’s interpretation of historical and philosophical evidence.

The terms “Asian” and “Westerner” as used in this trade paperback admittedly encompass a very wide stroke of the pen, and Nisbett gives the nod to this with an apology in his introduction. By “Asian,” he means

people of China, Korea and Japan, and by “Western” he means people of European heritage, primarily those of the U.S.A. and Canada. Granted, myriad differences may be found in the subcultures making up these groupings, but using these broad categories does not detract from the value of this work.

The first three chapters present an overview of differences between East and West, starting with a brief review of philosophy and society in ancient Greece and China, then progressing to modern views of thought, self, social life and practices. However, the bulk of the book presents evidence of differences in fundamental beliefs concerning the nature of the world, as well as how the world is perceived and reasoned about within these two very different thought systems.

*“Someone  
owes me  
three hours  
of my life back.”*

“To the Asian, the world is a complex place, composed of continuous substances, understandable in terms of the whole rather than in terms of the parts, and subject more to collective than to personal control. To the Westerner, the world is a relatively simple place, composed of discrete objects that can be understood without undue reference to context, and highly subject to personal control. Very different worlds, indeed.”

Nisbett concludes his book by outlining the implications of his discoveries for society, philosophy and psychology.

Highlights of this book for me include:

- the comparison of individualism and collectivism,
- the presentation of differing ideas of success,
- the look at views of self,
- the contrasting of communication styles—including negotiation and conflict (Aha! —now I understand that *much* took place at that seemingly fruitless all-church meeting!), and
- the discussion of East/West differences in perception

of events and their causes.

There is a wealth of information contained within the pages of this work, and by no means does this brief list do justice to what you will discover upon reading it.

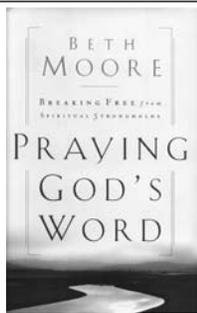
The greatest strength of Nisbett's research is that he makes no attempt to cast stones or place one culture above the other when presenting his findings. He simply states the "how and why" of the differences, leaving conclusions and application up to the reader. In an age of "let me tell you how to think" media, I found this to be wonderfully refreshing.

There are numerous references to the research behind Nisbett's conclusions, including summaries of how it was conducted. As a cultural anthropology major, I found it fascinating. Others might not. Be assured that the research is presented in lay terms, is brief, and always helps to bring clarification to the topic at hand.

This book has also been translated into Japanese and published as the hardcover volume entitled 木を見る西洋人森を見る東洋人思考の違いはいかにして生まれるか (*The Westerner Who Sees the Trees, the Easterner Who Sees the Forest: How Is It that Such Different Thought Processes Arise?*) When a Japanese colleague I respect read the Japanese edition and agreed with Nisbett's descriptions of Asian thinking patterns, I was further convinced that this is a valuable work.

So what will it do for you? *The Geography of Thought* provides some outstanding guideposts for navigating Japanese culture. It is not a detailed map, and it is not a ten-step plan for successful cross-cultural ministry. Rather, it is like a good friend whispering advice in your ear, providing cultural clues to help you make good decisions. It does not replace the value of gaining personal experience, but it does provide an enlightening interpretation of it. Whether you are new to Japanese culture, or have spent a lifetime living in Japan, this book provides insights that can help lead a bit more easily into greater effectiveness in ministry and outreach.

What about those three lost hours so many years ago? I've rediscovered them many times over in joyful partnerships with Japanese believers! 卍



**Praying God's Word**  
Breaking Free from  
Spiritual Strongholds  
Beth Moore, Broad-  
man & Holman  
Publishers, 2000, 344  
pages

When I received *Praying God's Word* as gifts from two different people, I was eager to see what was so special about it. In this book, Beth Moore, a teacher and writer of Bible studies, takes a different approach than in her previous books. She has found many Christians whose growth is stymied by spiritual strongholds in their lives. After doing a great deal of research to find scriptures that will help them break free from these strongholds, she has put these verses into prayers. So actually we are praying scripture. This isn't a book you sit down and read through. It is a book you slowly pray through.

The chapters deal with problems such as disbelief, deception, pride, addiction, guilt, despair, depression and unforgiveness. Each chapter begins with a description of the problem, followed by pages of prayers related to it and calling on God to free us from its grip. Interspersed throughout are quotes by famous Christians. Not every chapter will be relevant to every reader. But praying through even those chapters can open our eyes to hidden strongholds in our own lives. Moore wants us to "develop the mind of Christ in areas that seek to hold us captive." Unlike most self-help books, Moore recognizes that professional help may be required, but this book can be an excellent supplement in overcoming the strongholds. Praying through the book or certain chapters regularly will indeed deepen our prayer life and free us from the sins and things that bind us.

