

Volume 37, Number 4, 1987/1988

# JAPAN HARVEST

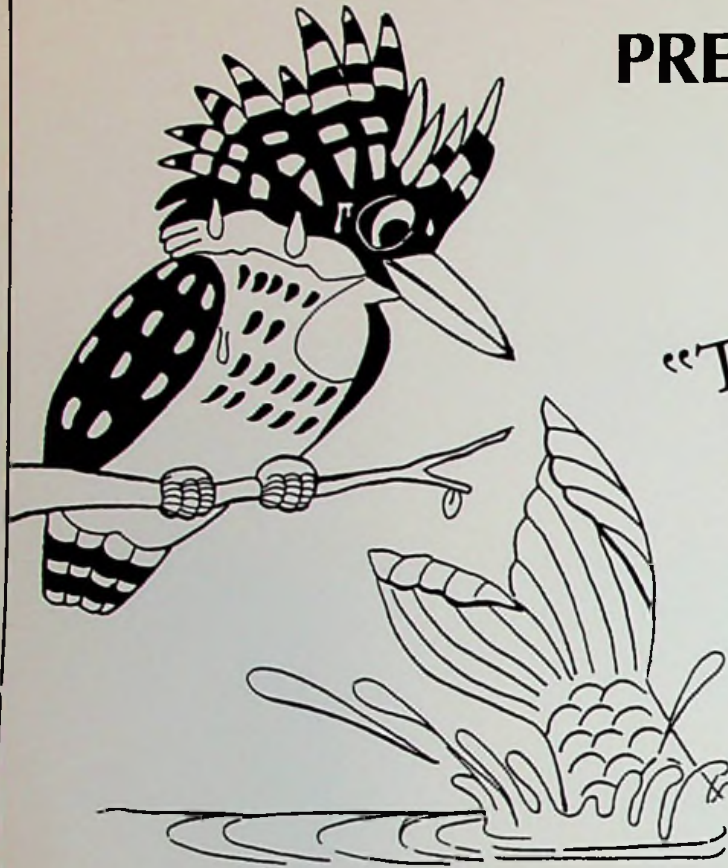
The Magazine for Today's Japan Missionary

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own understanding. In all  
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PROVERBS 3: 5-6

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# JAPAN HARVEST

The Magazine For Today's Japan Missionary

Volume 37, Number 4, 1987/1988

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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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## *JEMA President's Page*

The JEMA Plenary Session, February 8 and 9, was a time of tremendous challenge. I haven't missed one session since 1976, and believe that this year's was one of the best. Such blessing must be shared and an effort has been made to include highlights in this and the next issue of Japan Harvest. Having been re-elected president for another two-year term, I look forward to serving you through JEMA. My concern these past two years has been to keep JEMA financially stable, to maintain strong ties with JEA and through it with our Japanese church leaders, to unite JEMA through a bond of prayer and fellowship and to integrate the younger generation of missionaries into JEMA's functions. It is a large agenda and I thank God for the excellent cooperation the Executive Committee is providing. I want to take this opportunity to express my sincere appreciation.

You may have heard already that the Calvin Cummings, serving in Sendai with the Orthodox Presbyterian Church, on the 15th of February lost all their earthly possessions in a fire that gutted their home. Brother Cummings sustained second degree burns on his hands and face, but has assured me over the phone that he can use his hands again. The David Kennedy family for several weeks took in the Cummings until housing could be found. In the meanwhile, construction has begun with the help of volunteers and a Christian building firm from Osaka. The house was insured and personal effects also were covered about 50%. As to assistance, Brother Cummings especially mentioned the loss of his personal library as well as the books of his children, aged two, four, seven, ten, twelve and fourteen (I think I listed them all). Can you help?

From Chile has come word that M.V. Logos, on 4th January, ran aground and was abandoned by the 141 on board. In addition to the ship there is the loss of its cargo — \$700,000 worth of books. The M.V. Logos called on Japan in 1978 and was the cover story of the Japan Harvest Magazine (Vol. 28, Number 2). A committee within Japan has been formed to raise funds, first of all to assist the crew and perhaps to replace the ship. Contact Peter Horne for further details.

I will be in Indonesia and Singapore, March 26 through April 5 as part of the Tokyo Christian College Southeast Asia visitation team. Pray for the two weeks of interaction with many Christian colleges, seminaries and missionary training centers.

Siegfried Buss



## FROM FEAR TO FAITH

STEPHEN FRIESEN

*The second day of the 1988 JEMA Plenary Session was opened with the devotional that follows below. Stephen and family have returned to the States for furlough. Let us pray for the Friesens and the church planting effort they have begun in Yokohama.*

Last fall, I performed the first funeral of my nine years in Japan. It was a tremendously pressured and stretching experience, yet we believe that God worked in our community because of the testimony of the faith in Christ of our neighbor who found the Lord before she died of cancer.

Today is my first time to share with the JEMA family, and I have felt, as with the funeral, the pressure of the privilege, and the stretching of my faith. Yet I trust that God will use this occasion to do a small part of His great work.

JEMA is changing gears from first to second-generation, that is, and we've heard it said that it's time for the younger ones to come forward, and maybe that's why I've been asked to share. But I'm still looking up to you, veteran missionaries, and feeling a need to hear from you before you depart. There's a depth of spirit, character, faith and wisdom that Christ has produced over the years. You have been through the struggles that we younger ones are going through. We are learning how to hang on to God in the middle of financial, family, marital, language, health and ministry, challenges and problems.

