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## TWO KEY NOVEMBER 2009 CPI EVENTS

	<b>Tuesday</b> November 3 Fuji Hakone Land	<b>Wednesday</b> November 4 Fuji Hakone Land	<b>Thursday</b> November 5 Fuji Hakone Land	<b>Friday</b> November 6 Fuji Hakone Land	<b>Saturday</b> November 7 Ochanomizu Christian Center
<b>AM</b>	<i>Culture Day</i>	Pre-Conf Day	CPI National Conf	CPI National Conf	Tokyo Regional Seminar
<b>PM</b>	Pre-Conf Day <i>Culture Day</i>	CPI National Conf	CPI National Conf		Tokyo Regional Seminar

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### FIRST, CPI 2009 Japan National Conference at Fuji Hakone Land

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A. Special Pre-conference Day - A non-scheduled non-programmed personal day for the entire CPI community with several options on Nov 3 (Tue) [The *Culture Day* national holiday] and Nov 4 (Wed) AM.

- Discover and learn about your gifts and skills in the *Personal Discovery Center*. • Talk over your personal and ministry struggles with professional helpers in the *Consulting Center*.
- Discover resource materials resources helpful to your ministry in the *Resource Center*.
- Have some downtime with family and friends (retreat & recreation).
- Arrange a special meeting with your ministry team.

B. CPI National Conference - Nov 4-6 (Wed - Fri)

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### SECOND, Nov 7 (Sat) – CPI Tokyo Regional Equipping Seminar at OCC

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- Day equipping seminar held at Ochanomizu Christian Center (OCC) in downtown Tokyo with different training options, especially for lay people. 2-3 Training tracks in English and 2-3 in Japanese.
- People can register for either the National Conference or Regional Equipping Seminar or both.
- Cost will be low, under 3,000 yen. (If they attend the Transformation '09 conference they can attend this Regional Equipping Seminar for free.)

For more detailed information on these two key events see [www.jcpi.net](http://www.jcpi.net).

## JEMA Church Planting Institute (CPI)



*Dale Little serves in Japan with the Evangelical Free Church of Canada Mission, living in Higashikurumeshi, Tokyo. He is the interim pastor of the English department of Tokyo Musashino Evangelical Free Church, and lectures in theology at Japan Bible Seminary in Tokyo and at Tokyo Christian University in Chiba.*

## Missionaries and Evangelism

During the summer and fall months of 2009, the Protestant churches of Japan will be celebrating the 150th anniversary of Protestant missions in Japan. One set of events is sponsored by the Japan Bible Society and is called, not surprisingly, the “150th Anniversary of Protestant Missions in Japan” ([www.protestant150.org](http://www.protestant150.org)). It is scheduled for July 7-9 in Tokyo and Yokohama. Participants have been invited from all Protestant church associations in Japan. Another set of events is sponsored by the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA) and is called the “5th Japan Congress on Evangelism,” or JCE5 ([www.jce5.net](http://www.jce5.net)). It will be held in Sapporo, September 21-24.

There is some question as to whether this year is really the 150th anniversary of Protestant missions in Japan. At the JEA annual business meeting, held in Tokyo on June 1-2, historian Dr. Yamauchi, President of Tokyo Christian Theological Seminary (Chiba-ken), presented a paper outlining his reasons for concluding that 2009 is actually the 163rd anniversary of Protestant mission work in Japan.

This sort of constructive discussion should encourage us in the expatriate missionary community in Japan to join with our Japanese brothers and sisters in these kinds of celebratory events, not just so that we can sharpen our historical insights, but so that we can show our Christian love for

one another by listening to each other. These events provide us with an opportunity to personally interact with Japanese church leaders (both pastors and lay leaders) from a variety of Protestant backgrounds in order to be encouraged in working together to seek and enter the kingdom of God.

Evangelism is one sphere in which we continue to work together with our Japanese counterparts. JCE5 is the fifth congress on evangelism in Japan. The previous one was held in Okinawa in 2000, with the theme of reconciliation. The word “evangelism” seems to always appear in the title of this series of congresses. At JCE4 in Okinawa, I remember wondering why that word appeared in the title of the congress because it seemed that little in the program was actually focused on evangelism. The theme for JCE5 is “Mission Cooperation in an Age of Crisis” (roughly translated). In looking over the program, I once again wonder about the inclusion of the word “evangelism” in the title of the congress.

Apparently, however, I am not the only one wondering about this. At the JEA annual meeting in early June, a Japanese pastor stood up and asked, “If JCE5 is about evangelism, where is this evangelistic emphasis in the program?” The answer given by the chairper-

## JEMA Datebook

Event	Date	Time	Place
Strategy Forum Meeting	August 6	10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	TBD
JEMA Leadership Team	September 15	10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	
JCE5: 5th Japan Congress on Evangelism	September 21-24		Sapporo Conference Center
WIM Day of Prayer	September 29	10:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.	TEAM Center
Strategy Forum Meeting	September 29	10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.	TBD
Prayer Walk	October 5	10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.	Diet Building
Pre-CPI Conference	November 3rd		Fuji Hakone Land
CPI Conference	November 4-6		Fuji Hakone Land
Tokyo Regional Equipping Seminar	November 7		OCC Building

son of the JCE5 organizing committee started with these words, "JEMA is offering one seminar on evangelism." He then went on to explain that a number of other seminars at JCE5 will have a focus on evangelism.

So it seems clear that JEMA and our member missions and missionaries have a reputation here in Japan for emphasizing evangelism. We expatriate missionaries in Japan are engaged in a variety of ministries, but it is probably not that far off the mark to state that we do seem to emphasize evangelism as a strategic ministry in this country that has such a low percentage of believers in Jesus.

Some among us, however, think this emphasis on evangelism is misplaced because we proclaim a "truncated gospel." That is, we do not always seem to give much weight to social action as mission. Maybe that criticism does have some merit. Be sure to read Gary Carlson's article in this issue. We should be both living out Jesus' "great commandment" as Christians and obeying his "great commission" as missionaries.

Nevertheless, if I had to choose

between the two, I would emphasize the missional priority of evangelism over social action, rather than the missional equality of social action and evangelism. The kind of gospel proclaimed by a focus on evangelism is said to be a "truncated gospel" because it is seen as ignoring social action. However, the kind of gospel demonstrated by missionaries who claim to place equal weight on evangelism and social action can lead toward being silent about the Christocentric and salvific content of the gospel. This could be called the "silent gospel."

This is because of our postmodern context. Our postmodern world displays an ultimate commitment to relativism when it comes to questions of truth. Tolerance has come to be defined as not disagreeing with the religious or moral beliefs of others. Beliefs are understood to be simply personal choices of preference, removed from the sphere of discussions about truth. In this postmodern context, our potential missional blind spot is that we tend to remain silent about the saving gospel of Jesus

Christ. We like the catchy, though problematic, phrase, "preach the gospel... and if necessary use words," because it is easier to remain silent and seem tolerant than to verbalize the gospel and risk being labeled intolerant.

In many ways, Japan holds to a postmodern set of values. It has probably done so for centuries. I would suggest that doing mission together here in Japan "in an age of crisis"—to borrow wording from the title of JCE5—requires continual and intentional emphasis on verbal proclamation of the gospel. Perhaps evangelism is indeed the sphere in which JEMA can make an ongoing contribution to mission in Japan.

I look forward to seeing many of you at the upcoming celebratory events here in Japan. You will find me either moderating a JEMA seminar on evangelism or taking in a theological seminar.



## Women in Ministry Events

Kanto **Fall Day of Prayer**, Tuesday, September 29, 2009, TEAM Center, Mitaka.  
Please join us for worship, prayer and fellowship.

### 2010 Retreat Events



**March 3-5**, Wednesday-Friday, Megumi Chalet, Karuizawa

**March 6**, Saturday, Hokkaido Christian Women's Fellowship, OMF Center.

Our guest speaker will be German SEND missionary Anita Hallemann. Anita will speak to us from her rich experience as a single missionary to the Philippines, cancer survivor, Bible School teacher and women's conference speaker. More information is on the website, Mark your calendars!

2009 Retreat pictures are available to download! Find the link at [jema.org](http://jema.org)



## Good News, Bad News

*Gary Bauman has served as managing editor of Japan Harvest since September 2005. Gary and his wife Barbara have worked in Japan since 1988 with Asian Access.*

*Gary*



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# Letters to the Editor

## When Did the Post-war Missionaries Arrive?

To set the record straight, the first post-war missionaries did not arrive in 1949! (See *Japan Harvest*, Spring 2009, “The 150th Anniversary and Three Other Anniversaries,” p. 18.) My parents arrived in December 1947. I recommend that you please do your homework or the rest of your data looks suspect... There were other post-war missionaries who are dishonored by this incredible oversight. JEMA should never forget its history or its missionaries.

*Andy Meeko  
Tokorozawa-shi, Saitama-ken*

*I received the following e-mail from my husband's sister... I had written her to ask what info she had about the arrival of missionaries after the war. The missionaries she mentions were all Southern Baptist missionaries:*

“We arrived October, 1947—I have Aki-chan's description of going to meet us in Sasebo, seeing us being transported from the ship in the bay via a small boat to the dock. I came across it when going through some of Baachan's boxes... Alma Graves was there before we were, and Uncle Edwin (Dozier), as well.

Mama told me once that when the Board was ready to send a man back alone (no families, yet), they asked [our Japan church association] whom they would like to have first.

The response was, ‘Garrott-sensei,’ but when Mama and Daddy conferred with Granddaddy (among others, I'm sure), he said, ‘You've

already had your separation. Let them send someone who hasn't been separated from his family already,’ so they sent Uncle Edwin, the logical choice. We were the first dependents to arrive after the war.”

(The “separation” she is referring to is this... [My husband] Jack's father was interred in Tokyo during the war, and was exchanged when Japan and the US had a POW exchange on ships in the ocean.)

*Cathy Garrott  
Omura-shi, Nagasaki-ken*

*Response from Kenny Joseph: “We should have said ‘the large influx of post-war missionaries started in 1949-55.’ Seven women missionaries stayed in Japan during the war and greeted General MacArthur. No missionaries were allowed to enter for 700 days, thus the only [new] foreign missionaries were born again G.I.s who started Gospel Hours on Saturdays. Yes, the Joe Meekos, Edwin Doziers and others came in ‘47.”*

Kenny, thought you'd like to know. Enjoying your Japan Harvest articles. I remember much, since I arrived here in 1954 and was saved here in 1955. I met you way back then.

*Jim Blocksom  
Ikoma-shi, Nara-ken*

## I Have a Complaint...

I have a complaint about the Japan Harvest that arrived in the mail yesterday [Spring 2009].

Here it is...

How in the world am I supposed to tackle my to-do list today when this magazine appears where every single article looks fascinating, the colors are so inviting, and the overall appearance keeps shouting, “Drop everything and read me cover to cover.”!

Kudos on a job well done.

*Flossie Epley  
Higashikurume-shi, Tokyo-to*

## Call to Prayer

My Dear Brothers: “Say not ye, There are yet four months and then cometh the harvest? Behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes and look on the fields: for they are white already to harvest.” John 4:35

Please, please forgive me but I am once again coming to you pleading for the multitudes of perishing souls in that land of darkness and unlimited spiritual need! As I said before, my burden is deepening, growing heavier and heavier! ...I have made a new commitment to be one of those absolutely vital intercessors!...

Please hear me! ...Revival will never come unless we, [God's] people, respond to His pleas to unite in “solemn assemblies,” that is, fasting and prayer retreats together, yes, and not just once but again and again. This is God's appointed path that will lead to revival and the salvation of millions! I plead with you... to heed the passionate pleas of the Almighty! Call God's people to unite in travail of soul... from all across the land to come to pray, to fast, to weep for the lost! Soak in Joel. Heed



the example of Nehemiah!

Yes, and even more. Please, please send out a clarion call for pastors and missionaries to respond to His pleas for committed intercessors who will like John Knox or Moses stand in the gap and travail in prayer daily, continually for the much needed move of God in Japan! Will you do this? I am praying for you every day! And may I suggest that you forget me and accept this passionate call to be from the Lord? I am only his insignificant mouth-piece.

God bless you, anoint you, lead you to the max for His glory!

*Donnel McLean  
Aromas, California  
(former career missionary in Japan)*

*Editor – We encourage you to visit the JEMA website ([www.jema.org](http://www.jema.org)) where Donnel shares more of his burden for reaching the rural areas of Japan with the gospel.*

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## A Fresh Encounter with God—Part 2

*Ken and Toshiko Reddington are church-planting missionaries in Kochi-ken. Ken, an MK who returned to Japan as a missionary 30 years ago, is on the Servant-Leader Teams of the Prayer Summit for Western Japan and the Kochi Prayer Summit. He is also on the executive committee for the Kochi Global Day of Prayer. He is secretary for the Kochi Citywide Interdenominational Pastors Group.*

As I mentioned last time, we will be discussing four things in regards to prayer during the course of this year. Those four things are the appointment, the plan, the pattern, and the promise. In the spring issue we looked at the appointment. We saw that we need to make a definite choice to pray. This time, let's look at the second item—the plan.

### The Plan

Now that we have chosen to spend time with the Lord in prayer, we have to make sure that it really happens. That involves choosing the right place and the right time.

**A Place** “But you, when you pray, go into your inner room, close your door and pray to your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees what is done in secret will reward you.” (Matthew 6:6)

To make it easier for us to pray, the first thing is to choose a quiet place to pray. It should be a place where people can't come in and disturb you; best would be a place where you can't even hear others. In our passage, it says, “Go into your inner room and shut the door!” When I designed our present house, I was planning to pray in my study. The only thing is, I didn't put a door between the study and our

bedroom! Design-wise, that was the best thing to do, but not for spending time in private with God!

