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Japan Harvest Staff

Editor-in-Chief: Ray Leaf (rrleaf@gol.com)

Managing Editor: Gary Bauman (editor@jema.org)

Editorial Assistants: Barbara Bauman, Cindy Dufty, Simon Pleasants and Karol Whaley

Production Editor: Jim Rew (therews@yahoo.com)

Printer: New Life League Japan (Norwegian Shinsei Senkyodan)

Cover Photo: by Tim Crowson

JEMA Executive Committee, 2006-2007

President: Ray Leaf

Vice President: Ken Taylor

Secretary: David Scott

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JEMA

2-1 Kanda Surugadai,

Chiyoda Ku, Tokyo 101-0062

Tel: 03-3295-1949

Fax: 03-3295-1354

E-mail: jema@jema.org

Website: jema.org

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*exists to network and equip  
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*Production Editor:* Jim Rew (Rewster4@aol.com)

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*President:* Ray Leaf  
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Website: jema.org

# Behind The Nativity Scene

## New Thoughts about an Old Story

By Maurice M. Heath

The fresh, soft hay makes a perfect pillow for His head. A composed Mary kneels to worship her Son. Soft light filters in from the star in the East, and unsoiled animals politely stand back from the sleeping baby. One can almost hear the angels singing “Silent Night.”

When we read scriptural accounts of events, we often miss their full impact because we fail to realize that these were real people living real lives. Our Christmas-card image of the circumstances surrounding the Messiah’s birth makes it easy to forget the dirty details of life to which Jesus was subject—just as we are. The fact is, the circumstances surrounding the Messiah’s life were far less sanitary and picturesque than what we tend to imagine. When I contemplate these circumstances, it becomes clear that only God could have thought of Christmas.

Really, the whole idea of Christmas goes against common sense. Throughout history, mankind has known that the only way to rule the world is through military might. The way to conquer is to have the largest army; the most chariots, guns and weapons; and the most massive military machine. But Jesus came in helplessness and poverty—the King of Kings, a vulnerable baby. Insect bites, dehydration, infection, the list goes on. Love was His means of conquering, and it seems ludicrous. But then, only God could have thought of Christmas.

Think of Mary, a teenager who was innocent, devout, chaste—and pregnant! Yes, she had an angelic visitation, but I find it beyond comprehension that she could really take in what was happening to her and in her. Even if she could understand, surely she worried about what her undoubtedly good, reverent Jewish family would say. She must have thought, “Oh, how can I tell my mother? And my father? I know he loves me, but what will he do when he finds out? His daughter unmarried and pregnant!”

And what did Mary’s friends say? “Look at Mary. Always so innocent, so pious. Look at her belly. Couldn’t wait until you got married, could you, Mary? You say you’re innocent? You’re pregnant by God? Come on Mary, we weren’t born yesterday. Tell us another one so we can laugh some more.”

Then Mary had to think of Joseph. “My beloved Joseph. He will be disgraced, laughed

at. Can he possibly understand?” Few of Mary’s family or neighbors understood. But only God could have thought of Christmas.

The Jews knew from Old Testament prophecy that the Messiah would be born in Bethlehem. But herein lies a problem. Mary and Joseph, who were to be the Messiah’s earthly parents, lived in Nazareth. Nazareth is located 70 miles north of Bethlehem, and people seldom traveled such distances in those days. Beyond that, the 70 miles were through bandit-infested desert wilderness, and these bandits often robbed and killed travelers. (The setting for the parable of the Good Samaritan was this region.)

Given those facts, it was improbable at best for Mary, at full-term pregnancy, to travel to Bethlehem at just the right time. However, a Roman emperor whose domain included most of the known world happened to make a decree that got Mary and Joseph to Bethlehem precisely in accord with the divine schedule. Caesar Augustus had never heard of Mary or Joseph, and probably not of Nazareth or Bethlehem either. All he knew of Judaism was that it presented occasional, minor annoyances that had to be stamped out by provincial governors. Yet Caesar’s decree for a census was God’s tool for fulfilling prophecy. Unlikely? Improbable? Only God could have thought of Christmas.

About half of you know better than the other half of us that having a baby hurts—a lot! I wonder how much Mary’s labor pains hurt. Did she cry softly as the contractions came harder, closer? Imagine riding a donkey 70 miles over dusty dirt roads while in labor. And then, lying down in a dirty, smelly stable for an unassisted delivery. I can believe that Joseph was kind and loving and gentle, but would he have known how to handle it if newborn Jesus’ umbilical cord had wrapped around His neck or if Jesus had been breech? And I wonder what he used to cut and tie the umbilical cord. I doubt it was sterile. Could Joseph aspirate the mucous so the baby wouldn’t develop pneumonia? What would he do if Mary hemorrhaged? He certainly didn’t have any medicine.

We may think Herod’s infant-slaughter was the first major challenge to the well-being of baby Jesus, but this is not the case. Surviving labor, delivery and the first two postpartum

days was nothing less than a miracle. In those days, infant mortality was probably around 50 percent under the best of circumstances. If a baby who was born in a stable were brought to a hospital today, it wouldn’t be allowed in the nursery—it would contaminate other babies. Only God could have thought of Christmas.

Beth was a short distance from Jerusalem, where unblemished lambs had been sacrificed for hundreds of years in accordance with Mosaic Law. The temple authorities kept their own flocks in order to have a constant supply of perfect lambs, and it’s quite likely that these flocks were pastured near Bethlehem. Although shepherds could not keep themselves clean according to the Pharisaic Laws and, therefore, were religious outcasts, the priests put up with them to keep unblemished lambs available. What a beautiful thought that it was probably the shepherds tending sacrificial lambs who first heard the good news from the heavenly host. And then, these shepherds were the Lamb of God’s first visitors. Only God could have thought of Christmas.

I have He’s a man now, but from the time of his birth, I did my best to shield him from unnecessary risks. The Heavenly Father has a Son whom He loves very much—He loves Him with a love far beyond my capacity for love. Though the Father didn’t take pleasure in exposing His Son to risk, He loved us too much not to expose His Son to the necessary risk of the cross so Jesus could become our Savior. Indeed, if I were the only person in all creation who needed a savior, the Father would have sent His Son just for me. Because of Christmas, all of us can know Jesus. Only God could have thought of Christmas.

Dr. Maurice M. Heath was in Japan for a year and a half immediately following Japan’s surrender. He served in General MacArthur’s headquarters. In 1955 he received his M.D. from Temple University and practiced medicine until his retirement in 1991. He delivered more than 700 babies. He and his wife, Shirley, make their home in Northeastern Georgia USA.

Used by author’s permission Alliance Life Magazine.

# A Christmas Prayer

By Helen Steiner Rice

“O God, our HELP in ages past, our HOPE in years to be”—look down upon this present and see our need of Thee. For in this age of unrest, with danger all around, we need Thy hand to lead us, to higher, safer ground. We need Thy help and counsel to make us more aware, that our safety and security lie solely in Thy care. And so we pray this Christmas to feel Thy presence near, and for Thy all-wise guidance throughout the coming year. First, give us understanding enough to make us kind, so we may judge all people with our heart and not our mind. Then give us strength and courage to be honorable and true, and place our trust implicitly in “unseen things” and “You.” And help us when we falter and renew our faith each day, and forgive our human errors and hear us when we pray. And keep us gently humble in the greatness of Thy love so some day we are fit to dwell with Thee in peace above.



# Specially Chosen Star

By Jim Norton

Beautiful, lovely traveling star  
Going before these men from the East,  
Showing the way to JESUS,  
On sweet BABE their eyes then feast!

Unusual star in the heavens,  
All other lights give place  
For this star by God was brightened,  
Bethlehem's sky did grace!

The wise men with hearts exalting  
Racing pit-a-pat, pit-a-pat!  
For months their eyes had been searching:  
They're off in a flurry, no chit-chat.

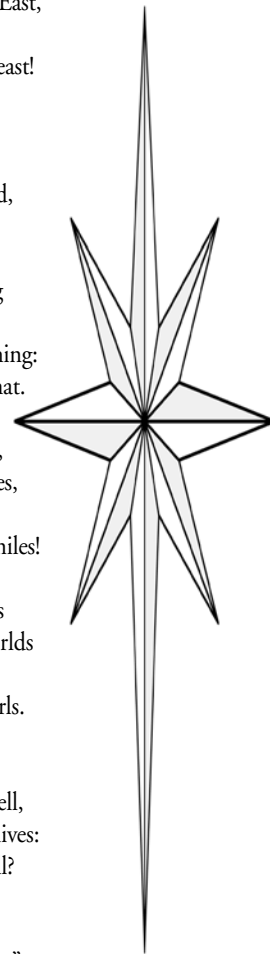
They came, treasures unwrapping,  
So carefully carried o'er the miles,  
Hand them to Joseph and Mary,  
The Babe's face see wreathed in smiles!

The Lord who created the heavens  
With uncountable myriads of worlds  
Bade that star to go on a mission  
To Palestine's proximity then hurls.

If God who controls the heavens  
Down to microscopic, minute cell,  
Don't you think He can guide in our lives:  
The tumultuous storms to quell?

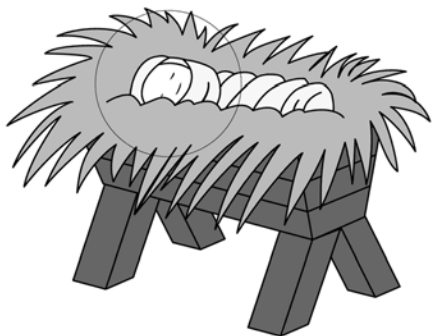
Matthew 2:9

“Lo, the star...went before them.”



Jim along with his wife, Audrey, served in Japan for 43 years. The Nortons are still active in ministry.

The gift GOD gave the world is sometimes lost amid all the tinsel and jingle. Some of us need the admonition of a little girl, when her parents were setting up a Christmas crèche. She said only, “Make sure Jesus shows.”



Faith sees the invisible,  
believes the incredible and  
receives the impossible!  
Remember;  
Faith makes things possible.  
not easy!



Send me!

Send me 罪にけがれた  
わたしのちびるを きよめ  
愛と平和の よきおとずれ  
つげるものとしてください

Send me イエスよこの世界に  
わたしを つかわしてください  
Send me イエスよ 今ここに  
わたしを つかわしてください



# Send Me Conference Memories & Impressions August 12-15, 2003



Elizabeth, 2nd generation  
MK, HS student

## “A chance to praise God”

I was planning to write something short about all of the aspects of the conference, but I decided to write about what touched me the most. The speakers were well picked and the meetings were well planned, but just the chance to praise God with two thousand other Christians can change your faith forever. In a world where the average Christian spends most of his/her time with unsaved people, to be able to sing God's praises in a hall filled with fellow Christians was a wonderful experience in and of itself. Maybe it was just me, but the sound of the voices and the clapping of hands all around me made my faith so much more real. I feel badly for the ones who weren't able to go, and I hope that there will be many more chances for others to experience what I felt!



Micah, mk, HS student

## “I was so encouraged!”

To attend this conference was a very good experience and a blessing for me. Through the messages of all the meetings I was taught what it is to be a Christian. I was taught things I should have known, but didn't. Also, I came to understand how hard it would be to become a messenger of God. I was really encouraged through the messages as I was made to think

about my life and how much I could change.

The workshops were a big impact, too. They were short but on very important topics. They gave me new suggestions and ideas for my life. The large number of high school students my age inspired me as I heard the ways they reach out to their non-Christian friends. I was greatly encouraged.

Going to the conference was a very good experience for me. It was a time of encouragement, thinking, praying and learning. I pray that God will use each and every one who attended. Praise the Lord!



Ryota, HS graduate working  
his first job

## “Here am I. Send me!”

I became a Christian in May, and I am so glad I could attend the SEND ME Conference!

I learned a lot in the four days. To be with over 2,000 people meant a lot and my faith has been encouraged. In all these youth I could see the glory of God. I want to believe Him more and live for Him.

To sing together from our hearts found me even raising my hands in praise. My heart was full of praise to God. The speakers, the testimonies, the music and the workshops revealed to me the big love of God. I am so thankful!

Those four days remain in my heart as a beautiful memory. I have asked God for some things and I do not know what will happen. I believe from my heart...”Here am I. Send me!”



Norihiro, office worker in  
a school for the physically  
impaired

## “My daily life was encouraged!”

To be honest, I didn't want to attend this conference. However, having time off from work, I wanted to go see for myself a large group of Christian youth. At the opening I was greatly surprised! The power of all those youth overwhelmed me. The center stage vibrated with energy. The testimonies given were powerful. The workshops were helpful and all these revealed the love of God through Jesus Christ.

In my church it is the same, but we have only a few youth. To hear of youth coming to Christ when they were ten or twenty years old, I wondered at the grace of God! I am also included in this marvelous grace, and I am so thankful.

This conference encouraged my faith greatly. To have the youth come from all over Japan, and to realize they were all followers of Jesus, my daily life was encouraged. The conference met so many needs. It had great meaning and was of great value. I hope from the bottom of my heart that we will have many more meetings like this!





Mary, 2nd generation MK, a senior at CAJ

### “...New hope for Japan!”

Though at times it was intimidating to be one of the few foreigners in a group of so many Japanese, it was awesome. The messages were challenging, the worship was amazing, and the workshops were very practical. Never had I imagined worshipping with over 2,000 Japanese, much less youth! It was a little taste of Heaven. At the last meeting, everyone joined hands as we sang a song entitled “One Voice.” I started crying as I blended my praise with the worship of many others in one voice and one heart to the Lord.

I left the conference with a new hope for Japan and a stronger faith as I continue to pray for this nation. I was very blessed and am so thankful that I had the opportunity to attend!



Alan, 3rd generation MK, seminary student at CIU

### “Indelible Impression”

It has now been several weeks since the Send Me conference and I have had ample time to ponder and process my experience. I have no doubts in my mind that God used this conference on many different levels in the lives of those who participated. Whether the participant was a young adult, a professional, career missionary, pastor, musician, tent-maker, or seminary student, I am confident that those present were edified. But this is my journey, my reflection of this experience and I would like to briefly share with you an impression that I believe has left an indelible mark on my life.

So what impressed me? Well, to narrow my focus, let me start by telling you first the things which did not. As eclectic and enthusiastic as the music and singing was, it was not the “praise and worship.” As thorough and theologically sound as the messages were, it was not the teaching. As informative and insightful as the seminars were, they did not prick my conscious. As cordial and charitable the times were talking to missionaries and friends, they did not move

me to action. So what was it that impressed me?

Before I give you my answer, I would first like to draw your attention to Mark chapter six focusing on the words in verse thirty-four. No doubt this is a familiar passage to all but during my time in Japan this verse took on a deeper meaning for me as the Lord intricately wove it into my conference experience. Mark records these words saying, “...And when He went ashore, He saw a great multitude, and He felt compassion for them because they were like sheep without a shepherd...” (italics added, NASB)

During my nine-day stay in Japan this verse was in the forefront of my thinking. I could not help but think in the same terms that Jesus did as he looked upon the masses. Everyday during the conference as I commuted for an hour and half on the train, I would recall or be reminded of this verse. Not only that but, during breaks from meetings and seminars I would frequently make my way to Starbucks observing people and contemplating the phrase: “they are like sheep without a shepherd.” And again, walking around Shibuya in the rain with my brother from Bangladesh, dodging the sea of umbrellas, the Lord continued to impress upon my heart the spiritual poverty and need in this country. The Japanese people are like sheep without a shepherd. Although I have lived in Japan for nine years and have been back several times since to visit family, the Lord used this verse to show me how He views the Japanese people.

So, in closing and to my surprise, it was not the conference per se that impressed me, but it was a country that was impressed upon me. The Send Me conference was the conduit by which I was allowed to see Japan with new eyes and a renewed commitment. This was my indelible impression. Peace be with you. Galatians 6:9



Mrs. Debbie Penner, MK, missionary & mother

### “God is the God of change!”

There were about three youth in our church who should have come to the conference, but didn't. If this is indicative of the national average, what we saw at the conference was only a fraction of the youth in Japan's churches. What a blessing to look out over the crowd to see some 2,000 Japanese Christian young people

praising God! At the final meeting, I would estimate 85 to 90 percent raised their hands indicating they wanted God to use them to spread the Gospel. It was amazing to see that the response varied little for “service commitment” (kenshin). About 70 to 75 percent raised their hands then.