When I think about how greatly many of you have been used, and how far I still need to go, I take courage from God's ability to change His servants and to lead them in faith. I'd like to share today from the very personal book of Habakkuk, a

servant of God whom God changed from a worrier to worshipper, from one who was perplexed with circumstances to one who was at peace with God.

Habakkuk had some problems that missionaries can identify with. He was God's man on the spot in Judah in the dark days of Israel's apostasy only a few years before the Babylonians came to conquer Jerusalem and its surrounding land. Habakkuk struggled with the twin problems of discouragement and lack of perspective and had to be taught a big lesson in living by faith.

The book of Habakkuk opens with the prophet's discouraged cry, "How long, O Lord, will I call for help, and Thou wilt not hear? I cry out to Thee, "Violence!" yet Thou dost not save." (1:2) God is ignoring me. I'm calling for help, Lord, and You're not listening. I'm concerned about this critical situation and You're not. Let me list the problems we're facing here — sin, wickedness, violence, injustice, disobedience . . .

Habakkuk, very upset, accuses God of indifference and insensitivity to the circumstances around him.

Some of us may be asking God similar questions. Lord, Why are You allowing people to turn their backs on You? Are you really working here? Why don't we see more of the gospel breaking through to change not only individuals, but families, communities, cities, schools, and companies? How long are You

going to tolerate the pollution of minds and morals by the sensuality, violence and filth that the publishing and entertainment industries put out here?

I've got a long prayer list of people that I long to see come to Christ. Day after day I bring them before the Lord, wondering when He will answer and cause them to seek Christ. We are planning to go on furlough in a few short weeks, and as I was thinking at year end about a verse for this year and a verse for furlough, the Lord gave me Romans 15:18 "For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word and deed." I'm excited about the verse, and trusting that Christ will work through me, but sometimes I wonder, "Is He doing anything?" Am I going to have to go on furlough admitting that we have started a church but not had any baptisms in our first term?

When I was asked to perform a Christian funeral at the home of our neighbor because I had led the wife to Christ before she died, I thought, "This is the chance we've been praying for, to reach our neighborhood." In fact several hundred of our community attended the funeral and heard the gospel. Over a thousand people attended the wake and the following day's service, making our street look like a jam-packed rush hour train. Surely people will be knocking

on our nearby church doors, wanting to know more about the Christ who gives eternal life. Yet, not one person has made that step, and five months have passed.

How easy it is to misjudge or to prejudice the situation and waver when God doesn't do what we think He should be doing.

But the Lord had an answer for Habakkuk, and I believe for us as well. "Look among the nations! Observe! Be astonished! Wonder! Because I am doing something in your days—you would not believe if you were told." (1:5) God is saying to Habakkuk, "I challenge your disbelief. I challenge your discouragement. You think I'm not aware or concerned, but I am, believe me! And in your days, and before your eyes."

At a recent pastor's fellowship, one of our pastors shared from Isaiah 43:19 of the new things that God was doing in his life and in his church. "Behold I will do something new, now it will

spring forth; will you not be aware of it?"—"Do you not perceive it?" as the NIV has it. God is doing a new thing in Japan and maybe we would be astonished if we knew what it was. Our pastor mentioned that last year he had heard Hatori Akira Sensei say that, among all the new year cards that he receives from believers all over Japan, the predominant verse that people said God had given them was Isaiah 43:19. God is working. . .

In receiving God's answer, Habakkuk faced a second problem, the problem of perspective. God had said he was raising up the Babylonians to punish His people. An idolatrous, arrogant, violent and fierce nation was to be the instrument that God would use to judge His people. Habakkuk's discouragement turned to dismay and disapproval. Instead of complaining, "God, what are you doing?", he now demanded, "God, You are holy. How can you use these godless people? They're worse

than Israel."—"God, I don't understand or approve of the way You plan to do your work."

Could it be that we, too, might be struggling with perspective, that we, too, are questioning God's methods. We want to see God work in us and through us in this land, but often we silently qualify our desire with "in ways that are acceptable to us, as I hope it will go, or as I have planned for it to go."

The college I attended had an annual "work day" project, where we students were farmed out to various businesses and homes to labor for two days and have the wages earned be donated to a needy project at school. It was to my disappointment that I was assigned to clean out the grease pit at Irv Schroeder's Chevrolet dealer service garage. Why didn't I get a classier job? At least a cleaner one? However, at the end of the job, whether it was out of appreciation or pity, I don't know, Irv not only donated thirty dollars to the



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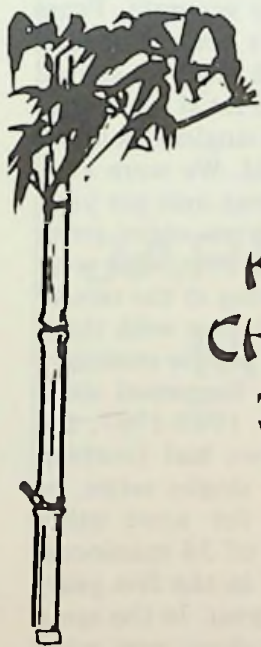


college, but he gave me another thirty as a personal gift. An unexpected bonus. However, God said to me, "Don't spend it on yourself," and as I was wondering about it, my older sister who was a senior at the same school, shared with me that she wanted to go to a Campus Crusade for Christ Christmas conference and needed thirty dollars. As I gave her the money, I had no way of knowing that she would come back from the conference with newfound joy in Christ. Her new love for the Lord was what I needed, and through her experience, God drew a wandering MK back to Himself. I began to learn the authority of Christ and how to walk in dependence on the Holy Spirit. All because of a dirty grease pit!