In old English (the KJV, etc.), this verse reads, “enter into thy closet.” The president of the seminary I went to actually did pray in the closet under his staircase. That's a great place to pray, because we should pray in a place without distractions. We don't want our time with God to compete with the TV, the stereo or the radio. As you know, Satan can bring a million and one things to our minds to keep us from praying. Don't allow the room where you pray to keep you from God. That's the problem with my study. Since my wife uses it too, we have two computers, three printers, two phones and a fax machine, as well as four filing cabinets, a paper cutter and a copy machine—and a few thousand books! I could really go off on a tangent, couldn't I? So, guess where I

pray now? In the church downstairs. What a perfect place to pray!

**A Time** Verses five, six and seven of Matthew chapter six all have the words, “when you pray.” So the Lord expects us to pray! And

---

### Prayer is:

Man falling on his face

before a holy God,

drinking in the grandeur

of His majesty,

appropriating the marvel

of His grace,

claiming the assurance

of His promises and

surrendering to the marvel

of His will.

—Russell Kelfer

---

when we do, it's easiest if we pray at the same time every day. Then it's hard to forget! This is one situation when "getting into a rut" is good!

It should also be a time without distractions. We all have different schedules, but how about 2 a.m.? Lose sleep to pray? That sounds crazy! But just look at Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. And Luke 6:12 tells us that "He (Jesus) spent the whole night in prayer to God."

Of course, those were special times. For more "normal" times, we need to choose a "healthy" schedule, and stick to it. For instance, I get up before the rest of the family to have my "quiet time" with the Lord. And for that to be healthy for me, I have to try to get my work done early and get to bed at a decent time the night before.

As I said before, I realize I'm "preaching to the converted" here.

But where and when we pray is important. We want to be able to really connect with God. It might take work, but it's worth it (remember going that extra mile or going out of the way just to be with the boy or girl we liked so much?). Let's be imaginative with our time with God.

Stay tuned—next time, we'll look at the pattern for prayer.

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— Paul Nethercott

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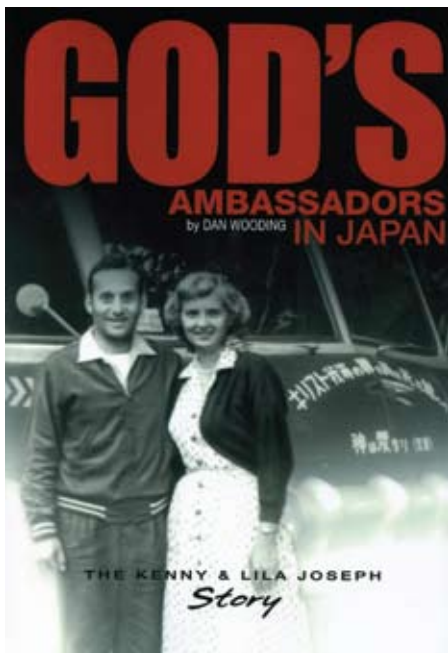


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## Veteran Missionaries Kenny and Lila Joseph Honored with Release of Biography



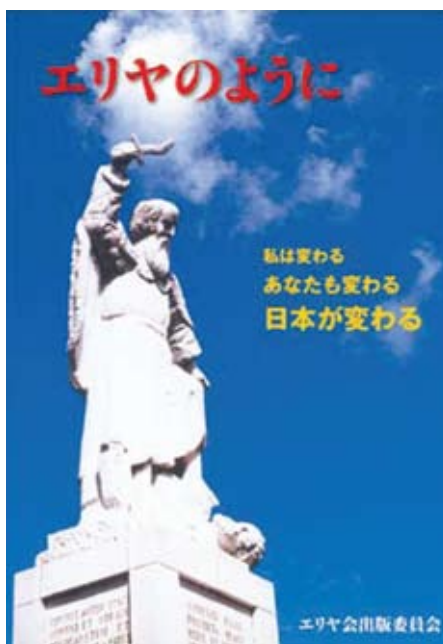
Assist News Service—On Sunday, May 31, 2009, at a gathering in Tokyo celebrating their 80th birthdays, Kenny and Lila Joseph were surprised with a book release party for a 200 page book on their lives and work in Japan.

God's Ambassadors in Japan: The Kenny & Lila Joseph Story, written by veteran missionary biographer

and ANS founder, Dan Wooding, follows the duo's journeys from the North Dakota prairie and the South side of Chicago to life on the bustling streets of one of the world's largest cities, Tokyo, with their four sons who were all born there.

For more information or to order a copy of the book, contact Kenny Joseph at REAPjapan1@aol.com.

## Elijah Group Releases Book to Aid in the Evangelization of Japan



In autumn 2001, Dr. Okio Hino laid out his vision for a monthly meeting of committed Christians from various walks of Japanese society to embark on a mission researching attitudes toward Christianity and seeking the spiritual transformation of Japan. In 2002, he was a founding member of the Elijah Group, a joint partnership of missionaries, pastors, and Christian businessmen. Missionaries actively involved in the group have included Ray Franklin, John Mehn, Ray Leaf, Scott Parrish, and others. Mizuko Matsushita (from the JEMA office) took notes at the meetings and submitted 60 reports. David Scott played an important role in providing technical assistance. Monthly meetings were held from 2002 to 2008, as well as five symposiums and two surveys to gather research data.

All the resulting records have now been reviewed, edited, and published in a 500-page book entitled Eriya No Y\_ Ni (To Be Like Elijah). Available only in Japanese, it is hoped this book will be an important tool aiding in the evangelization of Japan.



## In Memory of Norbert Raschner Kobe, Japan

Early in the morning of May 1, 2009, God called to Himself our dear brother, friend, and fellow-missionary, Norbert

Raschner, 53, from his home in Kobe, to rest from his labor and cease from his battle with cancer. We let him go only reluctantly, but have full assurance that God knows better than we what He is doing through His children in both life and death.

We remember our brother as a foreful man of God who desired nothing but to build God's Kingdom of-actively in Japan. We know what a difficult task that is. And so we now pray that this seed which has fallen

into the ground and died will do just what Norbert has always been praying for: bring forth a great harvest in Japan which cannot be measured, and a revival that will shake this land. We are not quite sure how this will happen. But we know God's thoughts are not our thoughts, nor His ways our ways (Isaiah 55:8). From this seed fallen to the ground and buried, we anxiously await this great harvest!

*"I tell you the truth, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds."*

*John 12:24*

Please remember in prayer Norbert's wife Brigitte, their children Johannes (21), Simon (20), Beate (18), Daniel (11); and in Germany, Norbert's aging parents and two sisters. We of the Japan Fellowship Deaconry Mission also thank you for your prayer as we await the great harvest He has promised!

## Japanese University Students Ministry

by Naoki Okamura, Associate Professor, Tokyo Christian University

When I was an educator at a Christian university in California, every year I observed a great percentage of Japanese international students who were transformed from self-professed non-religious students to those who paint positive pictures of religion. More specifically, year after year up to half of these non-religious Japanese international students became participants (some more active than others) in local Christian churches in the area. This is an astounding percentage, considering the fact that most Japanese young people are said to have a quite negative view of organized religion, and that in most estimates, the number of Christians in Japan is less than one percent of the entire population. As a religious educator and a researcher, I became fascinated by this group of students and decided to conduct a study to learn from them.

A group of young Japanese college students, aged from 19 to 24, who had lived

in the United States for at least half a year, were chosen as the research sample. In order to observe the changes that took place in their religious views and experiences related to Christianity, 17 students, who considered themselves to be non-religious at the time of their initial departure from Japan, became the research targets. Out of those 17 students, ten (six females and four males) were willing and available to be extensively interviewed. A variety of qualitative data that focused on their American experiences was gathered by using standardized open-ended interviews, by comparison of their behavior both in public and in private, and by observation of naturally-occurring social interactions that took place as they went about college life.

It was very interesting to observe that during their time in the United States their feelings about religion and their feelings about the American life moved unexpectedly and surprisingly in opposite directions. They arrived in America ("the land of freedom") hoping to escape from their pressure-filled life in Japan. But they discovered their American life to be an experience filled with many restrictions and frustrations—a lack of

personal transportation, an inability to communicate well, and a fear of crime, to name a few. On the other hand, they started their time in America with a very negative view of organized religion, but found it to be rather pleasant as they enjoyed fellowship with many Christians, thinking of it as a "delightful experience." Four of the students went so far as to make a personal religious commitment to the Christian faith and identified themselves as being Christians.

As a result of this study, I have arrived at the following conclusions.

1) Intercultural experience creates crisis situations for Japanese students, which may serve as a catalyst for them to question their existing uncritical beliefs about religion.

2) Japanese students, in general, respond well to approaches that utilize personal affection, love, and nurturing to encourage religious transformation.

3) The presence of caring and loving individuals is crucial to aiding in the religious transformation of Japanese students.

This study was presented at the Religious Education Association conference in Boston (2007) and will be published in the *Journal of Religious Education* (2009).

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# Mission Confusion or Evangelical Confusion?

by Gary Carlson

On February 23, 2009 I was one of many delegates to the JEMA Plenary and heard Dale Little's opening message, entitled "Mission Confusion." When I returned home, I sent Dale an e-mail in which I expressed disagreement with him about certain points in his remarks. He showed how gracious he is in offering me the opportunity to respond in the pages of the Japan Harvest,

Scriptures in seeking to establish a model for missionary identity and activity, our understanding of the gospel message, and our appraisal of ministries done (by missionaries and others) in Jesus' name.

## Approach to the Scriptures

Dale Little, in his Plenary address, sought to establish a model for missionary work using Paul as an

state that this summary is not only descriptive, but also prescriptive for us today. In other words, as evangelical Christians who accept the authority of the Bible, we should connect our mission work to these themes.

My concern is that this approach is an overly selective use of the Bible. If we wish to understand the biblical mandate for missions, should we not look at the overarching themes of the whole of Scripture? There is much throughout the Old and New Testaments that inform us about God's love and concern for a broken creation, his plan for its redemption, and the way he wants to use people like you and me to further that plan. We need to consider all of this, and not just Paul, as we seek to determine what the Bible is saying about our mission work.

The focus of all of this, of course, is in Jesus Christ. Jesus came to this earth bringing the gospel message, and was in himself this good news. We need to learn from him before anyone else in Scripture about the gospel message he has given us, and the way in which he would have us share that message in our witness and work. Jesus is the one who gave his disciples the Great Commission in Matthew 28, and he also declared that he was the model for mission when he told his disciples, "As the Father has sent me, I am sending you" (John 20:21, see also Jesus' prayer in John 17:18). How the Father sent Jesus, and the way he carried out the ministry his Father



Staff member with residents at a church-sponsored group home for mentally handicapped men

following the issue in which his message appeared. It is my hope that my comments will be taken in the spirit of the Hayama seminars of the past, in which brothers and sisters affirm their oneness in Christ while disagreeing over certain issues.

The concerns I have center in the following areas: our approach to the

example. Looking at some of Paul's words about his own work, Dale's conclusion is that Paul's missionary activity centered in 1) the proclamation of the gospel (evangelism), 2) the founding of churches (church planting), and 3) the strengthening of existing churches (church strengthening). Dale went on to

gave him, is our prime example for mission and ministry.

In choosing Paul as our primary model, we miss out on Jesus' example. And I would also add that if we are going to look at Paul (and I would agree that we have much to learn from him), we should look at the whole of his life, his ministry

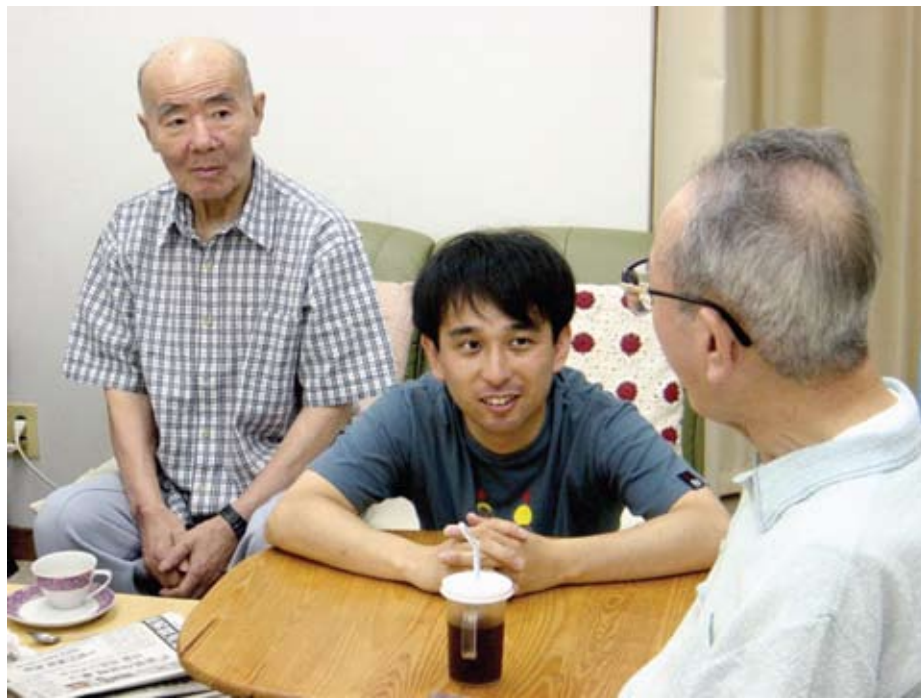
be missing out on the aspects of the gospel that deal with family, society, and creation itself.

At the onset of Jesus' public ministry, in Mark 1:15, he announced, "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!" There was good news, the gospel, even before Jesus made his way to

lieve you can find such a distinction in the pages of the four Gospels, let alone the answer to the question of whether they are equal in importance. The gospel message that Jesus proclaimed, enacted and fulfilled was the message of God's plan to heal everything in our lives, in our relationships and in creation that has been damaged by sin.