One pastor's son, whom I know, attended the conference. He has been a very skeptical youth, reacting to extremes in his upbringing. He said, “When I came to the conference, I was convinced that God never really changes people, but now I know that He does! I have hope that He can and will change me, and I want to start working to see others changed as well.”

In the afternoon of the third day I had the privilege of attending the Christian leaders' seminar at which Dr. Waybright spoke on servant leadership, and Dr. Fernando spoke on “Renewal of Evangelism according to the New Testament.” The good, concise definition of postmodernism helped me. What an encouragement both messages were!

About the Writers: **Elizabeth Penner**, in high school, lives with her parents in Kyushu. **Micah Ghent** is in high school and studies at home. His parents minister in Aomori. **Ryota Ishii** attended 2003 Adult English Camp at Okutama Bible Chalet where he was encouraged to attend SEND ME. **Norihiko Obiki**, baptized three years ago, is a member of Yachiyo Fukuiin Kurisuto Kyokai. **Mary Schaeffer** is in her final year of high school. Her parents are church planters. **Alan Kropp**, a missionary candidate hoping to return to Japan, attends Columbia International University Seminary in Columbia, South Carolina USA. **Mrs. Debbie Penner** is an independent missionary and founder of FREE JAPAN.

*And may there be many more...*



# Black Gospel Music in Japan

(A synopsis of a research project by Lay Hong Ong and Joan Low, Singapore Bible College students preparing for missionary service in Japan)

When my friend Joan and I traveled to Japan this spring to conduct research on Black Gospel Music, we found that there is a huge range of responses from those participating in Christian-led choirs. There are big “success” stories like Tokyo Voices of Praise (TVOP, led by Meg Awano) which started in 1994 made up of 80 percent non-Christians and is presently 90percent Christians. Visiting Meg’s choir rehearsal was like taking part in an awesome time of worship! Almost all of Meg’s Christian choir members are actively involved in their local churches, and some are in seminary preparing to become pastors or evangelists. Many have become choir directors and have started branch choirs all over Japan.

On the other end of the spectrum are churches that have a Black Gospel choir ministry but there are only one or two who turn to Christ each year. Why the difference? We are not sure, but one thing we found from our survey is that although most Japanese join a Black Gospel choir because of the music, most stay in the choir because they find a community of friends. Therefore, a dynamic community of friends within a Black Gospel choir has the potential to influence many lives for Christ. Music alone is not enough; it is very important to have Christians in the choirs to live out the truth of what these choirs are singing every week—the joy, hope and salvation found in Christ alone.

When the Black Gospel “boom” started in Japan ten years ago, most Christians dismissed

it as just another fad; after all, Japan is well-known for its many popular but short-lived fads. While most Christians ignored it, non-Christian choir directors were quick to catch on and many started choirs in cultural and community centers across Japan. Conservatively speaking, there are hundreds of choirs and the number of Japanese who regularly sing and/or listen to Black Gospel style music may number in the millions. Unfortunately, most know the form of the music but not the spirit behind it. However, there seems to be a shift from singing Black Gospel just for enjoyment to seeking a deeper sense of meaning and identification. Some choir members we spoke to express a desire for more Black Gospel songs written in or translated into Japanese. They said they wanted the meaning of each song to be at the heart of what they sing. The fortunate ones find what they were looking for in one of the churches that have organized a Black Gospel workshop or choir.

It has been ten years and the Black Gospel “boom” is still going strong. Whether Japanese join Black Gospel choirs because of the music or are searching for something more, the Church must rise up to the challenge of not only sharing the truth of the Gospel with them but also helping them feel welcome in the Body. If the traditional Church finds it difficult to capitalize on this tremendous opportunity, perhaps there is a need for new churches where Black Gospel enthusiasts will find a place to fit in. The challenge remains for us Christians to invest in what God has already begun in the hearts of people and help usher them into the kingdom of His Son.



June 26, 2003

CAN Interview: Ken Taylor

Conducted by: Paul Nethercott

Transcribed by: William B. Ball

**PN:** Ken, how about your background? Tell us a little bit about yourself...

**KT:** Well, when most people ask me that question, they expect to hear that I come from a Christian background, that I have a church background. However, I give them a different kind of an answer, telling them that our background comes from the nightclubs of Southeast Asia. We are not from any certain denomination either. However, we were raised in the Philippines, Bola and myself. I grew up in a Roman Catholic home, and I didn’t receive Christ until Bola and I were at the height of our musical careers. That was in the entertainment industry, when we were in our mid twenties. Soon after that, we moved to San Francisco, CA, where we settled and grew in the Lord. From there, we would make little two-week missionary trips.

Bola was a physical therapist by profession, and I was in business in the music industry. That was when we sensed the call to go into full-time ministry. We went to seminary, and in 1997 we heeded the call from the Lord to come

to Japan. We are involved in church planting, with a focus on music and the arts.

**PN:** Let's move on to our focus, the details of your ministry in Japan.

**KT:** The purpose statement for our ministry is to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ in Japan through music and creative arts. I believe that a part of me has to be involved in church planting. I have a strong belief that since my background is in music, that there is a temptation to just do a para-church ministry. However, I believe that Jesus didn't say that "I will build My Music Ministry", rather "I will build My church". I must stay involved in church planting. The fact that all of the Apostle Paul's epistles were written to churches means that whatever is done, God does it through the church. I have to have that strong connection, so that everything I do is connected with church planting. Since, 30 percent of my work is in church planting, I'm still using my gifts of music and the arts, and so on. However, a lot of my work is done through CAN, where I help Paul (Nethercott) in a lot of projects to encourage Christian Artists in Japan, and help provide resources and equipping ministries for the artists.

**PN:** Tell us about the school project.

**KT:** One of the issues I had in Japan when I first got here, was how could I be a part of a long-term, strategic plan that would impact the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the arts. I really sense that the Christian artists here are in dire need of encouragement and equipping. Many are very talented, but there's no real way for them to gain help spiritually and theologically. So, a theological, Bible-type training school came to mind. So now, a small vision to start a school for just music and the arts has become a full-fledged Christian Leadership Training Center (CLTC). There are other people involved, and we plan to start in January. The school will have what's called a head-heart-hand approach. This is a balanced approach towards training leaders, and includes a track in music and the arts.

**PN:** OK, how did you get involved in leading Black Gospel choirs made up of Japanese sing-

ers?

**KT:** When I first came here seven years ago, as a rookie missionary in language school, Black Gospel Music as a boom had already been happening, unbeknownst to me. I never had a single thought that I would ever be involved in this type of ministry. However, the fact was that in my philosophy of ministry I had one "wild card" called exploration, which meant finding indigenous, culturally relevant ways to minister and evangelize. The most interesting thing was, a non-Christian, Japanese friend invited me to a Black Gospel choir concert. That was about five years ago. I was just overwhelmed and impressed by a choir of 200: all Japanese, mostly non-Christian, singing Black Gospel. This was influenced by the movie *Sister Act*. It was a struggle at first, but I soon found out that there was a strong possibility of doing this as a ministry here in Japan. Here you have non-Christians flocking to hear a concert about the Gospel. It shocked me; I just couldn't understand it.

**PN:** What does a concert look like? How are the people behaving? How are they singing, like African-Americans in America?

**KT:** Well, the Black Gospel Music boom here in Japan is quite unique in its characteristics. For example, here, unlike America, most people who like to sing Gospel music are non-Christians, while in America, most people are Christians, and obviously from a Christian background. Also, the purpose for singing Gospel music here in Japan is primarily for the fun of singing Black Gospel Music... Japanese like the tempo, the upbeat, and the freeing style of music. However, in America, the Gospel music is used for worship. The two have very, very different features.

**PN:** You said that Japanese sing Gospel Music primarily for fun. Do you think that there's a spiritual reason for singing it as well?

**KT:** Yes, obviously from the secular and non-

Christian point of view, it is a fad, and one that is primarily because of enjoyment of the genre. However, from the spiritual perspective, for something to be this big, to be this unique and full-scale, I believe this has to be a movement of the Holy Spirit. God is somehow exposing Himself to the Japanese through Black Gospel Music, so they can hear the Good news of Jesus Christ! It is such a neat thing. It is no doubt that when people come week after week and pay from ¥1000 to ¥2500 for a two hour session, and sing songs about God and learn about things directly from the Bible, and then



bring their friends to the concerts, who are all non-Christians, this is some sort of unnatural, in our case, a spiritual movement. This does not make sense, nor do I try to make sense of it. I know that for the others who are involved in this movement, like Ronnie Rucker and Meg Awano, for them it's like a wave, and we can't understand it. That's part of the mystery of it all.

**PN:** You talked a little about your emphasis on the local church. Can you tell us a little bit about your philosophy of ministry, and how you're Gospel choirs integrate into it?

**KT:** Interestingly, Black Gospel Music in my ministry is only about 30 percent of my work, so I have to be very strategic in how I spend my time and energy. I have felt that in my philosophy of ministry and the church, being the basis for God's blessing, I try to make sure that the church will partner with me in putting up a choir, which means that they'll do up to 90 percent of the coordination. They'll take care of all spiritual and logistic aspects. Then, I come in mainly as the 'hired gun'—to do the music. Sure there's influence, sure they really enjoy the teaching of the music with a Christian emphasis. In addition every lesson includes a talk time and prayer, and things like that. However, most of this is done by the church, and I make sure of that. The church coordinator needs to be a Christian so that if someone becomes attached, then they'll become part of the community church, and not follow the music director. That, I think, is a very positive approach to leading Black Gospel choirs.

**PN:** Can you give us a concrete example of a



particular church where you think this model is working the best?

**KT:** Keisen Kurisuto Kyokai Midori no Chapel in Ushiku has a choir called the Spring of Grace Choir. We do workshops there and they've had some conversions. In one specific case a husband and wife joined the choir. The wife became a Christian through the choir. After stopping for a while they joined again. At this point a decision had to be made whether she would go to church on Sunday or rejoin the choir. She chose to go to church, while her husband, still not a Christian, went to the choir. Obviously there was church coordination. The wife felt comfortable making her decision.



**PN:** So, in your opinion, is it possible to use the Black Gospel choir opportunities to build up and/or plant churches?

**KT:** Well, there are two methods. One is for the church members to somehow be part of the choirs and to make relationships. So when relationships are born and made, they can then move into the church body life. That's the traditional model. Yet, there's a lot of talk out there, and there might be some movement already towards developing new styles of congregations that are directed towards using this genre. It just might be a Saturday evening style of service of Black Gospel choir, where they'll feel more comfortable, versus the traditional Sunday style of worship. So, things could run in two veins.

**PN:** So instead of integrating a choir into a church, do you think it's possible that a choir could become a church?

**KT:** Um, yes, that is a possibility. However, whether the whole choir becomes a church all at once or not may be very difficult. A lot of thought needs to go into how that should be done. For those who are Christians and who have become Christians through the choir, there could be discipleship training.

**PN:** So it sounds like you're talking about one specific plan to plant churches that would easily integrate choir members into them....

**KT:** Yes, however, to develop a church based only on a genre, I would not go that route. If Black Gospel Music suddenly dies as a boom

in Japan then you have a church that's mainly Black Gospel. It loses touch with society, which is again the issue that we know well as church planters. If we use teaching English as the basis for starting a church, and it becomes the way things are run, then it's not the way to go.

**PN:** So, is it correct to say that you're looking at Black Gospel Music as a strategic opportunity at this time, something we need to take advantage of?

**KT:** The rub here is two things with the Christian Japanese church: Black Gospel Music, compared to the traditional music in the

Japanese church, is totally different in genre. Now, if the church can get over that, that's fine. The rub really is on the spiritual level for the Christian, and I myself went through that struggle during my first years in Japan. How can non-Christians sing Black Gospel songs or songs about God and have joy and meaning when they're non-Christians? That to me, was an issue and it kind of irked my heart. What many Japanese Christians feel when they see this is that they misunderstand what's happening. The reality is the non-believers are NOT worshipping God, rather they are singing songs and are being drawn TO God through the songs. Another thing that really helped me settle the issue of "non-Christians singing the songs about God" in Japan was Old Testament examples.

As I looked through the Old Testament, (I saw) how many times God used Gentile kings and nations to bring Israel, the chosen people, back into His fold. It's almost the same thing here in Japan. Somehow, I see more joy in the faces of non-Christian choir members singing songs about God than I do see in Christians in churches, singing songs to their God. Seeing this has affected my life. I'm a little more "black gospely" in the way I worship God today. These non-Christians affected me, and here I was the leader.

**B3:** On that note... you mentioned that there are so many non-Christians in your choirs.

How can you tell the difference between someone who is just enjoying being in a Gospel workshop, and a member who is being transformed by the message of the Gospel and by the influence of the Christians around them?

**KT:** Personally, from the numbers that I have, I can't tell. That's why the church coordinators are so important. They are in touch with the choir members. That's one of the issues I had at first. There was the high percentage of non-Christians. Some 90 percent are non-Christian and I have a choir that's 100 percent non-Christian. It sounds really good from a missionary standpoint, but I was humbled by God, and broken. Where are the Christians? Where are they? Why aren't they in the choirs making relationships with these people? That's what really broke me. So that's what I tell choirs today, especially the coordinators. They've got to get the Christians in there. It's a great opportunity, and they're not taking advantage of it.

**PN:** This is a pragmatic question: how do you handle the finances with your choirs, especially the ones that are connected with a church?

**KT:** The finances are interesting; actually, there have been choirs that have been started without fees. Generally speaking, no fee means people don't come. As we know, in Japan, if it's for free something's wrong. They don't have a problem with paying. The question is, how do we deal



with the finances? We deal with it just like any music school or Cultural Center would. If I do it with a church, it's based on a percentage. The church will get 50 percent, and they'll take care of all the coordination, and then the choir director gets a percentage of that as well. Obviously,

in my case, the money goes to a "ministry account." So, what that does is to open up opportunities for the Japanese Christians and for me to help them. They can find not just a ministry, but also some funding for their own work.

**PN:** If someone wants to learn how to get a Black Gospel choir started in their church or community or observe what you are doing, are you willing to work with them?

**KT:** Oh, absolutely. I've always got churches interested, and what I ask them are two things. One, that the pastor or coordinator come to



observe what I'm doing. The other is the need of someone who is musically talented—someone with piano skills, who can sing and has some experience in leading at least a choir. Then they can come out and “shadow” me, through at least one workshop. I can show them and teach them how to do things, and share with them a lot of the resources that I have. I think that it can be done. Given the fact that there are many choirs that don't have Christian directors, my thing is equipping others, creating a rapid force to go out there. I'm always getting requests from churches and Cultural Centers, asking me if I know of anyone who can direct a Black Gospel choir. My answer is almost always, “no.” Boy, what lost opportunities.

**PN:** Do you think it's possible to get short-termers, foreigners, to come in and do an effective job with this, just like we have done with English teachers?

**KT:** Yes, I think that it can be done with a short-termer, but there needs to be orientation. Maybe partnering with a bi-lingual coordinator will be necessary.

**Billy Ball:** You mentioned something about raising people like Ito-san to lead choirs. How did that process come about? Is there a process in raising up Japanese leaders to do the same thing?

**KT:** Interestingly, there are gifted Japanese musical leaders, and you either have to find them, or they just “come out of the bushes.” You ask them if they're interested then you train them. Some may like rock and roll and not Black Gospel, but they're gifted. Then, you have to explain to them, “Look, here's an opportunity. Sure, you've gotta learn the genre.” There's

one person whom I work with, who is highly trained in classical music, he's even a vocal classical leader who does Messiah concerts. He's a great leader. It's a totally different genre, but they understand. Once they see and understand the opportunity, then you work through the process of training them. Black Gospel Music has a lot of very unique musical features, even director features, which you have to work into the process.

**Billy Ball:** I think it was you that mentioned that you were here to work yourself out of a job. Do you prefer raising up Japanese to do this?

**KT:** Yes, I would prefer... There are pluses and minuses to Japanese choir directors. There's obviously a strong impact because here's one of their own doing this. If they're a Christian, they've been transformed and are just enjoying it. Also, the language is deeper, thus they can teach at a deeper level. However, there is attraction and benefit for the *gaijin* doing it. Ideally, in the future, I really think there's room for both. The key is the Christian directors. Short-termers, if they came, would have a language barrier as well as cultural and orientation issues. The Japanese director wouldn't have the language barrier, but might have some genre barriers. Now, a lot of the new Japanese Black Gospel directors have come from Black Gospel choirs. That is the ideal and they're doing great. Meg Iwano and Ronnie Rucker have raised up a lot of Christian directors that way.