God says in Isaiah (55:9), "My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts." I believe the emphasis is not so much that God's ways are hard to understand, but that His ways of doing things are

higher in the sense of better, more stable, more effective than ours. They are perfectly suited to the situation, the need, and the problem. That's why God says in the preceding verses, "Forsake your ways and your thoughts and return to the Lord." We need to accept God's thoughts and God's ways as best because they are.

And by the way, Habakkuk, don't worry about the Babylonians. My purpose isn't to exalt them, but to show My glory through them. They will be punished, too. Eaters will be eaten. Idolatry will give way to full knowledge of the glory of the Lord. My ultimate purpose will be fulfilled, and "The earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord as the waters cover the sea." (2:14)



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# NEW MISSIONARIES IN OLD WINESKINS

*During the Challenge Hour at the 1988 JEMA Plenary Session two mission leaders, Doug Heck and Doug Birdsall, presented papers which became the basis of a lively and most stimulating discussion by a panel of mission directors and missionaries who have served in Japan less than ten years. The optimistic tone of the paper that follows and the accompanying statistics dispel the "rumor" that with the wave of retiring missionaries the ranks of missionaries in Japan will be greatly decreased.*

DOUGLAS HECK

In the first place, before I talk about new missionaries in old wineskins, I'd like to mention something about the building in which the wineskins are kept. Just very briefly, let me say something about the situation in Japan — comparing the 1950's to the 1980's. Then, we were talking about a Japanese generation whose country had been defeated, I believe for the first time in their history. Now, we're talking about a new generation for whom the war is simply a dim memory, if that. Then, there was a broken society in many ways, questioning even its very foundations. Now, perhaps deservedly so, a self-satisfied society riding on the crest of success. Then, the Western missionary could feel a certain cultural superiority. We came, in a way, as conquerors. Now, Japan is an economic power in the world, and with that we have resurgent nationalism and pride in being a Japanese. Then, in the 1950's, missionaries came as real pioneers. Everything was in many ways fresh. There was an opportunity to do many new things. Now, a missionary comes, and in many respects is found to be filling the shoes of the veterans who are leaving. At that point, there were very few, if any, backup projects. Now, of course, when we come, films, books, Sunday School curriculum, camps, schools — many of these things are already in place. Then the older missionaries (the missionaries who came at that time)

were "senpai". They were older than their Japanese co-workers on the whole. Now, we find ourselves put in the opposite position of being younger. Then, financially speaking, it was relatively easy. If you wanted to raise support you could say, "MacArthur has sent out a call for missionaries." Not much support needed to be raised. In our mission, for example, it cost \$120 per month for an adult for full support. Now, of course, we're in different times financially. Not only that, there is the motive — the reason for going. People are saying, "Why should you go to Japan today? There is a church there." Also, there is the yen/dollar problem. Property, which in the 50's was the kind of price land ought to cost, now is something like the price of gold. So the situation, the building in which the wineskins are kept is a different building.

Next, I would like to talk for a few minutes about the experience of one mission, TEAM. My wife Vernadene and I came to Japan in 1972. The first annual conference of TEAM we attended was in July 1973. I still remember vividly the concern that was expressed by the missionaries at that time as they looked down the road and saw that in ten years or so many, many of them would begin to retire. Of course we are in that time now. They realised there was a need for new missionaries. There was a call for prayer and there was great concern. That made a real impression on

me as I was attending my first conference. I suppose I felt a little bit like an answer to prayer, and that was a help to me. Anyway, this is what happened. They began to pray. I myself have prayed since that time. I am sure many other of our missionaries have.

Now, let me share some facts and figures. Let me throw in a disclaimer first. This research has been done as my own personal research among our records. It was rather brief, and I would hate to have to go into court with some of this. However, I think it is pretty accurate. From 1968 to 1975, a period of eight years before and after we arrived on the field, TEAM had four couples and two singles (six units) come to the field. We were averaging less than one unit per year. Of course, we were never going to replace our retirees, who were going to be retiring at the rate of five or six units a year with those numbers of new people coming.

But what has happened since that time? From 1983-1987, the last five years, we had fourteen couples and six singles retire, or leave the field for some other reasons. A total of 34 missionaries left the field in the five years previous to this year. In the same five years, what about new missionaries? Well, it is really exciting as I looked back at the records. We had fourteen couples come; in the same time fourteen couples left. We have had seven singles come, and in the same time six singles have left. So the

total in the five years has been 35 new missionaries as over against 34 who have retired. So even though we might have looked at it and said, "It looks impossible; it looks like there is no way but we're going to decrease in our missionary force," actually over these five years God has given us a small increase. Not only that, in the early 70's when we came, the short-term program was just in its infancy; whereas now we have a number of short-termers, who are also on the field for six months, one year, two years, helping in very important ministries. Right now, for example, we have at least 15 short-termers on the field whom you could add on top of that 35 if you wanted to. God has answered prayers. We thank Him, and it is our responsibility to keep praying.

In 1988 (this year) we expect to have three couples and one single who will be retiring. But we have at least six couples and two singles who are in the pipe-

line and hope to get out this year. As I look back at this kind of thing, it is certainly a humbling experience and something that causes us great thanksgiving.