All of this follows in line with the prophets of the Old Testament, who cried out with God's voice against idolatry, to be sure, but also against the oppression of the poor, widows, orphans, and the marginalized by those with wealth and power. And at the other end of the Bible we can follow the arc of God's work in this world from Jesus through to his disciples and the early church. In Acts 2 we read of a church that verbally witnessed of Christ, but also enacted the gospel by sharing possessions so that no one would be in need. Paul gathered an offering in the churches he established and visited not as "bringing the wealth of the nations to Jerusalem," as Dale Little writes, but as an act of "service to the Lord's people" (2 Corinthians 8:4) who were in need.

In Ephesians 2 after that wonderful statement of how we are saved by grace through faith, Paul says "we are created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do" (v. 10). Later in the same letter he says that God's purpose in raising up apostles, prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers in the church is "to equip his people for acts of service" (4:12). He says to Timothy, regarding those who are rich, "Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share" (1 Timothy 6:18). When Paul said farewell to the elders of the church in Ephesus, he reminded them that he had worked diligently to support himself and his ministry companions, saying, "In everything I did, I showed you that by this



Church sponsored day-care service for the elderly

and his letters, and not just a few isolated passages.

### Understanding of the Gospel Message

Before moving on to consider the method of our mission work, we first need to make sure we understand the content of our message—the gospel itself. Our understanding of the gospel will determine much about our methods, so we must make sure our understanding is on target and complete.

For many of us, it is too easy to define the gospel only in terms of the forgiveness of sins and the re-establishment of a loving relationship with God through the sacrificial death of Jesus on the cross, and the gift of new life through Jesus' resurrection. Of course without this, there is no gospel! But if we limit ourselves to this definition, we will

the cross. About the same time, in Luke 4:18-19, Jesus stated the gospel and his ministry by quoting Isaiah: "The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners, and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

The gospel, this good news, was the coming of the kingdom of God in and through Jesus Christ. He proclaimed forgiveness of sins, but he also healed the sick, cast out demons, fed the multitudes, and welcomed the outcasts of society to intimate table fellowship with him. He taught kingdom values of peacemaking, showing mercy, and loving our enemies. For Jesus, was the gospel the salvation of the soul or social responsibility? I do not be-

kind of hard work we must help the weak, remembering the words the Lord Jesus himself said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive'" (Acts 20:35).

Certainly a significant part of Paul's missionary work was to care for the poor and needy, and to train church leaders to do the same.



**Church sponsored ministry to mothers with preschool children**

The writer of Hebrews echoes this. "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds" (10:24). James says "Suppose a brother or sister is without clothes and daily food. If one of you says to them, 'Go in peace; keep warm and well fed,' but does nothing about their physical needs, what good is it? In the same way, faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead" (2:15-17). Peter exhorts his readers by saying "Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us" (1 Peter 2:12). John challenges, "If any one of you has material possessions and sees a brother or sister in need but has no pity on them, how can the love of God be in you? Dear children, let

us not love with words or tongue, but with actions and truth" (1 John 3:17-18).

Returning once more to Jesus, he gave his disciples a Great Commission, but before and above this is the Great Commandment (quoting from the Old Testament) to love God and to love our neighbors as

ourselves (Matthew 22:34-40). He also gave us a wonderful example of what it means to love our neighbors in the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30ff)—by showing mercy to those who are suffering and in need.

To sum up, the gospel message is to be proclaimed in words, but also demonstrated in the way we live our lives, especially as we care for those around us; it is this consistency of word and deed that is the appealing, compelling ministry and mission to our world.

### **Appraisal of Ministries**

If this is our understanding of the gospel, then what does this say about mission and ministry done in Jesus' name? Dale Little would have us believe that Paul's example teaches us that mission work consists of

proclamation of the gospel, and the planting and strengthening of churches. To this I would say "Yes and amen!" but I would add that this is not all we are called to do.

And I would dare to add that Paul would tell us not to model our work so closely on his example! In several places in his letters, Paul emphasizes the uniqueness of each individual believer. After writing about the unity we have in Christ, he states "to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it" (Ephesians 4:7). He challenges believers to "think of yourself with sober judgment in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you," and reminds us that "we have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us" (Romans 12: 3, 6). So Paul might tell us, "This is how God has created, called and gifted me to serve him; discover the same about yourself."

It is my belief that in mission and ministry this means that rather than slavishly following one model, we need to prayerfully (and with the discernment of others in the church) learn how God has made us and how we can use who we are and his gifts to us to serve him best. That ought to be unique to each individual believer, and to each individual missionary.

### **Putting it all together**

I rejoice with those whose primary calling and gifting is to proclaim the good news of Jesus verbally. I thank God for those who are called and gifted to plant churches. And I am grateful for those who by God's grace are able to help strengthen churches. I affirm all of these servants of God, their calling and their gifts.

But I also say "Yes and amen!" to those God has called and gifted primarily to serve the poor and needy. I rejoice with those who are called and gifted to work for justice in society. I am grateful for those who by God's



grace are effectively working in areas of healing the hurts of individuals and families. All of this is from God, done in Jesus' name, and leads to God's glory.

Thinking back to those who made the comments Dale referred to at the beginning of his message, I would say that the person who is helping create a profit-generating business may not be instilling greedy, materialistic values, but simply helping poor people put food on the table for their families. I would say that the missionary who is drilling wells and building houses for people in need does need to share a verbal witness to Christ when that is possible, but we need to recognize that some missionaries work in situations where a verbal witness could result in imprisonment and death for the missionary or the new believer. It may not be shame and fear of persecution, but a solid faith and conviction of calling that leads one to believe that God will at a later time open doors for greater verbal witness.

I would also add that the person who digs wells should not "envision his digging of wells as a practical way to earn credibility so that at the appropriate time he can share the gospel (if permitted)," as Dale suggests. If our practical deeds do not come from a heart of compassion and love, then simply using these actions as a means to an end may be seen by those we want to reach as manipulative and make people less open to our message. In other words, caring for people in concrete expressions of Christ's love is an end in itself.

The evangelist/church planter/church strengthener needs to be aware of the hurts and needs of individuals, their families and society. Getting involved in these areas may not be their main area of strength or giftedness, but they too can contribute in time and talent here. And the missionary who is involved primarily in ministries of compassion, mercy

and justice must never forget that people need to know that Jesus died on the cross and was raised to new life for them, and that Jesus calls them to come into a relationship with him and with others in the new community which is the church. This kind of missionary also has a story to tell of coming to faith in Christ and living in him, and should "be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope you have" (1 Peter 3:15).

It seems to me that evangelicals, whether here in Japan or in our sending countries, have long been confused about the nature of the gospel of Jesus, and how to proclaim and live it out in this world. We need to take a good, long look at the Scriptures in order to get to know God's heart of compassion for women and men, the young and the old, the rich and the poor, those who have power and those who have none. This understanding is needed as we work out the calling God has given to each of us as missionaries.

At the end of the story of Zacchaeus, Jesus declares "Today salvation has come to this house" (Luke 19:9). Is Jesus only talking about Zacchaeus' believing in Jesus? Or can we learn something from the fact that Jesus' words come after Zacchaeus' statement that he would give half his possessions to the poor and pay back those he cheated fourfold? Salvation is the restoration of all that is broken in God's world due to human sin – in this case the condition of Zacchaeus' heart, but also his relationships with his society. Jesus' presence brought a change in all of that.

In 27 years of mission service in Japan (both short-term and career), I have often been frustrated by the indifference of so many Japanese people to the gospel message. It may be that if we only choose to focus on the verbal proclamation of the gospel, planting churches and strength-

ening them, Japanese non-believers hear our message as irrelevant. I have seen church ministries to the elderly, mothers with pre-school children, and the handicapped become effective in connecting with non-believers. This is not because these ministries are done as a means to earn a hearing for the gospel, but because people sense a genuine love and concern they have not experienced before.

I will not accept the question raised in Dale Little's article and by others of whether evangelism and social action are equal. I believe the question to be based on false assumptions. We cannot find such a distinction anywhere in the Bible. When we as missionaries proclaim the good news of Jesus in our words, when we plant churches, when we work to strengthen existing congregations, and when we care for the needy, hurting, outcast and oppressed, we are moving in mission and ministry from the very heart of God. Let us not be confused about this!

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# Reaching Japan: The New Math for Church Planting and Starting Mother Churches

By Dan Iverson

Our recent annual congregational meeting included a skit to give vision for the priority of starting daughter churches. In the skit, Izumi, a very pregnant church member, was staring upwards commenting to herself about a huge (imaginary) fruit tree. Suddenly Izumi realized that her friend Keiko was high up in the tree pruning it. After some funny bantering as Keiko tried to get the very-great-with child Izumi to climb the tree and help her, Izumi began questioning Keiko about her methodology for producing more fruit. Izumi said it must be difficult to take care of such a huge tree. Keiko responded that it was difficult, and that it seemed to be growing more slowly, if at all, and producing less fruit proportionally the bigger it grew. Holding her huge belly as everyone laughed, Izumi responded that living things can only grow so big! Izumi asked Keiko why she didn't plant

more fruit trees that in time would collectively produce much more fruit. Keiko acknowledged the logic, but gave a number of excuses paralleling why churches do not start daughter churches.

The point was clear to everyone as we talked about our vision to start daughter churches. Our church is starting a third daughter congregation (See "Multi-Site Church Model" on page 20). This Kingdom expansion is exciting, but very messy! Ongoing vision-casting is greatly needed.

## The Church Planting Priority

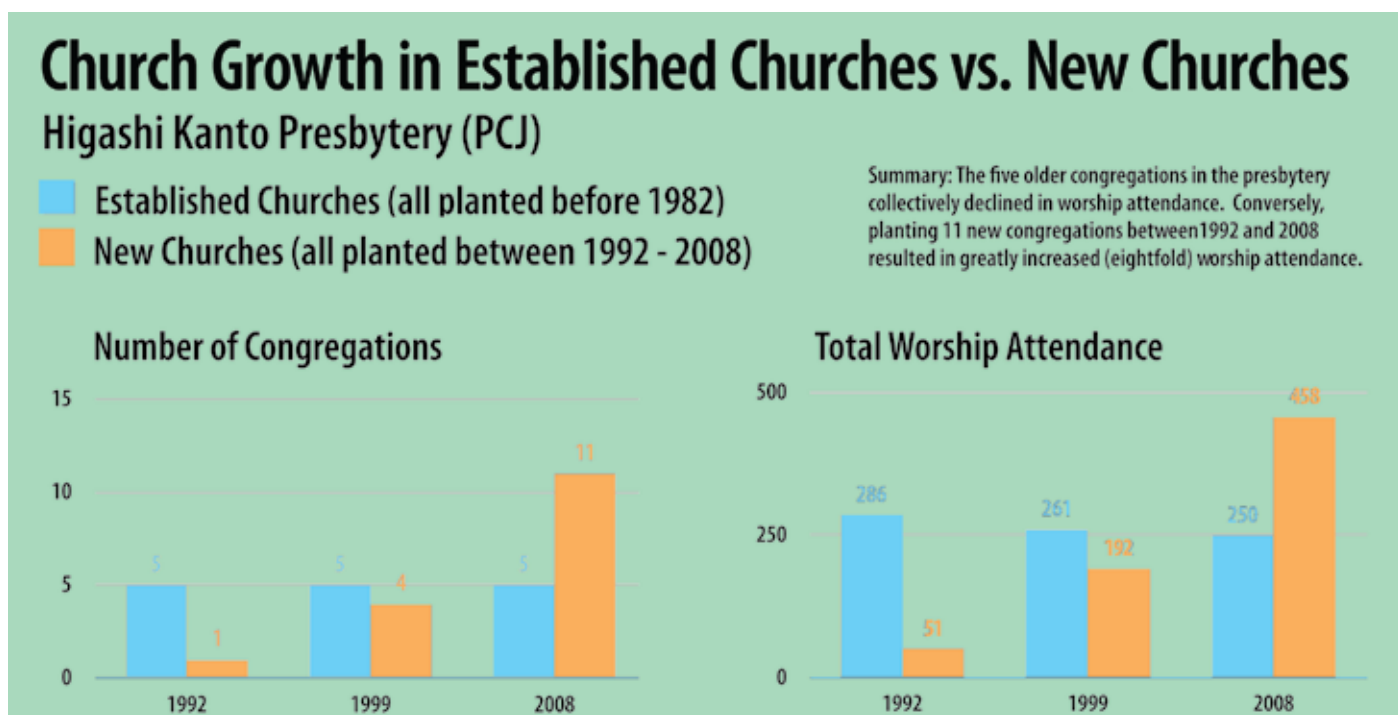
We need more church planting to reach Japan, but there seems to be less taking place. Church growth expert Peter Wagner said, "Planting new churches is the most effective evangelistic methodology known under heaven"<sup>1</sup>. JEMA CPI chairman John Mehn's recent research about church planting in Japan confirmed this. He found that churches and missions that are aggressively church planting generally see more conversions and growth. The large number of conversions and church growth (for Japan) reported in previous Japan Harvest issues by TEAM missionary Ralph Cox was largely the fruit of aggressive church planting<sup>2</sup>.

In my limited research within our

Japanese denomination, it is clear that church planting results in conversions and church growth. Our Higashi Kanto Presbytery (East Tokyo/Chiba) partnership of Japanese churches and missionaries grew from 5 churches totaling 286 worshipers in 1992 to 16 congregations with 708 worshipers in the last 17 years (see chart). Over that period, the total number of worshipers in the established churches declined 13%, while the number of worshipers in the 11 new church plants grew 798% in worship attendance. That is 8-fold growth, by God's grace, through church planting! During that same 17-year period we kept hearing that Christ's Church in Japan was not growing, or was barely growing. Even in difficult Japan, God is using a Biblical, zealous, persevering church planting focus to see the Church grow.

