

Volume 34, Number 1, 1984

# JAPAN HARVEST

The Magazine For Today's Japan Missionary



**JEMA PLENARY SESSION  
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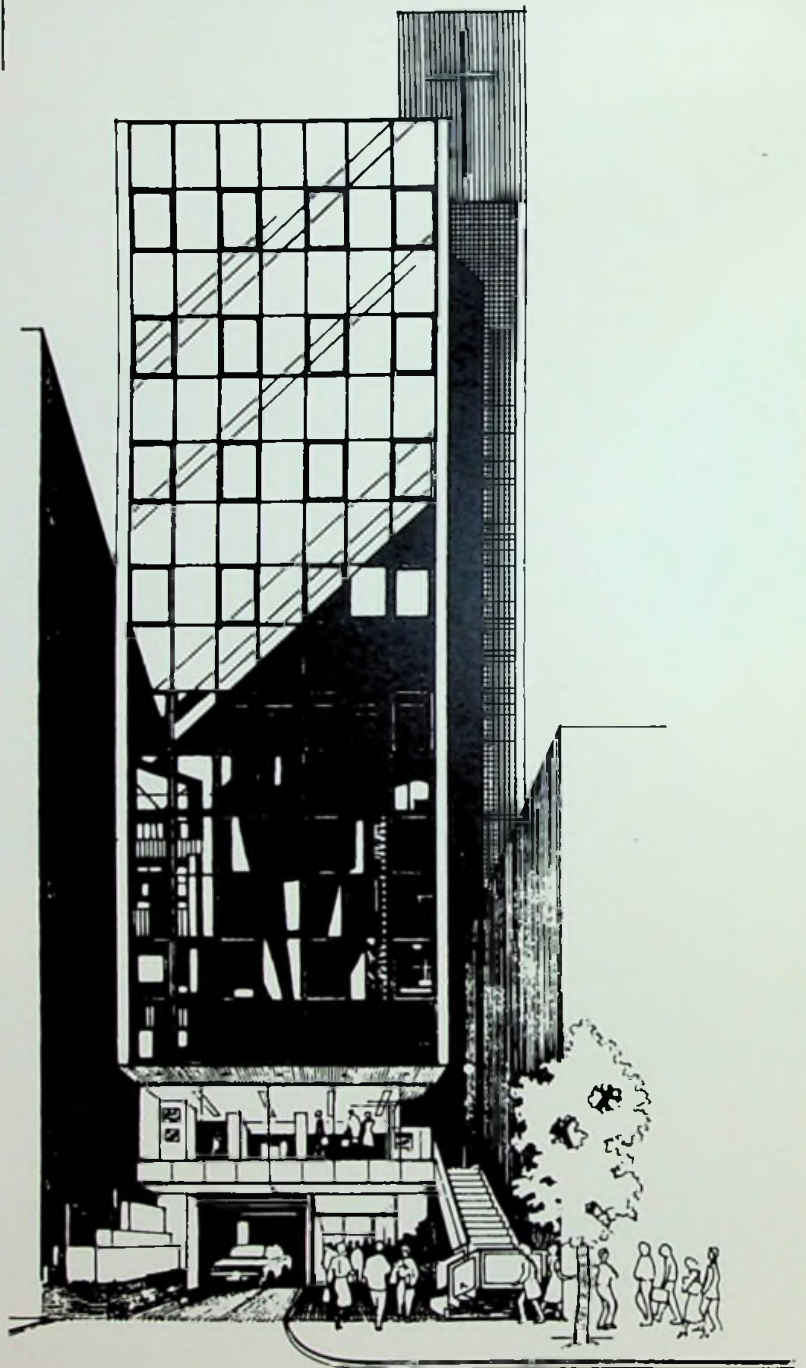
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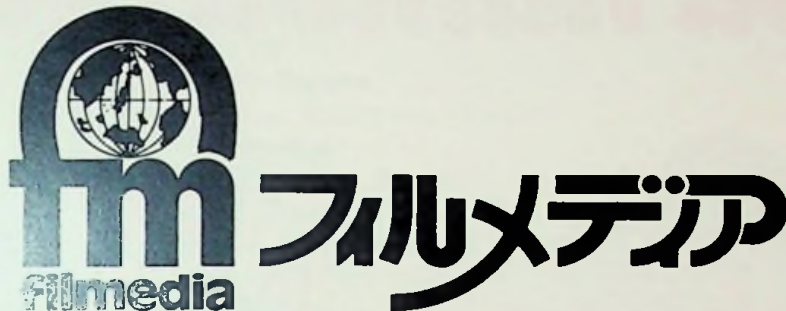
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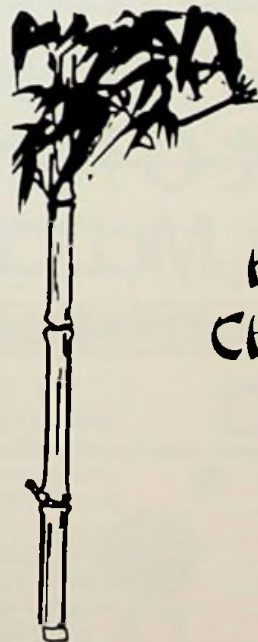
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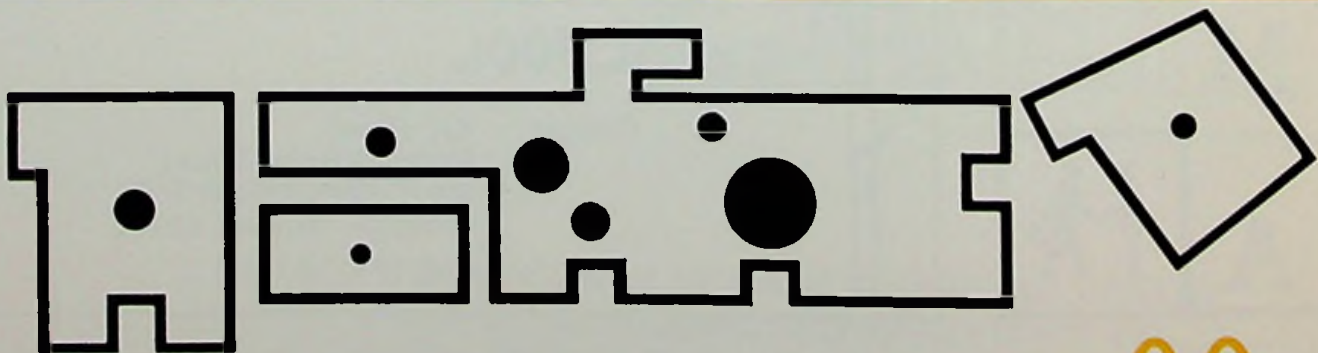


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# JAPAN HARVEST

The Magazine For Today's Japan Missionary

1984, Volume 34, Number 1

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

2	JEMA Plenary Session . . . . .	
9	Church Planting Handbook (Part 1)	
9	Introduction . . . . .	Don Wright
10	More Salt for the Stew . . . . .	Millie Morehouse
13	Some Thoughts about Future Church Planting . . . . .	Hugh Trevor
14	Church Distance Scale . . . . .	Don Wright
15	Methods, the Gospel, and my new Church . . . . .	Don Wright
15	Housewives are Japan's Ripe Harvest . . . . .	C. Peter Wagner
16	How to conduct a door-to-door Survey . . . . .	Robert Sorley
17	Sample Questionnaire . . . . .	Robert Sorley
18	Radio Monitor Survey . . . . .	Don Wright
19	"Seisho O Yomu Kai" . . . . .	Phyllis Jensen
20	"Tonarigumi" . . . . .	Martha Classen
21	Honoring Ancestors in Japan . . . . .	Donald McGavran
26	JEMA Plenary Session Roll . . . . .	

Cover: Karuizawa  
Credit: Tsuchiya Studio

The JAPAN HARVEST is the official publication of the Japan Evangelical Missionary Association, a non-profit organization which publishes the Japan Harvest four times a year. Its purpose is to promote primarily the cause of the evangelical church and mission in Japan, and secondarily the ministry and activities of the association.

Though the magazine responsibly endeavors to represent these causes, individual articles or advertising express the viewpoints of the contributors and not necessarily those of JEMA. The editor welcomes unsolicited articles. Such material will not be returned.

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**Japan Evangelical Missionary Association**

## **JEMA – What it is**

JEMA is a corporate body of evangelical missionaries. It aims to provide service and fellowship as well as being the united voice of evangelicals in Japan. Membership includes evangelical mission organizations and individual missionaries.

JEMA's statement of faith is a clear expression of the historic doctrine of the Christian faith and it accepts the Bible as the supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct.

JEMA is one of the three charter members of the Japan Evangelical Association. The other members of JEA are the Nihon Fukuin Remmei (JEF) and the Japan Protestant Conference (JPC). JEA sponsors united efforts, such as crusades, congresses on evangelism, seminars and fellowship meetings.

## **JEMA – What it does**

- \* CONVENES an annual nationwide missionary conference each summer in Karuizawa. JEMA also sponsors regular fellowship meetings and banquets in different geographical areas during the year.
- \* SPONSORS the Japan Missionary Language Institute. This Institute provides facilities and courses tailor-made for missionaries for the study of the Japanese language.
- \* PUBLISHES the *Japan Harvest*, the magazine for today's Japan missionary. JEMA also publishes the annual *Protestant Missionary Directory*.
- \* ASSISTS those in need as a result of natural disasters by distribution of clothing, relief supplies and money.
- \* CONSULTS with members on mission policy, through seminars and workshops.
- \* INFORMS members of Japanese law and changes in legal procedures. When necessary, JEMA represents a united voice in bringing matters to other organizations or government bodies.
- \* COOPERATES in the activities of the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA).
- \* PROMOTES pioneer evangelism through workshops and published surveys.

## **JEMA – How it operates**

JEMA is governed by the annual Plenary Council composed of delegates of member missions and regional centers. This council selects an executive committee to serve between council sessions.

Each member mission organization shall elect one of its members to represent them at the annual Plenary Council. The number of votes he will have is determined by the number of their missionaries actually on the field at the close of the fiscal year. A limited number of observers are also invited to attend. Individual missionary members are represented by the elected regional center delegates.

The autonomy of member missions is protected by permitting any mission to abstain from supporting any action of the group of which it is not in agreement. Upon the request of the abstaining mission, JEMA will refrain from publicity associating them with such action.

JEMA is financed by the annual fees paid by mission organizations and individuals on its membership roll.

# 1984

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Dear JAPAN HARVEST Reader:  
This issue of the magazine has been dedicated to a better understanding of JEMA and its various involvements.

The 1984 Plenary Session which was held at the Ochanomizu Student Christian Center on February 13 and 14, has been singled out as a good example of JEMA activities. Since attendance at the Plenary Session was limited to delegates and observers, it is hoped that these pages will serve to provide wide dissemination of information relating to JEMA's year-round program.

JEMA is indeed unique in the annals of missions. Where else can one find a fellowship that encompasses over 1,000 missionaries on the field? We are reminded of God's goodness to all of us during these post-war years. Ours is a heritage that we should cherish and uphold. May these pages contribute towards a better understanding of JEMA and what it stands for and may we be encouraged to uphold each other in the task of winning JAPAN FOR CHRIST.

*Cordially yours in Christ,*

*Siegfried A. Buss*  
Siegfried A. Buss  
Editor

## JEMA EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 1984 '1985

President .....Verner Strom  
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## PRESIDENT'S REPORT

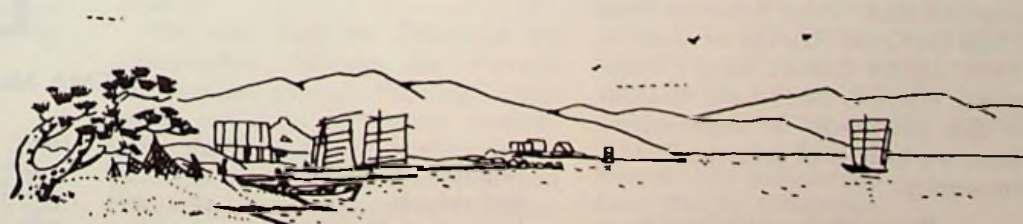
### PLENARY

Our assembling together for the 17th Annual Plenary Session is a testimony to God's faithfulness in enabling us as Evangelicals to work together in the JEMA organization for these many years. This plenary is your opportunity to directly participate in implementing its goals. This plenary ends three years of my responsibility as JEMA president and I have appreciated your support of this organization. A warm welcome to delegate and observers.