But, who are the new missionaries that have come with TEAM? If we look at these new missionaries, some extremely interesting things come to light. Since 1980 we have had 47 new career missionaries come. What has been the source for these new missionaries? Eleven of the 47 were MK's — some from our mission, some from other missions. So, 23% of the new missionaries in the last eight years have been MK's. Twenty-two have had short-term experience with TEAM. Therefore, at least 47% of them have had short-term experience with TEAM. Only 14 of the 47 (or 30%) had no previous experience at all on the mission field. However, if we look at the statistics a little more closely we find a very interesting point. Of the 14 who have had no experience, eight of those are married to someone

who either was an MK or had short-term experience, or both. So, there actually are only six new missionaries in the last eight years that have come to our field who have not had any experience, or been an MK, or are not married to one or the other. Eighty-seven percent of our new missionaries in the last eight years have either been an MK, had short-term experience, or are married to one of those kinds of people.

What, then, does that say about our recruiting for new missionaries? I think in the first place we ought to continue to pray. It is nice to talk about all these statistics, but I really believe that one of the great reasons for this is prayer. I believe God is answering prayer. We have to continue to pray. We can't say, "Oh, we're ahead of the game. Let's slack off." We want and desire more and more new missionaries, and we have to continue to pray.

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Then, I think we have to continue to stress the use of short termers of all types. Seventy-two percent of our new missionaries since 1980 either had short-term experience or were married to a short-termer. When you add all these percents up, you get over 100%. The reason is that some of these couples (where one was an MK and one had short-term experience) have some overlapping. But, just looking at it from the short-term viewpoint, 72% of the missionaries that have come in the last eight years (those 47 new career missionaries) either had short-term experience with TEAM or were married to a former short-termer.

We hear today that young people are not ready to commit themselves to a career in missions. First, they want to put their toe in the bath to see if it's too hot (which is a wise idea, as a matter of fact), but at any rate they want to test it out a bit. The great advantage of the short-term program is that it provides just

such a testing period. It provides an opportunity for them to come to the country for a year or two years and test it out. Is this really the Lord's will? That is in my opinion the tremendous strong point of short-term service. We give people an opportunity to test (not in the wrong sense), to see, if that's what the Lord's will is for their life. Yet, at the same time they are doing a very worthwhile ministry. They're contributing to the overall cause of the gospel of Christ here in Japan.

It takes effort to use short-term workers. Anybody who has used them knows. Each one has to learn how to use the train, and how to do this and how to do that. It takes time; it takes effort. But, when you think 72% of your career missionaries are coming out from that kind of experience, then it is certainly worth the effort. So, we need to pray. We need to stress the use of short-termers.

Next, I think we need to pray for and recruit MK's. It's diffi-

cult to get the balance between putting pressure on our kids to come back in the wrong way, and in the right way. Since 1980, among our 47 new career missionaries, 43% were either MK's or married to MK's. Not all of those are TEAM MK's. But, we have also contributed to other missions. I know just a very quick count through our records produces at least five of our MK's who are serving with other missions or in other countries.

What about mission strategy then in this changeover period? Let me suggest very briefly four things. First of all, older missionaries (and I can speak to both because I'm in the middle) have to realise the work isn't going to end with them. It is a humbling experience to me to go on furlough. You always think you are so necessary, but you go on furlough and come back, and everything just went on. Sometimes there is a little bit of slacking in the work, but you have to realise, friends, and I have to rea-

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lise, that the Lord doesn't stop working just because you and I leave. Also, we as older missionaries must be open to the vision of new missionaries. God is not finished working in Japan today by any means.

To the new missionaries, I think we need to say that you have to realise that the work is not going to begin with you. There are some new missionaries that come out and think that everything that has been done until now has obviously been done in the wrong way, or it hasn't been done as well as it could have been done, so let's start over. That's a terrible attitude. If we end up with that, we're going to be in a disastrous situation. We don't need a new foundation; we need to build on what's there. We don't need a new car; we need to tune up the one that we have.

I was elected the Field Chairman of TEAM this past summer, and there has been talk about tremendous change. I don't think TEAM needs to change to a whole new ball game. If people in TEAM are looking for that from me, they chose the wrong fellow, because I don't see that kind of need. I think we have to build on the foundation and continue moving forward.

Then, in the third place we need to maintain and build a relationship to our Japanese co-workers. The importance of personal relationships has been mentioned. It is especially true now as we are having a changeover in mission leaders, we have to work to keep up the relationships with our Japanese co-workers.

In the fourth place, I think we have to avoid the sense that mission today is impossible because of the financial and monetary pressures. Ladies and gentlemen, God is not going to be defeated because of the *endaka* problem. We cannot base our whole strategy on money. You might say, "That is nice to say in a sermon, but then you get down to raising support and it's a diff-

erent thing." I don't think so. I think we cannot give in and let money rule what is going to happen in missions in Japan today. I think perhaps here is a place (and I'm saying this carefully) that we as faith missions have an advantage. A denomination in a sense sets a budget, and they fit the people into the budget. We have a chance to say to the Lord, "We've got these people who are going to come, and we're going to believe that You will raise the money and get them here."