It's not rocket science. The general truth is that starting more churches results in more Kingdom growth. The chart from the east Tokyo area from 1992-2008 shows that. The chart from Ralph Cox in Shikoku in 1977 shows the same thing<sup>3</sup>.

In spite of the clear success of church planting for Kingdom growth, the impression of many mission leaders is that fewer missionaries in Japan are involved in church planting. Increasing numbers of missionaries



seem to be opting for other ministries. This article is a call to the priority of church planting.

## The Biblical Church Planting Imperative

The Bible is clear about the church planting priority. Jesus promises to build His Church in Matthew 16:18. In Matthew 28:19-20 Jesus commissions his disciples and us to make disciples and baptize them, by inference, into His Church. As the New Testament church is born in Acts 2, we see them doing just that, and those who believed and are baptized are added to the church (Acts 2:41, 47). They spread out through Judea and Samaria as Jesus promised (Acts 1:8) and start churches. The church in Antioch becomes the mother church for starting churches that will extend “to the ends of the earth” as they send Paul and Barnabas (Acts 13:1ff). Everywhere the gospel goes, churches are started to continue making disciples. Paul commands his followers to continue the church planting pattern by appointing elders in every town (Titus 1:5). Those who love Christ love his Bride, and long to see her in every place. The New Testament ends with the church from every nation worshipping together in heaven (Rev. 7:9).

## Church Planting for Greater Kingdom Advancement

Numerous writers show that church planting generally leads to more conversions and greater church growth than merely trying to grow established churches. Tim Keller writes in his church planting manual<sup>4</sup> about why church planting generally brings about more Kingdom growth. In summary, he says:

- New churches generally reach more younger adults. Older churches are led by those from a different era, with extra-Biblical (though not necessarily unbiblical) customs (such as dress, music style, etc.) that are not so attractive to many younger folks. These church norms are difficult to

change in established churches. In church plants, a new church culture can be established from the beginning.

- New congregations are better at reaching new people. They can be assimilated, use their gifts, and even become leaders sooner than in established churches, where long tenure tends to precede influence.

- New churches are generally better at reaching new social groups (such as the new wave of young people flocking to central Tokyo) than are the established churches. An example is central Tokyo’s New Hope Chapel.

Keller points out that “as a congregation ages, powerful internal institutional pressures lead it to allocate most of its resources and energy toward the concerns of its members and constituents, rather than toward those outside its walls... But new churches, of necessity, are forced to focus far more of their energies on the needs of their non-members and become much more sensitive to the sensibilities of non-believers. There is also a cumulative effect. In the first two years of our Christian walk, we have far more close, face-to-face relationships with non-Christians than we do later. Thus new Christians attract non-believers to services five to ten times more than a long-time Christian. New believers beget new believers.”<sup>5</sup>

## The “New Math” for Kingdom Growth

We have nine children, which has gotten us on Japanese television three times. Carol and I often joke with Japanese people that we are sorry we have not been able to help more with their population decline problem. We were only able to have nine children, not much help considering the problem’s severity. We labored hard for 20 years, but all we could produce was nine! “But,” we add with a smile, “Now we have entered the reproduction phase.” Six grandbabies have been born in only 3 years. We would not be surprised if God blessed us with 30 grandchildren, and 150 great-grandchildren. It is the miracle

of exponential reproduction.

In *The Multiplying Church*,<sup>6</sup> Bob Roberts calls this kind of thinking the “new math for starting more churches.” It’s really not new. This is the way living things naturally grow and propagate<sup>7</sup>.

Christ’s Church is a living organism. It grows best by reproduction, as Christians reproduce other Christians by evangelism and family growth; and as churches reproduce new churches, which over time produce new granddaughter churches. Bob Roberts calls us not to a mere church planting vision, but to a bigger vision. He calls us to plant churches that have in their DNA from the beginning the vision and commitment to be the mother church for several churches, and the grandmother church for many churches.

## Church Planting DNA for New Churches

Seventeen years ago, I met with the Japanese core members of our church plant in advance of the first worship. I shared about our someday starting a daughter church. Their eyes rolled back. They looked at me like I was crazy, as if to say, “We have not even had our first worship, there are only four Japanese adult Christians, and our crazy missionary is talking about starting a daughter church!” But the response was completely different eight years ago when I did the same thing with six church members living in a nearby town. We met together about starting house church worship there two Sunday mornings a month. We shared the importance of this new congregation having in its DNA from the beginning the vision to be a mother church to a new church plant somewhere. The response this time was completely different. They had experienced reproduction thinking in our mother church. They embraced the idea together with our elders about someday giving birth to a daughter.

We leaders need to have vision and

give vision for starting baby churches that grow into mother churches. This needs to be in the DNA of new church plants from day one.

### **Theory Versus Reality in Difficult Japan**

Church reproduction and starting mother churches is more difficult in Japan. In our post-war Japan denomination of about 60 churches and pastors, few churches have started daughter churches. Our growth has been fairly good for Japan, but has largely been through the planting of “mule churches” that have never reproduced. They eventually reach

their permanent size, stop growing, have fewer conversions, grow older in average age, and never start a daughter church. Many begin to decline.

Ministry in Japan takes time. People usually take several years to believe and be baptized. They are often the only Christian in their family, creating other difficulties in discipleship. How can a church reproduce itself if it is small, weak, and immature? We do need to be careful about premature reproduction. I eagerly await my 23-year old married daughter reproducing... she and her husband are ready! But we do not want our 17-year old daughter to reproduce anytime soon.

In my view, some who talk about rapid church reproduction do not talk enough about the health and maturity of the mother, and the quality of what is reproduced, and how that DNA will affect the future generation church plants. We must pursue healthy church reproduction.

Here are some helps to encourage us in our church planting.

- We need a passionate perseverance and a long view of church planting in Japan. Microwave missions won't get it. Our first four years in Japan produced no visible fruit. Even as God began to give some fruit in our 6th year, the problems and obstacles were

## **Multi-Site Church Model: Why this Fits Japan**

### **One Church, Multiple Congregations**

Our 17-year old church in Chiba <sup>1</sup> of about 175 worshipers happened upon the “one church, multi-site” model several years ago. It was not in our plan, but we changed from “one church, one location” to “one church, three sites” over several years. Though meeting for worship in three locations, we are one church, with one elder board, one doctrinal standard, one budget, and one uniting vision. We have joint Sunday morning worship periodically. We have one missionary pastor who is 56 (me), and two Japanese pastors, 35 and 36. We have been a team for about ten years. We are now dreaming about a fourth congregation and fourth pastor.

### **A Biblical, Workable Model**

We believe the multi-site church model is Biblical, our first consideration, of course. We found that this model is being used around the world <sup>2</sup>, even in Japan. We experimented first with a second worship site, with meetings two Sunday

mornings a month near the next train station to the east of us. Then, two years ago we began a third worship and ministry site near the next train station to the west of us. We found that this model fit our church, our leaders, and the towns we seek to bless (Jer. 29:7). We initially began as a half-step towards planting a daughter church, and found many advantages to staying “one church, multi-site.” Our two Japanese pastors recently attended a multi-site church conference in America <sup>2</sup>, and returned even more convinced that this is a good model for us and for Japan. We believe that this model can help overcome some of the challenges we face here in Japan.

### **A Sister Church Adopts Multi-site**

Recently, an older sister church from our denomination also adopted this model. They are a solid church with fine leaders, but as we often observe with established churches, they had leveled off at about 70-80 worshipers for the past decade. Concerns about budget and paying back their building debt were main hindrances to the idea of starting a daughter church. Last year, however, they took the risk by faith and started a late afternoon worship service in another

area where three of their elders live. Their combined worshipers quickly increased from 75 to about 100, a 33% increase! They are reaching many new people who would not have traveled to the mother church location. Lay elders take turns doing most of the preaching, and the mother church pastor preaches monthly. Having sufficient finances had been a fear when thinking about starting a daughter church, but in fact their combined all-church income has gone up significantly since becoming two congregations. One leader said that in the new congregation there is more ownership by a higher percentage of people. People's gifts are needed, and they are more willing to use their gifts. Much creativity emerges. New ideas for ministry are more easily conceived, approved, and executed in the new congregation. There is excitement as people see God work. Students in school clubs on Sunday mornings can more easily attend the late afternoon worship, helping solve another of our on-going struggles in the Japanese church.

### **Half-Church Planting**

There is no question we need more church planting to reach Japan. The multi-site model is a means to

legion. It was hard to imagine how a reproducing church could ever be born. We were close to quitting many times, and now thank God for giving perseverance until the day of fruitfulness, and now reproduction. In Japan, planting a healthy mother church will usually take many years. The faith, giftedness, number of missionary/Japanese workers starting the church, and the place (city or countryside) will affect how long it will take. But it will usually take time. We need a persevering and tenacious faith that clings to Christ's promises to build his Church as we labor.

- We, as the church in Japan, must

help more churches start daughter churches without some of the budget and leadership difficulties of starting a fully independent church plant. Churches are afraid to send people off to a separate church plant because they will lose those tithes and offerings if it is a fully separate church plant with its own budget. If the church is paying back on a building, or struggling budget-wise, this makes them hesitant to start a new church and lose that income. Doing multi-site, you can keep one budget, solving your budget income/loss problem. And, if you grow, as often happens, the budget of the whole also usually grows because of the giving of the new people in the new site.

In the multi-site model there are many opportunities for service. Trained lay elder preachers, missionaries, and seminary students rise to help, they preach... and they grow! Staggered worship times, video sermons, and many other creative solutions enable the church to have worship and ministry in multiple locations under one church board. An experienced senior pastor and elder board can oversee several sites, while much of the day-to-day ministry is actually done by others. And people grow in faith and ministry skills by using their gifts more than they

grow in evangelistic effectiveness. If our churches do not grow, they will not be strong enough in leadership, numbers, and giving to be able to start healthy daughter churches. Many churches now are growing in Japan. Using lay-led cell groups, more dynamic worship, and better evangelism methods have helped. The JEMA Church Planting Institute and other conferences and resources have helped me.

- Smaller and weaker churches can still participate in church reproduction even if they do not have the strength to start a church alone. Several smaller churches can partner together to pool

would have in the mother church.

### Help Young Pastors Succeed

Many young pastors in Japan are hurt by criticism and problems. Many become depressed, and far too many leave the pastorate. The age factor is huge. It is difficult for younger people to lead older people in Japan—even if they are strong, godly leaders. The multi-site model helps with this issue. An older pastor can give guidance and leadership, and protect when needed.

Our two younger ministry staff guys are godly, as well as being gifted as leaders, preachers, and pastors. They are both fruitful in ministry. They are eager at age 35-36 to use their gifts and serve as the main leaders for separate sites under the leadership and protection of our joint elder board, but they are adamant that they are not yet ready—nor do they desire—to pastor a fully separate church plant. It may be different when they are 45. But they feel strongly that for now the multi-site model under one elder board frees them up to lead and serve in better ways than if they were lone church planters.

### Some Other Advantages of a Multi-site Church

- The congregations can be dif-

ferent in things beyond core values. They can be different sizes. People can participate where they fit. One of our three congregations is bilingual, which fits an increasing number of people in Japan.

- Some new church planting models can help us move toward more church reproduction. The growing House Church movement model helps address problems like the high cost of land, and the shortage of trained clergy as it seeks reproduction of small house churches. Praise the Lord for this movement seeking to reproduce healthy, Biblical churches in spite of our many challenges in Japan.

The multi-site/multi-congregation model fits Japan and some situations. This model helps with some of the challenges that militate against

ferent in things beyond core values. They can be different sizes. People can participate where they fit. One of our three congregations is bilingual, which fits an increasing number of people in Japan.

- All the gifts can be more easily used to serve all the congregations. This is easier to do as one church than when congregations are completely different churches.

- More children have a Sunday school they can bike or walk to near their home.

- The church can keep the advantages of a bigger church, while not losing the advantages of a smaller church.

*(See [www.iversonjapan.com](http://www.iversonjapan.com) for a more detailed case study of Oyumino Church and further explanation about multi-site church.)*

### Endnotes

- 1: [www.oyuminochurch.jp](http://www.oyuminochurch.jp)
- 2: "Multi-Site Related Materials for Download," <http://www.harboruptown.org/conference-materials-for-download/>, (accessed May 2009)

reproduction. This model is rather like half church planting in some ways. It helps with our shortage of church planters, the “age challenge” young church planters face in Japan, worship space limitations/costs, and budget challenges.

- Better use of lay people, seminary students, and short-term missionaries can help us start more churches. An example is Ralph Cox’s widespread use of short-term missionaries paired with interpreters to start more churches <sup>8</sup>.

- More direct church planting by career missionaries is needed, particularly the planting of mother churches. Direct church planting by missionaries has fallen out of favor in some circles in recent years <sup>9</sup>, but it is still much needed in Japan.

- Church planting by teams can help compensate for those who lack church planting gifts. Few are point-man church planting types. However, a team of missionaries and Japanese doing church planting together can “pool their gifts” to start a church, and from the beginning model for the new church how members of the Body of Christ can love each other and minister together <sup>10</sup>.

### Spiritual Power Needed

The task before us in Japan is humanly impossible. This is not merely a methodological issue, but a spiritual one. We need the Spirit to bring power and renew us individually and corporately.

In his argument for gospel-centered church planting, Tim Keller says that the gospel is “ ‘the power of God unto church planting’ as well as ‘unto salvation’ ” (Rom. 1:16-17) <sup>11</sup>. We need gospel power and gospel motivation in Japan. This emphasis in the JEMA CPI network has been a great help to me personally and in our church planting.