**PN:** One more question I want to ask. Were you thinking about tying in some of the training through CLTC, with the Black Gospel directors? Is that on the horizon?

**KT:** Well, the best way with Black Gospel is

for them to “shadow.” They need to be there; they need to see it. We can introduce ideas, introduce concepts, and show videos and stuff like that.

**PN:** Well, do you have any final thoughts? Anything you want to say, to communicate to the missionary community out there?

**KT:** Yeah, I think that it needs to be pointed out that I am not the expert here; I am just one small part of this big boom that God is using in Japan. I think that what I am trying to do is from a church planters' point of view, which just happens to be a musician/artist akin to Black Gospel directing. I'm using it and taking it to the next level and trying to find ways churches can use Black Gospel Music as a strategic and legitimate means for outreach.

**PN:** Thank you Ken.

Paul Nethercott came to Japan in 1987 with TEAM. Until 2002 he was involved in church planting ministries. In 2002 he became the full time director of CAN (Christian Arts Network).



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## Church Information Service wants to serve nationwide Japan!

Almost a year ago Naoko M. contacted CIS asking for information about churches in her area. (By searching the Web she had found our e-mail address.) We recommended a church nearby, and sent her all the needed information. It wasn't long before she began attending and on August 3, 2003 she was baptized at the WEC church in Kyoto. She thankfully sent us a joyful e-mail,

writing, “Today was a special day for me. My baptismal service was so blessed. After the service brothers and sisters in Christ gave me warm words of congratulation. I was impressed so much that God loves me and gave me eternal, abundant life. I appreciate so much that CIS introduced this church to me.” In July CIS put up a Website. There have been over a dozen inquires from non-believers and believers.

Please pray that this ministry will be useful in helping Japanese find churches which will further the cause of Christ in this land. Yukio Hanazono is the director of CIS.

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# Inviting Jesus to Japan

Could it be that  
Black Gospel is pre-  
paring the way? An  
interview with  
Junko Ito

**J**unko Ito is a young woman full of enthusiasm about reaching Japanese through Black Gospel Music. She is a member of the Keisen Kirisuto Kyoukai Midori no Chapel in Ushiku (a Conservative Baptist Church) which is pastored by Mr. Masahiro Okita.

**Q.** Where did you get the idea of starting a Black Gospel choir at your church?

**A.** I went to the "Little Shepherd Convention" where a pastor from Sapporo was talking about her church and their Black Gospel Music ministry. She said: "non-Christians are gathering to sing Black Gospel Music and the newspaper and TV people come to report on it." She also said that some were becoming Christians. So, my pastor's wife and I started talking about the possibility of this ministry in our church. The pastor was there too, so we were talking about it and we started praying that we could have a Black Gospel choir at our church. It was a fun dream, a very "easy" kind of thinking, not taking any responsibility. But then, the church started to pray for that choir and after about a year we found out Ken (Ken Taylor) was training gospel choir directors as well as directing a choir, so we asked him if he could come to our church to help us start.

I was thinking we would start slowly, but Ken said, "In two months or three months I can come, but you need to gather 100 people." I asked him, "If we had 10 people could you still come?" He said, "No." He said to go ahead, "If your aim is not high I won't come, and if all of the members in your group are Christians I won't come. Gather as many non-Christians as possible—try."

**Q.** When did this (conversation) take place?

**A.** It was in January or February of 2001. In May, we had our first workshop.

**Q.** So now you had a big problem, you had to gather a hundred people more or less.

**A.** My pastor said I would need one more person to work with so I called up Mrs. Sakuma, who is a coordinator with me now. She said "yes" on the spot. Now I had a co-worker and Ken to direct, so I had no reason not to begin.

**Q.** How many flyers did you make?

**A.** Ten thousand. We also made a home page and posters. (These ideas we got from Ken.) We put posters in *karaoke* and CD shops, train stations and other places like that.

**Q.** What was the response?

**A.** Well, from *karaoke*, from the newspaper, and from the *eki* posters people came! God used everything. We were amazed at the power of the Internet.

**Q.** So how many people showed up for the workshop?

**A.** For the first one, 35 showed up.

**Q.** Was that enough for Ken to come?

**A.** At first there were just a few signed up, but Ken said, "You have started, so I will come." Many people wanted to attend, but we had made it a 4-day thing, so many who wanted to come couldn't fit it in their schedule. So for these we did a short course during the first workshop.

**Q.** Did many people come for that?

**A.** Yes, besides the 35 who attended the whole session, 23 people came for the short workshop.

**Q.** Where these mostly new contacts for your church?

**A.** Yes, one third were Christian and the rest were mostly new, non-Christian contacts.

**Q.** Now, out of that workshop I understand a choir developed. Tell me about it.

**A.** Twice a month Ken came on Sunday afternoons. I was the coordinator.

**Q.** Is that working well for you and your church?

**A.** Yes, at first I thought that Sunday afternoon would not be a good time because we had many contacts who were housewives. As we all know, it's a hard time for them to come. On the other hand, Sunday afternoons would be good for men. We have a lot of men and it all turned out well.

**Q.** Is your pastor supportive of your choir?

**A.** Yes, from the beginning he was supportive, and said, "Go ahead and do it!" For the second workshop he joined as a member.

**Q.** When did the second workshop take place?

**A.** The following year, in 2002.

**Q.** So you didn't start a choir that first year. What did you do?

**A.** We wanted a regular choir, but Ken's idea was to make it a workshop. So each term we advertise and do a workshop with a final concert. Then after the concert, we stop, and

then we do the same thing again. We have choir practice twice a month (every other week).

**Q.** How many people are involved, generally, in the choir workshops now?

**A.** At the last concert we had 60 in our choir.

**Q.** What has this done for your church in terms of connecting with new people and having an effective outreach?

**A.** Pastor Okita became a choir member at the second workshop. He realized that he had to get involved more with this ministry so he asked church members to pray specifically that the workshops would be both worship times and evangelistic in outreach. Church people started to pray more for the ministry, and they also started to find how they could get involved. (Many people cannot join because they are not English speaking or they can't sing this kind of music.)

**Q.** Has the choir participated in your church; have they sung at the church?

**A.** The concerts are at the church, and the workshops are at the church so members are at the church all the time. Church people also come to the concerts.

**Q.** What style music do you have in your church? Is it contemporary or more traditional?

**A.** Combined, but I think now I can call it contemporary. It's kind of changing slowly; we seem to blend (styles) all the time.

**Q.** Are there any choir members that have come to know Christ or who have started coming to church as a direct result of the choir?

**A.** Yes, so far I know of three people who started coming and got saved. One came after the recent concert at CAJ and two from the first workshop.

**Q.** Do you sense among the 60 members a high level of spiritual interest?

**A.** Many are struggling in their lives, and some are getting some power and encouragement from singing, but not all are expressing interest in Jesus. I see some who are really close to deciding to come to church, but they are not yet believers. At first they think, "It's fun, it's fun!" Then the next stage is, "Is it okay for me to sing this song?" I observe many are on that level, and they really respect our faith. They are starting to see that being a Christian really makes a difference in one's life. They see the difference! The recent concert at CAJ and our

other concerts have had a powerful influence.

**Q.** What kind of potential do you think the choir has for your church?

**A.** Our church is changing from traditional to contemporary; we're singing more new music. More and more we express our feelings and move and clap and raise our hands. New people are joining because they are moving into the area. Some members are "uptight"—those who have grown up in the traditional way, but they join the choir and are becoming more expressive in their worship. This is one thing Black Gospel Music can do for Christians. We have some people who were already attending church, and some seekers who became Christians through singing Black Gospel Music. These joined the choir and the Black Gospel Music moved them along in their walk. It was good for them, but others quit the choir because the choir's being on Sunday wouldn't allow them to sing in the choir and go to church. What I want to see is more people becoming Christians. It's important to have a good Black Gospel director. We can offer high quality (because of Ken). People who would pay much money to go to a secular school are being drawn into our church.

**Q.** Do you think the choir members get the meaning of the songs?

**A.** I translate all of the songs and make a booklet. Also, during the devotional time we talk about the songs in Japanese so that the choir members get the meaning.

**Q.** What do you charge?

**A.** ¥12,000/workshop (8 or 9 lessons).

**Q.** So you and Sakuma san take care of the administrative things and Ken does the directing?

**A.** Yes, and we split the income; half goes to the church and half goes to Ken.

**Q.** You just had a concert at CAJ with around 500 people in attendance. How did you feel about that event?

**A.** That concert was really so good. From the survey we did we could see that the concert was the best part—"the icing on the cake" for everybody. We do concerts like that so that people will stay in the choir and be exposed to a worship atmosphere. Also, we had a devotional time before the concert for the choir members. Actually, we have a devotional time for each lesson, every time we meet. The pastor or Leon Hill (the missionary at our church) or someone

else gives the devotional.

**Q.** Do you have a closing thought, something you want to say to missionaries in Japan?

**A.** Thinking about this Black Gospel boom in Japan, from the beginning the scripture that hit me most is what Jesus said when He entered Jerusalem, "If people are quiet, the stones will shout." These Japanese don't have faith yet; they don't care what they sing about so much, but in actuality they are singing and shouting His praises. I don't know if every shouting person will become a Christian or not, but it's like God is using these people to welcome Jesus to Japan. To me, this is about revival. Our Father God wants to hear praises in preparation for Jesus' coming to Japan. I really think that the Black Gospel boom might go away sometime, but God is using these voices. The next wave should be harvest time. I am really looking forward to what is coming next!

*"Let everything  
that has breath  
praise the Lord."*

Psalms 150:6

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# Standing Room Only!

by Mike Sherrill

By 7pm Saturday night, May 17, all 130 chairs were occupied and people were still filing into the sanctuary of Fukuzumi Mennonite Center in Sapporo, Japan. There was a buzz of excitement as the first song boomed from the amplifiers, “Every Time I Feel the Spirit.” The excitement continued for another three hours climaxing with a “pull-out-all-the-stops” version of the “This Little Light of Mine” that drew together all three Gospel bands, including electric and acoustic drums, bongos, saxophone, electric and acoustic guitar, bass, keyboard, and over a dozen vocalists.

**Opening the door:** How in the world did a church of about twenty-five people pull off such an event? Well, it had a little to do with the world and a lot to do with the Holy Spirit. If you had been sitting at the lunch table on a Sunday afternoon in the middle of February you might have overheard a conversation about the important role music plays in proclaiming the Gospel; how it can open hearts and draw listeners into redemption through Christ. Serita-sensei, pastor of Grace Mennonite Church, talked with Sherrill-san, Mennonite missionary, about the tremendous redemptive effect “coffee house” music ministry had in downtown Sapporo years ago. Over the years literally hundreds of people found faith and life renewal in Christ. As the two continued talking they discovered they both were amateur musicians, one on the drums, the other on the guitar. “Are there any other musicians in this church?” one asked. It turned out that a man who became a Christian about a year prior, was a semi-pro on the tenor sax. Another man who became a Christian only a few months ago played guitar and bass. So the four got together and prayerfully decided to start rehearsing. No one had any idea of what to expect, but the least we could do was open the door and see what the Lord might do.

**Mobilizing the laity:** Churches with a strong vitality generally have a high level of church membership involvement in the church’s ministry activities. Individuals make

their special contribution through the specific gifts they have. When the congregation heard officially that there was a church “worship band,” they were excited. So, it wasn’t long before the idea of a Gospel concert came up. Putting together a successful event took a lot of hands and cooperation. This first step, in deciding what course of action to take, was accessing the gifts and talents we had on hand. Some talents we knew of already and others were new discoveries. We have found that people enjoy the opportunity to put their talents to work and that proclaiming Christ through their talents is especially gratifying. The talents we had we put into action: graphic design, free-hand illustration, carpentry, lighting repair, stage layout, ordering materials, the art of making “excellent” coffee, parking attendants, stage crew, friendly greeters, and the list continues. By giving people the opportunity to do what they liked doing and were good at, the putting on of a big event became a joy for all.

**Joining hands:** As you know from the introduction, this event became much more than a four-guy pick-up band that had rehearsed for barely three months. To tell the truth, our band had only about thirty to forty minutes of material to contribute if we stretched it. So, we knew from the beginning we would need some outside corroboration. In actuality, it was good for us to be in the position of needing others because that gave the opportunity to join hands with other like-minded people—those who relish the opportunity of proclaiming Christ through music and evangelistic testimony. Pastor Serita made some phone calls, and soon we had two other Gospel bands on the venue. Officially this made it a Jamboree, a joining of hands: band to band, Christians to Christian, and also a welcome to performers not yet believers. Many Gospel choirs in Japan are finding that as they allow non-Christians to enter their choirs the souls of these individuals simply cannot resist the transforming power of the Holy Spirit. Gospel choirs see a very high rate of conversion to Christian faith. This spiritual

phenomenon is feeding directly into the vitality of many Japanese churches.

**Proclaiming Christ:** The original purpose of this Gospel Jamboree was to proclaim the peace, love and joy of Christ. Ultimately, the joy and excitement generated at this event was not derived from the music, but from the spiritual overflow that comes from praising God in song and word. Our repertoire expressed the full range of human experience from the anguish and *angst* of Serita-sensei’s original song “Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani” to the release and bliss of “Oh, Happy Day.” Throughout the concert, the words in the songs and real-life testimonies, given by several of the performers, demonstrated the reality of a loving and caring God and the transforming power of faith in Christ. In a land of many gods, we must show the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ to be Someone entirely unique. The One True God. The One God willing to lovingly embrace all of humanity, including Japan. Herein lies the hope, peace and security that so many are eagerly searching.

**Update:** The band performed again in June at Ashoro Mennonite Church, in rural central Hokkaido. As many local residents turned out for the event the congregation was greatly encouraged. In addition, Cross Music, a local Christian recording studio, produced a debut CD from the live recording.

Rev. Dr. Mike Sherrill, Rev. Teresa Sherrill along with Isaiah, Jeremiah, Sophia, and Grandma Juanita minister and live in Sapporo, Hokkaido.

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you a hope and a future.” Jeremiah 29:11



# ALPHA course doing well in Japan!

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A talk with Japan Director Andy Game:

“God is bringing a new confidence in how to do evangelism in Japan. Alpha is just a part of the relevant work of God’s Holy Spirit.” Andy, traveling widely, is able to observe much and he is encouraged.

Seven years ago Alpha got its start in the Yokohama Christian Center and Saint Albans Anglican Church where a good number of unchurched Japanese, who wanted to know more about Christianity gathered. Courses were taught in English with discussion times in Japanese. Two things happened; the faith of believers (helpers in each course) was strengthened, and the unchurched made professions of faith and were baptized. Japanese leaders, seeing what was taking place, not only asked about the

course, but also formed delegations and went to England to join conferences. It was there they caught the vision for Alpha!

Japanese have so many questions about life and religion. Alpha course allows attendees to ask questions—any question. This approach gives dignity to the attendee. Gospel truth is taught by means of video. No preaching is done per se. For more information visit Alpha’s home page. (See below.)

Resources are available in Japanese, Korean, Chinese and English.

Japanese leaders are catching the vision! Since last year’s historical training conference in Tokyo (over 400 from a wide range of denominational backgrounds attended), 10 major cities have been targeted for training and networking. Already in the first five cities chosen, (Tokyo, Osaka, Nagoya, Naha and Sapporo), half-day sessions have been held introducing the Alpha Course, its principles, theology of evangelism and practicalities. The Alpha team returns to each city to hold a day of training, in hopes that

leaders will recruit gifted and burdened believers to hold 10 week Alpha Courses.