### OFFICERS

The members of the Executive Committee carried out their duties through the bi-monthly Executive Committee meetings and also through the various JEMA Commissions. The reports of these Commissions are included in this Plenary Program. Your Executive Committee for the past year were:

President Harry Friesen  
Vice-President Stanley Conrad  
Secretary Russell Lunak  
Treasurer Roy Jensen  
Members at Large Wayne Meyer  
Del Palmer  
Arthur Shelton  
Japan Harvest Editor Siegfried Buss  
(JEMA Directory Editor Florence Karlson)



# ANNUAL PLENARY SESSION

## OFFICE

*Room.* On June 18th the JEMA office was moved from the old wing of the Ochanomizu Student Christian Center building to room 304 of the new wing. Though somewhat smaller, there is adequate room for the office functions and enough space for the Executive Committee meetings. It is next door to the JEA-JPC office.

*WORKER.* We deeply regret that we must bid farewell to Mrs Shuko Watanabe who has served JEMA so well from its founding. She began serving the missionary community in EMAJ in 1956, a predecessor of JEMA. The Executive Committee regretfully accepted her resignation effective as of March 31, 1984.

## AFFILIATES

Though the main work of JEMA is carried out by its Commissions, JEMA continues to encourage those projects to which it gave birth. This past year *Church Information Service* received JEMA financial aid. A member of the Executive Committee represents JEMA at the *Japan Missionary Language Institute* Board meetings.

Five members of the Executive Committee serve on the *Japan Evangelical Association (JEA)*. For its annual meeting June 6-8, 1983, JEA invited a broad spectrum of the Japanese evangelical community to search for ways and means to include groups not now represented in its membership. I presented a paper on "JEA and Evangelical Unity", during the sessions. JEA continues to need the support of the JEMA constituency both in purse and personnel.

## PROSPECTS

This past year I have had to send many **CERTIFICATES OF RECOGNITION** to many Post-War retiring missionaries who have served the Lord in Japan for 20 years or more. There is yet so much more to be done and many more Japanese need to hear the Good News of salvation in Christ. JEMA doesn't issue *Certificates of Welcome* but we are thankful for the new crop of missionaries whom we hope will join the JEMA community.

Respectfully submitted by,

Harry Friesen  
JEMA President

## LIAISON AND MEMBERSHIP

### Importance of JEMA

Unfortunately, many people have the mistaken notion that joining JEMA is like voting in a national election . . . it doesn't matter if you do or don't and no one will ever know. JEMA is an important organization. Not only does it sponsor such activities as Pioneer Evangelism Seminars, fellowship banquets, Karuizawa Conference, but JEMA has been instrumental in such organizations as CIS and JMLI. The Japan Harvest and JEMA Directory are published by JEMA. JEMA also provides for missionary representation on JEA. JEMA is a service organization as well as a missionary fellowship and there exists a need to promote greater awareness of these services.

### Membership Incentives

"Why join?" is the question often asked. As reported in last year's plenary session, there seemed to be no special benefits to a JEMA member that were not equally available to the missionary community at large. The following benefits now apply to JEMA members:

Discount of JMLI registration fees.  
Reduction of registration fees at JEMA sponsored activities.

Special member price for JEMA Directory.

Reduction in Pioneer Evangelism Seminar registration fee.

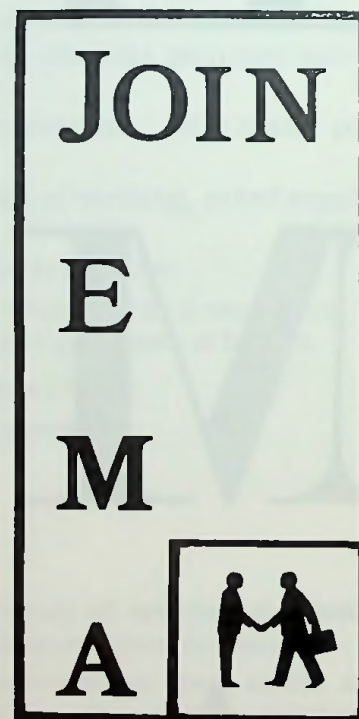
Missionaries need to be challenged to see JEMA as an organization that is worthy of their support by membership, instead of just thinking what is in it for them. There needs to be greater appeal and explanation of JEMA given to new missionaries to JAPAN. We are presently considering whether there should be some sort of membership option for short-term missionaries.

This past year was the second highest membership we have ever enjoyed. As can be seen from the above figures membership has increased due to the increase in individual members. This is largely the result of a letter which went out to about 250 missionaries who have arrived in Japan within the last five years. Twenty-eight people sent in membership applications.

### Future

One service which could be investigated for the future is greater dissemination of general interest information. There seems to be a need for some sort of missionary pipeline on a more regular basis. A desire for more area-related activities has also been expressed. The commission welcomes your ideas and suggestions on how JEMA might better serve the missionary and how others might be encouraged to join our ranks. You are our best advertisement.

Respectfully submitted,  
D. R. Palmer and Roy Jensen



JEMA Membership

	1968	1973	1978	1981	1982	1983	1984
Member Missions	35	41	46	49	49	46	45
Individuals	748	671	827	886	867	889	886
Individual Members	219	312	274	253	241	213	235
Total Membership	967	983	1101	1139	1108	1102	1121



## PUBLICATIONS

### JEMA DIRECTORY — 33rd Edition

The assistance of many has made possible the 1984 JEMA DIRECTORY. Our sincere thanks go to Miss Florence Karlson, Editor, Mrs. Shuko Watanabe, Associate Editor and Mr. Roy Jensen, Advertising Manager.

### JAPAN HARVEST

The editor wishes to express his deep appreciation to Mrs. Edna Johnson and Mrs. Edith Buss of the Production Department and Mrs. Shuko Watanabe of the JEMA Office. Mrs. Watanabe, who will retire this spring, will be sorely missed. I would like to take this opportunity to pay tribute to her dedicated service during the past 28 years.

There are many who have helped behind the scenes, meticulously proofreading each issue. I wish to thank Mrs. Eldora Schwab, Mrs. Edna Johnson, Mrs. Edith Buss, Mr. Roy Jensen and Mr. Victor Springer.

Typesetting of Japan Harvest is done in Hong Kong with substantial savings. The added time required, however, can play havoc with getting each issue out on time. Printing is done at New Life League. Mr. Roald Lidal and the NLL staff have been most cooperative and helpful; it has been a very satisfactory arrangement.

### ADVERTISING

Thanks to a good advertising income JEMA publications have operated in the black. Mr. Roy Jensen worked very hard and has been successful in increasing ads in the JEMA Directory. Please let our advertisers know that you saw their ad in a JEMA publication. Your assistance in soliciting advertisement would also be appreciated.



## ANOTHER YEAR

It has been again a joy and privilege to serve as editor during 1983. Thank you for your words of support and encouragement. After eight years as editor I feel more keenly than ever the need of keeping in touch with you, the readers. Your suggestions are always welcome. Japan Harvest is JEMA's official publication. May it serve to unite us in joyful service across Japan. Respectfully submitted, Siegfried A. Buss, Ph.D. JAPAN HARVEST Editor



### PIONEER EVANGELISM COMMISSION

"This commission shall explore and uncover any and every neglected geographical area or type of evangelism in Japan, and shall arrange seminars and workshops to assist and encourage the evangelical Christian community, both national and missionary, to take these opportunities for Christ." So reads our JEMA by-laws. How have we as a commission sought to fulfill these purposes?

Concerning the geographical need, we asked the CIS staff to present the statistical challenge for the need of churches at both of our Pioneer Evangelism Seminars in Kanto. The reports were not encouraging, indicating that the percent of churches planted in Japan continues to decrease. Is it possible that the newer missionaries will give us a new thrust in church planting? Does the interest shown among the pastors at the Kyoto Evangelism Congress and at the KDK seminars indicate a new commitment to church planting by our Japanese brethren? We hope and pray so!

We also had the "Seminar on Geographic Strategy for Pioneer Evangelism Church Planting" right after last year's Plenary Session. There we heard some of the goals of five representative missions, and then discussed the specific needs of megalopolis areas, *bed towns*, cities, and rural areas.

Concerning types of evangelism and seminars, besides the above mentioned seminar, 50 people gathered at OSCC to hear Dr. Snider speak on the theme of "It's Happening in Japan Now—Can the Missionary Get In On It?" He shared a number of insights gained from recent studies of growing churches. God is working in great ways in many churches. And a common characteristic of the growing church is for the pastor and missionary to have a positive, expectant, aggressive attitude toward evangelism.

In seeking to move into other areas of concern related to evangelism we would like to announce that on April 23 at OSCC we will have a seminar called "The Japanese View Towards Death (Is It an Obstacle to Church Growth?)" Rev. Susumu Obata, author, professor at Tokyo Theological Seminary, and pastor of Suginami Presbyterian Church, will speak on this important subject, helping us to understand the problem, and giving us guidance in how best to lead others with Christ through death.

We continue to encourage areas outside Kanto to sponsor their own Pioneer Evangelism Seminars, and we are glad that the Hokkaido JEMA-related missionaries will again have a seminar this winter entitled "Successful Pioneer Evangelism" with Rev. Kosukegawa. JEMA continues to budget money to help cover a speaker's travel for a seminar. We trust that more areas will take advantage of this help during the coming year.

The Commission will also continue to inform the JEMA constituency when speakers from other countries who have valuable church planting insights come to Japan. And we trust this year to coordinate several meetings that would give you a chance to hear them.

The last thing that the Commission is working on is to print a church-planting notebook. This will have articles from the Japan Harvest, excerpts from past Pioneer Evangelism Seminars, and other material written specially for this project. We appreciate your cooperation and prayers for this.

Respectfully submitted,  
Don Wright, Chairman  
W. Robert Shade  
Wayne Meyer

## CONFERENCE AND FELLOWSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT

### A LOOK BACKWARD

1983 was a good year for the Conference and Fellowship program of JEMA. The year began with a fine banquet at the Sanno Hotel (the last to be held in the old building) at which Dr. Claude Meyers of CAJ spoke and CAJ students provided special music. Then in June gatherings were sponsored in the Kanto, Chubu and Kansai areas with Dr. Walter Kaiser, Dean of TEDS, as the speaker. While all who attended appreciated Dr. Kaiser's lecture we had hoped for a greater attendance. Postage costs plus other expenses resulted in a small financial loss to JEMA.

Response to the 1983 Conference was most encouraging. Our two speakers, Dr. Charles Lewis of Wheaton and Dr. Stanley Toussaint of Dallas complimented each other as well as related well to our theme "On To Maturity." Another highlight was the fine work done by our music leader Greg Cleveland. In addition to a substantial increase in attendance

the offerings exceeded a total of 700,000 yen and thus a substantial part of JEMA's commitment to C.I.S. was raised.

Special thanks to the JEMA Executive Committee as well as all who helped with the many details of the conference.

### A LOOK FORWARD

Our first activity for 1984 will be the Annual JEMA banquet. This year we are scheduled for the New Sanno Hotel. Our speaker is Col. Rhon Carleton, installation staff Chaplain of Yokota AF Base who will speak on "Church Discipleship and Evangelism". Special music will be provided by the Roland Halbergs and Harold Johnsons.

The committee will also be sponsoring a special gathering with Dr. Oswald Sanders, retired leader of OMF as guest speaker. This will be in the Tokyo area on June 22. Watch the JAPAN HARVEST for details.

Our 1984 Karuizawa Conference speaker will be Mike Pocock, Candidate Secretary of TEAM. Dr. Pocock is a former missionary to Venezuela and has his Doctor of Missiology from TEDS. Everyone

speaks highly of his capability as a speaker. We are also anticipating showing a film on the life of John Wycliff which is being arranged by A. V. Center. We are presently waiting to hear from Mr. Bruce Narrimore concerning his availability for our Seminar hour and the services on the 29th. Your prayers will be appreciated.