Since she has done such extensive Scripture research, this book can also serve as a good resource book for Bible study or sermon preparation. 卍

  
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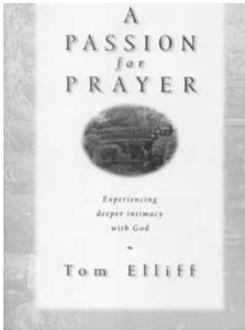
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# Prayer Resources

## For Your Personal Prayer Life and Your Prayer Ministries

By Karol Whaley

### BOOKS

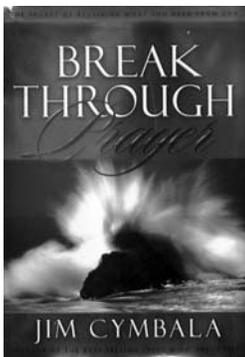


#### *A Passion for Prayer*

by Tom Elliff  
Crossway Books,  
Wheaton, Illinois,  
1998

In *A Passion for Prayer*, Tom Elliff seeks to help Christians

develop, or deepen, their intimacy with God. Sharing from his personal experiences as a missionary to Zimbabwe and as a pastor in America, Elliff also digs into God's Word regarding intercessory prayer, persevering prayer, the perils of prayerlessness, prayer and fasting, praying for the grace to forgive, and prayer in times of temptation. Good questions for reflection and prayer are listed at the end of each chapter. This book can be used with small groups.

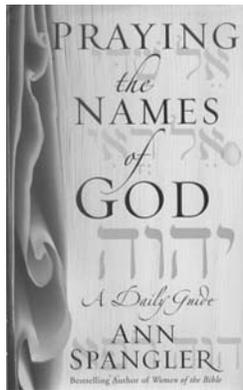


#### *Breakthrough Prayer*

by Jim Cymbala  
Zondervan, Grand  
Rapids, Michigan,  
2003

Jim Cymbala draws upon examples from his life as pastor of the Brooklyn

Tabernacle, as well as examples from the Bible, to share fresh insights into building a life of fervent, believing prayer. He also shares stories from others who have experienced wonderful answers to prayer. Using Biblical principles, Cymbala helps readers learn how to pray for themselves, for those they love, and even for the world around them, with dramatic results.



#### *Praying the Names of God*

by Ann Spangler  
Zondervan, Grand  
Rapids, Michigan,  
2004

Ann Spangler identifies twenty-six of the most prominent Hebrew names and titles of God, and

shares with readers how praying these names will give them a more intimate knowledge of God and his absolute faithfulness. In addition, she provides six months of weekly devotionals devoted to this topic. As a result of this study, readers will be enabled to "trust in the name of the Lord our God" for all of their felt needs.

"All the human talent, cleverness, and church-growth methods in the world can never compare with the invisible but very real blessing of God" (Jim Cymbala in *BREAKTHROUGH Prayer*, p.20).

"The results of prayer can easily be seen in the life of our Lord. The practice of prayer enabled Him to recognize those demands and ministry opportunities that were truly important. Jesus wasted no words or motions; the priorities of His life were established through prayer" (Tom Elliff in *A Passion for Prayer*, p.11).

"The world has yet to see a Christlike, victorious, and fruitful believer who was not a person of considerable prayer. So don't let one day pass without putting on the full armor of God and remembering, too, the efficacy of praying 'in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests'" (Jim Cymbala in *BREAKTHROUGH Prayer*, p.61).

### WEBSITES

<http://www.waymakers.org/>

Check out *The Ways to Pray* series—a collection of small booklets on different aspects of prayer. Click on the "Buy Stuff Here" tab and read about the series. Also, check out the "Fresh Prayer" page which provides fresh ways to pray for the lost.

<http://www.navpress.com/Magazines/Pray!/>

*Pray!* is a magazine published by the Navigators devoted just to the topic of prayer! Find out about receiving the magazine. Or, you can sign up for a free online newsletter called *Pray!Online News*.

<http://www.freejapan.org>

Free Japan has a 31 day prayer calendar focusing on spiritual needs in Japan. It can be downloaded and printed. Four inspirational prayer posters for Japan are also available on the website. Click on the "pictures" tab, then on "prayer posters" to find them. In addition, there is some good information about prayerwalking. **H**



Karol Whaley lives in Tokyo and serves as the Area Prayer Advocate for PacRim JO (Japan & Oceania) with the International Mission Board, SBC.