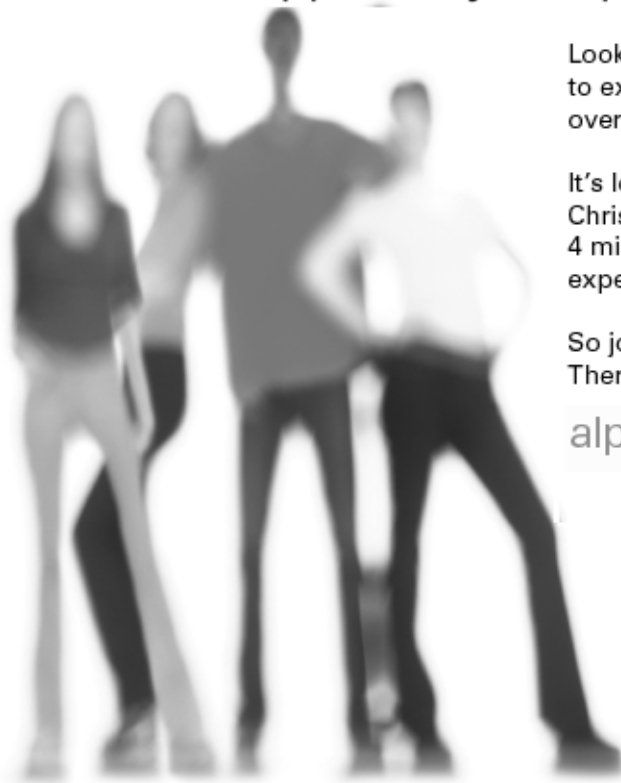
Presently, nation-wide there are 32 registered groups. Registering is strongly encouraged because inquiries need referrals. The Alpha Course is excellent for returnees! Alpha is perfect for families and for youth.

Andy, back in England a number of years ago, watched Alpha grow. He saw many coming to Christ! He witnessed “unlikely people—whole families” dramatically changed. Marriages were restored, healings took place, and dynamic things were happening in “ordinary” lives. Andy, an MK from Bangladesh with a heart for the world, took hold of the Alpha concepts and “ran with them,” knowing there was great potential for Japan. Could it be that in this postmodern age a key to reaching people for Christ is as simple as asking questions and discovering truth? Alpha Course gives the opportunity for this very discovery!

—the editor

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# Hepburn and Meiji Gakuin University Celebrates Its 140th Anniversary

by Sean Odani

The year before Abraham Lincoln was elected President a middle-aged Presbyterian couple set foot in the port city of Yokohama. Dr. and Mrs. James Curtis Hepburn would spend their next thirty-three years in Japan, a tenure to go down as among the most influential of any foreigners ever. Many of their contributions remain visible today, including one of the nation's oldest mission schools, Meiji Gakuin University.

While colorful woodblocks from the early 1860s portray an exotic and romantic Japan the period remained one of danger for the Christian missionary. Anti-foreign sentiments ran high, and historical records indicate a handful of foreigners were actually murdered. In addition, the government's official ban on the faith was not lifted until 1873. The earliest pioneers found themselves evangelizing covertly through teaching English.

Hepburn, a doctor, opened up a clinic to treat Japanese patients as another disguised form of outreach. The clinic was located near the port of Kanagawa, a little to the north, but

eigners. Hepburn made double use of his time in this indigenous environment by gathering information for his landmark Japanese-English dictionary.

After a season in Kanagawa, the Hepburns moved to the foreign settlement located in the Kannai area of Yokohama. By this time, foreigners were allowed to live in a second designated area, the neighboring Bluff overlooking the harbor. The Hepburns found a place on the edge of the original settlement, near the foot of the Bluff. Today, the land houses the Yokohama Immigration Office. At this spot, in 1863, Hepburn opened a small school. Meiji Gakuin University was conceived.

The first edition of Hepburn's dictionary came out in 1867. The work was of tremendous benefit to missionaries and traders alike. Having spent some time in China as a missionary, the doctor was keen on language learning and foresaw the usefulness of a linguistic reference.

Around this time, the port city of Yokohama was home to many big-name early missionaries including Dr. Samuel R. Brown, Dr. Duane B.

Simmons, Jonathan Goble, and James H. Ballagh. This proximity resulted in a virtual Antioch church effect, a community of capable leaders.

God's hand was upon this early group whose members hailed from various denominations. God honored their unity and cooperative spirit. They did not hesitate to work together. Students of Brown and Ballagh comprised the famous "Yokohama Band" of future Japanese Christian leaders. Some of Ballagh's students founded the country's first Japanese Protestant Church, Yokohama Kaigan Kyokai in 1872. Since then, the church

has held Sunday morning services at the same



*Tokyo campus chapel*

location near Osanbashi Pier. Around the same time, a cluster of Hepburn's students was baptized and became the nucleus of the Yokohama First Presbyterian Church. The congregation was later renamed Shiloh Church. Today, the group worships in a striking redbrick facility, visible from the Keihin Tohoku Line between Sakuragicho and Kannai stations.

In these early years of mission work, the school was a model for evangelism and produced great fruit. At first schools were for boys; however, it was not long before women missionaries set up learning for girls. Mary E. Kidder, with help from Mrs. Hepburn, formed a school which operated out of the Hepburn's medical dispensary, where the doctor continued practicing medicine on the weekends. The small school prospered, moved out, and took on the name Isaac Ferris Seminary. Today, Ferris Jogakuin is regarded as the top girls' school in the area. Other female-led ministries sprang up. American Mission Home was initiated by three American women missionaries. This school now bears the name Yokohama Kyoritsu Gakuen. Brittan School became Seibi Gakuen and is more recently known as Yokohama Eiwa Jogakuen. The Sands's School is now called Soshin Jogakko. All these ministries were rather avant-garde considering the extremely low status of Japanese women at the time.

Hepburn's literary work continued. He headed up a translation team, including Dr. Brown who translated the New Testament into Japanese. Translation of the twenty-seven books was completed in 1879. The Old Testament was finished eight years later. In 1886 Hepburn put out a 3rd edition of his Japanese-English Dictionary, which included an English-Japanese



*Enbou "Eternal Hope" Bridge, Yokohama campus*

well outside the designated settlement for for-

section. The Romanization Society of Japan took note of Hepburn's form of romanization in this edition, and indicated that if he would be willing to make a few modifications, they would be happy to endorse his system. This became the Hepburn system of romaji.

As with the translation project, Meiji Gakuin itself was the combined effort of Hepburn and Brown. In 1877, the students of Brown and missionary Dr. Guido E. Verbeck joined together to form Tokyo Union Theological School. In the year of Hepburn's 3rd edition of the Japanese-English Dictionary, Tokyo Union Theological School merged with Hepburn's school to form a larger school, officially taking the name Meiji Gakuin. The new school moved to the Shirokane area of Tokyo, and Hepburn served as its first president. By that time, the institution had a Literature Department and an Economics Department. Preparatory classes for Bible School were taught under the Literature Department.

The Hepburns celebrated their Golden Wedding Anniversary as active missionaries. In 1892, at the age of 77, Hepburn retired. The couple returned to America. Though already a relatively old man for the 19th century, the doctor enjoyed superb health and lived on for another nineteen years. Ironically, Hepburn's life on earth and the Meiji Era both came to a close in the year 1911.

Characteristic of many quality works, Hepburn's ministry outlasted him. Following his tenure, the school grew. Shortly after the turn of the century it produced the well-known Japanese social worker and philanthropist,



*Dr. James C. Hepburn (1815-1911)*

Kagawa Toyohiko. Kagawa labored among the poor following his graduation and later attended Princeton University. His writing includes such books as *Shisen O Koete* (Crossing the Death Line) and *The Religion of Jesus*.

Among the school's most noted instructors was August K. Reischauer, father of Ambassador Edwin O. Reischauer.

Over the years, the school has been the base and starting point for countless unsung heroes sharing the love of Christ in the classroom.

A subtle but substantial pre-war change to the school came in 1930 when the Theology Department merged with another Bible school in Tokyo to become Japan Theological School, now known as Tokyo Theological Seminary. Thereafter, Meiji Gakuin University no longer awarded theological degrees. Even before WWII the school had a Social Work Department.

As the nation continued to change, after the war, so did the school. In the 1960s a Law Department was added. The early 1970s was a radical time with Japan's Baby Boomers entering university. Disillusioned, with the sacrifices of their parents for the sake of rebuilding the country, students became vocal, questioning all authority. Meiji Gakuin University, though spared from the most violent protests, was not without disruption. Eventually things toned down, though there was a noted change in the demeanor of the students. Until that time, chapel had been a prominent means of evangelism on campus. Students attended out of curiosity, seeking meaning and truth. After the riots, however, students seemed less curious intellectually, and less academically minded. University became a time to relax and enjoy one's self.

The Bubble period was also significant in terms of the school's history. Following the trend of major universities in Tokyo, the administration felt it was time to expand and create a branch campus in the suburbs. Adding a second campus would allow the school to increase enrollment; little thought was given to the declining birthrate. The school opted for a symbolic homecoming in choosing Yokohama. While relocation to the old stomping grounds

of the Bluff or Kannai would have been nostalgic, these areas had become the most expensive in the city. The outer edges of the town would be more practical. The school obtained a sizeable tract of land in the Totsuka area, a largely residential district to the south.

The second campus opened in 1985. The



*Main building, Tokyo campus*

following year, the school added an International Studies Department. This would be the sole department to operate all four years at the Yokohama campus. In general, students of all majors spent their first two years at the Yokohama campus and the last two at the Tokyo campus.

Each campus developed its own personality. The Yokohama campus became somewhat carefree, with its predominantly Freshman and Sophomore population. Located on the top of a forested hill, the campus provided a "country feeling" despite

its Yokohama address. The Tokyo campus, located on prime land within the Yamanote Line and a primarily upperclassman population, became a bit somber, as students faced the realities of job hunting.

In retrospect, old-time staff describe the expansion as a mixed blessing. Though small, the Tokyo campus allowed all Christian instructors to be together, a situation not unlike the founding days of Hepburn, Brown, and others. Apparently, Christian gatherings and outreaches during the single campus era drew larger numbers. With the two-campus system, Christian faculty and staff found themselves spread thin. Ballpark estimates put the faculty at 20 percent Christian and the staff at 10 percent. The school is extremely open to increasing these numbers.

As for daily religious life, both campuses conduct a voluntary twenty-minute chapel during lunch hour. Speakers include Christian faculty, staff, local pastors, and sometimes students. The Tokyo campus adds an evening chapel on Wednesday nights. The school has a Religious Affairs Office and its own church, Meiji Gakuin Church. The flock meets in the chapel of the Yokohama campus on Sunday mornings. From 1996 this congregation has been pastored by the school's full-time minister



*Yokohama campus chapel*

who carries the title Meiji Gakuin Pastor.

Recognizing that the Freshman year is when students usually choose their clubs, the school gives out its official religious handbook to all incoming freshman. All first year students are required to take a course on Christianity and write a brief report on a chapel visit.

The school's Christian club is quite vibrant and bears Dr. Hepburn's name. A Christian club for international students, most from Korea, is also active. In recent years, with shorter attention spans and faster-moving lifestyles, traditional Bible studies have given way to music related outreaches such as chapel choirs, Gospel music groups, and concerts. The religious handbook lists a wide range of school-sponsored outreaches and programs, a good number of them during Christmas. Overall, the institution's Christian heritage provides a favorable backdrop for Christian student groups.

Academically, the university finds itself in the top third nationally. While not part of the elite Tokyo Big Six, the school is more than a regional college with students hailing from all

areas of Japan. Despite its relatively strong ranking, the school does find itself challenged by severe demographic projections and changing educational philosophies.

In the context of an uncertain age, the university's guidebook cover, with a picture of the founder, makes the reflective declaration, "The origin of Meiji Gakuin goes back to Hepburn's school in Yokohama." Like a *haiku* with a hidden meaning, the statement serves as a gentle yet profound reminder that a mission begun 140 years ago remains in progress.

Sean Odani has an A.A. in Biblical Studies, Hope Chapel School of the Bible; B.A. in Speech, University of Hawaii; M.B.S. in Biblical Studies, Christian International Graduate School. Sean is a tentmaker and church planter from Honolulu, Hawaii. He teaches at several mission schools in the southern Kanto.

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# Shinkaiyaku Bible Revision Released

Japan Bible Publishers (Nihon Seisho Kankokai - NSK) announced the publication of the third edition of the *Shinkaiyaku Seisho*, also called the New Japanese Bible. This translation has been the standard for Evangelical churches and denominations in Japan since its original publication in 1970. This revision includes 900 word changes, a new page layout and design with a larger type face for easier reading. The cross-references and text notes have been revised to reflect the changes based on the latest research in the original languages of the Bible. Page numbers will also be different from the previous version.

One edition to be released October 25, 2003, is the medium-size print Bible with references, color maps and text notes. A large-size print edition without references or notes will be released November 25, 2003. The compact-size edition is scheduled for release in January 2004. More editions will follow over the next two years. The previous version will not be reprinted. Books, magazines, software and Sunday School curriculum published by Word of Life Press Ministries (WLPM) and other Evangelical publishers will begin quoting from

the new revision by next year.

Although the translators group, the Shinkaiyaku Seisho Kankokai (SSK), has been researching and compiling revisions since the 2nd edition was published in 1978, Hiroshi Kishimoto headed the group of 5 translators that brought this project to completion. The intention of the translators was to make clear the meaning of the original text as the basis of sound doctrine. A good place to compare wording is the first chapter of Genesis. The translators especially focused on the words for leper and leprosy as well as various physical handicaps, replacing those now considered derogatory in contemporary Japanese. This took the longest to decide and was done after an extensive survey of Evangelical churches and pastors and after listening to the thoughts of Christian sufferers of Hanson's Disease.

A summary of word changes was prepared, and is available upon request to NSK. The board of NSK is headed by Rev. Matao Okamura (Domei Kyodan) and has representatives from 24 Evangelical denominations. NSK's office is a division of WLPM, which partners with the churches to distribute the revision

nationwide.

Toshio Tsumura, chairman of SSK, stressed that their intent is to provide a translation that presents the original text of the Bible for the benefit of all Christians and all the people of Japan, not just Evangelicals. It is for all who want to study the Bible and know what it actually says. To do that, the translators consulted the latest research on the Bible manuscripts in the original languages. They worked from the 7th edition of Kittel's Hebrew text of the Old Testament and the 24th edition of Nestle's Greek text of the New Testament.

The new revision builds on the heritage of the *Shinkaiyaku* translation that has been the rallying point for the cause of the absolute trustworthiness of the Bible. It will provide a trustworthy basis for doctrine and Christian living as Japanese believers communicate the Word of God in words that do not place unnecessary barriers for people with disabilities.

Don Regier is the director of international relations, WLPM.



# Listening with Different Ears

—an essential method in communicating the Gospel for a shame-oriented society.

When I came to Japan in 1995 for the first time, I knew that a missionary who has a long-term commitment needs to thoroughly master the language. That is hard work, as most of you presumably know. After seven years in this country, I still have a long way to go. However, after having reached a working knowledge of the language and able to deliver sermons in Japanese, I realized that it is equally hard work for the audience to listen. Because of my lack of vocabulary, grammar or foreign accent, some things I say may sound a bit strange. This can be attributed to the fact that the Gospel itself can sound strange to the natural man, the word of the cross being foolishness unto Gentiles

(cf. 1 Corinthians 1: 18ff.)<sup>1</sup>. This strangeness is inevitable. But there is still another strangeness that stems from the fact that Japanese ears hear something different than we intend to say. For example, the sentence: *kami wa watashitachi no tsumi o yurushite kudasaimasu*. Japanese ears, which never before had contact with the biblical message, might understand it this way: “I bring you the glad tidings that God(s) permit(s) our crimes.” Of course, I wanted to say that God forgives our sins. However, when I simply use the Japanese words, without further explanation, it can create serious misunderstanding. Because of this, a missionary not only has to master the grammar and vocabulary of the language, but also needs to learn to listen with the ears of the people to whom he proclaims the Good News. Next to language, our basic tool is careful listening. This is an indispensable “missionary method.” The scriptures encourage us frequently to become good “listeners” (cf. Proverbs 18:13,17; 20:12; James 1:19).

Why is it now that the sentence *kami wa watashitachi no tsumi o yurushite kudasaimasu* was understood in such a corrupted way? This short sentence contains three essential terms of the Christian message, all of which are problematic when simply translated into Japanese.

*Kami* – our understanding of God

*Tsumi* – our understanding of guilt and sin

*Yurushi* – what it means to be forgiven

## 1. *Kami*—our understanding of God

What do people think or imagine when they think of God? Maybe they imagine an ineffable bright light or a supernatural power they could utilize for their own purposes. For others “He” may be the “Spirit of the Universe.” And still other people may have only a very vague concept of God or none at all. Maybe they do not even have a name for Him. This is probably as true for our home countries in Europe or North America that are becoming increasingly secularized (though not non-religious) as it is for the people to whom we are sent.