In conclusion: the topic is "New Missionaries in Old Wine-skins". It is a tricky title, but let's be careful that we don't come up with a negative attitude from this: "We're new missionaries. We don't need these old skins because they are going to burst." Let's not take that kind of an attitude at all. I'd rather think of ourselves as part of the family of God. "Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people, and members of God's household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone." (Eph. 2:19-20). "For this reason I kneel before the Father from whom His whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name." (Eph. 3:14, 15). In a family, there is always change going on. The grandparents die. The parents become grandparents. The children become parents. New children are born. It's the same way in missions. The older missionaries are going to retire. The middle group of missionaries are going to become the veterans. The new missionaries move into the middle, and new missionaries continue to come in as children, as it were, on the mission field. I believe God will continue to keep renewing His family. Let's have faith that He will.

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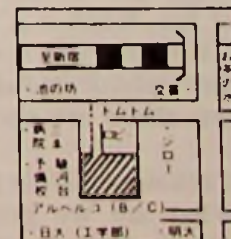
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# MY LIFE



If you are in business, and you want to stay in business and you want to make money, what must you do? Advertise!

Everywhere you look, you see advertising! Companies paid \$1 million for 30 seconds of time on the Super Bowl telecast! Why? To get people who are not now buying their product to start buying it. Now everyone needs food and gasoline. But few people think they have need of what we are "selling" - the Gospel.

What are we going to do to get those who are not now "buying" the Gospel to buy? How are we going to tell the thousands of people in our locality that what we are talking about in our church will help them? If we rely only on our Christians to invite their friends to church we will never reach our locality for the Lord. What is the simplest form of advertising? The printed brochure - telling what this company's product will do for you.

What do we have in the way of literature to capture the attention of the public? What can we do? What are people reading today? Look around you, on the trains, where people rest. Look in the bookstores and see what is on the shelves. Is it Christian literature? No. What is it? Cartoon books! Millions and millions are sold every month in Japan! Like it or not, these are the facts of life.

What are we offering people to read? What are we printing for mass distribution to the non-

## Your Message in "Manga" Will Get Through!

JAMES BLOCKSOM

Christian public? Tracts? Tracts! But who reads them? No-one! And neither would you! Would you take time to wade through a tract given to you by a Buddhist organisation, with pages of fine print? Be honest.

Now, if someone gave you a small, cartoon booklet, neatly done, attractive, bright, something that looks like it obviously cost something, the chances are that you would look it over right away or at least stick it in your pocket for closer perusal later! Regardless if you disagreed with the organisation, curiosity would motivate you to look inside and sample the contents.

### 1. WHY AREN'T NON-CHRISTIANS READING OUR LITERATURE?

#### A. The Message

Who decides what tracts the church buys? The newest Christians? Ones just saved out of the world? Probably not. It is usually some dear saints who have walked with the Lord for many years and subsequently totally forgotten the non-Christian point of view!



We must scratch people were they itch!

So very often the tracts that Christians give out "don't scratch the non-Christian where they itch". So they are thrown away. Nothing is so disheartening to those passing out tracts as to see them litter the streets or filling the trash cans.

Most tracts are little more than a presentation of the way of salvation. Few non-Christians are to that point in their spiritual journey! Tracts must relate to the non-Christian's needs.

It's just like the *orikomi* in your daily newspaper. You leaf through and see if there is something that you are interested in. If there is, you pick out that one and throw away the rest!

#### B. The Media

How are people influenced today? Does experience and common sense tell us that a six to eight page evangelistic sermon with no pictures or diagrams to illustrate the message, printed on ordinary cheap paper, with a two-colour cover, is going to be read?

We live in the TV age. Visuals are where it's at! Like it or not. People spend hours in front of the TV set. College professors and truck drivers are looking at the same programs! If we want to capture people's attention, we will have to do it with visuals. In literature, that means pictures and cartoons. People remember only about 5% of what they hear, a bit more of what they read, but much more about the pictures.

I have used overhead projection (OHP) transparencies to ill-

ustrate my Sunday messages for 15 years. No long ago one of the girls saved 10 years before, now a pastor's wife, remarked that she had forgotten my messages, but remembered my OHP's from 10 years before!

The church must realise that the parade has moved on. If you want to communicate in the late 80's, you must use the media where the audience is!

### C. Our competition

Look carefully at the free literature that companies give away. Look at the *orikomi*. Look at the Unification Church advertisements: full colour, slick paper, and top quality design.

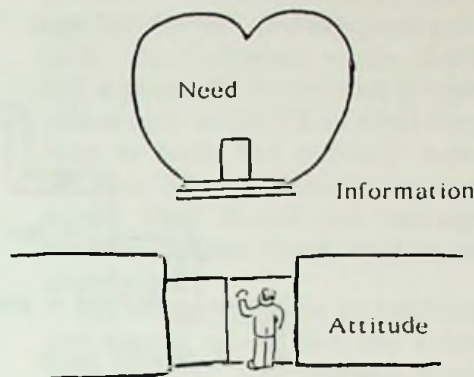
Compare this with the average tract or church handbill. Too often it looks cheap. Of course we want to save money, but if we produce a piece of literature that no-one will bother to look at, we have wasted all of our money and the time to distribute it and the opportunity to plant the Gospel seed today!

### D. Not Available

Try to find tracts in your local Christian bookstore. Some stores do not carry tracts at all! Others have a few stuck away in a corner, or in a drawer somewhere. Why? There is very little demand for them. And too many churches rely on getting free tracts on super-special prices. Remember, in tracts and anything else, you get what you pay for. Very few Christians give out tracts. Who wants to give out what you will have to pick up later off the streets? Who wants to give a tract to a friend that might injure their friendship?

## II. THE A-B-C's OF COMMUNICATION

How can we do a better job of communication? Dr. James Engel tells us that there are three factors involved in making a decision. Attitude. Felt need. Information.