In his book *Outgrowing the Ingrown Church* <sup>12</sup> Jack Miller likens church weakness to engine failure on a commercial airliner. If engine failure—a power problem—is the

urgent priority, it’s useless for the crew to try to improve service to their passengers. The crew will concentrate on solving the engine failure. Similarly, in the church we can run after the latest church growth trend while the critical problem is power failure. As we affirm the need for good church planting and church growth methodology, and pray that this article is a help to that end, our greatest need is the Lord’s power! May he empower us to reach this land, which is in such desperate need of the gospel.

Dan Iverson has served in Japan with Mission to the World (PCA) since 1986. He is the team leader for MTW’s Tokyo/Chiba Mission Team ([www.mtwtokyo.com](http://www.mtwtokyo.com)). In 1992, Dan helped start Oyumino Christ Church ([www.oyuminochurch.jp](http://www.oyuminochurch.jp)), and still serves as one of the pastors. He has been the MTW Japan Director since 2008. Dan and Carol have 9 children and 6 grandchildren.

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# Houses, Cells and Church Planting Movements in Japan Today

By Gary Fujino

This article summarizes sixteen observations and key principles related to the cell and house church movements in Japan.\* Common themes tie these various indigenous groups together. Keep in mind that large-scale church planting or multiplication movements (CPMs) have not yet taken place among any of these groups. But I believe several have the basic “DNA” to take them in that direction.

## 1) Japan’s cell church movement is not a fad.

The Japan Cell Church Mission Network (JCMN) officially began in 1998, inspired by similar networks in other countries growing out of the Global Cell Church Mission Network (CCMN). Some JCMN churches, with previous exposure to the cell church model through Dr. Ralph Neighbour’s teaching in Singapore, Hong Kong and elsewhere, had already been practicing cell church principles in their congregations for several years before JCMN was formed. In 2007, there were 160 churches registered with this network, a mixture of dedicated cell churches, churches wanting to transition to cell church, and churches showing an interest in cell church.

## 2) Cell churches were born out of the traditional church.

From what I have seen, and from what several “experts” on the cell church in Japan have told me, almost every cell church in Japan began out of a traditional church setting. With house churches, too, many of its proponents come from traditional church backgrounds. This principle is

important for us to keep in mind and relates to the next point.

## 3) The key leaders are often older, seasoned veteran pastors.

Most of the key cell and house church leaders are in their 50’s and 60’s. Yet they have been the pioneers. There are some younger leaders in their 30’s and 40’s (but the majority in that group are in their 40’s). Few are in their 20’s. Most of these leaders were senior pastors of existing traditional churches who had “been there/done that” and were ready to try something different. I have seen the same trend among veteran missionaries, some of whom are now house church planters.

## 4) The distinction between cell and house churches is not completely clear in Japan.

There are overlaps between what might be called “traditional cell church” and “typical house church.” Some cell church advocates are negative with respect to those who declare: “house is the only way” (and vice versa!).

## 5) The house church has an image problem to overcome.

Both Christians and non-Christians in Japan tend to stigmatize the house church “form,” viewing it with suspicion. Groups in homes are generally not trusted, nor considered to be “real” churches. Simply because of how they meet, house churches are sometimes automatically seen as being cult-like (“guilt by association”). This is neither fair nor true of real house gatherings; in fact, once those who have been critical become personally involved, many come to appreciate house church.

## 6) Some house churches are only churches in houses.

Increasingly, various groups and individuals are trying to “do house church,” but this is sometimes just the transfer of traditional worship services from a church building to someone’s

home. Such is not the authentic house church model, which is briefly explained later.

## 7) How cell/house church models will work in Japan’s mega-cities is still undetermined.

Cell and house churches are presently thriving in Japan in less urbanized areas or in smaller cities: outside of Nagoya, outside of Osaka, in Okinawa, Hokkaido, and in some of the outlying areas in Kanto. There are only a few new starts in metropolitan Tokyo itself (although, nowadays, there is growing interest and effort being placed on planting house/cell churches within its urban center). Small church plants do exist in some larger Japanese cities in both homes and by means of cells, but many are still just getting started.

## 8) If transition is the goal (rather than “non-traditional church planting from scratch”), it is easier to start with a cell structure and then move into a house structure in the Japanese context.

In almost every case I have studied, cell church was normally the point of transition. Change often began with a pastor at a traditional church catching the vision for a cell church and then “infecting” his congregation with the idea. Since cell church, by itself, is considered radical in Japan, many of these transition groups never moved beyond the cell form. However, in 2007 some cell churches were going in the direction of actual house church practice. The progression has almost always been a movement from traditional, to cell, and sometimes to house. Ten years ago, few house churches were planted from nothing, nor did a traditional church usually transition directly into a house church model. But there are now a large number of new house churches that have been planted from nothing—through direct evangelism or through immediate small group meetings in a home with no pre-existing support

structure (e.g., a “mother church”). The best present estimate is that somewhere around 100 house churches exist in various locations throughout Japan.

### **9) Such groups can operate under different theological persuasions.**

I have visited groups with denominational backgrounds rooted in Reformed, charismatic, independent, Brethren, and baptistic traditions, as well as groups started by mission agencies. But all have been either “cell” or “house” church in nature.

### **10) The structure or form really does matter.**

This is why cell churches and house churches can succeed under various doctrinal belief systems. The small group focus, the lay-drivenness, the gift-nurturing that takes place within this structure is what makes these small groups what they are. In particular, one of the key aspects of house church in Japan is that a group is virtually never “stand-alone,” that is, unconnected to any other house church. House churches in Japan are not “single” but always “webbed” within a network of other house churches. At least this has been true with the ones in which I participated or conducted research. This is even more true with cells. By definition, cell churches cannot exist apart from a larger unifying body.

### **11) Yet, it’s not about “the structure.” The structure, or form, is only a means to an end.**

Though essential, the structure is not the most important thing. This is because the life of the church is driven by deep, real personal relationships that are constantly being nurtured. If meetings themselves become the focus, then a cell or house church will die. Groups that thrive give high priority to human needs, as well as to biblical truth and training. They are full of love and caring, not programs. Body life is what makes a cell/house

church. “Church” is not primarily about meetings, but about meaningful human connections in Christ. The focus is more on personal life change, along with fervent personal evangelism and discipling. Frequent, regular points of contact throughout the week are the norm. Healthy cell/house churches are not about group meetings so much as they are about what happens in between those meetings.

### **12) Points of crisis cause growth.**

This was an unexpected observation, but is true both biblically and practically. A number of the Japanese churches studied “bought into”/endorsed the idea of cell church or house church, adopting the form and methodology. But, interestingly, it was not until problems or failures were encountered in these new groups that real growth and body life began to take place.

### **13) Gatherings are being contextualized.**

Contemporary experts like Neil Cole, Ralph Neighbour, Robert Logan, Wolfgang Simson, David Lim, Victor Choudrie and others are icons for those who follow cell and house church models. But their work and thinking has been “made Japanese.” Japanese house and cell church leaders often speak of the need to go beyond Western definitions and models—even beyond Asian models learned from India, China, Singapore, Indonesia and Hong Kong. Their concern is to find what “fits” Japan. This is a positive development and is essential for church planting here by the Japanese themselves, if Japan is to see its own church multiplication movements birthed.

### **14) It takes time to grow rapidly.**

Regardless of whether they became cell or house churches, many of the churches that decided to transition grew significantly in a short amount of time after they adopted the new

model. Often missed, however, was the amount of time spent in preparation for this transition. Vision was cast; training was conducted; people were mobilized; plans were made. These are hints as to how we also should prepare for transition to cell and house church forms. In other words, the more we prepare, the better it can go. I am not making a god of preparation, but I am not advocating “ad lib” either.

### **15) A high priority is given to prayer.**

Prayer is the covering under which most of these new cell and house churches have been started. Both personal and corporate prayer are heavily emphasized, and it is under such a mantle that the Holy Spirit has worked and grown these new bodies of believers.

### **16) The cell and house church movements in Japan are maturing and still growing.**

Intentionality and kingdom vision have characterized the birth and development of these church networks. All who are committed to these forms of church are prayerfully intentional in what they do, working toward a broader vision of what they hope God will grow (1 Cor. 3:6). Many are trying them out. Some are succeeding; others still struggle in practice.

Regardless of how we try to accomplish our evangelism and church planting, may the lost Japanese be reached for Christ! That’s the real issue, isn’t it? This is not simply about form or method but about the Holy Spirit being poured out on a nation. Thy will be done, O Lord!

\*A draft of this article was distributed at the 2008 JEMA plenary meeting. It is based upon research conducted intermittently since 2003 from visits to representative cell and house church bodies throughout Japan. This data has been updated, edited and expanded from its original form and reflects the growth of both movements



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9:30 AM PRAYER  
10:00 AM WORSHIP SERVICE  
7:00 PM EVENING SERVICE

### Conference Highlights

CHILDREN'S PROGRAM  
IN ENGLISH & GERMAN

FAMILY FUN  
MONDAY AUGUST 3

YOUTH CONFERENCE  
TUESDAY 4 - THURSDAY 6

KUC ANNUAL MEETING  
WEDNESDAY AUGUST 5

LADIES BUFFET  
THURSDAY AUGUST 6

KUC PICNIC  
FRIDAY AUGUST 7

MEN'S BREAKFAST  
SATURDAY AUGUST 8

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### "There's so much more"

This year we are very privileged to have Rev. LEIGH ROBINSON as our guest speaker.

Leigh was born in South Africa into a non-Christian home. Converted and called to ministry at about age 10. Studied at Prairie Bible College in Alberta, Canada, graduating in 1971. Taught Bible and Practical Theology and served in the Deans' Department at Prairie Bible College for 7 years following graduation. Spent the past 30 years in pastoral ministry, 27 years in South Africa and 3 years in Canada.

Currently Senior Pastor of Rosebank Union Church, an interdenominational, evangelical church in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Married to Irene (a Canadian) since 1977. They have three adult children (one married) and two grandchildren. Together with Irene he has ministered to missionaries in about 10 countries.



Rev. & Mrs.  
Leigh and Irene  
Robinson

# Because There Is More to Life than Work...

## International VIP Club & ALPHA Partner to Bring Purpose to the Workplace

By Andy Game,  
ALPHA Japan Founder

*'There is no one who has tried to enjoy life more than I have. And this is what I have learned: the best thing people can do is eat, drink, and enjoy the work they must do. I also saw that this comes from God.'*

*Ecclesiastes 2:24-25 (ERV)*

### Jesus and the Workplace

In his book, *The 9-5 Window*, Os Hillman recounts how Jesus' ministry focused on the **workplace**—the place where people spend most of their time!

- In 132 public appearances recorded in the New Testament, 122 appearances were in the **workplace**.

- In the parables of Jesus Christ, 45 out of 52 had a **workplace** context.

- Of the 40 divine encounters and miracles in the book of Acts, 39 occurred in the **workplace**.

### The Bible and the Workplace

When calling men and women into service, the Bible frequently reveals them in the midst of performing their everyday vocations.

- Moses was a shepherd.
- Gideon was threshing wheat.
- Peter was a fisherman.
- Matthew was a tax collector.
- Luke was a doctor.
- Paul was a tentmaker.

### The Challenge

Finding purpose at work is one of the greatest challenges in the globalised world. The God who created and sustains the world is also the

God of the workplace. Ken Costa, chairman of ALPHA International says, 'If the Christian view is not relevant to the workplace it is not relevant at all'.

### The Opportunity

The workplace is more than a means of earning an income; it's an opportunity to allow believers to be ministers of the gospel. Until now, little ministry has focused on this opportunity.

*'With the current global economic crisis people are turning to religion as the downturn bites—for advice about debt and redundancy, not simply spiritual consolation.'*

*Financial Times*

Now ministries such as International VIP Club and ALPHA in the Workplace are focusing on these opportunities to bring purpose to the workplace community. Together with the support of international churches across Tokyo, new workplace ministry is developing in Japan today.

*'Workplace ministry will be one of the core future innovations in church ministry.'*

*George Barna*

### Recognising the Harvest

*'I believe that one of the next great moves of God is going to be in the workplace.'*

*Dr Billy Graham*

*'I tell you, open your eyes, and look at the fields. They are ready for harvesting now!'*

*John 4:35 (ERV)*

The harvest is recognizable and before us in the **workplace!**

### ALPHA in the Workplace

Today the ALPHA Course is being conducted in diverse working environments—from factories to multi-national corporations. It has been run in the offices of Continental Airlines, Deutsch Bank, Disney, Ford, and Shell Oil, to just name

a few. It has been conducted in hospitals, police stations, factories, government offices, and small businesses.

*'We have been astonished to see ALPHA in the Workplace take off as an effective means for sharing the good news about Jesus Christ.'*

*Nicky Gumbel, ALPHA Pioneer*

In Singapore, some 2,000 people across 200 locations have participated in ALPHA over the past six years. From this initiative, the first VIP ALPHA partnership was birthed among the Japanese community in Singapore.

In Japan, there are currently four VIP ALPHAs being conducted in greater Tokyo with hopes for considerable future expansion. Around 200 people are regular attendants and there is a network of some 500 people that have participated.

### VIP ALPHA

*The International VIP Club* aims to create an expanding friendship network, to deepen relationships among the Club's business and professional members, and to search for truth in the Bible. [www.vip-club.tv](http://www.vip-club.tv)

The **ALPHA Course** is an opportunity for anyone to explore the Christian faith in a relaxed setting over the course of ten thought-provoking weekly sessions. **ALPHA in the Workplace** is the ALPHA Course run for young professionals in or near their place of work, usually in a shorter time frame. [www.alphausa.org](http://www.alphausa.org)

**VIP ALPHA** is run in close cooperation between the **VIP Club** and **ALPHA in the Workplace**. The **VIP ALPHAs** are supported by international churches across Tokyo.