Finally we have a commitment from Dr. David Hesselgrave of the SWM at TEDS to be our speaker in 1985. Dr. Hesselgrave is no stranger to Japan having served here for 12 years. He was also the first president of JCEM which together with EMAJ merged to form our present JEMA organization.

In closing let me express my deep appreciation to Art Kunz and Russ Lunak who have worked with me on this committee. Their input and work has been invaluable.

Respectfully submitted,

Stan Conrad

JEMA Conference & Fellowship Committee



# JAPAN MISSIONARY LANGUAGE INSTITUTE

1984-85 SCHEDULE:

Fall term - Sept. 10

Winter term - Jan. 7

Spring term - April 8

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## 1983 ANNUAL REPORT

This has been a year of change at JMLI. Mr. Yukio Sakiyama, after serving office manager for over a year, has accepted the responsibility of dean from September, 1983 and has done an admirable job learning the ropes. He is excellent in details. I continue as director after having had the position of both dean and director for the last two years. Besides keeping in contact by telephone I am at the school once a week.

Mr. Shelton Allen, our linguistic advisor, has well initiated our new "Medfly" computer. With the able assistance of Roy Jensen, most of our financial records are now in the computer. Mr. Allen continues to be a very much needed and appreciated member of the staff. Besides his computer work, he helps set up classes and counsels students and teachers.

Miss Kiwami Kojima has taken the responsibility of office manager. Her sister, Megumi, assists in the office. The students relate well to these capable Christian young ladies, both of whom are bi-lingual.

Volume I of our text was edited and the 2nd printing was off the press in June. Our brochure was also updated and was printed in the summer. The Master Index is now planned for completion sometime this year. Miss Frances Horton, who has just completed her assignment with us as Publication Secretary, is on a short furlough and will help us out on her return from April until she completes the index. Her capable work is very much appreciated.

The number of students per term was as follows: Winter 50, Spring 45, Summer 39, and Fall 53. This winter term we have 34 full-time and 17 part-time students. Of these 7 are not missionaries. There are 12 teachers and 5 office staff members.

There were nine who completed the necessary study and were awarded graduation diplomas. This brings our number of graduates to 79. Certificates presented for completion of individual volumes 1, 2, 3, 4, and 5 numbered 40.

Through these sixteen years of our existence, we feel that JMLI has played an important part in making missionaries literate in the Japanese language. Some of you here today are living proof of that. However, we have had criticism from time to time that we are too strict, not always considerate of the student's needs, etc. The

staff and teachers have been working vigorously on these areas and we feel that our teachers have begun to correct these weaknesses. They now express their genuine concern for the progress of individual students. They even praise students (which is not the Japanese way of teaching) and attempt to treat each student as an adult, although his language ability may be that of a pre-schooler. No school is perfect, but we are diligently working to resolve some of the difficult problems in teaching Japanese to Westerners.

We must, however, have your support by sending us your students in order to fulfill the goal of the founders of JMLI. At this time we are in a very serious financial condition and unless you can help us by sending us your missionaries, we will have to close the school at the end of the summer session. We need to have a minimum of eight additional full time students each term in order to operate in the black. Without your concrete co-operation, we have no alternative but to close.

Our inventory of Volumes, I, II, III is large, and in order to help us and you, we are offering a very special quantity price. For orders of ten volumes or more, we are giving a discount of 30% until February 29, 1984. Any combination is acceptable. Books are available on the back table during this plenary session and at JMLI until the end of this month.

Our present board members are as follows:

Harold Sims, Chairman, Church of Christ

Kevin Zirkle, Secretary, World Gospel Mission

Arthur Shelton, JEMA representative, OMS International

Jerry Livingston, Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church

Lyndon Swenson, Japan Conservative Baptist Mission

Frances Horton, Southern Baptist Mission

Ex-officio members:

Shelton Allen, Linguistic Advisor, SEND International

Yukio Sakiyama, Dean

Harold I. Johnson, Director, Wesleyan Mission

We want to express sincere appreciation to the missions which are furnishing staff and board members.

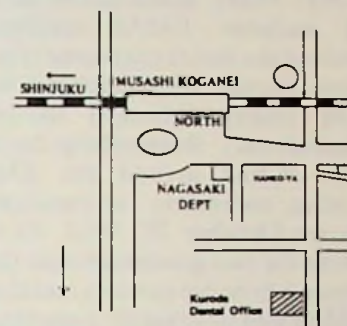
Respectfully submitted,

Harold I. Johnson  
Director

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## JAPAN EVANGELICAL ASSOCIATION (JEA)

On April 29th of this year, JEA will be 16 years old. JEMA became 16 on January 24th. Though we are not exactly twins, we do have a common ancestry, namely EMAJ and JCEM. The Evangelical Missionary Association of Japan was organized in 1949 and the Japan Council of Evangelical Missions was organized in 1961. Many missionaries at the 1963 summer EMAJ conference expressed the desire that some type of merger should be considered with JCEM (many belonged to both organizations). Responding to this desire, JCEM invited the EMAJ executive committee to meet with them on October 28, 1963. At this meeting the two groups felt that there was even a broader concern and that it would be well to schedule a meeting of all the leading evangelical inter-group organizations in Japan. A meeting was called for January 20, 1964 to be convened at the Sanno Hotel as all invited groups responded favorably. They were the Japan Bible Christian Council, The Japan Protestant Conference, and the Japan Evangelical Fellowship. JCEM acted as host for this important and historic

At that time I was a member of both JCEM and EMAJ executive committees and was asked to chair the meeting. JCEM and EMAJ merged in January 1968 and the way was paved for JEF, JPC, and JEMA to constitute themselves as the three charter members of JEA on April 29, 1968.

JEA has been blessed of God during the past 16 years of its existence. The memory of blessings received at the JEA-sponsored Second Japan Congress on Evangelism in June 1982 is still lingering in our hearts. It was indeed a visible expression of our evangelical unity in Japan. But we are not satisfied. There are a good number of evangelical churches and groups who for various reasons have not joined JEA. One of the principle impediments has been that entrance can be gained only by joining one of the three charter member groups. At JEA's Bi-Annual Plenary Session held June 6-8, 1983, this matter was seriously considered and many non-members were invited to take part in discussions related to the issue. As JEMA president, I gave an address on "JEA and Evangelical Unity" (cf. Japan Harvest Vol. 33, No.2, 1983). Much prayer, thought and discussion will be required as JEA considers how to restructure or even disband for a totally new organization.

It is here that JEMA still has a vital role to play. Not only were missionary organizations instrumental in the formation of JEA itself, but missionaries played a part in the original formation of JPC and in the formation of JEF, the latter of which was primarily Japanese. Very few of us would want to go back to the pre-JEMA and pre-JEA days when the evangelical community showed very little outward unity as there were times of considerable stress. Many of the missionaries who spent much time and energy

and prayer to establish JEMA and JEA have gone on to their eternal reward or have retired. Unity also be maintained by the same.

Due to rising costs and the shrinking of the missionary constituency, JEMA, as well as other missionary-related service organizations are hard put to balance the budget. We have had to curtail support of Church Information Service and now our annual JEA assessment of ¥400,000 seems difficult to maintain. JEMA has been an equal partner with JEF and JPC. Each organization has 5 members on the executive committee of JEA. The JEMA executive committee questions our financial ability to continue as an equal member and is suggesting to the Plenary that we consider decreasing our JEMA representatives to three persons. At ¥80,000 per representative our allotment would thus become ¥240,000 per year instead of ¥400,000. This would become effective as of the June 1985 JEA Plenary. This would give JEA time to adjust their planning in regard to finances and could also be a factor in projecting its future reorganization. This should not be interpreted by the JEMA constituency or by JEA as a cooling of interest or concern. I believe, personally, that JEA will need JEMA all the more in the days ahead. If we can't be a *pillar* let's at least be a *post*!

Respectfully submitted,  
Harry Friesen, JEMA President

# JAPAN HARVEST

Remember your friends with a gift subscription.





Dear JAPAN HARVEST Reader:

Beginning with this issue and for some time to come JAPAN HARVEST will present helpful and timely articles intended for insertion in a loose-leaf notebook which, hopefully, will serve as an up-to-date source of reference and information for church planters. I am thrilled to see the work done by JEMA's Pioneer Evangelism Commission in writing, compiling and editing articles that will now be available to many. It speaks well for the evangelical effort in Japan to see missionaries helping fellow missionaries in making available the tools essential for church planting. Naisbitt in his book *Mega-trends* draws attention to the fact that we are rapidly becoming an information-oriented society. I am encouraged to see that JEMA is in step with the times. It was Winston Churchill who stated: "Give us the tools and we shall finish the job." May the pages of this magazine contribute towards this goal.

*Cordially yours in Christ,*

*Siegfried A. Buss*  
Siegfried A. Buss  
Editor

## CHURCH PLANTING NOTEBOOK OUTLINE

- I. *The Church Planted*
  1. General
  2. The Missionary Who plants Churches
  3. The Planning That Plants Churches
  4. The Methods That Plant Churches
  5. The Evangelistic Preaching That Plants Churches
- II. *The Church Established*
  1. General
  2. The Conversion Response That Establishes Churches
  3. The Organization That Establishes Churches
- III. *The Church Strengthened*
  1. General
  2. Discipleship That Strengthens Churches
  3. Leadership Training That Strengthens Churches

## CHURCH PLANTING NOTEBOOK

### INTRODUCTION:

Church planting has been and is the major agenda item of most mission groups in Japan. And through the labors and prayers of many Christians, expatriate and Japanese, over 6,000 churches have been started. We say praise to the Lord of the harvest, but what missionary or mission dares to move to the awards table to receive the certificate of praise for a good job finished? Cities, towns and rural areas still wait for any kind of church to start, and nationally there is an average of only one church per 19,400 people. We of the JEMA Pioneer Evangelism Committee pray that this church-planting notebook will stimulate greater effort to plant 6,000 more churches before Jesus returns.

There is another reason for the commission publishing this notebook. Many people in Japan have abored for years starting a number of new churches. They have experience and wisdom to share with us. We need to hear these people so that we all can do a better job. Some of the material has been written just for this project; other articles come from previous Japan Harvests or other sources. And you will notice that the articles are primarily written by missionaries for missionaries. We also need to learn much from our Japanese brethren, and we hope that this type of material will be included, too.

The notebook will be published in the Japan Harvest over the next two years, but it will not be in any way complete or exhaustive. This is one of the reasons we encourage you to use it in the form of a loose-leaf notebook. The Japan Harvest will provide the outline and articles, but the order of publication will not necessarily follow the sequence of that outline. So please take out each insert, punch the holes, and start your own church-planting notebook, using the outline.

In this issue we begin to look at *The Church Planted*, and the first article by Millie Morehouse gives us a general report and challenge concerning the need in Japan and some ways that we can meet the need. Then we have given you a tool to analyze your community in relation to their felt distance to your church. This will help you to evaluate what kinds of methods might be the most appropriate in relation to your present stage of development.

Three articles give practical help in the first stages of church planting. Martha Classen helps us get started right with good community relationships, and then two articles give practical community survey techniques. The rest of the material gives a variety of methods that have been tried, and found helpful. You won't want to use them all, but we hope that you will find much that will be helpful.

We welcome your suggestions, ideas, and articles that you have found helpful for church-planting, and your prayers.

# *I The Church Planted*

## *1. General*

### *More Salt for the Stew*

**Millie Morehouse**

Something important is missing in the social milieu of modern Japan. It's not people or material goods, nor money or technology. There are plenty of these items in Japan. Nor is this land wanting in scenic beauty, culture or a supply of natural calamities. These also have been part of the country for generations.

What's missing? A "typical" community in any of the other advanced countries will most likely feature at least one prominent church spire. But we can usually drive through a Japanese city or town without seeing a church. Sometimes the churches are there. But often they are on secondary or away from the center of town. The element that's in short supply is the churches where the Word of God is proclaimed, and where believers, whom Christ called the salt of the earth, gather and grow. Each church flavors the society around it, but in Japan the number of churches is so small, and the society so large, that the savor of Christ has not yet adequately penetrated. The stew needs more salt.