### (a) Attitude

Many non-Christians have no Christian friends. Perhaps the only Christian that they have met was that polite Christian who smiled, courteously greeted him and gave him a tract as he came to the train station just this morning.

The next factor will be his reaction to the piece of literature that he has received. It's up to us to see that the little tract is a credit to the message that it carries - it speaks of quality, not quantity. Hallmark cards' slogan is great - "You cared enough to give the very best." That's what God did. We need to do the same with our literature.

### (b) Felt Need

Next, that lovely piece of literature must speak directly to this man or woman's felt need. If not, it is like a letter written to someone else! What can we put in that little tract to make the person who got it feel that this is for him and make him want to know more about Jesus Christ? Now, many people will say - the Gospel!

Let's imagine that you are sound asleep in your bed at 3 a.m. Someone comes into your room and turns on a bright light right in your eyes. How do you feel about that? Are you thankful? Able to see? No! You are blinded! Irritated and confused! However, what if you are awakened at 3 a.m. by a crash in the next room? Your eyes would open wide! It is pitch black. You

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stumble out of bed and promptly bark your shins on a piece of furniture. What is your attitude this time when someone turns on the lights? You are happy and able to make good use of the light!

This is what the Lord was speaking to Paul about on the Damascus road (Acts 26:18). The vast majority of people outside of Christ have their eyes tightly closed and they don't appreciate nor comprehend the Gospel light that we pour on them! We have to open their eyes first! Then we give them the light. Then they have the possibility of turning from the darkness to Christ and being saved. What opens closed, blinded eyes? Speaking to the person's felt needs.

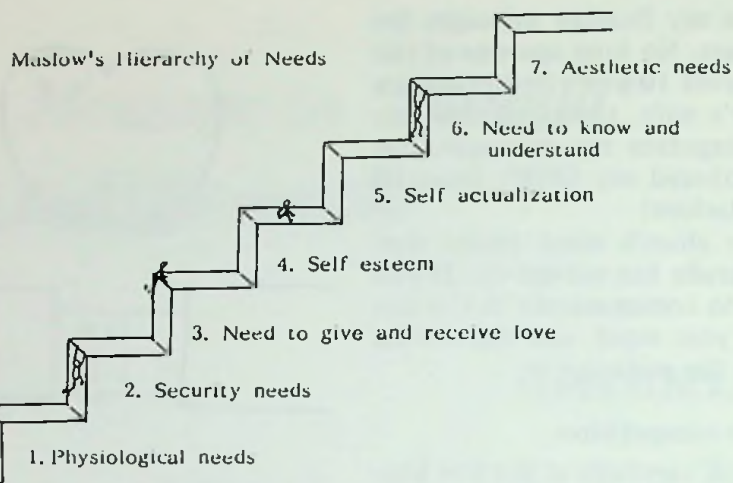


Felt need.

Back to our *orikomi*. You scan the ads, picking out only those that advertise something that you want. "Oh, Yamaha pianos at half price! Wow! But none of us play the piano and there is no room in our apartment for a piano!"

But if you are looking for a new camera - "Hey! Here is a store that is having a half-price sale on cameras!" You toss the rest of the ads and you investigate the camera sale!

Now the average Japanese is not bothered by his sins. He is not just waiting for someone to tell him how to be saved. Of course, he has sins and they are



causing him trouble. But he sees no connection with his problems, his sins and Jesus Christ!

What are the felt needs of the non-Christian? Different people have different problems. You cannot preach to everyone's problem in one message or one tract. The student facing entrance exams, the new worker in society, the young wife, the widow, and so on. Each faces different problems. Maslow's chart is a good example of people's needs and the relative power of the need to motivate a person. The lower down the scale a person is, the more powerful the need.

### (c) Information

What information do people need? The information that the non-Christian needs first is not the way of salvation. The non-Christian needs to see that the solution to his needs is the fruit of the Holy Spirit. And that these things are not on sale, at any price, in any store in the land! Once the person sees what he wants, and wants it badly, then he is ready to listen to the Gospel. The average non-Christ-

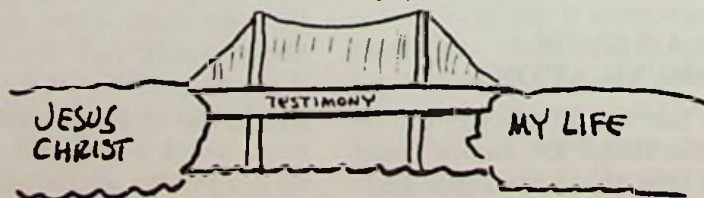
ian Western person has basic information much like the Jew on the day of Pentecost. The average non-Christian Japanese is much like the Athenians of Acts 17. Paul in Athens had to begin with the Gospel A-B-C's. Who is God? Who is Jesus? As A. Paget-Wilkes has well said, "Buddhism - that supreme masterpiece of Satan - has almost obliterated a consciousness of God". To miss this is to fail to communicate.

### (d) The Medium

#### 1. Testimony

The non-Christian is turned off by the theological approach to his problems. But people are interested in other people's experiences. Even a mob of hostile Jews paused to listen to Paul's testimony in Acts 22. Paul held the attention of a group of pagan civil and military men as he gave his testimony recorded in Acts 26.

Non-Christians identify with the needs of persons like themselves who have become Christians - their kind of person, with their kind of problems - housewives with housewives, high school boys with high school boys, and businessmen with bus-



Testimony bridges the gap.



inessmen.