This partnership has developed with three important concepts serving as guiding principles:

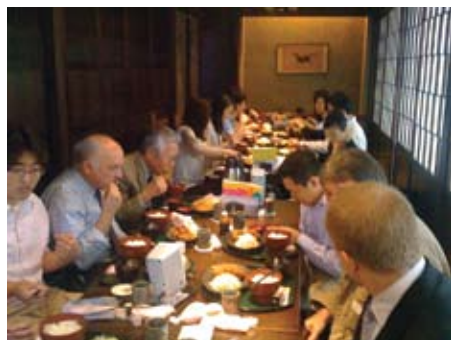
- 1) Provide time for young professionals to meet internationally-minded people and practice English skills (if they want to!)
- 2) Provide a chance to network

socially. The VIP Club is an expanding friendship network.

3) Provide, through ALPHA, 'an opportunity to explore the meaning of life'.

There are three main elements to a **VIP ALPHA** event:

1) A welcome meal—a time to relax with peers and make new friends.



2) An ALPHA DVD presentation—a time for 'a practical introduction to the Christian faith'.



3) Small group discussion—a time to ask the big questions about life.



*'ALPHA has succeeded in catching the mood of spiritually hungry young professionals'*

*Stephen Overell, Financial Times*

In spring 2009, a new English VIP ALPHA lunch started in Otemachi, the financial heart of Tokyo. Held in a Japanese restaurant each Friday, it has made use of the English ALPHA Express DVD, which contains shortened 20-minute talks. Work is now underway to produce a Japanese ALPHA Express DVD so that in the future, Japanese language VIP ALPHA lunches can begin.

The regular evening VIP ALPHAs have been growing, and in spring 2009 reached nearly double the attendance of autumn 2008. Hosted at international churches after work, they are held on Friday evenings in the Kanto area with the generous support of Tokyo Union Church and Yokohama Union Church. Many young professionals are drawn to these meetings.

There are ever-expanding opportunities for international churches and missionaries to engage in workplace ministry through VIP ALPHA. For more information, contact Andy Game at [andy.game@mac.com](mailto:andy.game@mac.com).

Andy Game is the founder of ALPHA Japan and Team Coordinator for the VIP ALPHA partnership. He has been involved in church planting, prayer networking, and pioneer evangelism in his home nation of England, as well as Eastern Europe, Singapore, China, and Japan. He was born and raised in Bangladesh as a missionary kid, so naturally prefers hot weather and spicy food.

The 'God at Work' Course is a new six-session course from ALPHA International. It looks at how the Christian faith can be lived out with purpose and integrity in the workplace and is a perfect follow-up course to VIP ALPHA.

A breakfast course is planned in English at a hotel in Tokyo in the fall of 2009. In 2010, with the launch of the books and manuals in Japanese, this will be expanded to more locations and be conducted in Japanese.

Useful Links

[www.vip-club.tv](http://www.vip-club.tv)

[www.alphausa.org](http://www.alphausa.org)

[www.godatwork.org.uk](http://www.godatwork.org.uk)



# Ad-vangelism and Follow-up

by Kenny and Lila Joseph

Every missionary and pastor wants more people to come to his/her meetings... church, Bible studies, concerts. More is better. Right? Former EMAJ President Chuck Corwin humorously wrote: “Our Sunday School has doubled. We now have four!”

Today we go back to pre-MacArthur Japan for background on ad-vangelism.

Galen Fisher wrote in *The East and West* in April 1922, “It is now recognized as one of the most telling and economical evangelistic methods, especially for the country districts where churches are few and the people are conservative. There are some dramatic conversions to this long distance evangelism.”

“The success of this plan in Japan led to its adoption by a Mission in China. Even that great missionary to the Moslems, Dr. Samuel Zwemer, used this method.”

“The history of Japan’s newspaper evangelism was pioneered by Dr. Albertus Pieters (Reformed Church) who wrote to Dr. Vories of Omi Brotherhood, ‘We must find means to influence men in the mass.’”

Dr. W.H. Walton wrote: “The first person to awake fully to the value of the press as an evangelistic agency was the Rev. Albertus Pieters in Oita. He had a rare fighting spirit of getting into a scrap when he attacked the compulsory attendance of school children at Shinto shrines. A Tokyo University Shintoist answered his article in a series upholding the national Shinto cult. So powerful were Dr. Pieters’ articles that his opponent ended up becoming a Christian himself.”

Edith Wilds on August 22, 1918 wrote an article on Pieters: “Advertising Makes Mission Work Easy.”

Pieters, with a business back-

ground, concluded: “The Japanese did not need the Gospel. Some didn’t know it exists. What should be done? Advertise!”

Pieters went home on furlough and put his proposition to businessmen. They jumped at it. “If we’re putting a million dollars a year into missionary work in Japan, why not put a thousand into advertising?” So Pieters came back with a thousand dollars in his pocket and bought space in the largest local newspaper. That helped him start many Bible classes, which later became churches.

Among many others, Rev. Walton (CMS), Dr. J.M.T. Winther (Lutheran) and Ray Boude Moore (Reformed) followed him. Dr. Oswald Smith said, “This is a wonderful way to reach Japan’s educated classes; a method of speed-up evangelism that I recommend.”

In 1951, MacArthur missionaries in partnership with the Pocket Testament League (PTL) used ad evangelism along with evangelistic crusades to hand out ten million little red Gospels of John. Each had a decision slip on the back page. The YFC World Congress on Evangelism teams garnered 313,000 more decision slips. Swamped with thousands of requests for information, Youth For Christ director Dave Morken and Navigators Roy Robertson and George Bostrom were forced to begin the Navigator’s follow-up correspondence course. In all, I counted 16 different groups that got into correspondence course ministry. The largest was the Japan Lutheran Hour, which was broadcast over 104 radio stations.

In 1952, Jack McAlister of Canada launched Japan’s Every Home Crusade, enlisting Ken McVety, Sam Archer and EHC’s Tanaka. As of 2008, EHC had gathered a total of 392,989 decision cards from the distribution of over 200 million tracts,

covering all of Japan four times!

You can still get free EHC tracts for blanket door-to-door distribution in unchurched areas. Currently, Ayako Miura’s “The Love Which Changed Me” (*Watashi o Kaeta Ai*) is available for this purpose. Contact WLPM’s Don Regier.

What’s going on with ad-vangelism today? The latest nationwide campaign was the stealth two billion yen that Mark DeMoss dropped into the January 2008 “Power for Living” campaign (see sidebar).

“Power for Living” covered all of the main ad-vangelism outlets in its “bottomless pocket” campaign, but you and I need to pick where we’ll get the most for our money. If you want to get more people to come to your meetings today, my best suggestion is spending not ¥50 for a postcard or ¥80 for a letter, but ¥2.5 per soul—in a newspaper insert. We get the Yomiuri. While the man of the house may glance at the paper before he leaves for work, he leaves his wife to check out the 5 to 20 inserts in the Yomiuri, which goes to 10 million people... the Asahi to 8 million... or the Mainichi to 6 million.

The beauty of inserts is that you can go to your local newspaper distribution center and ask them to pinpoint your area. (TEAM’s Dave Martin once put out an insert with him holding a rooster, saying “even the rooster praises God every morning, and so I came to Japan to praise God and spread His Word.”) The distribution center can give you the number of houses spreading out from your church or meeting place as far as you want to go... as far as your ¥2.5 reaches. You bring the finished proof of your newspaper insert to your city’s main post office and get a number for your postage-free reply postcard. You just pay the postage on the cards that are sent

## Power for Living “Ad-vangelism” Campaign: Two Years After

back to you.

Of course, you still can run into the concrete wall of “I don’t have enough money.” Do you know about the OneHope “hundreds free” Time-magazine size *Book of Hope*, a youth-oriented complete life and ministry of Jesus booklet? All you pay is the postage from within Japan (BookofHopeJapan@aol.com). They also have one for young children. You can give one to every child and youth in your neighborhood, with an invitation to your church or classes.

Or you can always put a free tract in some of the thousands of bike baskets that are on your side of the tracks. These you know will be delivered as they ride home. There is yet no law against that. We tried this twice for our Christmas worship. Our grandchildren pull Grampa from his chair with, “Let’s go put out tracts now!”

Back to the newspaper insert, Lila and I are praying about putting our picture in one saying “we live here and you’ve probably seen us walking or biking around for 41 years, but you’ve never come to our church...” etc. The only drawback financially is that you have to print out your insert. The newspaper delivery center can tell you which local printer prints especially for inserts. You can go from 1,000 to as far as your money and faith go.

You’ll notice that McDonalds uses inserts and also puts in perforated coupons so you can get special deals on meals. What better meal can we offer than the One who said “I am the Bread who came down from heaven.” And better than seconds on premium coffee, we offer “I am the Water of Life. He who drinks of Me will never thirst again.”

“Withhold not good from those to whom it is due, when it is in the power of your hand to do it.”

—Romans 13:7



had already funded similar campaigns in sixteen other countries, but not without controversy and opposition—from both secular and Christian sources. Why?

In order to gain maximum access to mass media, one of the Foundation’s policies is to conduct all its country campaigns independent of any connection or contact with existing Christian churches or organizations. And since campaign advertisements ambiguously talk about having a “personal relationship with God,” but go no further, even pastors cannot initially confirm whether or not Power For Living is a Christian publication or the offering of a Christian-sounding cult.

The Foundation is used to displeasure about its methods, but Japan proved to be a uniquely surprising challenge. Based upon past experience, the Foundation expected that in Japan’s case about one million requests for the book would be received over the course of the month-long media blitz. Kenji Oyama, former local church pastor and well-known figure in the evangelical Christian world in Japan, was hired more than a year before the campaign to supervise translations and make arrangements for advertising in major secular media outlets—from television, to newspapers, to posters on commuter trains. Toll-free phone lines were reserved, a call center was set up, hundreds of operators were contracted to handle incoming calls, and the mass media campaign was launched.

Two weeks into the campaign, it was obvious that something was seriously wrong. Only ten percent of the expected response was coming in. If this continued, nearly 900,000 of the one million *Power For Living* books that had already been printed would need to be discarded. There was another snag as well. Although Nippon Television (Tokyo Channel 4) had agreed to run the television ads, station officials now announced that if the book was sent out along with the postcard insert (offering a free Bible and Bible study materials), they would stop running the ads. What to do?

At this point, Oyama took drastic measures. He couldn’t bear destroying the books, so contrary to long-standing Foundation policy, he decided to send out personal e-mails to his circles

of pastor friends, offering to send them free cases of books if they would distribute them in their areas. As the books reached local congregations and were distributed, reports started coming in.

Neighbors of church members would say: “I was interested in this book when I saw the television ad, but I was afraid to give my address. There are so many strange religious groups today. I’m so glad I can get one from you!”

“Can I get copies for my friends, too? They were wondering what this book was about.”

Pastors called in saying: “This is the best evangelism tool I have ever seen. Can I get another 50 copies?”

“Can I get 200 copies?”

“Can I get 1000 copies?”

“I’ll distribute as many as you’re willing to send me! How many can I have?”

It was clear that even though many Japanese were interested, a huge proportion were not willing to give out their address to an unknown group with a religious message. Offering the books to churches resulted in an unprecedented shift as to how the books were distributed. A huge pent-up demand had been created through media exposure, so even though by the end of the campaign only 200,000 requests came in directly from the advertising, when bulk distribution through churches was added, a total of 3.25 million *Power For Living* books were printed and given away over a period of several months. Many testimonies were collected in local churches reporting on a wide range of people, from housewives to incarcerated prisoners, coming to Christ through the book.

What is Oyama’s conclusion today regarding the effectiveness of mass media evangelism?

On the positive side: “Churches who took advantage of this opportunity were greatly blessed. For the first time, church members actually found their neighbors asking for materials about Christianity and some coming to Christ. One of the greatest results of this campaign was to encourage Christians.”

On the negative side: “[In Japan], using mass media in the absence of a personal connection is not effective for evangelism.”

Currently, Oyama is working with Shinsei Senkyodan (New Life League, Japan) in the development of regionally customized gospel tracts that can be used by churches in their local areas.



# A DREAM AWAY: Personal Account of the Post-War Era

## Part One: The Voyage

by Margaret Meeko

September 2, 1945. At anchor in Tokyo bay. Aboard the USS Missouri, General Douglas MacArthur addresses those attending Japan's surrender. "We have had our last chance. If we do not now devise some greater and more equitable system, Armageddon will be at our door. The problem is basically theological... [the solution] must be of the spirit if we are to save the flesh."

But the "theological and spiritual" are not addressed promptly. Two precious years are lost before new forces begin to arrive; forces to answer Japan's deepest need. Among the first wave are Joseph and Margaret Meeko. Selling their home in San Francisco, leaving all they have, they commit to a land and people of whom they know little, a land and people that are to become as dear as family. They set sail with six-year-old Sonny, four-year-old Paul, a Buick sedan, a trailer (to serve as their first home), the three tons of food required by occupation regulations, and innumerable barrels and boxes of relief supplies. The voyage starts a ripple that is still expanding today. We pick up my mother's diary where she describes their departure...

—Andy Meeko

### November 26, 1947

We had no idea what lay ahead. The vast ocean stretched out before us. The tears and flurry of excitement that engulfed us at the pier still echo in my mind. I expected Joe and I would be deeply moved, but didn't expect to find a heart-broken little boy too. Poor Sonny cried his eyes out as the ship pulled away from the pier. He kept saying that he didn't want to leave his grandmas and grandpas. Their hearts were also broken. Fortunately Sonny never saw Grandpa at the end of the pier. When Grandpa thought we were out of sight, he buried his sobbing face in his hands. As we passed under the Bay Bridge, Sonny feared we'd never see it again. I kept assuring him that we would come back. But he said, "It will be such a long time." No words could comfort him.

As the ship left the pier, Mark, the Filipino cabin boy, told us supper was ready, so we went to the dining room. Here we met the captain and ship's officers and the four other passengers (three of them are Englishmen with the Shell Oil Company and one American with the Coca Cola Company). We found out that there are no other women or children on the ship outside of our family. It was a lovely meal, but none of us was hungry, except for Paul, so we turned it over with our fork and hurried up to catch our last glimpses of home.