"Just how many churches are there in Japan?" you may ask. The answer to that question will vary depending on the type of congregations counted. In a non-Christian land such as this, some groups that are only partly Christian will be counted simply because they are not Shinto or Buddhist. But those of us who claim to be Christian would rather not include such groups in our census. And of course the two major divisions of Protestant and Catholic must also be considered. The listing used at Church Information Service (CIS), which is the basis of any references in this article, includes what I like to term "reasonably orthodox" Protestant groups. This includes both conciliar

and evangelical groups, both well organized denominations and loosely associated, or even independent congregations.

At present we know of over 6,100 such churches and evangelistic points (dendojo) in Japan. But when we realize that the current population is over 118 million, this means that on the average each church has to minister to a general population of 19,400 people. Those of us from the west cannot conceive of a city of that size in our homeland with only one church. Even a village of 194 people back home would have at least one church. So the immensity of the task of witnessing in Japan is plain.

And, in a practical sense, few churches would lay any claim to being able to contact even casually, let alone witness effectively to the 19,400 people around them. The obvious answer would seem to be to open more preaching points, to establish more churches. But when the believers of these 6,100 churches are still less than 1% of the general population, the scale of the challenge is awesome and almost overpowering.

#### **UNREACHED PEOPLE NEED CHURCHES**

In recent years missiologists have encouraged us to think in terms of unreached peoples. Since most countries of the world have heterogeneous populations, there is a lot of validity in using such an approach. But the island country of Japan does not easily fit the framework of that concept. The few ethnic minorities in Japan—Chinese, Korean and Caucasian—all have their own churches, and in fact are probably better reached than the Japanese.

Possibly the only valid ethnic subgroup among the Japanese are the Ryukyuan. Yet Okinawa has the best church/population ratio of any of Japan's 47 prefectures. So they hardly qualify as an unreached people either. The Ainu of Hokkaido, usually also cited as an ethnic group, are by now so culturally and linguistically assimilated into the main stream, that it would be difficult to find them as a separate entity to minister to.

So we are led to the conclusion that the unreached people of this land are the Japanese themselves. Yes, there are political, social and economic differences among them. And yes, some groups are more open and responsive to the gospel, such as students and urban populations. But wherever we find them, Japanese are the unreached people we must seek to win to Christ.

No colonial era image of palm trees and pith helmets will fit this land of unreached people, however. The Japanese are not only modern and industrialized, but are at or near the top in high technology advances such as industrial robots, communication satellites, and super computer research. But after rising from the ashes of World War II to the current affluence, Japanese themselves admit to a moral vacuum of the spirit.

In this land where Christianity is permitted, but not widely accepted, we can observe that many people are drifting back to the old religions and customs to try to fill that inner void. Yet others also realize there is value in Christianity, and doors are still open to us to proclaim Christ.

For instance, real estate developers will be willing to offer some land for a church as sort of a status symbol. It is considered to be a part of a modern community. This may be only surface thinking on their part, but let's not hesitate to take advantage of it. It's indicative of a need they may only dimly sense.

The continuing debate over moral education for the nation's youth, and the growing drug, crime and violence problems of the schools are also indications that something is missing in the "stew" of society. The Japanese realize that the need is in the matter of a moral code. This is the point where Christians need to speak out, and call this land to repentance and faith in Christ as the answer.

## DELIBERATE CONSIDERATION

But how can people consider and trust Christ if there is no church nearby for them to go to? Just hearing the gospel once or twice is not enough for most Japanese. Because of personal and family implications involved in deciding to become a Christian, most people want an extended period of time to investigate and consider the gospel. Seed sowing ministries, or even an occasional visit by an evangelist, are not likely to have lasting results unless they can be linked to some more permanent ministry—a church. Some choose to call these gatherings assemblies, meetings, centers, study groups, etc., but all are referring to groups of people who meet in Christ's name to learn from the Word of God. When there is a church either in the community or nearby, a person can take his time learning "line upon line, precept upon precept" until he comprehends the truths of salvation. Often this seeking and probing of the Christian faith is done in some slightly indirect way, such as a mission school, Bible class, cooking class, etc. If a seeker can find a warm welcome among believers through such secondary contacts, he will be more likely to continue drawing closer to personal faith.

Japanese also seek security and permanence, not just in their jobs, but in religious matters as well. When I first heard a church officer pushing for the purchase of a cemetery plot for the church even before they had a building, I admit that I didn't follow his thinking very well. His point was that if a Japanese is asked to commit his soul and his life to Christ, he wants some assurance that he's joining a permanent thing. The message of eternal life in Christ answers his spiritual questions about what happens after death, but he and his family are relieved when they know provision is made for the physical remains as well. Churches with buildings and cemetery plots seem to provide that sense of permanence that they seek.

Once a *dendojo* or church has been established, it becomes not only a place for worship and spiritual growth, but also a rallying center from which believers will go out to witness and live for Christ. It also can become

a hub for outlying house meetings (*katei shukai*) that can be used to bring the gospel to individual neighborhoods. Then in turn it becomes a worship center for these neighborhood contacts and seekers.

### WHAT'S OUR RATE OF PROGRESS?

Every year new churches and *dendojo* are being opened. Surely by now we're making some progress in reaching Japan with the Gospel. The Postwar Survey which CIS presented at the Second Congress on Evangelism at Kyoto in 1982 gave us the first comprehensive figures on postwar growth. When we found that the number of churches in 1950 was just over 2,100 and that this number grew to over 6,000 by 1980, we found ample cause to praise and thank the Lord for what He has done.



But a further breakdown shows some cause for concern. During the 1950's the number of churches nearly doubled (93% increase). But in the '60s the rate fell to 26%, and in the '70s to 17.5%. The pace of starting new churches has slowed considerably. Growing affluence, and political and economic stability camouflage the deeper spiritual needs. A Japanese can meet his temporal needs and desires without faith in Christ. "If you're not facing a personal crisis, who needs religious faith?" is the common attitude.

Since 1980 this declining trend in the number of new churches has continued. Not only are new places opening, but also other places are closing. Perhaps a missionary goes on furlough, and an unresponsive *dendojo* is closed. Or a church that had divided finds both groups floundering, and then two groups close down. Young people move to the city, a mine or factory closes, and a struggling group gives up. A congregation isn't able to support a worker any longer, and the few remaining members decide to commute to a church in a neighboring city or town. Or two small groups may decide to unite for greater strength. There are many reasons why a group may choose to close.

But the net result, however, is that the total number of churches and *dendojo* goes up very slowly. Since 1979 we've been keeping an annual count at CIS. I was quite disturbed to notice that the net increase in 1983 was less than 1% of the total (Fifty-nine churches only). That is, for every 100 existing congregations only one new one was opened. I believe this indicates the need for a major effort on the part of Japanese Christians and missionaries alike to move out in a fresh surge of evangelism and church planting.

### WHO WILL HELP TO PLANT NEW CHURCHES?

In recent years evangelicals have been coming together for fellowship, prayer, encouragement and planning. No longer does a Christian need to feel small and insignificant, confined only to the fellowship of his local congregation or church association. A weekly Christian newspaper keeps him informed of what others are doing. Radio and TV programs bring encouragement to believers and let non-believers consider the gospel in the privacy of their own homes.

Regional efforts like *Sodojin Dendo* or large crusades, and national conferences like JCE, Keswick, etc. are overcoming the minority group mentality as we realize that others share our faith in Christ. We belong to something bigger, the universal fellowship of the saved, and we can walk a little taller. Evangelicals are also realizing that now that we are a significant part of Japan's Christian picture, we can work together to get things done. We can together commit our best efforts to plant new churches, and reach the unreached areas near us.

Many Japanese fellowship and congregations have been established for twenty or thirty years now. Congregations are mature and growing in numbers. Buildings are paid for, or nearly so. Now these believers are ready to think about reaching out to start something new. This burden to open new churches is growing. One denomination opens four new places each year. Another starts five or six. Individual congregations are also increasingly getting a vision to start new churches.

In addition to their own efforts, many Japanese still look to the missionaries as pioneers for opening new churches. Our foreignness allows us to move into new areas and to make contacts easily. In the early stages when the group is not yet able to support a worker, the missionary still has some income to live on. Depending on the region, and on the personality and gifts of the missionary, starting a new church may take from three to ten years before it is able to call and support a pastor or worker. So perhaps we can say that on the average a church planting missionary unit (a couple or two singles) could see a new work established in about seven years. Thus by the year 2000 each church planting unit could probably plant two more churches, allowing time for furlough as well.

But some missionaries aren't likely to be in Japan that long. Members of the postwar rush which peaked about 1951 are already starting to reach retirement age. There are still a significant number of evangelical missionaries who were part of that rush. I'm wherever possible these folks would like to plant to least one more church before leaving Japan.

The current JEMA Directory shows about 2,400 missionaries in Japan. Assuming that even half of these people are in projects, administration, support ministries, or may not be vitally interested in evangelism, there would still be 1,200 missionaries, or 600 units, available for evangelism and church planting. That would mean close to 100 new churches per year just from missionary efforts.

So including Japanese church planting efforts, missionary workers, and by the grace of God a supply of new workers too, there are considerable personnel resources to consider an additional thrust to plant new churches.

### FINDING AND FILLING IN THE GAPS

Where should we consider beginning a new work? Evangelical missionaries are scattered all up and down the nation of Japan. However, there is a strong tendency for families with school age children to cluster within convenient distance of various schools. For the sake of family life, this is an important consideration. But once the children have grown, we don't always see these missionaries

moving back to the areas they so enthusiastically entered when they first came.

Populations that remain in rural or non-metropolitan areas are steeped in traditions that make it difficult to convert to the Christian faith. Commitment, time and patience are needed in large measure by the missionary who works in such an area. Cooperation and encouragement of a church or churches in a neighboring area can be of great help.

But many missionaries choose to work in urban or newly settled populations because the ties of tradition are weakened, and it's often easier to get a church started, both in terms of time and of effort. And, believe it or not, there are still some areas in or near major cities that are not yet adequately churching. Other urban areas are still being opened for development, and that means more people waiting to be reached with the gospel.

Recently the Japanese government announced plans to develop eleven new areas as Technopolis, which means that high tech industries and their employees will be moving into these areas in a few years. Groups that already have some churches in these regions should plan now just how they will plant new churches among these populations. However, we should learn from some previous eager planning that it may take several years for these plans to materialize, and also that some sort of central clearing point for communications would be of help. It's poor stewardship when eight or ten groups all independently lay plans to reach the same area, especially when other nearby areas remain untouched.\*

### SOME NEEDEY PLACES

Our planning and vision need no longer be limited to the contacts or bits of information that may happen to come our way. Information is available about churches and populations in any section of the country. CIS, for one, is ready to assist you with details of some areas near you that are still unchurched, or inadequately reached. Here are some ideas.

—One city ward and seven cities still have no Protestant churches.

—98 cities in Japan have only one church, and that one may not always be evangelical. Most of these cities need two, three or

four churches to bring them up to that national average of one church per 19,400. Total population of these cities is over four million.

—87 unchurched counties have population over 20,000. Three of these counties have over 100,000 population.

—24% of towns of between 25,000 and 40,000 people still have no Protestant church (39 towns).

—Another 52 unchurched towns have from 20,000 to 25,000 people.

—Nearly every city with wards has sections that are inadequately churching. Often, but not always, these sections are populated but not too well developed.

Let's lift our eyes from the labor immediately at hand, and behold the fields that are ready for harvest, and open to us. Pray that the Lord of the harvest will send forth laborers into His harvest—missionaries (both veterans and newcomers), Japanese evangelists, burdened laymen, retired pastors, and any obedient servant of Christ. Let's encourage and help to thrust out those laborers who are burdened to plant churches in needy areas. Even as grain is gathered into sheaves, so believers must be gathered into congregations, bound together by the cords of love for their Redeemer.

Does the stew need more salt? Does Japanese society need more churches? Absolutely! Let us be about our Master's business as long as He gives us strength!



\*CIS will be glad to act as an information clearing point for such planners.