The testimonies of former criminals or unique persons are thrilling for Christians, but the average non-Christian does not identify with them. Such testimonies only help the non-Christian view Christianity as a haven for the wicked, the pathetic and the weak of society. And to further assure them that they don't need it!

## 2. Cartoon Tracts

What medium shall we use to communicate the information and testimonies? TV and radio evangelism have had so much PR that the lowly tract is not even considered by many Christians any more. Granted, TV and movies make a great impact, but the non-Christian has to be watching the right place at the right time and paying attention to the message!

TV is fabulously expensive. And how many people are listening to the radio at 5 a.m.? But literature can be read any time, re-read, and shared with others. You can carry it with you and use it anytime and anywhere. It is inexpensive and carries your church's address and phone number.

The cults have stepped up their literature production and distribution! It is reported that the Jehovah's Witnesses have six presses of the kind that New Life League acquired last year!

The ordinary tract may carry the right message, but if it is not read, it is wasted. From our experience of over 25 years, we have seen that cartoon tracts are superior to ordinary tracts.

## 3. The Advantages of Cartoon Tracts

(a) On the street, people take them more readily as they like something of value.

(b) Cartoon tracts are "the medium" for today. People are pleased to get them. Some, who were missed, come and ask for one.

(c) "A picture is worth a thousand words" - so goes a Chinese

proverb. "Seeing once is like hearing 100 times" is a Japanese proverb. Psychologists verify these old sayings. We know that people retain only about 5% of what they read or hear, but pictures make an indelible impression on our heart. That means our message told by cartoon tracts will be remembered.

(d) When it comes to teaching theological truth, like the existence of God, sin, and the cross, without cartoons, you quickly lose your audience.

(e) Cartoon tracts will open doors for your visitation programs. Distributing cartoon tracts prior to your visit will establish you as not related to the cults, noted for their rude visitation practices. Picking out an area and putting a different tract in the mailbox every other day, and finally a church announcement, will open many otherwise closed doors. People want to see who has been putting all those interesting little booklets in their mailbox, rather than trying to sell them something!

(f) Christians will much more eagerly give out cartoon tracts to friends, visitors, salesmen, and others who come to their home, as well as pass them out on the street or give them to shopkeepers where they shop. Why? Because the cartoon tract is not seen as a direct charge or attack against the receiver as the usual sermon tract is. The receiver often expresses appreciation for receiving the tract.

(g) The Broman brothers of Sendai pass out millions of tracts each year. They mostly use cartoon tracts. They must have good reasons.

(h) Cartoon tracts cost little more than ordinary tracts. If people will buy more, the price will go down.

## 4. Just Any Cartoon Tract?

Just any cartoon tract is not suitable because it is in cartoon form. We have seen some cartoon tracts that neither I, nor our

Japanese Christians would give to anyone. This motivated us to design our cartoon tracts.

We believe that a tract must be done by Japanese artists, in the distinct *manga* style. It must be tastefully and sensitively done. Bible verses need to be explained for the natural man who does not understand God's Word and needs someone to guide him to understand the meaning and application.

We have been working with New Life League for nearly 20 years developing a line of Japanese cartoon tracts and Bible study materials based on the principles we have mentioned. We have developed a series of testimony tracts dealing with needs that are typical of many in the group: would-be suicides, handicapped persons (Yoneko Tahara), women, high school boys, grandmothers and young women facing *kanashibari* and apparitions.

There are also special tracts: a Gospel presentation for men, a follow-up booklet for new Christians, a tract for those who believe in God but not Jesus Christ. We also have a tract dealing with evolution that is out of print. In its place we are using a semi-cartoon tract, "Your Ancestor?" by Professor Seiko Tsukioka.

We are working on a semi-cartoon tract to help the non-Christian come to believe in the existence of the true and living God as presented in Acts 17 and Romans 1:1-2:15.

## 5. What Can You Expect From Cartoon Tracts?

A tract is just one phase of your evangelistic outreach. It is a way to plant seeds. Without planting seeds, there will be no harvest. The cartoon tract is not a magic cure-all. But it is part of the process of plowing the hard ground. The probability of the cartoon tract being read is higher than any other piece of literature that you put into people's hands.



# TYPES OF BIBLICAL PROVERBS

(Biblical Wisdom, Study 2)

BARRY ROSS

**An Introductory Note.** In Study 1, I suggested that the Old Testament collections of wisdom sayings might be called a "Book of Manners." These "Rules of Manners" were preserved often in the type of expression we call a "proverb." We noted that the Bible says that one of the greatest proverb makers was King Solomon (1 Kings 4:32). But others, too, spoke proverbs. Many of these proverbs are collected in the book of Proverbs. We find others in Ecclesiastes, some in Job, and still others scattered here and there throughout the Old Testament. Occasionally the prophets used proverbs in their preaching to better teach a point.

In the ancient world of the Old Testament there were "schools" for teaching court officials, priests and temple personnel. In these schools, teachers taught the "Rules for Proper Manners." There is no biblical evidence for these schools in Israel, but we know that they did exist in Egypt and Mesopotamia (Babylonia and Assyria). We assume, therefore, that they existed in Israel, since Israel shared much of the culture of the peoples around her. It appears that "wisdom" teachers collected the various spoken proverbs, preserved them in writing, and used them in their teaching in the "schools." Thus, through his teaching the teacher applied to his day the knowledge gained through experience by those of previous generations.