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す。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!
- 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
- 関東キャンパス：中野駅(3分歩)
- 充実した内容、経済的な授業料

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**\* 2006年度学生募集 \***

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## Christian Leadership Training Center

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At CLTC we teach to impact the Head, the Heart and the Hands. That is, we seek to provide preparation for ministry and life that is intellectual, spiritual and practical. First, our core curriculum provides a biblical and theological foundation for ministry through such courses as Biblical interpretation, Old Testament and New Testament Theology, Integrative (Contextualized) Theology and Christian Identity. Then, our mentoring program encourages students to develop spiritually through the application of the Gospel in their lives and ministries. Finally, practical training seminars equip students to use their gifts and talents for ministry in their own church and in the world. All of our students receive practical training in evangelism, worship, contextualization and relationships in ministry. In addition, students are able to choose from a wide variety of other seminars including training in music, the arts, counseling, teaching, and discipleship, among others.

While separate components of our curriculum emphasize the Head, Heart and Hands, all three areas of training are integrated into every aspect of our program. For example, in every biblical and theological course the teachers both mentor their students spiritually and provide hands on learning opportunities that our students can take back and apply in their own churches. In our practical seminars we teach theological and biblical principles as well as how to apply them. Finally, our mentoring program integrates Gospel-centered biblical teaching, spiritual transformation through personal application, and training in how to mentor others.

If this description of CLTC has caught your attention, we encourage you to call, to email or even to come see what we are doing. Work with us in training the next generation of leaders who will reach Japan and the world with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

# Higanbana

## A Symbol of God's Kindness?

A month or so after I moved back to Japan in August of 2002, I was surprised by some of the most beautiful flowers I'd ever seen. I didn't remember them from before, when I lived in Hokkaido. But here in Honshu there were literally waves of the flowers, bright red, just "appearing" in so many places—beside train tracks, along roads and streams, on the dams dividing paddy fields, and at or near temples. I learned that these red, red flowers, just suddenly revealing themselves, are called *higanbana* in Japanese, or less commonly, *manjushage*. Their botanical name is *Lycoris radiata*. In English, they're often called "red spider lilies" due to the spidery appearance of the flowers, with stamens that extend past each individual flower's split and curling form.

As I've thought both about these flowers and the text of Romans 1:20: "Ever since God created the world, his invisible qualities, both his eternal power and his divine nature, have been

clearly seen; they are perceived in the things that God has made. . .," I've come to believe that *higanbana* are a picture of God's presence and great kindness to us all—and a particular invitation to people here in Japan to know him.

First, blooming just when there's a touch of coolness in the air in the fall here in Kanagawa, the flowers have come to symbolize to me mercy in a rest from the oppressive heat and humidity of much of Japan's summer.

Second, the flowers are generally hidden away. They're NOT there. Then, they're THERE! This seems to me a beautiful picture of how, at least as I've experienced it, God often works. Like the spider lilies' bulbs hidden underground through the year, sometimes God seems hidden. Like the plants' simple, strap-like leaves, already faded away by the time the blossoms come, God often seems not to call attention to himself, or even to the fact that he's

working. Yet he often shows himself to be working in ways I wasn't aware of, when, all of a sudden, he reveals the sometimes surprising results of what he's been doing in my life, or in the lives of others.

Third, red spider lilies by themselves are poisonous. But I've read that a medicine to heal people can be made from the starchy bulbs. And I've also read that when they're properly prepared, the roots can sustain life if there isn't enough food available for people to eat. I remember how God sometimes shows his mercy to me through things that at first seem like they'll hurt me. And yet he has the most unbelievable good planned for me, and for us all.

Finally, the blazing red color of the flowers reminds me of the blood of Jesus. It reminds me that Jesus' life, given voluntarily to take punishment rightly my own, is the supreme sacrifice and the most amazing picture of God's love. I, who should be punished, am instead welcomed by this God—a righteous, but generous, judge who loves me so much he himself pays what I owe him. Amazing!

Some of my Japanese friends say that

# Operation Japan Prayer

## A Handbook for Prayer—Revised, Resized & Repriced!

Daily prayer requests  
covering the whole nation  
Information on each  
prefecture in Japan  
Key prayer targets and issues

Operation Japan—3rd edition is  
a revised, resized and repriced  
comprehensive prayer guide  
which will effectively guide you  
as you pray for Japan.