## SOME THOUGHTS ABOUT FUTURE CHURCH PLANTING

HUGH TREVOR



As most readers of Japan Harvest will know, in 1982 the Church Information Service produced a book of statistics and maps to show the progress achieved in planting churches between 1950 and 1980. Dark pink on the map represents an area with no churches and light pink a ratio of one church to more than 40,000 population, and it is encouraging to see that though in 1950 most of Japan was one or other shade of pink, by 1980 significant portions had become light or dark green (more than one church to 25,000 people). As missionaries we are always asking ourselves what still needs to be done in Japan, and though the CIS handbook itself does not give a direct answer to such questions, I suggest that the colours and categories chosen for the maps supply us with a specific challenge, that is, to change the colours for the maps, even to make all areas dark green; that is, to have one or more churches to every 15,000 population, not just nation-wide or even prefecture-wide, but in each specific area, that is, in each of the 551 counties (*gun*) as well as the 722 cities of Japan.

The CIS Survey handbook listed the number of churches in each city and county, and to these lists one can add two further columns, the first showing the total number of churches needed to produce a ratio of 1:15,000, and the second to show the number of *new* churches needed, i.e., the difference between the total number needed and the number of existing churches. I myself have worked these out for all of Tohoku and Hokkaido, and taking Aomori Prefecture as a particular example, I found that though a total of only 16 churches are needed to bring each

of the eight city areas to a dark green, yet 30 churches are still needed to do the same for the eight counties. Since our own mission has struggled for years to plant independent churches even in the smaller cities of this conservative farming area, to think of starting 30 churches in the less populated county areas is obviously out of the question. So an effort to make all the areas of the CIS map dark green seems doomed from the start. To make the county areas of Aomori Prefecture light green (one church to 25,000 people) rather than dark green would require 14 new county churches, and to make them yellow (one church to less than 40,000) rather than the present pink would only require a further 6 (in addition to the present 12 churches). The city churches in Aomori Prefecture have increased from 13 (in 1950) to 32 (in 1960) to 46 (in 1970) and to 53 (in 1980), and the county ones from nine to eleven to nine to twelve over the same period. This lack of success in the country areas means that the establishment of even six more county churches is likely to be quite difficult, though the additional ones in the cities seem no problem. Of the twelve existing in the country areas of Aomori Prefecture 8 are United Church of Christ, which means that if the new churches are to be established by evangelical missions and denominations (since we are the ones who seem to have the greater vision for outreach nowadays) these six extra churches are to be started by those who have only started four such churches during the last 30 years. The problem is further compounded. We must consider what specific towns or villages are suitable for starting churches in. The population of these

country areas is often spread thinly, and the greater clusters of people are probably those where the United (or other) churches are already established. Missionaries may have the vision for starting new churches but their foreignness, methods (and impatience?) may make them (us) less than suitable for country work. What is true for Aomori Prefecture probably applies to a greater or less extent to other country areas of Japan.

So we come again to considering what can be done for the less church areas of Japan. It is worth pointing out that the aim of some denominations to spread themselves more widely throughout Japan by establishing churches in the major cities is not going to help significantly in changing the colours of the CIS map because the major cities are often dark green already, whereas the large pink areas are the country areas. If extending to a new area is contemplated, it would seem best to do so in some depth and strength, aiming to reach out to establish some churches outside city limits. And in view of the needs of country areas, it would seem good if each denomination or mission could have some particular country area that it tried to help even at the sacrifice of some possible expansion in more fruitful areas. Perhaps we could all calculate for our present areas of work what extra churches are needed to change the colours of the map, and what shade of colour we should be aiming for.



# Methods, the Gospel, and My New Church

Over the last years most of us have been stimulated to consider our ministry in relation to the Engel Scale, as shown on the horizontal line graph below. The scale categorizes people in their relation to the gospel from -7 (No Awareness) through to the 0 spot of decision for Christ, and on to the Christian development with +3 showing a propagating Christian.

Our goal is to move people along the scale towards a salvation decision, and generally this is done through many intermediate steps. On the line parallel to the Engel Scale we see the basic communication thrust needed as it relates to those receiving our ministry. Proclamation and explanation of the gospel is needed for people -7 through -4. A call for a decision to trust Christ is important for those at -3 through -1. And after the decision the discipling process is needed while the person grows to a +3 productive Christian.

But for church planting there is another scale that we can add to the Engel Scale. I have found it helpful to analyze groups of people and individual in the community, not only in relation to their distance from a salvation decision, but also in relation to their felt distance (knowledge of and commitment) to our local church. I have put this on the vertical plane entitled "Man's Response to Our Church". And to keep the two scales clear I have added a "C" after the number, meaning church, and a "G" in the Engel Scale, meaning gospel.

Especially in the early days of a new church most people will be a-9, and possibly there will always be -9 people in the area. But as in the Engel Scale we seek to move people down the scale towards a commitment to the church and on to +1C of regular attendance, and on to an active spiritual ministry within the Body, +5C.

In the Engel Scale we are talking about the church planter as preacher or communicator. But in the vertical scale we center on the church planter's activities. So on the left we see activities producing awareness of the church for -9C through -6C; activities centered in felt needs for -5C through -4C; evangelistic centered activities for -3C through -1C and evangelistic and discipling centered activities for +1C through +5C. I have used the word "centered" because depending on where the person is in relation to the gospel our activities will be modified. There will be -5C through -1G people who will come to a church-sponsored fellowship party who will be ready for an evangelistic appeal, or a -8C person who has just gotten his first church handbill, but is already a baptised believer, +2. And so discipling will be the major agenda activity needed.

Some will take these scales and make careful graphs of the community before deciding on the proper methods and messages. But however we use these two scales, it is important for us to see our area of church planting responsibility in terms of people's distance from the gospel and from our church. Then we can decide whether or not we are only going to try to reach the -3G people who are waiting to get our evangelistic advertisement. How many -9C through +3G people are in the area waiting for us? If over the beginning months of activities there is a large number of -5C people, where do they stand on the Engel Scale? Do we need evangelistic meetings or the beginning stages of discipling activities?

As you look over the many good ideas in the rest of this church planting section, I think it would be good to continue to ask where the people are on these two scales.

## Housewives are Japan's Ripe Harvest

As I see it Japanese housewives comprise the ripest harvest field. They are open to listen to the gospel. They have time for receiving Christian instruction. They have felt needs that the church can meet. They have control of their children and can lead them to Christ also. If this is true, a great deal of evangelistic effort should be concentrated on the housewives.

My suggestion is that some urban churches in Japan should experiment with an outreach program directing 70 percent of the effort to women, 20 percent to youth and 10 percent to company men. This admittedly will not win many company men, but neither have the other methodologies attempted to date. The males may well come along in the next generation.

Christian mothers will lead their male children to Christ and nurture them in the faith. When they later join the company they will keep their obligation to Jesus as their first priority and their obligation to the company as their second. They then will be God's agents to explore new ways of spreading the Word through the natural social structures of the company. Meanwhile churches geared to meet the needs of women will multiply and flourish.

C. Peter Wagner from *Global Church Growth*  
September-October, 1983, Vol XX,  
No. 5

Don Wright

# How to Conduct a door-to-door Survey

When planning to plant a new church in a community, one useful method is to begin with a community survey. It is not an easy task, especially if the community is large, but it is well worth the effort. Some purposes for such a survey are (1) to inform the community of one's intention to start a church there, (2) to provide opportunity for face-to-face encounters between the church planter and a majority of the households in the community, (3) to provide the church planter with some information as to what families or individuals have a strong or moderate interest in Christianity, and (4) to indicate to the community that one wants to be helpful in ways *they* think useful.

The first step in conducting such a survey is to determine the area where one plans to distribute the questionnaire. If possible, obtain a house-by-house map of the community. Some of the new housing developments publish annually a directory of all the households in the area, with maps included. If this is not available, you may wish to make your own map.

Secondly, draw up a questionnaire based on information you desire, preferably in consultation with a Japanese pastor or friend. Have it printed up in an attractive form, in sufficient quantity that you will have 10-20% more copies than the estimated number of households. (More people will fill out the questionnaire if it is relatively brief and calls for simple rather than lengthy answers.) See the attached sample questionnaire.

Thirdly, prepare for the distribution and collection of the questionnaire by studying the map carefully. From the map, list on a memo sheet the family names of each house in the approximate order you plan to distribute the questionnaires.

It is vitally important to keep a record of where you have been, who was home, and their initial response to your request. Choose a system of symbols which will make record keeping easy, such as:

- handed it out after face-to-face contact
- put it in mailbox after voice contact through intercom
- put it in mailbox when no one was home
- questionnaire was refused

After each day's distribution, you will want to transfer these symbols to the master map of the community. This will give a complete picture of what you have covered.

Fourthly, begin the actual distribution. In many homes today, you will ring a doorbell and speak into the intercom. Be prepared with what you will say. For example: "Good afternoon. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ . I am conducting a survey of this community by means of questionnaires, and I would like to hand you one." Some will ask what kind of questionnaire it is. Be forthright about your intention of starting a church in the community. (It is especially helpful at this point if your survey form includes a question indicating your desire to be of help to the community.)

Many will be hesitant about coming out or accepting the questionnaire. Some typical excuses are: "I can't leave what I'm doing right now." "I have company." "I'm on the telephone." "I am (or my child is) sick." However, even most of these will agree to accept the questionnaire if you say, "Well, I'll just put it in your mailbox then. I'll come back to pick it up on \_\_\_\_\_ ."

Others will say, "Our home is Buddhist." You can respond, "That information will be helpful for me too." After you begin collecting

questionnaires, you may be able to say truthfully, "Most people in this area are cooperating in the survey." That is likely to reassure some who are wavering.

If someone is home when you ring the doorbell, you will probably get one of the following responses: (1) They will graciously come out and accept the questionnaire. (2) They will hesitate, perhaps offering one of the above-mentioned reasons. (3) They will ask you to just put it in their mailbox. (4) They will refuse to accept it. (Even in the latter case, if you ask to just put it in their mailbox, they will sometimes agree.) Whenever possible, tell them what day you will return to collect the questionnaire. If they say they will not be home that day, either name another day or ask them to leave it in their mailbox for you. While on the way to the next house, mark the response on the memo sheet of names using the symbols you have chosen.

Fifthly, return in two or three days to collect the questionnaires on the promised day. Again ring the doorbell and say something like: "Good afternoon. I'm \_\_\_\_\_ , who distributed a questionnaire here the other day. I have come to collect it." Again there are several possible responses: (1) They may bring the completed questionnaire to you, or you may find it in their mailbox. (2) They may say, "I'm sorry, but I haven't filled it out yet." (Offer to wait for them to complete it if they have time, or come back on another specified day.) (3) They may say, "I've lost it," or "I never received one." (Give them another one and indicate when you'll be back for it.) (4) They may say, "I've decided not to fill it out." (Thank them and excuse yourself.) (5) No one may be home. (Come back another day.)

As you leave, in an inconspicuous way mark the response on your memo sheet as follows: For response 1 above, fill in the , , or . For response 2 or 3, indicate the date you promised to return. For response 4, write an X over the original symbol. For response 5, write nothing. Since many will not be home or will not have the questionnaire filled out when you come, count on making the rounds at least three times. When you receive a questionnaire back, check it on the way to the next house to see if the name and address are filled in. If they are not, you may want to fill it in yourself.

Sixthly, transfer the symbols indicating the response onto the master map and see what progress you have made. You will probably want to compile the total results, although the chief use of the returned questionnaire is for individual follow-up.

Seventhly, follow up on those who indicate a desire to visit church or study the Bible.

This type of questionnaire can be used even after you start the meetings.

The over-all response is likely to be quite positive, with many indicating a desire to attend church or to study the Bible. Do follow them up and invite them to church or to study the Bible with them. But do not be surprised if they say they are too busy. To some extent, the responses on the questionnaire will be influenced by the traditional Japanese desire to be positive and to please the other party. But thankfully, some who respond positively will prove to be sincere seekers. Others who responded negatively will delightfully surprise you occasionally by showing up and continuing to attend.