It was beautifully warm and still out on the San Francisco Bay and seemed just like riding a ferry. The city lights shown brightly and we could see everything clearly. We told our parents, the Meeko's and the Baldwin's, that we would be looking for them at Yacht Harbor and as it was too dark to wave a handkerchief, we took a light out on the deck so we could flash it. Sure enough, when we reached Yacht Harbor, there were two cars with their headlights pointing out toward the Bay. We flashed our light at them and they turned and followed the ship. When we got out into the Golden Gate, we saw some more car lights flashing out near the Cliff House and hoped it was our folks. From there we went straight out into the sea, steered to the north, and were on our way.

### November 27, 1947

Today the ship is really pitching. It wouldn't be so bad if one could just tell which way it was going and be a little

prepared, but it never seems to get the same way twice. Sonny is really "green around the gills" today. I had Mark squeeze him a half a glass of orange juice this morning and he has been lying on his bunk saying, "My orange juice just goes up and down."

I have spent most of the day trying to get unpacked and settled, but have to lie down most of the time. We are all nauseated, except for Paul and I sure wish he wasn't so spry.

He is running around ready to lick-his-weight-in-wild-cats and the mate brought him down off the bridge once already. We find that if we take Sonny out on deck for fresh air often it helps a lot. There is coal dust and oil all over the place and the white shag rugs in the bathrooms are really suffering. Joe wasn't able to go down to Thanksgiving dinner, but I did and am doing better than most of the men by at least putting in an appearance. The turkey and dressing just didn't sound very good so I ordered baked ham and pineapple. It couldn't have looked more unappetizing if they had served it in an old shoe!

I sat there with it until the Coca Cola man took one look at his plate heaped with turkey and dressing and left the table in a hurry. Then I escaped too.

The captain says this is very nice weather for this time of year. He keeps the crew busy making everything secure,

so I guess he doesn't think it will last long. Also they have shoveled all the debris and garbage over the side and hosed down the ship with the fire hose, so now we don't get so dirty. They go around soaking wet all the time from the spray and don't seem to mind it at all.

Tonight Sonny said, "Mama, when the ship left the pier yesterday, I saw Mrs. Tubbs put her handkerchief up to her eyes and she was crying." Then he was in my arms again in tears. We had prayer about it and talked about the story of Jonah again and he fell asleep. Joe and I had a time of devotions and then we went to bed too. It really amazes me how the children can sleep through the foghorn. Every time it blows it feels like my heart stops beating and I jump six inches off the bed. I have tried putting one of my pillows on top of my head, but that doesn't work either.

**November 28, 1947**

When Mark called us at seven this morning, I was already dressed and had been waking the other members of the family. We all were able to manage a good breakfast and then went for a walk around the ship. I took the boys on the main deck and up on the prow of the ship so they could see it cut the water. It was really a thrill to stand there and feel the prow go way up and way down and see the big white waves splashing. The sea gulls have all left us now, but there are still some great big birds staying with the ship.

Joe has spent most of his time "nihongo wo benkyo shimasu" (studying Japanese), but I told him I will wait until he catches up to me, [before] I study with him. For that matter, I just haven't felt up to studying yet. Mark put up some clotheslines in the bathrooms and brought me some washing powder so I did some washing today. All I have to do is turn on the heaters and close the bathroom doors and they dry very quickly. Now we have most of our oil and grease cleaned up and are feeling much better. Even though it is rougher today and quite stormy, we have our "sea legs" now and are taking it better.

After lunch today I thought, "Isn't

this wonderful! No telephone, no interruption, away out here on the ocean. Now is my chance to catch up on all the sleep we have been missing lately." So I pulled off the boy's clothes and washed them and put them to bed. Then I took off my shoes and settled down for a nice peaceful nap. I had just dozed off when Joe came bursting into the room and said, "put on your life jacket and be ready for lifeboat drill in ten minutes." So I jumped out of bed, dressed the boys, put on their life jackets and my own and was just pulling on their rubber boots when the bells and sirens started ringing. I grabbed the boy's hands and dashed out into the pouring rain while the crew lowered the lifeboats and secured them again. I couldn't help but think of what a hair-raising experience it would be to be out on that dark gray water riding the waves in one of those tiny things. After the drill we went back to bed again.

We are headed west tonight and are about five hundred miles off Eureka. We are synchronized with the waves tonight and it feels something like riding on a rocking horse rather than the uneven rolling. It is eleven fifteen P.M. and after our devotions we'll go into the fresh air for a few minutes before retiring. As I look upon the majesty of the scene about us my heart swells with pride within me as I realize that I am a child of the King who created the heavens and the earth.

**November 29, 1947**

After my chores this morning I took the boys out on the deck into the sunshine. I had an opportunity to have quite a long chat with one of the officers about these large black birds, which are following us. They are black sooty Albatross, related to the great white Albatross. These are a little smaller and inhabit the northern regions. Unbelievably good flyers, the birds accompany the ships clear to their destination without a rest. Feeding on garbage and marine life stirred up by the propeller, they can eat at least their own weight without any ill effects. They can also pass the ship, going at a speed of forty miles an

hour or more against the wind without flapping their wings. They are fascinating to watch and during the war there were several improvements made on planes that were suggested by watching the flight of these birds. The officer said, "We have a ship here worth two or three million dollars. It has so many hundred horsepower, so many dozen men on the crew, and so many thousand pounds of supplies to see us over the trip. It makes us feel rather humble to have those little birds start right out with us with nothing but the feathers upon their backs, fly all the way without resting, and arrive in at least as good shape as we do."

After supper I went out for some fresh air and we spied another ship ten or twelve miles away. We could see their lights shining in the darkness. It seemed comforting to know that there was another ship so close by. I met Mr. Culpin out on deck and had a very interesting talk with him. I was surprised to find that these Englishmen speak very little Japanese, although they have all spent many years in Japan. They are now working for our Army, in an advisory capacity. He had many interesting things to tell me about Japan, having been in every section. He strongly advised against sending our boys to a Japanese school. He said that if they were educated in a native school in any other country in the world they would overcome any mannerisms picked up in just a year or two. But the Japanese way of thinking is so different and he was afraid if they learned to think as a Japanese, "They might never get straightened out again." After finishing my walk around the deck, I went to bed and read my Bible until I fell asleep.

**November 30, 1947**

Certainly the Lord knew what was before us that night. Just before I slept I read in Psalms 107: 23-31, "They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters; These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep. For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof. They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to

the depths: their soul is melted because of trouble. They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wits' end. Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

That night I was awakened by the storm. The ship felt as though it would stand first on its bow and then rock clear back and stand on its stern. I kept thinking, "Now we are about six or seven hundred miles off the coast of Washington. What is it going to be like when we are off Alaska and then the Aleutians?" I was so afraid. I lay there and pondered on the scripture and committed the ship to the Lord and waited for dawn to come. Dawn came, but it stayed dark until about eight o'clock because of the storm. I was up at six, and Mark called us at seven. It was only with great difficulty that we were able to dress and get downstairs to breakfast. Poor Mr. Fry (The Coca Cola man) was missing again

(and didn't show up at supper either), but the rest of us were able to put away our ham and eggs. It was no graceful process, however, and a great many things landed on the floor, despite "wet down" tablecloths. Paul picked up his glass of milk just as we went over a good one and the milk landed in his lap. Then we went upstairs and I read Bible stories to the children until time for church. Joe conducted a service in the salon, but only Captain Robbins was there. While we were reading the scripture, two more of the officers came in and Joe went ahead and really preached.

About 3:30 p.m. the storm stopped suddenly and we all rushed out on deck for some fresh air. The sun was even trying to shine a little and it seemed so peaceful. Our birds were still coming along behind us. We went to Captain Robbins cabin and talked ship. He said we had had a seventy-mile an hour wind and it was a real storm. We will probably see some more, but are going only about 100 miles farther north before we straighten out on the last lap of the "Great Circle to Japan." Captain also

told us something of our cargo. We are only three-fifths full, but have six million pounds of food. Among this is seventy-five thousand pounds of butter and three hundred and twenty thousand pounds of eggs!

Captain gave us a copy of the "Mast" to read which told of the ships he skippered during the war. He was attacked seven hundred and forty seven times at Leyte and Mindoro (including being hit by Kamikazes). He received medals and citations for his handling of his ships and men. We are in very good hands tonight.

Well, it looks like another storm is on its way. We only pray it won't be as fierce as the last. Sonny inquired, "Jesus knows where we are, doesn't He, Mama?" Surely He does. Whatever happens to us will be according to His Will.

**Next issue:** Arrival in Japan

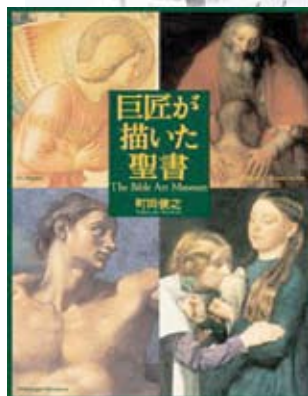
(To view a video clip describing some of the Meeko's story, which garnered NHK coverage, click on "History" at [www.drmeeko.net](http://www.drmeeko.net))

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## The Bible for All



### Bible Art Museum, Toshiyuki Machida

A sketch of the entire story of the Bible from Adam & Eve to the New Heaven & New Earth as seen in the art of 29 famous masters of western painting. 45 masterpieces are accompanied by Scripture (*Shinkaiyaku*) and comments. Artists include Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Botticelli, Chagall, Bruegel, Millet, van Gogh, da Vinci, Rouault, etc. Forest Books. Hardcover. A4 size, 144 pp. ISBN978-4-264-02747-8

(Kyosho ga Egaita Seisho) (19029) ¥3,780

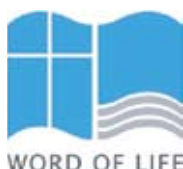
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### Bible Mini, Japan Bible Publishers

Small, handy size edition of the *New Japanese Bible* 3rd edition (OT & NT) that fits in coat pockets and purses for easy use anywhere. 5.5 point print. Text edition without any cross references or notes. Lightweight 340 grams. B7 size (13.3x10x 3.5cm) 2,096 pp. Soft vinyl cover in slip case. ¥2,940

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*The Missionary Geek*

### Some Things Never Change

A couple of weeks ago I was out at our Bible Camp and thought I'd poke around in the camp computer. I helped them set up a new Dell desktop in 2006 and even set up a backup system to an external drive. I thought I'd check to see that the backup system was working and was shocked to see that it hadn't run since 2006 when I set it up! There's only one thing worse than not backing up your data, and that's thinking you backed up your data and for some reason didn't.

I did an informal poll around our office. And not one person was confident they were adequately backing up their data. It's totally natural since your e-mail files are probably stored in the following default location (if you're a Windows user): C:\DocumentsandSettings\\Local-Settings\ApplicationData\Identities\{GUID}\Microsoft\Outlook Express.

Microsoft sure makes it hard to find your data. To make matters worse, in Windows XP, the Outlook Express user files, including \*.WAB and \*.DBX files, are by default marked as hidden. To view these files in Explorer, you must enable Show Hidden Files and Folders under Start | Control Panel | Folder Options | View. OK, we're going to fix this, and you're going to know your data is safe.

First: Find where your data is. Usually you want everything in My Documents plus your e-mail files plus your address book (yes, I know it's crazy but it's not in the same folder as your e-mail), plus your Internet Explorer favorites. I like to move my e-mail files to My Documents to make sure they get backed up. Do this in Outlook Express by going into "Tools" and "Options" and "Maintenance" and "Store Folder." Create a new folder in My Documents called E-Mail and then change the store folder to that. The process is similar in Outlook or other e-mail programs. Next, open your address book and click on "Help" and then "About Address Book." That will tell you the location of your address book. Your Internet Explorer favorites are located in C:\Documents & Settings\User Name\Favorites.

Next: Choose a backup program. My current favorite is a program called "GFI Backup." You

can download it at [www.gfi.com](http://www.gfi.com) and the program is free for home use. Some nice features that this program has are that it's easy to choose the files you want to back up, and you can set it up to send you an e-mail with the results of the backup. If our camp computer backup doesn't work as it should, I get an e-mail back in Tokyo. You can schedule your backups to run whenever you want, as long as the computer is on. Just make sure you tell this program everything you want backed up, and then check to make sure it's all really there, after you run it the first time.

Finally: Select a destination for the backup. I like external hard drives because you can leave them hooked up and if you've scheduled your backups you don't need to do anything. If you have more than one computer in the house (who doesn't these days?) you might want to look into a "Net Drive." This is an external hard drive but instead of plugging into the USB port of one computer, it has an Ethernet connection and plugs into the router or hub. This makes the drive available to all the computers in the house and they can all backup their files there. I just bought a new Buffalo Link Station Net Drive (LS-cleda) for our office (I bought one for camp too) for less than Y15,000. It's got lots of storage space (600 gigabytes) and you can configure it in English (a big plus for me) if you download the files from the Buffalo web site. This drive also allows you to remotely access files through an Internet connection. So if you're at home and you really need that file from your office computer, you can get it. The remote connection is kind of slow but it sure beats getting on the train to go to your office.

OK, that's the drill. Now it's up to you to see this through. Just imagine if your computer crashed right now what a mess you'd be in!

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*Faith De La Cour, Human Resource Development Coordinator for Asian Access, serves as the chair of the JEMA Member Care Committee.*

*Faith and the JEMA Member Care Committee welcome your feedback at [membercare@jema.org](mailto:membercare@jema.org)*

### Evaluating Your Ministry in Light of Your Call

Over the past year our articles in the Japan Harvest have focused on monthly and annual review processes. These reviews, used sequentially and as a package, are like looking at a map, either to assure us that we are going toward our destination, or to warn us that we've been traveling in the wrong direction. And sometimes they help us realize we have come to the end of this particular trip.