- Revised and updated with current statistics and needs.
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*higanbana* remind them of death. The flowers do bloom during the fall equinox, or *higan*, a time when the Japanese are remembering the dead, after all. And they're in, or near, so many cemeteries. But maybe that's another way God wishes to speak through these flowers—to remind those we work with, and even me, that our life on earth is limited. Is God calling out through the flowers, "Do today the things you may not be able to do at another time"—like trust Jesus? I believe he is.

I've been so touched by the beauty and all I see of God in *higanbana* that I've planted some where people here will find them. I hope when these folks, some of them the friends I mentioned above, see the airy, red blooms they'll also be reminded of God's amazing and incomprehensible kindness—that kindness that's for all the people in Japan, and the entire world.

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*John first served as a missionary in Japan in Sapporo from 1988-1991. He returned to Japan along with his family in 2002 and serves with Mission to Unreached Peoples in Odawara, Kanagawa-ken. He hopes to integrate small-scale, sustainable agriculture into some aspect of his journey someday.*

*"Consider how the lilies grow.  
They do not labor or spin.  
Yet I tell you, not even Solomon  
in all his splendor was dressed  
like one of these."*

*Luke 12:27*



# Guide 3rd Edition

*Editor: Rev. Don Wright has been a church-planting missionary with the General Baptist Conference for over 30 years. He presently serves from his home in Oregon, U.S.A.*





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.

# Meigen, Kakugen—Sayings of Famous People

By Miriam Davis (la@omf.or.jp)

Browsing in a bookshop I came across

名言格言がわかる本

by 国語学習研究会著(こくごがくしゅうけんきゅうかいちよ) at ¥1,300 and published by メイツ出版(しゅつぱん) in December 2004.

This book introduces 100 sayings by well-known people, both Japanese and non Japanese, in an easily understandable form for Japanese elementary school children. Each saying is used in a simple cartoon illustrating its meaning, followed by an explanatory paragraph. The colorful format with lots of pictures, large characters and lots of furigana on Kanji make this an excellent resource for intermediate students of Japanese and above, as long as you don't mind the content of the cartoons being aimed at grade school children. In the first section you will find sayings by a variety of people like Tolstoy on love, Clark of Hokkaido University, Archimedes, Socrates and Winston Churchill.

On page 13 a quote from the opening of the Heike Monogatari reflects the sudden changes in the ruling Heike family's fortunes in the Kamakura period (1192-1333) but has come to symbolize the Japanese sense of the emptiness and brevity of life, or as the book puts it:

冒頭の有名な一節で、仏教の持つ無常観 (sense of mortality) を見事に表現しています。

祇園精舎の鐘の声諸行無常の響きあり

祇園精舎 is the name given to the temple where Buddha is supposed to have preached. 諸行無常 (everything is transient) とは万物が消滅流転(生まれ変わり変化)してとどまらないという意味です。当時、権勢を誇った平家がたちまちにして滅んだ事を表現したこのは、一節聞く人へののちのはかなさを感じさせてくれる名言と言えます。

On p17 is Eddison, (inventor of light bulbs, gramophones etc,) to encourage you in your

Japanese language study! Genius is 99% effort and only 1% inspiration!

天才とは99%の努力であり、残りの1%がひらめきである

A quote from Plato (プラトン) (p24) has echoes of Romans 7:14ff without the hope that the Bible supplies.

自分に打ち勝つことは、勝利のうちの最大の物である

この言葉は、自分の内面にある怠惰や貪欲と言った悪い気質に足を引っ張られる事の多い人間は、その自らの気質を克服する事が何よりも大切な事であり、また大切だけに非常に難しいことである、という意味です。どんな人でもつつい自分甘やかしてしまうもの、自分に厳しくすることは分かっていても難しいものですよね。

The section on sayings of famous people is followed by proverbs grouped by association - with animals, nature, success and defeat, religion, work, time, the body and actions, the heart and numbers. Here are three that brought to mind Scripture references and that could be used in preaching and teaching.

## 48. 蒔かぬ種は生えぬ

Unless you plant seeds nothing will grow or no results without effort. This can be used in both positive and negative ways.

## 49. 勝って兜の緒を締めよ

When you have won a victory keep the string of your helmet tied under your neck ready for the next battle. In other words, remain on your guard.

## 77. 口は禍の門

The mouth is the gate to trouble.

Wanting other sources of sayings in Japanese? Go to [www.jp.omf.org/christian](http://www.jp.omf.org/christian) and click on 'Quotes from Famous Christians' for quotes arranged by topic with topic index and vocabulary list.

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