Robert Sorley

## SAMPLE QUESTIONNAIRE

We have come to (name of community) with the purpose, along with all of you, to start a Christian church. Consequently, in order to learn more about this area and to measure your interest, we are conducting a community survey. If you will be so kind as to indicate on this questionnaire some of your desires, we will be grateful. We are sorry to trouble you, but please read through the questionnaire carefully and mark your responses appropriately. We will be returning in two or three days to collect the questionnaire. Please give this your kind consideration.

A. We want to become your good friends.

1. How long have you lived in this community?

\_\_\_\_\_ years

2. How many in your family are in each of the following age brackets?

Pre-school _____	High school _____	30's _____	60's _____
Elem. school _____	College _____	40's _____	70's _____
Middle school _____	20's _____	50's _____	80's plus _____

3. What newspapers does your family take? \_\_\_\_\_

B. Since we are missionaries, we are interested in knowing about your religion. (From here on, please give separate responses as husband and wife.)

Husband      Wife

4. Concerning religion:

I have a deep interest

I have some interest

I have no interest

5. My religion is \_\_\_\_\_ kyo \_\_\_\_\_ ha \_\_\_\_\_ kyo \_\_\_\_\_ ha

6. Concerning Christian churches:

I would like to visit a church sometime

I have never attended even once

I have attended a few times

I have attended many times

I used to attend often, but do not at present

I attend the following church regularly: \_\_\_\_\_

C. We would like to study the Bible with you.

7. Concerning the Bible:

I have one, and read it often

I have one, but seldom read it

I have read it a little, but don't own one

8. Concerning the contents of the Bible:

I have a deep interest

I have some interest

I have no interest

I have no knowledge

9. If you have an interest, where can we study the Bible together? (Indicate as many responses as are appropriate)

In my own home

In some other home in my neighborhood

In church

D. We want to be helpful to you.

10. I think an American (Norwegian, etc.) can serve our community in these ways:

By teaching English conversation

By teaching American (Norwegian) cooking

By introducing us to American (Norwegian)

customs and ways of thinking

Other (please be specific) \_\_\_\_\_

11. If you don't mind, please fill in the following as well.

Occupation:      Husband ( \_\_\_\_\_ )      Wife ( \_\_\_\_\_ )

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your cooperation!

(Name of your church)

(Your name)

(Your telephone number)



# Radio Monitor Survey

## General Approach

A door-to-door visitation, using the PBA Hatori radio tapes. After an explanation of the monitor purpose, a three minute tape is played at the door. Reactions are received, the radio broadcast is promoted, and for those who are interested, the tapelending library service is explained.

## Reasons for this Approach

1. In our area the Jehovah Witnesses are quite active, and so we wanted a way to immediately distinguish us from them.

2. With intercom systems nowadays it is possible to visit for several hours without even seeing a face.

3. Being a radio monitor allows several seconds of relationship before religion begins to be mentioned.

4. The tapelending program as the follow-up provides a natural weekly with those interested.

## Materials Needed

1. A light-weight cassette tape recorder

2. An easy-to-understand three minute sermon selected from the PBA

Hatori radio tapes. You will also want to have ready the whole series of tapes for those asking for the tape service.

3. A sufficient number of PBA Dayori papers to give to those interested.

4. Probably name-tags are helpful for those visiting.

5. A clip board and a method for recording the visited areas and the responses.

## The Specific Approach at the door

"We are radio monitors for a program on ————— (Give the name of the local station that carries the PBA Hatori broadcast). Today we have a short 3 minute radio tape we would like for you to listen to and give your reactions." At this point, if talking over the intercom, the conversation will end with a reason for not listening, or the person will come out to the door.

The explanation continues: "The radio broadcast is produced by Pacific Broadcasting Co. and has been on the air for a number of years. Rev. Akira Hatori is the speaker. He shares very simply how the Bible relates to our daily lives." It is important to mention before the tape is

played, that it is about the Bible, or is a Christian tape, lest the person thinks you have tricked him. Assure the person that you can play the tape at the front door, or if he offers you to come into the *genkan*, that is even better. Play the tape without comment, as you pray silently for the listener. After the tape is ended, ask him for comments. Then explain the time of the broadcast, giving him the PBA paper. At this point many will say that the broadcast time is too early, and then you can explain that your church has a tape library, and that you would be delighted to bring a tape once a week for him to listen to. (This is probably the first time that the church name should be mentioned.)

## Results of the Program

We have not systematically used this program, though we have used it for two years in connection with a spring evangelistic outreach. We found that 10% of those at home will listen to the tape at the door. Both Japanese and missionaries had the same percentage. We have had three people who have listened to the total tape series.

Don Wright

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# “Seisho O Yomu Kai”

*Seisho O Yomu Kai* is an organization which is publishing guides to be used for small group discussion-type Bible studies. At present the guides are translations of the Neighborhood Bible Studies (co-authored by Kunz and Schell, published by Tyn-dale).

*Seisho O Yomu Kai* guides use the inductive (investigative) method in studying the Bible, which puts the emphasis on what the Word says rather than on what the teacher says it says. The guides are questions only. The answers are not in the back of the book or in the teacher's head, but in the passage itself which is being studied. The questions lead the reader first to see what is written (observation), then to understand what it means (interpretation), and finally to apply it personally (application).

Because we remember about 90% of what we express verbally and only 10% of what we hear, learning, belonging and growing are increased as individuals participate in the discussion study. The group should be small enough so that each one feels free to take part. In a group of from four to eight (or up to ten for couples' groups), people can express themselves in an atmosphere of acceptance. As each person shares, the group becomes a safe place, a loving fellowship. When people share, they care.

When a group grows to more than ten members, the more talkative ones gradually tend to do most of the discussing, while less talkative people take little or no part. Also, in a larger group there is a lesser degree of commitment to the group so that attendance is more irregular and preparation less thorough.

Ideally the groups meet in the homes of the members. Each person (including non-Christians) takes turns being the “question asker.” This entails no teaching at all, just reading the guide's questions to the group, who then share their findings. Rotating the role of “question asker” assures that the group becomes “our group,” not “Mr. (or Mrs.) Tanaka's group.” A sense of belonging grows in proportion to each individual's involvement in and commitment to the group.

The “question asker” is not to be confused with the spiritual leaders of the group. Having everyone share in leading the discussions sets the Christians free to *listen* to everyone in the group in a way that is not possible when leading the discussion. Then they can minister to them individually with sensitivity.

*Seisho O Yomu Kai* places a tool in the hands of any believer, so that he can introduce his neighbors or family to the Bible and to his Savior. Studying with his friends as a co-investigator, he sees the Word itself convince them of its truth and draw them to the Living God. In such outreach groups at least half the members should be non-Christians. If they are in the majority, they do not feel threatened, and they express their doubts and questions more freely. As they are in regular contact with believers who care for them, they become receptive toward the Lord and sometimes come to a confession of faith even during the study time.

The church that encourages small group Bible studies grows in two ways. Participating church members grow in knowledge and become more mature Christians, and the church grows in numbers as new people through the outreach Bible studies. Also, since cults usually use the topical approach, having experience in the inductive method of study will help safeguard the Bible student from false interpretation.

Many churches are using the guides within their regular church meetings, such as young people's or ladies' meetings, or in prayer meeting. One church which averages 45 at reihai has 22 coming to prayer meeting. At prayer meeting they divide into small groups for 45 minutes of Bible study using SYK guides. Another church is having SYK Bible studies twice a month for the ladies' meeting. For those they meet in seven homes. The other two weeks each month they meet in the church for prayer and a traditional meeting. The home meetings provide an easy way for new people to join a group.

Some examples of how God has used this Bible study method:



## *For small group discussion studies*

Mrs. M, a housewife: As I was studying Mark in a small group, I trusted Christ as my Savior. At the time I was having the usual stresses of living with my mother-in-law. I asked her if she would like to study with me, and she was willing. So we had the great joy of leading her to the Lord. Now she is in a Bible study group and a member of our church.

Mrs. I, a housewife: I, too, found the Lord in an SYK Bible study group. In time I wanted to share what I had found to be a whole new life. Since my first son was a thalidomide baby born without ears, I was in contact with many mothers of deaf children. So I started having this kind of Bible studies with them, and many of them in turn have found the Lord.

One men's group in Mie Ken is so enthusiastic about this kind of Bible study that they meet after work, at 9:30 p.m.

Another men's group in Tokyo, which meets Saturday evenings, recently saw one seeker come to saving faith. He later said that one major help had been the Christmas Bible study there, through which he came to understand who Jesus Christ is.

SYK staff members (both Japanese and missionary) are available for *Setsumei Kai* to help Christians start outreach groups. The SYK study guides are available at Bible book stores or direct from SYK at P.O. Box 58, Machida Shi, Tokyo 194. Tel.: (0427) 23-9757 or 26-0424. For more information, contact Lorraine Fleischman or Virginia Bowen at the above address.

Phyllis Jensen

# “Tonarigumi”

## Working Through the Tonarigumi

**Cultural Background:** Historically, Japanese communities were always divided into *tonarigumi* (ten to twenty homes in a block association). One family head was the *kumicho* (head of the block). All functions of the community operated through these *tonarigumi*.

Today these divisions are no longer official, but because of tradition many are continuing to function at least in part. Depending on the area the observance of the old customs will vary. Traditionally these *tonarigumi* met once a month. The city office sends information and business items to these *kumichos*. They in turn handle this business at the local level. A *kairanban* (bulletin of information) is sent to each home in the *tonarigumi* via the *kumicho*. One home carries the *kairanban* to the next home in line. It is a very systematic, quick, and simple way of keeping in touch with every home in town.

In modern Japan the new people into especially *danchi* (high rise apartment areas) tend to ignore this traditional organization of the community. Some older communities do not enroll newcomers into their *tonarigumi* unless by special request. This is especially true when many small apartments or rooms are rented out. In this case the landlord takes the responsibility to notify his renters of special announcements or business that affects them also. Those type of “excluded” neighbors hardly enter into the social activities of the community. With this status comes very little obligation but also very little

inclusion. Hardly any influence is felt either way between these neighbors.

## Application:

After moving into their house, the missionaries should go through their landlord to the *kumicho* for their official *aisatsu* (greeting). Here they should make arrangements to *aisatsu* all the homes in their *tonarigumi*. They will together decide when the *kumicho* or landlord can take them to all these homes. These should be the second or third day after moving. At this first *aisatsu* to the *kumicho* inquiries could be made about officially joining the *tonarigumi*.

The missionaries will prepare some kind of a present of homemade baking, towels, or perhaps specially prepared postcards and their *meishi* (calling card) to give to each home. Since they are Christians and are announcing their purpose for coming there, they should give them an attractive, appropriately selected tract with the gift.

If the move is made near Christmas or near some type of a special event or occasion, the missionaries could have a wonderful opportunity to have a party or open house. Children through junior high school from the *tonarigumi* could come from say 6:30 till 7:15 p.m. for games, goodies, and some kind of Bible time. Very careful notice should be taken who the children are and from what home. Then they could be sent home to invite the adults and young people to come.

The same type of program could be planned for 7:30 with the adults with a time to just talk informally to get acquainted. After this they should be sure to try to remember their names when they meet them on the street or around their homes.

These suggestions are deviating from Japanese custom, but missionaries are different and they are expected to do things differently. Through this the ice may be broken for future contacts. The neighbors are very anxious to enter the missionary's home anyway and so it will be an opportunity to get acquainted quickly. Also this makes it very clear why the foreigner has come.

The missionaries should enter into *tonarigumi* activities as much as is possible or advisable. The first months will bring opportunities for contacts that will never be there again.

At first the missionaries need to contact many different men—city office, police, electrician, gas man, water department, newspaper office, garage, etc. in order to set up housekeeping. Americans are tempted to go scouting around individually and ignore the patterns and introductions that a Japanese would usually follow. Yield not to temptation! Needs must not be (overcome) by the American spirit of doing things right now! They must have the *kumicho*, landlord or other new neighbor friends introduce them to someone. They must always ask! This is not an intrusion, but a respectful way to do it. This especially holds true for single woman missionaries. During the next years they will gain by having been introduced like this. Services will be much better, too! They must ask what stores to shop in. They must do everything through a middle man.