In Japanese, we use the word *kami* to talk about God. The following paragraph from an Encyclopedia may help explain what Japanese understand when we use the term *kami*.

In the first place the word *kami* means different celestial and terrestrial deities, which appear in ancient writings; it means, then, also honorable spirits, which reside in holy places where they are revered. Finally, not to speak of humans, birds, quadrupeds, trees and herbs, the ocean and mountains as well as honorable things with salient or extraordinary features, are all called *kami*. These *kami* are very diverse, and there are strong ones as well as weak ones, some are admirable others not; there are also good ones and bad ones. Because of this diversity, it is almost impossible to give a general definition.

There are, according to tradition, eight hundred myriads of these *kami* (*yaoyorozu no kami*). A myriad is 10,000 or an uncountable number. Since there is no morphological distinction between singular and plural in Japanese nouns, you don’t know right away whether only one *kami* or eight million *kami* is meant. After Catholic missionaries in the 17th century searched in vain for an appropriate and generally accepted translation for the Christian word of God (in Latin *Deus*), the first protestant translators of the Bible, at the close of the 19th century, decided to introduce the term *kami* into Christian vocabulary.

This had two consequences. First, I need to explain that the Japanese idea of *kami* is differ-

ent from the *kami* revealed in the Bible. Second, the term *kami* took on a monotheistic nuance in the course of the evangelization of Japan, with the Japanese Bible thus transforming the Japanese language.

As a missionary proclaiming the Gospel in a foreign language, I need to listen as well as speak. Since the communication process is only complete after a message has been received, I can only know what I have said when I hear the answers of the recipient.

If you ask someone whether she believes in God, and suppose that person answers affirmatively, what does it mean? Usually we don’t know anything at all! Or suppose Taro Tanaka says that he doesn’t believe in God, it may only mean that he does not accept a certain idea of God. That’s all.

Our belief in the Triune God enables us to communicate the only true God who transcends all our self-made images and ideas of God which are nothing but mere idols (cf. first and second commandment). God, the most abstract reality, becomes the most concrete, a human person, in Jesus Christ who wants to live within us and transform us through the Holy Spirit. We could not grasp the meaning of the Holy Trinity with our logical minds, but His presence leads us to awe and adoration.

## 2. *Tsumi*—our understanding of guilt and sin

The second important term in our example sentence is *tsumi*, which means crime in the judicial sense. You can imagine some indignant faces when I say that everyone is a sinner using the Japanese word *tsumibito* (the same characters are, outside Christian usage, usually read *hanzainin*). Of course, the last thing I wanted was to imply that everyone in my audience was a criminal.

Even after 140 years of Protestant mission, there is only a very small portion of the Japanese population won for Christ (the figure of one percent is most widely accepted). There are many views and opinions about the reasons for this puzzling slow growth of the church in

Japan. One of the most common propositions is that the Japanese in general lack “sin-consciousness” (*tsumi ishiki*). This is because, as we have just seen, they don’t know of the only true, one, and personal creator God who is almighty and has set absolute moral standards to which we are accountable. This explanation seems to be corroborated by the social-anthropological distinction between so-called “guilt-cultures” and “shame-cultures,” terms coined by Ruth Benedict,<sup>2</sup> who categorizes the Japanese culture as a “shame-culture.”

The Japanese, having no “guilt-conscience,” naturally lack the desire for forgiveness offered by the atonement of Christ.

Before we go on in our discussion and take a closer look in the Bible, let me just briefly explain the difference between “shame-oriented” and “guilt-oriented” cultures.<sup>3</sup> Simply put, the conscience works differently. According to Melford E. Spiro<sup>4</sup>, who did extensive research on “shame-orientation,” someone raised in a “guilt-oriented culture” has internalized the values taught by only a few agents (significant others). So he feels the painful pangs of conscience when he does something wrong (i.e. against internalized values) even when those agents are not around anymore. This is true of all individualized societies. Through confession and the receiving of forgiveness, the conscience is relieved of its burden. Whoever experienced the “hell bound ride of conscience” (Luther), and then received the forgiving love of God through Christ, knows what I am talking about.

In contrast, the “shame-oriented conscience” is under constant fear of being discovered and embarrassed. Instead of internalized values, the rules apply only in a group of significant others as long as they are around. Owing to the fact that the group of significant others are too many, the values can not be internalized apart from the group. The group is the rule. This is mainly true of collectivistic cultures.

“Losing face” is the most terrible thing that can happen. Therefore, persons of the “shame-oriented culture” smile when they are “caught in the act” or when in an awkward situation. (This is very disturbing for westerners.) To always smile is far from being always happy. To confess one’s sins would not necessarily lead to relief, but rather to social death.

It is said that the main obstacle in reaching the Japanese with the Gospel is the lack of a guilt-conscience in spiritual matters. To remove this obstacle would mean to change the Japanese culture from the start. It could well take a couple of hundred years, before we would experience increased receptiveness. On the other hand, the Japanese culture is shifting

from collectivism to more individualism, thus possibly changing the psychological workings of the conscience. In any case, for someone to recognize himself as a sinner before God, is not making a person feel guilty, but the conviction of the Holy Spirit (John 16:8).

Of course, the forgiveness of sins is the very center of our message. But this forgiveness is not “forgive and forget.” Instead, it is justification, the acceptance of the sinner by God. It is the restoration of a relationship with the living God. Sin, according to the Bible, is not a moral transgression or fault, but it is the separation from God. And from this separation flows all the moral evil as well as our creaturely pain, suffering, and eventually death. Sin in the Bible is a term referring to a broken relationship. The fall of man is a fall away from God. We lose the immediacy with our Creator, the source of all life.

Let us revisit the great passage of Scripture in Genesis 3 describing in vivid colors the fall of man. We see Adam and Eve, the garden of Eden, the mysterious tree(s) of “Knowledge of Good and Evil” and the “Tree of Life,” and the snake with its deceptive promise of “man becoming like God.” Eve ate from the forbidden tree, and she also gave it to her husband. What was the immediate consequence? Did Adam feel the pangs of conscience? Did he confess his disobedience and misdeed right away? Did he ask for forgiveness to relieve his conscience? No, his first reaction was shame. Not the “guilt-conscience,” but a “shame-conscience” was the consequence of the fall. Adam and Eve realized they were naked. They lost their naive innocence and became self-aware. They tried to cover themselves with leaves to hide from each other, and they hide in the bushes from God. (Here we see that guilt and shame are not two concepts to be put in juxtaposition to each other. Rather, shame is the consequence of sin. On the other hand, to feel guilty does not necessarily mean to be guilty and vice-versa.)

The relationship between God and man was disrupted, as was the relationship between man and man. Unity was lost and replaced with estrangement and shame (cf. Ephesians 4:18).

Now, we would not consider shame as something bad. On the contrary, it fulfills a very important task. Shamelessness is something obnoxious and repelling. The feeling of shame points to a very sensitive and vulnerable area in our lives. Shame has the function of protecting. Shame protects us from becoming mere objects (instead of being a living being created and loved by God) or from getting hurt.

In this sense, shame points to the fact that we have lost the immediacy to God<sup>5</sup>

and a loving relationship with Him. It shows that something very essential in our lives is wrong. We are “alienated from the life of God” (Ephesians 4: 18).

We are like strangers who have left the oasis, with its life-giving springs, and lost our way in the desert, wandering helplessly around fighting dehydration and certain death, and being deceived by mirage after mirage. We have left the fountain of life and try to dig cisterns which hold no water (cf. Jeremiah 2:13). What is left is a deep sense of dissatisfaction and a longing for life from God.

Whenever we are separated from God, we see each other as mere objects and not as living persons created by the living God. Even religion and God become mere objects of theology, worship, magic, etc. These the Bible clearly rejects as idolatry. We are desperately searching for healthy and authentic lifestyles, but realize that this is not an option we are free to choose and to take. We are bound to sin and destruction on a personal and global level. As the apostle Paul cries out: “I can will what is right, but I cannot do it. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do” (Romans 7:18.19). We are already in sin and estranged from God.

This leads to our third key word.

### 3. *Yurus*hi-what it means to be forgiven

In everyday use, the word *yurus*hi, as used for forgiveness in the Bible, means “permission, excuse, license.” But to assume that God would just tolerate our sins would, of course, be a great misunderstanding. Forgiveness is not a “license to sin.” The apostle Paul had to fight off this misapprehension (cf. Romans 6:1).

As we have mentioned above, forgiveness of sin must be understood in the context of justification; our relationship with God is restored. Like the lost wanderer in the desert, we find our way back to the fountain of life; we are saved.

Let’s look again at Genesis chapter 3. Despite the fact that Adam and Eve had been expelled from the Garden of Eden (so that they would not eat from the Tree of Life and live eternally, verse 22), their relationship with God was not entirely broken. The first thing God did was to cover the nakedness of man with the skin of an animal. The first sacrifice was made by

*Continued on page 25*

*Continued from page 19*

God in order to protect man who had become vulnerable. God was clothing man so he need not be ashamed in his exile and alienation. For me, this is one of the most touching scenes in the Bible. At the same time, it points to the far

## From the President's Pencil

Two significant events affected the missionary community this past summer. First, in July, JMLI (Japan Missionary Language Institute) closed its doors after 35 years. In an effort to continue serving the community in the areas of language and culture, a standing committee of JEMA is working with the old JMLI board.

But recently, a language school named TAC opened a branch on the second floor of OCC (Ochanomizu Christian Center). It specializes in training businessmen, so at first I didn't give it a second thought. However, after some persuasion from JEMA secretary, Ms. Matsushita, I paid a visit to the school president. Walking into the office of President Takahashi, I was warmly greeted with, "Mr. Leaf!" Taken back I realized that he had been my first-year teacher at JMLI 31 years ago when it was located in this very same building! He taught only one year, then transferred to ICU. Later he opened his own school, using some of his own innovative language learning methods on how to teach Japanese as a second language. He claims that within one year his students are speaking Japanese as well as being able to read *kanji*. "The classroom is a language ghetto," he says. So two weeks into the course, students are out of the classroom using their Japanese.

Mr. Takahashi and his assistant are dedicated Christians. Mr. Takahashi also serves on the OCC Board of Directors. He expressed his desire to help missionaries and will offer discounts to missionaries who enroll. How providential that he has opened a school branch right in OCC just at this critical time!

Secondly, the JEA Global Missions Youth Conference (SEND ME) took place on Aoyama Gakuin campus, August 12-15. Rainy, cool weather blanketed Tokyo, but that didn't deter the 2,110 college and career young people who attended. Some say--and I heartily agree--this was a turning point for the Church in Japan! It was an extraordinary event blessed by God!

The JEA leadership was tested many times during all the many preparations! Although often discouraged and facing opposition, they took great steps of faith and demonstrated courage in executing all the plans. At the final meeting of the conference, two questions were asked. 1. How many of you will follow Christ? A great number of hands were raised. 2. How many of you will serve Christ (*kenshin*)? Though not as many hands were raised, a great many held their hands high in sincere dedication!

As with any conference, results are critical. JEA leaders know this very well and already have follow-up meetings scheduled.

JEMA, along with 29 other Christian organizations, had a booth. JEMA vice-president Ken

Taylor had a major part in the music. Veteran missionary Donald Wright did simultaneous translation. Other missionaries taught in workshops. And many were volunteers. We appreciated the fine cooperation given! From beginning to end, this conference was the work of the Church in Japan. Let us continue to encourage and pray for Japanese leaders as they build on this momentous and historic event.

Ray Leaf, president



**Winter Issue deadline:  
November 15, 2003**

*We are wanting testimonies of missionaries who are MKs.*

*Please send your articles/testimonies to your editor at: dikropp@gol.com or FAX: 047-486-6210  
Please send your photos to your production editor, Jim Rew, at: therew@yaboo.com*

## JEMA Datebook 2003

Event	Date	Place
WIM Day of Prayer	October 27, 2003	OCC
CPI Conference	November 18-21, 2003	Fuji Hakone Land
JEMA Day of Prayer	January 12, 2004	OCC
Mission Leaders' Consultation	February 24, 2004	OCC
JEMA Plenary Session	February 25, 2004	OCC
WIM Spring Retreat	March 3-5, 2004	Megumi Chalet, Karuizawa
JEMA Day of Prayer	April 5, 2004	OCC
Tokyo Men's Prayer Summit	May 11-14, 2004	
Tokai Men's Prayer Summit	May 24-27, 2004	



## Executive Committee Report



Japan Evangelical Missionary Association

### July 9, 2003

#### OCC Tokyo

Member-at-large Richard Kropp gave the devotional followed by a time of prayer.

Peter Blank, treasurer, reported that profits were slightly higher than this time last year, but lower than the two previous years.

The WIM committee reported good progress in planning the October Day of Prayer, the 27th, and the annual spring retreat. (Check the JEMA Datebook for details.)

On July 9, seven men took part in the JEMA prayer walk at Yasukuni Shrine.

CPI and JEMA will share a booth at the upcoming SEND ME Conference.

Gary Fujino reported that last year's rates will apply for the upcoming CPI conference, November 18-21, Fuji Hakone Land. Dr. Dwight Smith will be the special guest speaker. (Check ad for details.)

Approval was given to Janice Kropp to form a Japan Harvest editorial staff. Don Wright reported progress on the 96-page Operation Japan prayer guide expected to sell for 100 yen per copy.

The proposal to combine membership and subscription to the Japan Harvest magazine as a package will be presented to the Mission Leaders' Consultation at the February 24, 2004 gathering.

The JEMA convention poster board is ready for use and will be displayed at both the Karuizawa Summer and SEND ME conferences. Ms. Megumi Takei designed both the logo and the layout.

Don Wright sent a written report of the annual JEA business meeting. A significant point was in the fact that JEA has a growing awareness of the need for cooperative evangelistic efforts in local areas.

JEMA office has received two computers, one, an iMac, donated by a client of David Scott's, and the other from the former language school JMLI.

Mrs. Debbie Penner, independent mis-

sionary from Kyushu, presented her vision for a worldwide prayer movement called "Free Japan." (This grew out of her timely article entitled, "Storming Heaven," Winter 2003.) The movement was endorsed by the Executive Committee. A prayer walk is set for March 2004. (See ad.)

In preparation for the 2004 Plenary Session, members selected for the nominating committee are Ken Taylor, Traugott Ockert and Gary Fujino. Vacancies to be filled are: president, treasurer, and one member-at-large.

Ray Leaf will represent JEMA at the Karuizawa Summer Conference. Alma Oline and members of the WIM Executive Committee are planning a Ladies' Buffet with speaker Stella Cox.

### September 10, 2003

#### OCC Tokyo

Treasurer Peter Blank gave the devotional followed by prayer.

The treasurer's report was given. Two used computers were contributed to the JEMA office (note July 9, 2003 report). Beginning January 2004, the Windows accounting system will be used for all financial records. The other computer will replace the outdated Mac, which had been used for the bulk of office business. Appreciation for the contributions was expressed.

The Women in Ministry Commission is planning a prayer day on October 27 at OCC.

The JEMA Day of Prayer is scheduled for October 6. A prayer walk around the Imperial Palace is planned.

John Mehn, CPI director, reported nearly 80,000 yen worth of materials sold at last year's conference. In November 15 delegates from a Japanese church in Hawaii are coming to the conference, and there will be several overseas teams serving again this year. Adequate time for personal reflection and interaction is being

planned.

Several JEMA commission and executive members served at the recent SEND ME Conference. Officially 2,110 registrants attended. Vice President Ken Taylor had a significant music role. It was reported that this conference very well might prove to be a turning point for the Church in Japan. The Executive Committee approved the purchase of a small ad in the SEND ME Conference follow-up publication. The new display board, purchased by JEMA, helped represent CPI, CAN, and JEMA at the conference.

Pastor Irikawa's Personal Evangelism Seminar, given in the spring, continues to generate interest with over 20 new orders for videos.

The JMLI board met for its final meeting on September 9. On October 17 the JEMA Language and Culture Committee will meet to consider further steps in creating a commission to help missionaries in the area of language acquisition.

The Karuizawa Summer Conference went well with about 100 attending the final Sunday evening service. The week long program included a concert, a film night, a prayer breakfast, and a seminar.