The final piece in the review “package” is the one that should take place prior to leaving on home assignment. Before we conclude our term, it is good to take time to reflect on the ministry that is drawing to a close. This allows us to reexamine our ministry in light of God's call for us to be

here in the first place.

Many of us can recite the story of how we were first led to Japan—whether it was through a dramatic supernatural call, an availability to serve wherever God led us, or through a growing interest in Japan and increasing awareness of the spiritual needs of the Japanese. While the actual definition of the missionary call is hard to pin down, according to the editors of ReMAPII (Retaining Missionaries: Agency Practices), “What is important for retention is to have spent time (individually and with others) being certain of God's desire for you to do something and/or go somewhere, to the extent that you can look back to that experience and hold on to it during the hard times.”<sup>1</sup>



*Michael B. Essenburg (Christian Reformed Japan Mission) serves as a coach, consultant, and trainer at Christian Academy in Japan. Time permitting, Michael works with missions.*

### Pay Attention to Your Goals

You're at the end of a hectic week, the kind where you can hardly remember what happened. You're sitting at your desk, doing some reflection. You're noticing that you've accomplished some goals (building your network list and preparing a message) and that you haven't accomplished some other goals (developing a debriefing tool and a conflict resolution workshop). You wonder why some goals get done, while others don't.

Then it hits you.

You paid attention to networking and preparing a message. You didn't pay attention to developing the debriefing tool and the conflict resolution workshop.

**Tip: Pay attention to your goals—because what you pay attention to gets done.**

**Question: What can help you pay attention to your goals?**

**Answer: A review system. A review system that you use on a daily, weekly, quarterly, and annual basis.**

1. Daily review: Take 5 minutes at the end of each day to review progress on your goals and to look at your schedule for the next day.

2. Weekly review: Take 30 minutes at the end of each week to review progress on your goals, determine your action steps for the next week, and schedule your action steps.

3. Quarterly review: Take 1-2 hours to review your goals, your progress, what helps/hinders you, and what you want to accomplish for each goal in the next 90 days.

4. Annual review: Take 2 or more hours to review your goals and the progress you've made, to establish your goals for the coming

Many missionaries have said, “Without [a call from God], we would have left long ago.”<sup>2</sup>

Just as our pursuit of God is not a one-step event but a life-long journey, so our call to service is not just that first sense of God’s leading, but a growing conviction through our ongoing relationship with Christ and our increasing experience in our ministry context. “We have yet to meet a long-term missionary who has not felt that call and a personal sense of call was utterly vital to their own missionary journey.”<sup>3</sup>

So as we come to the end of a ministry term, we gain insight and guidance as we examine our work in light of the call that we received from God. We ask ourselves questions like:

- “What were the end results I was looking for this term and to what degree have these been achieved?”
- “What activities have I been in-

involved with during this term? To what extent were they satisfying or fulfilling? Were they consistent with my call? Were they consistent with my mission assignment?”

- “What did God accomplish through me this term?”
- “In what ways did God work in my life personally, professionally, and spiritually this term?”

We also have the opportunity to examine areas where we need help in finishing well:

- “Are there unresolved on-field relationships I need to reconcile before leaving?”
- “What were the biggest obstacles I encountered this term?”
- “What were some of the most difficult experiences?”

We reflect on areas where we need retooling of ministry skills. We identify where we and our families need help for spiritual, emotional

and physical restoration and renewal while on home assignment.

Recently I’ve been reviewing materials from a pre-home assignment workshop I was able to attend, as well as reading several books on missionary fundraising. Together they have emphasized the importance of being able to articulate our call to missions, our vision, and the value of our work in light of furthering the Kingdom of God in communication with our supporters. Pre-home assignment reviews provide us with one tool to bring our ministry and call back into focus.

### Endnotes

1. Hay, Rob, *Worth Keeping: Global Perspectives on Best Practice in Missionary Retention* (2007, World Evangelical Alliance Mission Commission), 95.
2. *Ibid.*, 94.
3. *Ibid.*, 94.

year, and to identify what you want to accomplish for each goal in the next 90 days.

**Remember: What you pay attention to gets done.**

### Empower Others to Focus

Want to empower others to focus on their goals? Ask questions that provoke reflection, for example:

1. What are your goals?
2. What satisfies/concerns you about your progress?
3. What do you like/dislike about focusing on your goals?
4. How does focusing on your goals help you accomplish them?
5. If you increased your focus on your goals, what might happen?
6. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being high), how focused are you on

your goals?

7. On a scale of 1-10 (10 being high), how focused do you want to be on your goals?
8. What helps you focus on your goals?
9. What will you do?

### Learn More about Coaching

How? By exploring these 3 web sites:

1. Coach22 provides quality resources on coaching:  
<http://coach22.com>
2. Coaching Mission International provides low-cost coaching for missionaries:  
<http://www.coachingmission.com>
3. Close the Gap Now provides coaching, coach training, and coaching resources:  
<http://closethegapnow.org>



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*Paul Nethercott has been a member of TEAM Japan since 1987. Paul is the Director of CAN (Christians in the Arts Network). Paul's ministry focus is on training, equipping and empowering leaders. He is involved in church planting, Member Care & Development and teaches at CLTC (Christian Leadership Training Center). His interests include tennis, walking, playing guitar and reading.*

### Revelation & Response:

#### *A Key Biblical Concept for Planning and Leading Worship Services*

In 1987, my wife Nancy and I arrived in Japan with a big vision, excited to reach Japan for Christ. After two years of full-time study we had, well, an elementary knowledge of Japanese. We boldly moved to Kyushu (where we understood even less of the local dialect) and helped establish several churches. We survived.

As “church planters” we dealt with every aspect of church leadership. Both of us grew up in the church and we had music skills, so we thought we had one area “covered”—we knew about worship. Our order of service followed the pattern used by the denomination with which our mission is connected. Each week we would use the same template, just changing the three hymn numbers in the bulletin (if we forgot to update a number, we would end up singing the same song the next week). “Leading worship” consisted of “Next we will...” In reality, we had almost no idea how to plan an effective worship service.

Six years later we moved to Yokosuka, where we joined a church planting team focused on one church. No longer responsible for anything and everything, we began relearning how to plan and lead worship services. Greg Dirnberger, a college friend and gifted worship leader, held a seminar at our church on worship; this was a turning point for Nancy and me, as well as for our church. We shifted from just going through the motions to being thoughtful about the meaning of worship and why we do what we do. In particular, Nancy discovered a passion for worship, which led to her completing a Doctorate of Worship Studies. For this column, I asked Nancy to write about one “key” concept that has really helped her in planning and leading worship services:

### The Biblical Rhythm of “Revelation and Response” in Worship

*By Nancy Nethercott, D.W.S.*

*“Worship is the expression of a relationship in which God the Father reveals himself and his*

*love in Christ, and by His Holy Spirit administers grace, to which we respond in faith, gratitude, and obedience.”*

—Robert Schaper, *In His Presence*

Schaper’s definition of worship is packed with truths: we have a relationship with a Trinitarian God; God initiates the relationship; God moves in us to respond to Him; worship is an expression of that relationship. Our worship is our response to the God Who has made Himself known.

Corporate worship is a dialogue between God and the congregation; a corporate expression of our relationship with God. A dialogue has movement and rhythm, which is in direct contrast to moving point-by-point through a service as if it were a program of isolated acts of worship. As I plan the flow of a service I have found it important to remember the idea of “Revelation & Response” in worship as illustrated in Isaiah 6:1-8.



*Logo depicting “revelation and response”*

Revelation refers to the many ways God reveals Himself to us as we gather in His name. It is proclaiming and re-enacting the revelation of God and His mighty deeds of salvation.

Response is the reply of the people to the truth proclaimed through revelation. It is responding to God’s past, present, and (in faith) future saving actions with praise and thanksgiving, lament, or commitment. We see this rhythm all through the Bible as God speaks or reveals Himself, and then people (in groups or individually) respond.

In personal worship (all of life), this is a meaningful rhythm to follow as we “have

conversations with God.” For example, as I walked along the beach in Saipan recently (see photo) I saw beauty that reflects His character and His outpouring of love for me. I responded, telling Him “I like it! Thanks for showing me Your ‘artwork.’ ” And when I read His Word (His letter to me), I naturally respond to what I am reading.

In corporate worship services examples of “Revelation & Response” include:

## Revelation



*Beach in Saipan*

- Songs (often hymns) that focus on who God is and what He has done (or will do)
- Prayers focused on God, that recite His attributes and deeds
  - Scripture, particularly words of proclamation
  - Spoken or written words that proclaim God’s might and character; creeds, the message
- Drama that re-enacts the mighty acts of God in history
- The Lord’s Supper—God revealing Himself to us in Jesus Christ

## Response

- Songs (often worship songs) that are responsive; saying “YES!” to what has just been revealed
- Scripture that is a response to God (many of the Psalms)
  - Prayers of thanksgiving or praise
  - Words of praise and thanksgiving, or lament, spoken by the congregation or leader
- Art that is celebrative and responsive (ikebana)
- The Lord’s Supper—we respond to Christ’s sacrifice for us
  - The offering
  - An invitation to follow Christ

People cannot respond before they have been given something to respond to. Thus, starting out a worship

service with songs that try to engage people in response to God before they have been given the revelation of God and His mighty deeds (which might be as meaningful and simple as a scriptural “Call to Worship” sung, prayed, or read) is not only unfair, it is creating an atmosphere of frustration. Just as it is in a dialogue between friends, we need to listen first so we know how to respond. Along with that, if we do not give people the opportunity to respond after a word/message, song, or act of revelation, they will feel that something is lacking in their times of corporate worship.

Realizing our times of worship in a church gathering are “corporate conversations” with God—in which we hear His voice and respond to Him—takes the guesswork out of planning worship services. The question to ask when planning is: “What does the particular element of the service do?” Does it allow us to hear God’s voice, or is it our response to that voice? Then we know where it fits into a meaningful flow of worship.

When the flow makes sense, worship leaders (*shikaishya*) will be able to “lead” the people intentionally as they meet together with God. Amazingly, this removes the tendency to move from one “item” to the next saying, “And now we will...” or “Next we will...” But, “Worship Leader Training 101” will have to wait for another time!



*Large Ikebana Cross - by Pastor Toshio Miura*

Material on revelation and response is available in Japanese from Nancy at [nnethercott09@aol.com](mailto:nnethercott09@aol.com)



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### Rental Drama Series in Japanese Language and Culture Learning

In 2008 I wrote about Internet dramas and their value in language and culture learning. The same holds true for video rentals, with some added advantages. They are easily accessible for those who find it less easy to use the Internet, or lack the required software. It is often possible to borrow a whole series at once without waiting for your favorite episode to appear the following week. Cost is low and video rental shops abound. In the spring 2009 issue, I featured a few good rental movies. In this issue I would like to introduce some of the drama series I have enjoyed.

#### 一リットルの涙 (Ichi Rittoru no Namida)

This is about the real-life struggles of 15-year-old Aya, who suffered from an incurable disease until her death at the age of 25. The script is based on her diary and was broadcast on Fuji TV in autumn 2005. The book has sold over 1.1 million copies in Japan. “By carefully depicting Aya’s earnest desire to live, and the love of her family, friends, and boyfriend, the drama, ‘One Litre of Tears’, wishes to deliver her simple but strong message: ‘Just being alive is such a lovely and wonderful thing.’” (Fuji TV) It was followed in April 2007 by a special: 一リットルの涙: 特別編追憶 (Ichi Rittoru no Namida: Tokubetsu Hen Tsuioku), set half a year after Aya’s death. Her former boyfriend, Haruto, has already become a neurologist at the hospital where Aya was once treated. Haruto is struggling with the loss of Aya. But after he meets Mizuki, a 14-year-old patient who has given up on living, he feels compelled to share with her the story of Aya’s life.

#### Dr. コトー診療所 (Dr. Koto Shinry\_jyo)

Kensuke Goto has volunteered to work on the small island of Shikina (Yonagumi Island, 509 kilometres from Okinawa). Shoichi Hoshino, who works at the town hall in the Public Welfare Division, has long searched for a doctor willing to work on the island, so he welcomes Kensuke

with open arms. However, the other islanders are sure that Kensuke will leave the island sooner or later. The odds are against the likeable Goto time and again, but he eventually wins the hearts of the islanders. The scenery is superb and the drama provides insight into life on a remote island.

#### プロポーズ大作戦 (Puropozu Daisakusen)

Iwase Ken and Yoshida Rei have been friends since elementary school, but the lively and cheerful Rei is about to marry another man. Ken goes to the wedding ceremony, where a fairy appears and sends him back in time, giving him a second chance to win the girl he loves. I prefer less improbable storylines but the comedy will appeal to some.

#### 人間の証明 (Ningen no Shyoumei): Proof of the Man

If you enjoy detective stories then this may be a series for you. One day an African-American man is found dead with a deep wound in his chest on a small island in Daiba, Tokyo. The only clue to the case is his final words heard by a passerby—“stoha.” What is the mystery behind the man’s dying message?

You can find synopses in English of all the dramas above at <http://www.jdorama.com/>.

#### Correction regarding e-Sword:

*The winter issue of Language Lab recommended the Bible software programme e-Sword as a useful tool for studying the English and Japanese Bibles side-by-side. We have been advised that e-Sword does not currently have permission to use the Shinkaiyaku Japanese Bible. Please note that BibleWorks, J-Bible and A-Bible are the only software packages currently licensing the Shinkaiyaku. The WLP website at <http://www.wlpm.or.jp/jbible/index.htm> lists both A-Bible (for Windows and Macs) and J-Bible (Windows only). Further information about A-Bible is also available at: [abibleinfo@gmail.com](mailto:abibleinfo@gmail.com).*

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