These are just some ways that the missionary can work through the *tonarigumi*. It is the best way to get off on the right foot in a new area.

Martha Classen  
(Unpublished paper for Trinity Evangelical Divinity School)

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# Honoring Ancestors in Japan

DONALD McGAVRAN

Donald McGavran, who was in Japan in 1983 to deliver a series of lectures on Church Growth, touches on a sensitive subject and difficult problem. He himself states, "I do not know the answer." McGavran, however, boldly explores several possible solutions which may stimulate further discussion and study.

In this lecture, we consider a common Japanese conviction, which encourages ONE BY ONE and heavily restricts GROUP BY GROUP ingathering. This conviction is that "becoming a Christian" is an anti-family activity. A key question for all Christians is how to disarm this conviction.

In any nation or society, when "becoming a Christian" is at least to some degree *perceived* to be anti-family, the spread of the Gospel is hindered. It remains hindered till the perception is changed.

In other parts of the world, the God-commanded growth of the Church is delayed or even stopped when "becoming a Christian" is perceived as "leaving us and joining them." The vital question for Christians is: How can we encourage a strong Christward movement *within* each ethnos? How can we make it possible for a person to become a Christian while remaining a part of his family and community?

Let me illustrate this principle from three *other* lands. Then we shall consider it in Japan. In each land, I shall describe both the problem and its hotly debated solution.

## A LOOK AT MUSLIM LANDS

First, look at Muslim lands—the evangelization of Muslim. Because of the Crusades, where for hundreds of years Christians were killing Muslims and Muslims were killing Christians, Muslims consider becoming Christian a horrible thing to do. It is joining the enemy. It is disobeying the

Koran. It is anti-national. It is traitorous. It is disgraceful. Christians eat pork. Christians do not circumcise their boy babies. Christians do not worship on Fridays, nor pray five times a day. So strong is this feeling toward "becoming a Christian" that many converts to Christianity have been killed by their own infuriated families.

Surprisingly, it is also true that when Muslims become atheists, agnostics, or Marxists, they continue on in their families. They are not killed for doing that. Furthermore millions of Muslims regard with great veneration some *Pir*, or dead Muslim Holy Man. They worship this man more than they worship Allah.

Christians, seeking to obey Christ's command to disciple all the peoples of the earth, have recently attacked this problem boldly. They have tried to work out a way in which Muslims could become followers of Jesus Christ, while being perceived by fellow Muslims as continuing members of "our community, our family."

This, of course, is similar to what happened in the first Pentecostal expansion of the Church. All the early Christians were Jews. They continued to act as Jews, go to the temple, ban pork and circumcise their boy babies. They worshipped God on the Sabbath, Saturday, not Sunday. They kept the Jewish feasts. But they also were thoroughly committed followers of the Risen and Reigning King—Jesus, the Messiah. Is it possible to repeat this Christian history in regard to Muslims who become followers of Christ?

Let me now place before you a hotly debated solution to the Muslim problem. I do so to suggest that the problem in Japan may be similarly approached.

The hotly debated solution may be described as follows. Announce that since the word, Muslim, means "Submitted to God" and all Christians are submitted to God, followers of Christ can therefore be called Muslims. Christians are those submitted ones who worship Him whom the Koran calls *Ruh-i-Allah*, THE SPIRIT OF GOD, and who follow all Muslim customs not forbidden by the Bible. They do not eat pork. They worship God on Friday. They pray five times a day. They circumcise their boy babies.

Becoming a follower of Jesus does not involve joining a congregation of Europeans or some racially different people. Just as many Muslims today belong to sects whose founder is some long dead *Pir* or Saint, just so followers of Jesus, THE SPIRIT OF ALLAH, will do everything which Jesus in the Bible tells them to do.

While they are true obedient followers of Christ, they will in all *cultural* matters look like, act like, and live like Muslims. Thus they will form groups of believing, obedient followers of Jesus, *within the Muslim Community*. They will not ask Muslims to become "Christians." Heaven forbid. But they will invite them **WHILE REMAINING CULTURALLY MUSLIMS** to become followers of the Saviour and Judge of all men.

The debatable aspects of this "solution" are easily seen. It would encourage men and women to become sincere followers of Christ **WITHIN THE MUSLIM COMMUNITY**. It is the **WITHIN**

aspect of the solution that critics attack. How can a sincere follower of Christ belong to a community which holds that the only true authoritative revelation of God is the Koran; and that the Bible is a corrupt version of God's Word? Is it possible, critics ask, for a man to be regarded as a Muslim, when he follows merely the cultural customs of Muslims, while denying the essential religious convictions? Islam believes that a sacrifice for sin was neither necessary nor performed, and that Jesus never died and never rose again from the dead.

To all critics, advocates of the "solution" reply:

"Very well, you tell us how we can encourage multitudes, while living **WITHIN ISLAMIC COMMUNITIES** to become true disciples of Christ."

### A LOOK AT INDIA

The second illustration comes from the great nation of India. There today we find about 18 million Christians and 600 million Hindus. Ninety percent of the Christians have come from the low castes—the *Ettas*. Consequently while Christians hold and teach that there is no caste, that in Christ we are all one, Hindus perceive Christians as a low caste group—in fact as a new low caste. Christian boys and girls, enrolling in school, will enter their caste as "Christian."

When respectable caste Hindus hear the Gospel and are attracted by Christ, they think of "becoming Christian" as "leaving our caste and becoming a low caste person." When one of them does decide to become a Christian and is baptized, his family says to him,

"You have ruined your caste. You have made another father. Your own father was not good enough for you. You went and made another father! You have disgraced our family. You are no longer one of us. You have become one of them. We shall not allow you to eat with us, drink with us, intermarry with us, or have any intimate relationship with us." The inevitable result is that Christian movements **WITHIN** the respectable castes do not occur.

Let me now describe two hotly debated solutions to this problem.

A Lutheran missionary suggests that since one does not "become a Christian" till he is baptized, we encourage respectable caste Hindus to believe on Jesus Christ, obey Him as Lord, accept the Bible only as God's Word, and live a Christhonoring life; **BUT** not be baptized. Attend existing churches, or form congregations of the unbaptized, but avoid being called "a Christian." Be known as a "Hindu for Jesus" or a "Follower of the Jesus Way." The word "Christian" in India has come to mean a low caste community which eats beef, and is far outside the Hindu community.

The Lutheran suggestion attempts to get multitudes of genuine believers living inside respectable caste communities—just as Marxists and Communists do. This solution is attacked by Christian leaders. It is easy to see why. It counsels men to disobey the clear command to be baptized; and it permits followers of Christ to maintain many social distinctions which war against full Christian brotherhood.



Another hotly debated solution is one which I have put forward. I suggest that evangelization be done along caste lines. Since these Indian social distinctions are iron clad, let us encourage the formation of congregations of respectable caste people. They will meet in their own sections of the town, city or village. They will be led by elders, deacons, and ministers of their own. They will not, to be sure, refuse entry to their places of worship to Christians of what Hindus consider lower castes; but in general their congregation will be composed of respectable caste

people. As soon as this becomes common, I say, we shall find congregations forming **WITHIN MANY CASTES**. Christian movements will occur **WITHIN THE CASTES**.

This "solution" also is hotly attacked. Critics say that it has abandoned brotherhood. It no longer believes that in Christ we are all one. It embraces the racist caste system. It is entirely contrary to Christ's prayer "that they may all be one."

In defense, I point out that when any group of believers in the Lord Jesus regard the Bible only as the Word of God, and lay aside all other religious books, they will come to believe that all men are brothers—since all have a common father, Adam. They will come to believe that all men are equally sinners and are equally saved by grace. Thus, even though for a while social distinctions may continue, the *theological* foundations of caste have been destroyed. Since they now accept *the Bible only* as God's Word, they will be continually impelled toward fuller and fuller brotherhood. At the same time, by staying within their own social group and forming congregations there, they will open the door to salvation to many of their comrades.

If every time a person becomes a Christian, he shuts the door of salvation to the rest of his family, the growth of the Church will be necessarily slow. If, however, when he becomes a Christian he makes every effort to keep the door to salvation open to the rest of his family and intimates, then both individuals and groups of his own folk will join him and become Christ's followers.

### A LOOK AT THAILAND

A third example is taken from a Buddhist country. In Thailand the growth of the Church has been very slow. It is generally held that a patriotic Thai must be Buddhist. Buddhism is the Thai religion. It is the Thai way of life. One of its prominent features is that every young man is wearing a yellow robe, begging his food from door to door, living at a monastery, and listening to

lectures on the Buddhist Faith. To become a Christian is held to be unpatriotic, and to follow a foreign, not a Thai, way of life.

Christian young men do not for three months put on the yellow robe, live at a monastery, and beg their food from door to door. As a result, Christians are by most Thais considered unpatriotic. Christians are "them", not "us". To become a Christian is to leave the family, leave the Thai way of life, and follow foreign customs. Consequently when here and there a Thai citizen becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, is baptized and lives as a Christian, he finds that he has put a great distance between himself and his family, his relatives, and the general community. Consequently to this day no streams of Thai converts are flowing into the Church in Thailand. The growth of the Church continues, but slowly as ONE BY ONE drip in. If Christ's command is to be carried out in Thailand, we must find some way to encourage men and women there to become obedient followers of the Lord Jesus while being perceived by their relatives and comrades as thoroughly Thai, as still *us*. The great goal is to get multitudes of men and women WITHIN THAI SOCIETY living as ardent followers of the Saviour. How to achieve that goal is the problem.

Recently a hotly debated "solution" to this problem has been set forth by the Roman Catholics. There is nothing in the Bible, they say, which forbids putting on a yellow robe, begging food from door to door, living at a monastery for three months and listening to lectures on the Buddhist way of life. Consequently, Roman Catholics say, let our young men on reaching the age of eighteen, put on yellow robes, go to monasteries for three months like all other Thai young men, beg their food from door to door and listen to Buddhist lectures.

Protestants speak hotly against this proposal. They claim it is deceptive. It subjects Christian youth to all kinds of temptations. I need not elaborate on Protestant reactions to the idea. They will be your reactions and mine. The question, however, must be asked, would such a procedure allow people in Thai society to become Christian, while remaining thoroughly Thai? If all young Christians in Thailand were to do this,

would it allow Christianity to flow WITHIN THE NORMAL THAI GROUPINGS--just as Secularism now does? Would it open the door to GROUP BY GROUP following of the Saviour? Would it induce rapid church growth?

### A LOOK AT JAPAN

Now let us look at Japan. What holds back a series of powerful movements to Christ in the many natural groupings of Japanese society? Why do converts to Christian Faith come mostly ONE BY ONE? Why does "becoming a Christian" seem to so many an anti-family act?

We must not overstate the case. Christians in Japan are thoroughly Japanese. They look like, talk like, dress like and live like Japanese. Many Christians have become eminent citizens of Japan, and have served the nation well.

Why then the continued ONE BY ONE accession? Why the slow growth? Why has Secularism enrolled millions while Christianity has enrolled thousands?



Several true answers can be given to these questions. Of these answers we shall consider only one. It is most influential. By those who worship their ancestors, following Christ is held to be an un-Japanese act and destructive of family unity. Each Japanese family worships its ancestors. Christians do not. When you do not worship your ancestors you destroy your family. Something like this is a common perception.

Essential to correct understanding of the contemporary situation is to remember that Japan, like the developed nations of Europe and America, has become heavily secular. Secularists believe that the real causes for all action are controllable forces, *not* spirits, *not* gods. If you are blind from cataracts, don't pray to the gods to cure you. Go to a doctor who will

take the cataract out. If you want your family to prosper, do *not* pray to non-existent ancestral spirits. Instead, work hard, educate your children well, be honest and friendly, and be loyal to your company. In short, while ancestor worship is still widely practiced in Japan, it has by secular multitudes ceased to be really *believed*. Acts of ancestor worship (in the minds of many) come to be more ancestor *honor* than ancestor *worship*.