#### Summer issue 2003 corrections.

We humbly apologize for the misspelling of the following names:  
President Motoyoshi Tago,  
Coretta King,  
the University of Edinburgh.  
Also, we should have written the Komeito Party and not the Soka Gakkai Party as printed. *We are sorry!*



## Encouraging Mrs. Kathryn Holmlund

This issue we'd like to let you know how, Kathryn Holmlund is doing. Several months ago Mizuko Matsushita and I had a great time talking with her in her lovely home, one room in the Seibo Home, connected to the Seibo Catholic Hospital in Shimoochiai, Tokyo. This year marks Kathryn's 22nd year in Japan and also her 88th birthday!

Mizuko and I went to visit Kathryn to cheer her up; instead she brought us cheer as we listened to all the miraculous events of her blessed life. Let me just mention a few:

Of Swedish heritage, Kathryn was only 11 years old when her mother died (she died of TB at age 36). Widowed twice, Kathryn has led a life of humble service in such places as Multnomah Bible College (Portland, Oregon) where she studied and served, in the Ivory Coast, where she helped missionaries and loved MKs, and in Sweden when on her return trip to the US she met her very first Japanese friend, Mutsu. Staying in the Stockholm University dormitory she found Mutsu so helpful, even willing to show her around on his "free" weekend. This meeting connected Kathryn with Japan for the last 22 years, but before coming to live here she served as director of Social Services at the C&MA Santa Anna Retirement Home (California) for 3 years. As amazing as it seems, God got Kathryn to Japan because she wanted to meet Mutsu's family (Mutsu, with no living mother, considered Kathryn his "mom"). She contacted the guesthouse of the Covenant Seminary in Naka Meguro, and it was then she was told of a need at the guest facility. Would she be interested in being the hostess for one year? After gaining the needed permission, she came on a one-year commitment. That year

brought Kathryn to where she is today, 22 years later, with permanent residency, with care in a beautiful retirement center, and with memories enough to fill a book!

Kathryn has taught many an English and Bible class taking her to a Buddhist high school (Kosei Koko) for 5 years, for 11 years to Ms. Millie Morehouse's English Bible class (Millie left Japan for retirement), not to mention the years of 12 English classes weekly at Ochanomizu Christian Center. Kathryn has also been a faithful supporter of Okutama Bible Chalet's summer camp program!

In spite of some present physical limitation Kathryn fills her days with loving Japanese on her floor of the retirement center, writing notes (monthly) on 120 New Life League tracts she passes out, financially supporting Bibles for third world countries, and... well, it just doesn't end! We could go on and on! Then, too, Kathryn is loved by a host of Japanese and missionaries. She told us how much it has meant to her down through the years that whenever Dr. Siegfried Buss is in Japan, he never fails to give her a visit!

We want to encourage Kathryn again today, and we pray that God will give her many more years... of being blessed and being a blessing! She certainly blessed us during our visit! And, I sure hope she gets started writing! Japan has such a rich Christian heritage in the service of special people like Mrs. Kathryn Holmlund! Blessings today, dear Kathryn. —*editor*

## Surviving Life with Multiples

Remember seeing them in the Summer 2001 issue of *Japan Harvest*? Well, the Schoenborn quadruplets are now two and a half years old!

**Japan Harvest:** How's it goin'?

**Scott:** We are in the middle of the "terrible two's multiplied by four!"

Scott told me that even with five children under age seven he and Beth have never ques-



from left to right: Katie, Kristin, Kent and Kyle

tioned God's call to Japan. "People thought we were crazy returning." (Beth's pregnancy, delivery and first year of the quads' lives took place in the US.)

Scott & Beth's philosophy: Make disciples of all nations, beginning at home! "We are in the middle of it—balancing family and church." Being back for about a year, Scott reports good growth in young believers in the Toyama church plant and in his family. Three youth attended the recent SEND ME Conference and returned home greatly encouraged! At Christmas 59 children came to the Christmas program. Half of these were friends of Kelly (now seven and attending the local elementary school). The Toyama area is very traditional, but the Schoenborns are determined to make a difference! Scott added that they never leave the house but what passers-by give them broad smiles! May you, Beth & Scott, be encouraged today! Blessings abundant!

—*editor*

## Memorials



On July 27, 2003, Helen G. McGarvey left this earthly life behind and entered the presence of her Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. The McGarveys, Paul and

Helen, were sent out by the

Christian & Missionary Alliance to head up the work after WWII. Helen not only lovingly supported Paul in all his ministries, but she also grew into a broadened ministry herself. Her deep, abiding love for Christian music, in particular gospel hymns, was expressed through her ability as a vocalist, choral leader, instructor, pianist, organist, and composer. For years she taught music at the Japan Alliance Bible School, Itsukaichi, Hiroshima Ken. She sang duets with Paul, and played the accordion at street meetings and summer tent evangelistic campaigns. During those days the response was tremendous as hundreds gathered to hear the Gospel message. Helen was responsible for the publication of two Japanese/English chorus books, *Songs of Victory I & II*.

In 1968, when the McGarvey's ministry finished in Japan, they moved to Jerusalem for two years where Paul served as pastor of the

# クリスチャン新聞

Gleanings from  
The Christian Shinbun

## Elijah Group does Survey

**E**lijah Group, also known as the Japan Transformation Project Development Council, is a think tank made up of Japanese Christians from various walks of life. Monthly meetings are held, along with missionary counterparts and foreign professionals, to discuss vital issues related to the spiritual transformation of Japan. The Elijah Group's vision is to see the life changing power of God throughout Japan.

Recently an important survey was taken.

### Survey Overview:

How do non-Christians view religion in general and Christianity in particular? Approximately how many have had contact with, or have an interest in, Christianity? Why do those with interest not become Christians?

The survey clarifies quantitatively the average person's connection with and attitude toward, as well as level of interest in, religion and Christianity.

### Survey Area:

The capital of Tokyo and its surrounding area, a 30-kilometer radius, was surveyed.

### Survey Method:

Area sampling was done by the use of a questionnaire, left with each respondent. One thousand five hundred men and women between the ages of 15 to 59 were surveyed.

### Results were:

The percentage of respondents who expressed interest in religion was 17 percent. Interest choices ranged from high, to fair, to slight. Those with an interest in religion represent a minority of those surveyed. Persons in their 50s had high interest while younger persons had almost no interest.

It is disturbing to note that among persons under 34 years of age, students included, most responded that they "have no interest in religion whatsoever."

Those who have a religion came to 17 percent. The following is a breakdown: Buddhism 9 percent, Soka Gakkai 5 percent, Christianity 2 percent, Shinto 1 percent.

Persons in their 50s tend to have a relatively high interest in religion. A high proportion of these believe in Buddhism. On the other hand, the proportion of female students and young people under age 34, who believe in Christianity, is high when compared to other people groupings.

Those surveyed who considered themselves to be within the Christian faith was 1 percent. An additional 1 percent considered themselves formerly within the faith, but not currently. Also, 0.5 percent would like to enter the faith. Those who formerly wished to enter the faith, but currently do not have the desire were 4 percent of those surveyed. Many believers within the Christian faith are adults, while those who wish to believe tend to be female and 34 years of age or younger.

## Relationship to Christianity at Certain Life Stages:

Of those surveyed 12 percent have at one time or another been enrolled in Christian related schools. This exceeds the ratio of those who have been enrolled in educational institutions of other religions. Those with a high interest in Christianity attended Christian schools.

Those with a high level of interest in Christianity (1 percent) combined with those who hold a fair level of interest comes to a total of 8 percent.

The ratio of women who hold a high level of interest in Christianity is higher than that for men. Among students 17 percent were women.

*(This partial translation of the Elijah Group Survey was made possible with the help of Ray Franklin, Southern Baptist missionary. The entire survey is available in Japanese. Contact the JEMA office.)*

## 3rd Edition OF NTV (Shinkaiyaku)

**T**he 3rd edition of the New Translation Version will be published this fall. One of the focuses of this edition is concentrated on the translation of the word, *raibyō*, leprosy in Japanese, and it changes the word to a more appropriate, non-discriminatory, pleasing word.

The NTV was first published in 1970 with a second edition in 1979. Work on this 3rd edition began in 2001. Editors have tried to find more appropriate words and expressions for words found in about 900 verses. Words have been reviewed and replaced. Trying to keep the original meaning of the Hebrew and Greek, *raibyō* will be replaced with the word *tsuarato*. This is based on scripture in Leviticus 18 where *raibyō* in the Hebrew means "to be infected." Jesus healed a great number of people, mostly by His word, but sometimes by touching the sick. Jesus overcame the reality of discrimination. *Tsuarato* patients were treated as untouchables and were society's outsiders. There were some scholars who wanted to keep the word *raibyō*, but after much discussion and examination the expression *tsuarato ni okasareta hito* was adopted.



Translated by Mizuko Matsushita, JEMA Executive Office Secretary. She has served faithfully since 1984.

Continued on page 24

*Memorial continued from page 22*

International Alliance Church. No matter where their ministries took them, the pastorate or as superintendent of the Alliance Southeastern District, Helen faithfully stood at Paul's side and served with grace and love.

She is survived by a son, Rev. James P. McGarvey, and two daughters, Arlene Joy Bupp and Patricia June McGarvey. Helen was the grandmother of eight and the great grandmother of six. A memorial service was held on July 31 at The Village Church at Shell Point, Florida (USA).



**M**uriel Webendorfer McQuilkin reached the end of her 25-year journey into the darkness of Alzheimer's

Disease September 20, 2003, at her home in Columbia, SC, USA.

Born August 16, 1922, in a remote Andean village in Bolivia to missionary parents, she grew up in Beaver City, Neb. She was married to Robertson McQuilkin of Columbia in 1948. She was best known for her work with "The Puffet House," a children's show that ran as a part of Joe Pinner's "Mr. Knozit" show on WIS TV in the 1960's, and as the host of "Looking Up," a morning radio program that aired on 89.7 WMHK in the 1980's. Before serving for 22-years as First Lady of Columbia International University as wife of the president, she served for 12 years as a missionary in Japan.

Memorials may be made to "The Muriel McQuilkin Scholarship Fund" at CIU. Please remember the McQuilkin family in your prayers at this time.



**M**iss Penny now in Heaven.

Thursday,  
September 17, 2003,  
at 9:47 p.m. Miss

Florence Penny went to be

with her Lord.

Miss Penny was in active missionary ser-



CPI 2003

November

18-21

**Y**ou won't want to miss this year's conference with 6 training tracks, including Dave & Nancy Walker teaching "Gospel in Life and Ministry," special guest Dr. Dwight Smith of Saturation Church Planting International, and, of course, Dr. Steve Childers.

- A full program for children is being planned again!
- Come with your Japanese counterpart!
- The conference starts Tuesday, November 18!
- Call the JEMA office today!



vice for the last 71 years! Born in 1908, saved in 1928, she came to Japan in 1932. During WWII she went to India and then returned in 1945.

Hundreds came to say good-bye. Long-time friends and fellow-missionaries will miss Miss Penny. We extend our sympathy to all who loved and worked with her. Never dreaming she would leave us so soon, we included an encouragement piece in the summer issue of this magazine. What a faithful warrior! She was still preaching morning and evening at the beginning of this year.



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future to the greatest sacrifice ever. God's great sacrifice was made by giving His only beloved Son on the cross on our behalf. "For our sake He made Him to be sin Who knew no sin, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21).

Let us behold the cross of Christ just a moment longer. Isn't it a very shameful and disgraceful death, this death on a Roman cross? But the suffering of Christ was not only the cross. Even before being crucified, He was ridiculed and mocked; the soldiers put a crown of thorns on Him, beat Him up and made fun of Him. Then they drew lots for his garment; and there He hung on the cross naked. Death on the cross was not only very painful physically, it was also shameful. Christ was made to be shame on our behalf. By His disgrace we received grace (cf. Hebrews 11:26, 12:2, 13:13). Through His nakedness He clothes us with the "garments of salvation" and "covers us with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10; cf. also Matthew 22:11, and Revelation 7:13). By His estrangement from the Father ("My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?") He made us members of God's household and children of God. He opened the gate to Eden, so heavily guarded by the cherubim, and gives us to eat of the Tree

of Life (Revelation 2:7). This forgiveness is full restoration—relationship with the Triune God. And this forgiveness is beautifully described in Psalm 34:5: "Look to Him, and be radiant; so your faces shall never be ashamed" (cf. Isaiah 54:4).

By being forgiven and wholly accepted, I don't need to be ashamed of my past or present, nor do I need to fear the future. I may behold the Lord and His glory will be reflected in my life (2 Corinthians 3:18).

In conclusion, let me just say in a nutshell what I tried to explain. The Gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ is a Gospel also for the "shame-oriented" culture. The Bible talks more of shame than we are usually aware. I strongly believe that its message is also an answer to the problem of shame, which can be powerfully communicated in Japan leading many to the saving and liberating faith in Christ. But we need to be sensitive to culture and language. We need to be "listeners." And by digging deeply, exegetically, linguistically, and culturally, I am convinced that the Gospel can take root in Japanese soil and yield its fruit in due season.

I would love to hear from you. Any comments, questions, critique, experiences, and so forth, are very welcome.

Stefan S. Jaeger

### Footnotes

1. All Scripture taken from the Holy Bible, NRSV
2. Benedict, Ruth, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, Tokyo 1994 (1946)
3. Nowadays, these less rigid terms are used instead of "shame and guilt culture."
4. Spiro, Melford E., *The Children of Kibbutz*. iUniverse.com; Revised edition (April 2000).
5. The fact that we are in need of mediation, and eventually of a mediator, points to a basic "shame orientation."

Stefan along with his wife, Daniela, came to Japan in 1995. They are serving with JFDM as church-planters in Marugame, Kagawa Prefecture. Stefan studied at Tabor Theological Seminary in Marburg, Germany and received a M.A. in Missions from Columbia International University, SC, in 1999.

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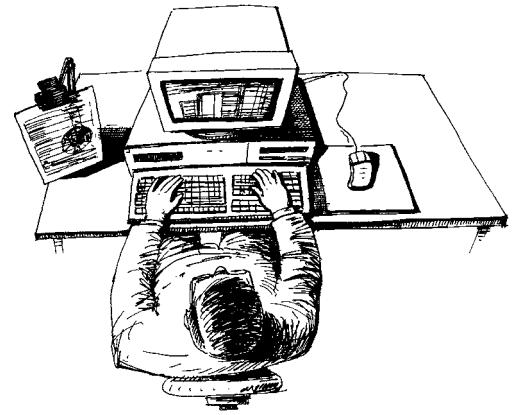


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As the Missionary Geek was leaving for Home Assignment he asked me to write in his place for this issue. I'm glad for the opportunity and will be giving you a different perspective on computers. Our Missionary Geek is decidedly a PC Guy. I, however, am a Macintosh Guy.

The biggest news and buzz in the Macintosh world is the OS X (10). This operating system is a major departure from the Classic Macintosh operating system. OS X is built from scratch and from the UNIX operating system. (UNIX is the system of the Internet, major corporations, and universities.) **Two of its major advantages are that it is extremely stable and it is designed around multiple users** (more about this later). When running OS X, however, you will not see, or do you need to see, the UNIX system underlying everything. There are clean and elegant lines of a new interface called Aqua. (If you are geeky enough to want to work with UNIX there is a way to do it.) All the features of the Classic Macintosh system are still there, but they are not in the same place and will look a little different. If, however, you are a Macintosh sauve you can get used to OS X quickly!

OS X is currently on version 2, actually 10.2.6. It wasn't until version 10.1 that OS X was actually ready for the common Mac user. Then last summer Apple released version 10.2 called Jaguar. We are now eagerly awaiting the release of the new versions of OS X, Panther or version 10.3. This will be available around the end of the year. Advance looks indicate there are a number of great features!

OS X is a substantial upgrade for the Macintosh system. There are a number of features within the system and with accompanying software that make it an advisable switch.

**Multiple Users:** If you have no one sharing your computer this won't be as attractive. If you are like I am, sharing with the entire family, you know all that involves. Everyone likes things set up the way they prefer with all files vulnerable. With OS X multiple each user can set up accounts and log in their desktop the way he/she wants. All files will be safe from vagrancies of other users!

**Desktop appearance:** Each user may set up the desktop background with any photo

desired. Each can set it to any folder containing photos and cycling through the entire set is possible. The same can be done with the screen saver.