Equally truly, contemporary man, highly mobile, often living far from his ancestral land and village, is deeply interested in his ancestors. Genealogies are carefully written up and published. Men visit the places where their ancestors lived. Men write down what parents and grandparents have told them about their ancestors. In America, it is increasingly common for a person to visit an old cemetery, find his great grandfather's badly worn gravestone on which the inscription is barely legible, and erect a new granite stone, which will be legible for hundreds of years. *Honoring* one's ancestors is common practice among Secularists, Buddhists, Christians, Atheists, Hindus, and Muslims.

In this modern world (where every passing year makes such action more likely) every segment of society, every natural grouping, every *ethnos* wants all its members to remain *its* members. Each family consciously or unconsciously declares, "This family must remain this family. The highest duty of every member is to be loyal to this family."

Ancestor worship helps the family to make that declaration. The god shelf, the *butsudan*, the careful record of each past generation, occupying a place of honor and being asked for direction and guidance, *greatly emphasizes the consciousness of family*.

"In this family are all those who daily recognize this group of ancestors. Those who bow daily before these ancestors, honoring them, asking their advice and guidance, are members of *this* family. Such daily acts bind us together into one group. We are the only people who will keep alive the memory of these well-loved ancestors. But for us and our daily bowing before them, they would soon be forgotten. We wish to prevent any such dishonoring of our grandparents and great grandparents. All real members of

our family will thus daily honor their father and mother, their grandfather and grandmother, and all other ancestors."

Some such intense family feeling is a common Japanese characteristic. "Those who bow before our ancestors are *us*. All those who do not bow are *not us*. Since those who become Christian will not bow before their ancestors, we sadly conclude that they have *left our family*."

Remember, please, the crucial question I asked at the beginning of this lecture. It was this: How can we encourage a strong Christward movement **WITHIN EACH FAMILY, WITHIN EACH ETHNOS**? How can we encourage such movements when everyone who follows Christ is perceived to *leave his family*? This is the problem. This is an obstacle which stops movements to Christian Faith. What can we do about it? Can we remove the obstacle?

On the favorable side are the unquestioned facts that God commands Christians to honor father and mother, and that Old and New Testaments record carefully genealogies running back many generations. Biblical religion truly honors and remembers ancestors. We must not confuse modern fragmented secular life (which does *not* remember or honor ancestors) with biblical religion. We also recall that millions in Japan, like millions in America, are thoroughly secular. They may bow before the *butsudan*, but they do not really believe that the spirits of the dead are there to see them bow, smell the incense, and hear their requests. To secular Japanese, bowing is merely a cultural ritual. It is a respectful nod in the direction of the ancestors.

Could Christians similarly bow before the names of the ancestors? American Christians lay a wreath of flowers on the grave stones of grandparents! Or, could Christians take the radical step proposed in China by Matteo Ricci in the seventeenth century? On the front of Chinese ancestral tablets he had inscribed **GOD THE FATHER, GOD THE SON AND GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT**. Then he said,

"When Chinese Christians bow before ancestral tablets, they are clearly worshipping the Trinity, not the spirits of the ancestors. By bowing before the names of the

ancestors (written on wooden slabs hidden in the back of the tablet) they do, however, remain **WITHIN THE FAMILY**, while being ardently Christian."

On the unfavorable side, as we try to work out solutions to this difficult problem, we must remember that the Bible from the beginning to end is firmly opposed to any worship of gods, spirits, men or idols. God, the Father Almighty alone is to be worshipped. All through the thousand years of Jewish history before Christ, God frowned on any worship of the spirits or gods, even when it was carried on together with the worship of God in Jerusalem. God alone is to be worshipped. Him **ONLY** shall you serve.



We remember that the early Christians, who could easily have dropped a pinch of incense "to honor Caesar," refused to do so. The Christian in his heart could have said,

"This is a political action. I am simply honoring my king, which the Bible tells me to do. Since it is the culturally accepted thing to do, I do it; but I am not in any sense worshipping the Emperor."

But Christians did *not* say this. They knew that all observers would perceive them as worshipping the Emperor. Consequently Christians cheerfully went to the stake, or were thrown to the lions in the Colosseum.

Any honoring of the ancestors, which may be *perceived by others* as *worship* of ancestral spirits faces this danger. The problem is a difficult one.

It is made more difficult by the fact that liberal Christians in Japan have openly advocated adjusting to Shinto/Buddhistic religion in ways clearly prohibited by the Bible. D.C. Holt in his 1943 book, **MODERN JAPAN AND SHINTO NATIONALISM**, says:

A liberal group (of Christian apologists) "adjusts . . . conflicting absolutes by accepting outright the dogma that the emperor is God . . . They teach that the Godhead has four persons: the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, and the Japanese emperor . . ."

Many other liberals have recommended that Christians bow at the *butsudan* and offer incense there. The Christian is not worshipping, these liberals declare. He is simply following an Old Japanese custom.

Because of these obviously wrong answers to the cultural problem we are facing, many conservative Christians have shut out from their minds any attempt to discover ways by which Japanese can become Christians *while remaining more a part of their families than non-Christians*. In this lecture I am suggesting that, avoiding the biblically wrong answers, Bible believing Christians *can by honoring the ancestors* cause the Christian Faith to flow freely **WITHIN THE FAMILY**.

#### NO EASY ANSWER

To sum up: we face a difficult problem. I do not know the answer. In this lecture I am not presenting you with my solution. I am strongly urging that you see the problem and find biblical and effective ways through the difficulty.

It seems to me highly likely that until we Christians find ways to follow Christ while remaining firmly within the family, the growth of the Church in Japan will be slow. This is so clear and fits in so well with the progress of Christianity in other parts of the world that it merits careful study by evangelical leaders in this great nation.

Looking at the problem from the outside, and not knowing the Japanese scene intimately, I tender the following suggestions to stimulate your thinking and exploring along these lines.

Would it be possible to work out a Christian *daily* ritual which would remember, honor, and exalt the ancestors *more than* the Buddhist bowing before the *butsudan* does? The Christian ritual would take more time. It would be more costly. Following it the Christian would say,

"I, Christ's follower, in obedience to God's command to honor your father and your mother as the Lord your God has commanded you (Deut. 5:16) gladly spend more time and more money honoring my ancestors."

Would it be possible, without worshipping the ancestors, to honor them openly and regularly? Could Christians know much more about their ancestors than non-Christians? Should every Christian family have a printed book telling of the good and great deeds of ancestors as far back as records go, and also of traditions of life before the records? And should reading selections from this book be part of the daily round of duties?

Any such action is thoroughly biblical. Matthew and Luke had no difficulty in getting the genealogical records of the ancestors of our Lord. They thought these sufficiently important to give them places of prominence in the Gospels. All through the Old Testament, the names of the fathers and often the mothers of noted men are carefully recorded. King David is often spoken of as "the son of Jesse."

In addition, from a purely human point of view, much is to be gained by preserving a record of the family. It gives to every member a sense of being one of a notable company. Family identity is important.

Instead of the names of the ancestors being written on wooden slabs (Thai) inserted in the back of the ancestral tablet where they are seldom seen, should not Christians write the names on a large board to be hung in a prominent place near the doorway of the house? So, whenever members of the family enter or leave the house, they pass before their honored ancestors' names.

A Japanese minister I met many years ago told me that he could not win his oldest brother who said, "If I become a Christian, all memory of our honored ancestors will perish." Had that brother seen that the Christian members of his family remembered their ancestors *better* and honored them *more*, and spent *more time* honoring and remembering them than he himself did, would he have become a Christian?

I do not expect that all over Japan Christians will suddenly start to spend more time and money honoring their ancestors than Buddhists do. I do hope however that here and

there a pastor, doing everything he can to help the church grow, and deeply convinced that Christian banning of ancestor worship is part of the reason for this slow growth, *will undertake an experiment*. He will persuade his members to build *honoring of their ancestors into their daily routine*. He will help them make beautiful plaques with the names of ancestors on them to be hung near the door of the home. He will teach suitable and thoroughly Christian prayers thanking God for "our family" to be offered as a small part of family devotions. He will then evangelize vigorously, calling attention to the fact that becoming Christian *builds family loyalty more effectively than anything else now being done in Japan*. Some such planned experiment would show us the degree to which conscious adaptation to this cultural trait of honoring our ancestors was indeed feasible, Christian, and did in fact help churches grow.



A church in the Hawaiian islands, when I visited forty years ago, had tablets covered with ancestral names hanging on its front wall. The Christian Japanese there were saying to their non-Christian relatives, "We remember and honor our ancestors, and give their names places of great prominence." This was good, but something more intimate, more meaningful and more costly than hanging a list of family names in the church is required. The Hawaiian church custom should not be substituted for a daily honoring of the ancestors; but it could be regarded as an additional Christian act emphasizing that those who become Christian still regard themselves as WITHIN THE FAMILY.

Another way of honoring our ancestors is for Christians to write up a brief history of each family; and for it to be divided into thirty sections, one for each day of the month. Then at family prayers, in addition to the Bible being read, a section of the family history would be read; and in the family prayer, God would be thanked for the whole family, its achievements, and progress, and asked to guide it in the future.

Along this line we recall the New Testament passages which tell us that Christians were baptized for the dead. Presumably they were baptized for members of their families who had not had the opportunity of confessing Christ and being baptized into eternal life. The practice is mentioned but is neither commended nor denounced. In the years which followed, the Church actively opposed the practice. I mention it merely to point out that concern with the family--even those who had not become Christian--was a part of the early propagation of the Gospel. We must proclaim that belief in Jesus Christ and incorporation in His Body is necessary for salvation. We must also make sure that "becoming a Christian" is perceived by the rest of the family as a pro-family act.

Greatly multiplied efforts to win members of our families to Christ will help our non-Christian relatives see that becoming a Christian far from being an anti-family act, makes the Christian a better family member. The Christian son becomes a better son, the daughter a more loving daughter. The husband becomes a better husband and the wife a better wife. Constant prayer for those of our dear ones who have yet-to-believe proves us loving members of our families. Constant attempts to do for them more than we would have done had we not become Christians, will help them see us as truly their own people. Just as men and women can become Secularists, Marxists, and Soka Gakkai and remain *within the family*, so they can become Christians while remaining *within the family*.

The goal is clear. Our intent should be so to proclaim the Gospel that in every family in Japan a section, and if possible the whole family, should *by joint action*, decide to follow Christ.

## A CALL TO GROUP ACTION

I close this series of lectures on Church Growth in Japan, calling attention once more to the desirability of group action in accepting Christ. As long as "becoming a Christian" is seen as the action taken by one member of a family all by himself, so long will the conviction be strengthened that "becoming a Christian" is not a family affair. In *this* lecture I have been suggesting that when (because of individual action) such a conviction has grown strong, we may help counter it, by well-planned, costly, and determined *honoring of the ancestors*. I also point out that were it to be clear that joint action in becoming Christian leads to more honor and respect for the ancestors, to their names being better known and more often remembered, *then* group action by the entire family would become more possible in most sections of the population of this great nation.

If groups of families contemplating following Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour were assured that such action would *enhance the honor paid to their ancestors*, and were the new ways of honoring ancestors to be taught to would-be Christians, group action would become much more likely.

As the ONE-BY-ONE OUT OF THE FAMILY INTO THE CHURCH is supplemented on a wide scale by GROUP-BY-GROUP WITHIN THE FAMILY INTO THE CHURCH, Churches in Japan are likely to multiply. Then the Christian Faith will become far more influential in Japan; and far more a cause of national blessing.

*The author and editor welcome your comments.*

*Ed.*

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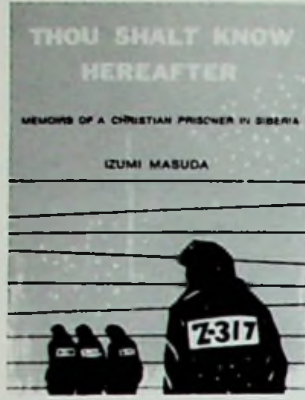
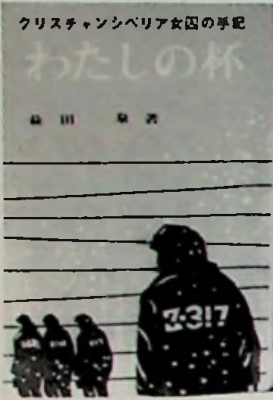
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