**Mail Application:** One of the best features of this application is the Junk Mail filter. With an automatic setting the filter can be taught to move junk mail to a special folder, deleting automatically. Rules and filters can be set to help with cutting down Junk Mail, too. (This would be a good topic for a subsequent article!)

**iTunes:** iTunes came with OS 9, but has really taken off with OS X. This is version 4 and with it there is the ability to import music into the computer like other versions, but it also gives access to the new Apple Music Store where you can purchase and download music online. (Right now you need to have a US billed credit card.) Depending on the amount of free space on the hard drive you can put in a whole lot of music in iTunes. (I'm working on importing my personal music collection and have over 2,000 songs already.)

**iPod:** iPod is not part of the OS X system, but it requires OS X. This little device is the greatest! It stores an entire music collection on a small device and it can be carried anywhere. It takes personal music, but can also be used as an external hard drive. The combination of iTunes and iPod is marvelous!

**iPhoto:** In the missionary community digital still cameras have replaced photo/slide film cameras. It is just so much easier these days to take one or two (or fifty) digital photos and either send them to supporters via email or make a digital slide show. (Be careful here, however. Someone recently told me that those who made "bad" slide shows years ago are now making "bad" digital presentations. Just because things are made on the computer doesn't mean they're good!) iPhoto does all the work! This is how you do it: take digital photos, connect camera to computer, iPhoto automatically comes up, and you import the photos. You can adjust, correct, enhance and crop photos in iPhoto. Then you can either print the photos in any number of formats or send them via email making a slide show using your own music from iTunes or even send the photos to Apple

to have a picture book made. iPhoto is not PhotoShop. For most of us, however, iPhoto will suffice.

**iMovie:** iMovie is to digital video as iPhoto is to digital stills. Many of us are creating videos to either take on Home Assignment or send back to supporting churches. iMovie allows importing digital video clips and editing. Any number of special effects and transitions can be made. Stills can be imported and scanned using the Ken Burns affect. In the end, music can be added from iTunes and then be exported as a finished product. Everything can be done on the computer!

**iDVD:** The last of the iLife suite is iDVD. This is the software that allows you to prepares movies for DVD and then burn the movie to DVD. Using Apple's new SuperDrive will help you take advantage of this software. The SuperDrive is a combination DVD-R (DVD burner), CD-R/RW (CD burner).

**Keynote:** For a number of years Apple has had a presentation module as part of AppleWorks. It was a limited program and it forced many to purchase PowerPoint along with the rest of the Office Suite. Last spring Apple released a new presentation package called Keynote. This has all the features one has come to expect and it will do as much and more than PowerPoint.

**Safari:** Apple has been content to let Microsoft provide Internet Explorer as the browser for the World Wide Web browsing. This past spring, however, Apple finally released its own browser. It has been a public Beta until recently when Apple released the full version as Safari 1.0.

Macintosh OS X is here and here to stay. How about getting on board!

*The Mac Guy, to God be the Glory!*

## Worship & Music:

### Facilitating a "God-Encounter"

Recently, I attended the annual Christian Arts Network Worship Seminar held at the National Youth Olympics Memorial Youth Center in Tokyo. I was impressed with the enthusiasm and talent of the 180 registrants who came from all over Japan!

On the morning of the first full day, we experienced an excellent example of skilled worship leading by one of our Japanese co-workers. He "led us into God's presence" where we communicated one-on-one with the Lord. Of course, as Christians, we know God is always present, but we don't necessarily recognize or experience His presence all the time.

Skillfully led worship can calm our hearts, and help us focus. Thus we are more receptive to His presence, communication, and leading — this is a "God-Encounter" worship experience. An examination of the "hows" can be instructive. At this seminar we were led into a deep awareness of God's presence just by a brother with a heart after God and a single keyboard.

Walk with me through the event that began at 9:00 a.m. on a Monday morning.

#### Song #1:

*Shu no ai wa tokoshie made* (The Steadfast Love of the Lord) This session's worship leader, Osamu Komaki, starts playing the first song in this worship set at a slow to medium tempo, letting us know that it's time to get ready to sing. We're not quite mentally awake, but we start singing and waking up to God's love. Komaki-san doesn't push us — he knows we're just beginning to come together. He briefly welcomes us to worship as we transition to song #2.

#### Song #2:

*Wa ga tamashii no hitsujikai* (Shepherd of My Soul) We pick up the speed a bit on song #2 to a comfortable medium tempo, but our voices and minds are still a bit sleepy. Komaki-san

## Church Music

stops after a couple of verses, giving us permission to stand up and stretch. We return to singing the same song, and feel a bit more ready to praise the Shepherd of our souls. We transition into song #3.

#### Song #3:

*Mina o kakagete* (Lord, I Lift Your Name on High) Most people are quite familiar with the medium-to-up-tempo of this capsule summary of the Gospel. We enter into praise at a reasonable level of enthusiasm even though it's only 9:15 in the morning. The day has just begun and we don't try to reach an enthusiastic level of praise which we might achieve in an evening meeting. We're praising, just the same, and we have our focus firmly on the Lord now, and are ready to move on to song #4.

#### Song #4:

*Chichi no kami no shinjitsu wa* (Great Is Thy Faithfulness) Now we're singing a familiar melody, one that those who have grown up in the church have been singing since youth. The words have been slightly updated, taken from the *Living Praise Songbook* published by Word of Life Press Ministries. We slow down a bit to meditate on God's faithfulness. After a verse or two, Komaki-san invites us to talk with our Lord as he plays quietly in the background. Even the lighting crew is in tune with the moment as they slightly dim the lights, taking our attention off of our surroundings. We enter into deep communication with God. After three or four minutes, of expressing our thoughts and feelings to the Lord and listening for His communication to us, we move to song #5.

#### Song #5:

*Me o akete* (Open Your Eyes) If we weren't intimate before God up until this point, we certainly are now. We bow our hearts before Him. Some in the congregation are in tears as they bask in God's presence, while others are hearing His word for the day. Some gently sing, while

other just listen. This a holy moment! After singing through the song several times, our leader draws our time of worship to a close, and thanks the Lord for a new day. It's 9:30; we're fully aware of God's presence, and we're ready to learn from Him through His servants!

Gary Bauman has been in Japan since 1988 with Asian Access Japan (until recently, known as LIFE Ministries). A minister of music and worship before coming to Japan as a missionary, he has combined his passion for music and ministry by publishing "The Caroling Collection" Japanese/English Christmas songbook and CD. He welcomes visits to his website at or emails addressed to [gbauman@asianaccess.org](mailto:gbauman@asianaccess.org).



*"Music is a fair and lovely gift of God which has often wakened and moved me to the joy of preaching... Next, after theology, I give to music the highest place and the greatest honor... My heart bubbles up and overflows in response to music, which has so often refreshed me and delivered me from dire plagues."*

*—Martin Luther*



# Thinking Theologically about Church Planting:



## When Little is Big

by Dale Little

**H**ave you often wished the size of the Church of Jesus Christ in Japan would be bigger than it is? I have. Church planters in Japan and in other resistant cultures can be encouraged to persevere in their ministries by understanding that small can be significant within God's mission.<sup>1</sup>

In John 1:14 we are taught that the Son of God, by virtue of His incarnation, lived or dwelt among us. "The Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us." This image, of God dwelling among us, comes from the Old Testament context of God choosing to dwell with His chosen people. Now, we know that God cannot be contained geographically (1 Kings 8:27). Yet from the time of creation it seems that our God has been determined to dwell on a miniscule level with the people He creates, loves and chooses. Remind yourself of God walking with Adam in the primordial garden, or of His choosing to dwell with the former slaves fleeing from Egypt (Exodus 29:45-46). Furthermore, when we look toward the future, we also know that God's intention is to continue dwelling with us on into eternity (Revelation 21:3).

But according to John 1:14 it is in Jesus Christ that we see the epitome of God's way of dwelling with us. His clearest way of dwelling with us is through His Son, who exegetes the Father. If we want to find God, to see God, to know God, we need look no further than Jesus Himself.

This is a strong affirmation of the centrality of Jesus to the Christian faith. Therefore, once Jesus has ascended back to heaven after His approximately thirty years of dwelling with humanity, we would expect His followers in the early Church, those who penned the New Testament, to point exclusively to Jesus as the only place where the Father has chosen to reveal Himself.

Yet surprisingly, perhaps astoundingly, the apostle who penned John 1:18 also wrote 1 John 4:12. In 1 John 4:12 John tells us that God is revealed in another place as well. In this verse he is answering the question, "Where can God be seen?" We would expect John's answer to go something like this: "God the Father

reveals Himself and His love by means of his Son, Jesus Christ. So if you want to see God, look toward Jesus." But instead, John states, "No one has ever seen God, but if we love one another, God lives in us and His love is made complete in us." John teaches here that God the Father reveals Himself in the loving community of those who follow Jesus. The churches to which he was writing were scattered and fledgling. Yet that is where God chooses to dwell.

Now, the way in which God dwells in the local church is different than the way in which God dwells in Jesus Christ. A local church is transformed into the place where God lives when its members love one another because of their love for Jesus. So God lives in the local church in a secondary sense. It is Jesus Christ Who remains the primary way in which God reveals Himself.

Nevertheless, John boldly declares that there is a kind of parallel between the dwelling of God in Jesus Christ and the dwelling of God in the local church. The first aspect of that parallel is quite easy for us to affirm. Yes, we believe and know that God revealed Himself through our Lord Jesus. But the second aspect of that parallel, that God reveals Himself within the local church, would be difficult for us to affirm if we did not have 1 John 4:12, wouldn't it?

Nevertheless if we do not learn to affirm this parallel truth we miss an opportunity to be encouraged. Our church planting is vitally important to God and His mission because He has chosen to dwell in our church plants.

And this is true regardless of their size. So be encouraged that little is big, that even small churches can be significant because God dwells within them and wants to reveal Himself there. Continue to dream and work toward the day when the Church in Japan will be larger than it is. But in the meantime, remember that small can be significant.

### Footnote

1. These thoughts were given in sermon format at Takayama Chapel (Shichigahama Machi, Miyagi Ken) on Aug. 10, 2003. I am indebted to the following article: George Vandervelde, "The Challenge of Evangelical Ecclesiology," *Evangelical Review of Theology* (2003) 27:1, 4-26.

Dale was raised in Japan first as an OMF and then an EFCMJ missionary kid. He returned as an EFCMJ church planting missionary in 1984. He currently leads a church planting project in Higashi Murayama Shi, Tokyo, and is a lecturer in theology at Japan Bible Seminary in Hamura Shi, Tokyo. He holds a Ph.D. in systematic theology.



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# CELEBRATING CHILDREN



## Potpourri & Promises

By Janice A. Kropp

At that time Jesus, full of joy through the Holy Spirit said, *I praise you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because you have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to children. Yes, Father, for this was your good pleasure* (Luke 10:21).

In Luke chapter 10, we find Jesus sending out the 72 in pairs. They were to go to towns and places where He would follow. “Ask,” He pleads. “Go,” He commands. “You are like lambs among wolves!” They went and returned rejoicing, amazed at what had been accomplished through them. Jesus, after a quick flashback (Satan’s fall), knowing the Source of the power and the authority, reminds them of the most important thing! “Rejoice that your names are written in Heaven.”

What does it take to know that one’s name is written in Heaven? Faith! Then even a child can know! Look, the priests and Levites missed it. The experts in the Law missed it. There was too much knowledge, too much learning, and too much executing the myriads of man-made rules. They missed it, but the children got it! “Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure,” says Jesus!

### From Birth into Adolescence

These are the years when we most easily enter into faith! Think back to when you came to Christ. How old were you? I was five. Young, but old enough to know my heart was full of sin. Old enough to know that without salvation I would spend eternity away from God, in eternal punishment. My decision was clear. I can see it now as it was then—across the front of the youth tabernacle at Mahaffey Camp a thick, long rope (you know the kind used for

tying boats up to docks?) was draped. Grabbing the rope signified salvation. I went forward and took the rope in my two little hands. No question about it; I wanted to be saved!

Three of our four sons came to Christ in youthful simplicity. At age eight, our second son, Todd, on hearing the child’s version of *Pilgrim’s Progress*, asked how he could be saved! Alan, son three, and Donn, son four, under the ages of five, asked what being a Christian meant. As a family we were returning from a home Bible study and they wanted to know what salvation was all about! In the last year two of our eight grandchildren have asked Jesus into their hearts! What’s going on? The message, simple yet profound, has touched young hearts! *Jesus said, I praise You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, because You have hidden these things from the wise and learned, and revealed them to little children. Yes, Father, for this was Your good pleasure,* (Luke 10:21).

### Twelve-Year-Olds

What is it about these youth that we see specifics in both Scripture and the news?

Jesus, returning from the region of the Gerasenes, had crossed the Lake of Galilee. A crowd cheerfully welcomed Him. But in the joy there was a hurting father, a ruler in the synagogue. Jairus was desperate! He came, fell at the feet of Jesus, and pleaded for his only daughter, a 12-year-old. Indeed, Jairus had come to the right Source, and now, Jesus was on His way to his daughter’s sick bed! Can you imagine his joy? “He’s coming to my house to heal my daughter!” His heart was abounding in hope! She was raised, but for what purpose? God’s glory, yes! But I wonder what special life she must then have lived. After all, she was raised from the dead! She knew reality! She had been touched by the Savior! God uses people like that!

My mind goes to another 12-year-old.

We don’t know his name. How tormented he seemed to be. Something was amiss! Did he lack love? Did he have friends? Did he ever go to church or hear a Bible story? This troubled youth, not so trusting or sensitive, had a heart once tender but now turned to stone! In the city of Nagasaki he lived, played and acted in cruel ways. The newspaper reported that he took other little boys, lured them away from their parents, abused them, and then one day he allegedly did the unthinkable. After drawing a four-year-old away from a store, he took him some blocks away, and up to the roof of a building. There he undressed him, and who knows what else. Going to the edge of the roof, somehow he found the courage to give the little guy a shove—off the roof! I can imagine that he stood watching as the little body floated downward only to hit the ground with a thud, knocking life from the innocent one. I am sure he didn’t know why he did it and what he did. His parents were mystified. So were the city authorities, and with them, all of Japan!

How is it that a child can kill another child? Is this observable in the animal kingdom? What is going on? If and when this youth is proven guilty of this crime, he will carry all through his life this horrible, tragic deed! If there were one such child in Japan, wouldn’t it be accurate to say there are probably many more as troubled and as sick as he? Where will this awful act lead this precious 12-year-old?

Scripture speaks of another 12-year-old. Unknown to His parents, He was not in the crowd going home from Jerusalem. We all know the fright of losing a child, don’t we? A 12-year-old should know where he’s going and what the household rules are! Mary and Joseph searched for three days! It must have seemed like an eternity. Here was Mary, mother of the Christ Child, and she had allowed something to happen to Him! I can imagine her heart pounded in fear. I can almost feel the emotional

ebb and flow as her thoughts bounced between regret and hope. For three days Christ was missing! It must have been a very long 72 hours. But then—there He was—calmly sitting among the teachers, listening to and asking them questions! To His mother's rebuke, He answered by asking her two questions: "Why are you searching for Me?" and, "Didn't you know I had to be in My Father's house?" This 12-year-old knew what life—His life—was all about! This 12-year-old would change the course of history! Instead of abusing, He would be abused. Instead of killing, He would be killed. This Youth was our promised Savior!

Then there is another 12-year-old. His name appeared in *The Daily Yomiuri*, Saturday, August 30, 2003. Sho Yano is going for his doctorate at the University of Chicago. What a mind he has! At age three he played a Chopin waltz by "ear." By age four he was composing. By age seven, he was doing high school work. At age eight, he scored 1,500 out of 1,600 possible points on the SAT and started college at age nine. With a mind like his, what great thing is he going to do for this world that is so tossed and pulled by a million influences of good and evil? How is he going to end up?

### Celebrating Children

Summer is over now, and we must thank the Lord for all the children who attended youth camps and conferences. I know for a fact that 2003 summer program of Joy Bible Camp (Okutama) brought more applicants than space could afford. I also know that when the invitation was given at chapel time, "Uncle Bob," as they call him, said most kiddies raised their hands to receive Jesus as their Savior. "It was a miracle," Uncle Bob remarked.

I saw with my own eyes the fantastic response to the SEND ME Global Youth Missions Conference held at Aoyama Gakuin! Over 2,000 Christian youth gathered to hear messages on faith, mission, holy living and sexual purity. These youth joined their voices in song, and raised their hands indicating deep desire to follow God wherever He would lead.

Last year returning from home assignment, I was asking the Lord how to touch un-churched kids! Thus the Adventure Club, *Boken* Club, was born. The first three Saturday mornings of every month our place of worship becomes the meeting place for six regular attendees. Mothers and sometimes a father will accompany them. We advertised widely; eight came. Not a bad return, we thought!

Adventure Club is an hour and a half of singing, playing, making crafts, some English,

and Bible storytelling. Each child pays 500 yen each time he/she comes. (There is no fee envelope, only a basket at the door.) The children's magazine, *Lammy*, is given out each month along with special surprises. (Parents are given a beautiful monthly Gospel tract.) Our lending book/video library allows the children to hear again the stories they learn. Church believers are helpers. And, last Christmas you should have seen these kiddies sing before the jam-packed room of people gathered for the Candle Light Service. They were the "hit" of the evening! And at Easter, we invited Fred Tanaka of CEF for a special children's meeting. Twenty-two gathered and heard clearly the salvation message!

I feel like **Celebrating Children!** There's a host of children to win, and they represent some of the most tender and teachable hearts. They, however, are not without problems and struggles. Some are very smart and gifted while others have severe limitations. In Luke 10 Jesus reminds us, The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into His harvest field. Go!

A traveling evangelist returned home after several days of meetings. His wife, always ready to hear how the Lord had worked, asked how many had come to Christ. His answer, "Three and a half people." To which his wife responded, "Oh, three adults and one child. Praise the Lord." "No," he corrected, "Not three adults and one child, but three children and one adult! The three children have their whole lives to live for Him, while the adult's life is half over!

Ready to run? We'll have to in order to get the children of this land!



### GIVE ME A SMILE:

Driving through Tokyo with all 3 children, Merete, our precious daughter-in-law, was driving home. While whizzing by buildings and landmarks, Karina, 5, asked, "Mom, where's the Tokyo Tower?" Merete answered, "Oh, it's not around here!" "Well," Karina blurted out, "I guess it's not such a small world after all!" Oh, those smart grandkiddies!

### PROMISE:

*Here I Am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with Me, (Revelation 3:20).*

## JEMA Women in Ministry Day of Prayer October 27, 2003

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.  
Matthew 7:7*

All the ladies are cordially invited to come together for prayer and praise with other women. Don't miss this opportunity!

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Chiyoda line

Time: 10:00 - 14:00

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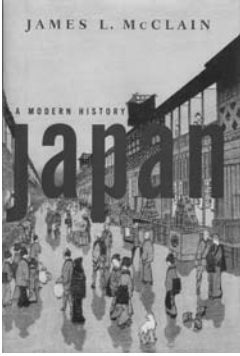
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## The Reader



### JAPAN: A Modern History

James L. McClain, W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 2002, 632 pages

This one volume of Japanese history, from the Tokugawa era to the turn of the 21st century, was like a tapestry weaving together in my head all the loose ends of events, culture, and thoughts I had picked up over my last 25 years here. As “lights” went on in my head, reading passages that explained my Japanese experience, I often found myself

responding with *naruhodo* (so that’s it! OR I see!). I became more aware of why other Asian countries both admire and fear Japan; how the government used education to control the opinions of its people, the changes in the role of women, and how Western influence in areas of music and recreation have taken root.

I usually don’t enjoy reading history books with their lists of names, dates and events. McClain, however, gives leaders personality as they try to control and react to events. In each era we see the impact events have on society: the schoolboy, the housewife, the artist, the shopkeeper, or the *kamikaze* fighter. Through anecdotes from the lives of *shogun*, emperors, prime ministers, Korean migrants, and even peasants, Japanese society comes alive. Quotes from women’s magazines, charts of imports/exports, and bits of poetry give us a well-rounded history of what the Japanese thought, felt, and even ate. Though Japan has changed in many ways since the days of the *Shogunate*, there are many themes that run throughout Japanese history that we can still see today.

Published in 2002, it was *natsukashii* (it took me back with a sense of nostalgia) to read about events that I lived through this past quarter of a century.

I recommend this book to everyone who loves the Japanese and wants to understand more fully where they are “coming from.” This is a good book for every mission library and would benefit any new missionary!



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

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# Free Japan Prayer Focus

*I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone.*

In their misery they cried out to the Lord, and He saved them from their troubles. He brought them out of their gloom and darkness and broke their chains. Let them give thanks to the Lord for His love and for the miracles He does for people. Psalm 107:13-15

## 1) How did Free Japan come about?

“Storming Heaven,” an article written by Debbie Penner in the Winter 2003 issue of Japan Harvest magazine, included her vision of evangelical churches around the world praying in March 2004 to topple the strongholds in Japan. At the Japan Baptist Mission team leader’s meeting in late January, the article was discussed. We decided to contact the author and let her know that our mission was interested in participating. Four of us met that April to pray and make plans to move forward with Free Japan. Debbie Penner (independent missionary), Janice Kropp (Japan Harvest), Bryan Smith (YWAM), and myself left that meeting with a conviction that this was indeed God’s leading. Now many others are joining the grassroots movement.

## 2) What is the plan?

The organization of Free Japan has been kept to a minimum in order to give freedom to the Holy Spirit to do His work, without any hindrances. Each mission group, church, or individual is free to hear from the Lord and plan their own prayerwalks in the location and for the duration that the Lord requires of them. Each group also has the freedom of expression to use their methods and strategies for their own prayerwalks.

We envision that people will use their circles of influence and networks to form prayerwalking groups that work well together. It is also our hope that our prayer partners, Christians from around the world, will also come to Japan in March 2004 to participate with us in this effort. We are praying that there will be many of our Japanese Christian brothers and sisters prayerwalking with us.

Each missionary unit in the Japan Baptist Mission is being challenged to sponsor one prayerwalk during March 2004. That will count for 40+ volunteer teams praying for God’s power in March 2004 to set people’s hearts free. That is only a small drop in the bucket of what God wants to do during this worldwide prayer-walking movement known as Free Japan.

## 3) How do we get started?

The first thing is to pray. What does God want you to do? How can others you know also become involved? Secondly, choose a location to pray. Do you have a particular city or area that is your focus or passion? Think about target areas to prayerwalk...government buildings, schools, entertainment district, shrines, and temples, etc. In the article “Storming Heaven,” Debbie suggests that the Toshogu shrine (and related shrines) is the major stronghold that should be confronted with on-site intercessory prayer.

God can do the impossible! He can “connect” all of our efforts into one that sweeps the nation of Japan.

Please go to the website that Bryan Smith is handling: [www.freejapan.org](http://www.freejapan.org). If you have general questions or if you want to

let us know what your group is planning to do, you may contact me (Karol Whaley) at [freejapan0304@aol.com](mailto:freejapan0304@aol.com). If you would like to contact Debbie Penner about the Toshogu shrine stronghold, you may reach her at [obachan@bigfoot.com](mailto:obachan@bigfoot.com).

## 4) Will it work?

It is God’s desire to bring the nations to Himself. Now is the time for Japan! As our former International Mission Board prayer advocate commented, “It’s exciting to see what God is doing in Japan and facilitating widespread prayer is just another indication that great things are on the horizon. May the Kingdom come in mighty power across Japan...”

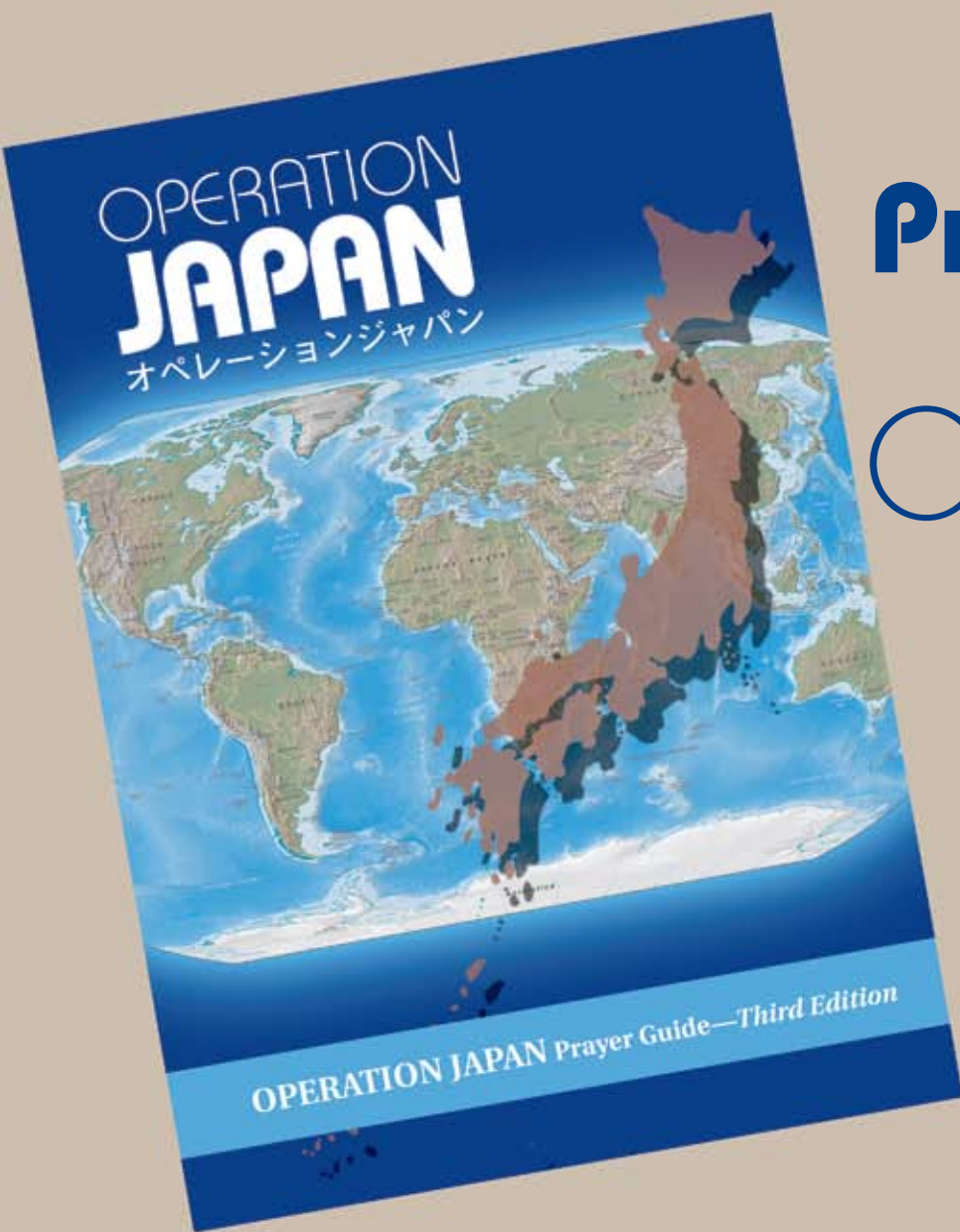
That is certainly our prayer! Many precious saints have gone before us believing that God will send a great revival to Japan. How exciting that God is still at work in our hearts causing us to believe and carry that passion! We need to be unified in our timing and united in our desire to see this nation spiritually set free. The rest is God’s part! He is able! Let’s call out to God with one voice and in one great effort during the month of March 2004. Each of us will be blessed as God pours out His Spirit in this place.

## 5) Why do it?

To see Psalm 107:13-15 become a reality. You can make a difference!!

by Karol Whaley, JBM prayer advocate





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Japan



**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. [la@omf.or.jp](mailto:la@omf.or.jp)  
[www.jp.omf.org/jlc](http://www.jp.omf.org/jlc)**

## *Furusato* – A Song from the Heart of Japan

A while ago in ‘Developing Cultural Awareness’, I wrote that knowing the stories and songs every Japanese knows can give us insights into Japanese worldview and deepen our cultural awareness. Many of us are familiar with *Furusato* (故郷、ふるさと or “Hometown”), but are perhaps not aware that this song has been suggested as an alternative national anthem to *Kimigayo*, which is opposed for its nationalistic overtones. *Furusato* is numbered among what someone has called 日本心の歌 (にほんのこころのうた) and is a standard number at school graduations. The words were written by Takano Tatsuyuki (高野辰之) and the music by Okano Teiichi (岡野貞一).

Most Japanese know *Furusato* off by heart but not that the composer was a keen Christian who gained hints for his melodies from Christian hymns. Okano (1878-1941) was born in Tottori city, Toyama. His interest in music was first awakened as a child by hearing the organ week by week at church. He was baptized in 1892 at the age of 14, and a year later, began studying organ with Adams, an American missionary in Okayama. Okano became professor at Tokyo Geijitsu Daigaku, and organist for 40 years at the Canadian Methodist Hongo Chuo Church, Tokyo. He was instrumental in producing the Mombusho (Ministry of Education) Song Books and wrote over 160 school songs, of which 50 are still sung today.

The words of *Furusato* are not the easiest to understand. Hearing instead of seeing the word おいし in the first line has led many Japanese to interpret its meaning as

‘delicious’ instead of ‘chasing’ or ‘hunting’ as it is meant to be! 友垣 (ともがき) in the second verse means ‘friend(s)’. The bond of friendship is likened to the weaving together of a fence or hedge (垣、かき). つつがなし means ‘in good health, without problems’. If you prefer a loose English translation, go to <http://www.mahoroba.ne.jp/~gonbe007/hog/shouka/furusato.html> and click on 英語訳 at the bottom. Whether in Japanese or English, the words of this song help us to understand the emotions felt by the Japanese towards their *Furusato*.

1. うさぎ<sup>お</sup>追<sup>い</sup>し かの山<sup>やま</sup> こぶな<sup>つ</sup>釣りし かの川  
ゆめ 夢は<sup>いま</sup>もめぐりて わす 忘れが<sup>た</sup>き ふるさと
2. いか<sup>い</sup>にいます 父母<sup>ふぼ</sup> つつが<sup>なし</sup>や 友<sup>とも</sup>がき  
あめ 雨に<sup>かぜ</sup>風につけても おも 思<sup>い</sup>いずる ふるさと
3. ころざし<sup>こ</sup>は <sup>は</sup>を果<sup>た</sup>して <sup>ひ</sup>いつの日に<sup>か</sup>か 帰<sup>かえ</sup>らん  
やま 山は<sup>あお</sup>青きふるさと みず 水は<sup>きよ</sup>清きふるさと

If you are not familiar with the tune of *Furusato*, you can listen free to a lovely arrangement on wind instruments at <http://www.wind-art.com/HP/HTML/hurusato.html> (Note: there are a number of songs with the title *Furusato*, including one by J-pop idol group, *Morning Musume*, so be sure you get the right one! For the Morning Musume *Furusato* go to <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Furusato>)

# JEMA ORDER FORM

All items postage paid except where noted

Please note new fax number

				QTY
<b>Membership Dues</b>	¥2,000 Single	¥3,000 Couple	_____	_____
<b>Individual Package Plan*</b>	¥5,500 Single	¥6,500 Couple	_____	_____
	* Package includes Membership, Japan Harvest & Directory			
<b>Mission Package Plan</b>	¥3,500 in Japan (JEMA Mission Members only)			_____
<b>Japan Harvest 1 yr Sub.</b>				
¥2,500 member	¥2,800 non-member	\$25.00 overseas + \$5.00 SAL	_____	_____
<b>JEMA Directory</b>				
¥1,500 member	¥2,000 non-member	\$20.00 overseas + \$5.00 SAL	_____	_____
<b>Operation Japan</b>	¥300 each (Contact the JEMA office for quantity discounts)			_____

**If paying by check add ¥450 for Japanese non-Tokyo bank**

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If you itemize your order on the Furikae in the "This payment is for:" column, it is not necessary to mail the order form separately.

TOTAL \_\_\_\_\_

To phone, call the JEMA office at 03-3295-1949 or fax this form to 03-3295-1354

Or, mail your completed order form to: JEMA, OCC Bldg, 2-1 Kanda Surugadai, Chiyoda ku, Tokyo 101 Japan

Moving? Contact the JEMA office so we can update our files!

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

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7. Communing: Building Christian Community
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9. Discipling: Developing a Learning Community
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*Good Day Good Bread.*

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