This experiential knowledge we call "wisdom." One way of preserving such "wisdom" is in the proverb.

## What is a Proverb?

A proverb is *brief*, so that it is easily remembered. A proverb is *intelligible*, that is, it has understandable meaning for both the speaker and hearer. A proverb usually *does not mean what the words actually say*. A proverb does *not always retain the same meaning* from generation to generation. If the same proverb exists in different cultures, it does *not necessarily carry the same meaning*. A proverb is *the result of observation*.

A proverb, then, is a brief, easily understood comment on some aspect of human experience. It expresses knowledge gained from experience. The goal of the proverb is to teach a person some single point on how to live life in proper order.

To illustrate the above, note this Japanese proverbial saying: "Toranu tanuki no kawa sannyo o suru" ("Counting the skins before one has caught any badgers"). A western equivalent might be, "Don't count your chickens before they hatch." These proverbs are brief and, therefore, easily remembered. They are *not* actually speaking about badger (dog-raccoon) skins or chickens, yet they have understandable meaning for both speaker and hearer. Both will understand the point to be that it is foolish to plan on the results

of something as unpredictable as how many badger skins one will have for sale at the end of the season for catching badgers, or how many eggs will actually hatch under a setting hen. Both the Japanese and English sayings result from observation that, in fact, rarely does one catch as many badgers as one hoped for, and rarely do all the eggs hatch into chickens. There are exceptions, of course, but the proverb speaks to the *typical* outcome of some common human experience. And the point of teaching in both forms of the proverb is that the wise person demonstrates **caution in life's ventures**. Only the foolish person promises, in advance, what he may not be able to deliver.

Or consider this Japanese proverb: "Korogaru ishi niwa koke wa haenai," or perhaps its older form, "Tenseki koke o musazu." Its English translation is equivalent to the western proverb, "A rolling stone gathers no moss."

We have, then, a proverbial saying that exists in almost identical form in two languages/cultures. This brief proverb carries meaning for both speaker and hearer, and is *not* really speaking of stones gathering moss. When I use this saying, I do so in reference to some human characteristic. The "stone" represents a person. The "moss" is more abstract.

Now, the question is, am I expressing a *positive* or *negative* value judgment when I affirm

that a “rolling stone gathers no moss”? In *my* mind, is it *good* or *bad* that a person keeps “rolling on”?

When I first tested out this saying in an American university classroom many years ago, my cross-cultural eyes were then somewhat unopened. I assumed *everyone* had in mind the same idea as I when they used this proverb. And, I used it then to express a *positive* value judgment. It was *good* to be a “rolling stone,” to move about from place to place. It was *bad* to gather “moss” on oneself, to stay in one place too long. Moving about, from town to town, from job to job, at least every three to four years, widened one’s perspective, made one a more “experienced” person—so I thought.

Why did I think this way? Because my father had moved our family from place to place every three to four years all of my growing up years. Culturally, then, I had come to believe this was the “right” way to live.

But many of my students indicated there was another way to view the use of this proverb, especially one Japanese student. They, too, used this proverb, but to express a *negative* value judgment. It was *bad* to be a “rolling stone.” “Moss” was *good* in that moss takes a relatively long time to grow. Moss, therefore, represented stability, maturity, permanence. This type of permanence brought stability to a community. Traditions could be handed on from generation to generation.

Thus, my understanding of the use and meaning of proverbs began to widen. Different persons used the same proverb, but with *opposite* intention. I have come to be a bit more cautious in my use of proverbs. For, while the proverb surely has meaning for both me (the speaker) and the one who hears, the hearer may “hear” a different meaning, and thus miss the point I intend.

So when we come to biblical proverbs we must exercise caution, lest we interpret them solely from our own cultural context. And, indeed, for many biblical proverbs, because we are so far removed from *their* time and cultural context, *our* contextual meaning may be the only meaning we can extract. Nevertheless, since they are part of God’s written Word, we should attempt to let them speak to us. Let us, then, examine some various types of biblical proverbs: the “comparative” proverb, the “contrastive” proverb, the “numerical” proverb and the “legal” proverb.

**The “Comparative” Proverb.** This type of proverb consists of two lines in which various things are equated. The proverb is characterized by the comparative preposition “like” (J. “no yo da”). [In the Hebrew, this preposition, *ke*, is sometimes not written, but implied.] In the *Hebrew*, the first line contains some analogous aspect of human character. (Because of the nature of Japanese grammatical structure, the two poetical lines are usually reversed in translation) The intention of this type of proverb is to lead the hearer first to some characteristic, some “rule,” of the physical world with which he can readily identify. He is then ready to be led on to a new understanding of some aspect of human nature that is in fact *like* what he already knows from the physical world. There is a great number of such sayings in the book of Proverbs. Let us look at three examples, each given below in the *Hebrew* sentence order.

[Like] apples of gold in  
in settings of silver  
Is a word spoken in right  
circumstances.” (25:11)

Here, the first line draws one’s attention to the work of art in jewelry making. A small “apple of gold,” itself a thing of beauty, can have its beauty enhanced or lowered according to the

“setting” the artist chooses for it. It would be most inappropriate to use a setting of any metal other than silver. Silver, too, is a metal of beauty and value. By inserting the “apple of gold” into a “setting of silver,” the artist has shown great wisdom. The silver enhances the beauty of the gold to the point that the eye of the beholder is drawn first to the gold and its beauty, then to the silver setting. The gold, then, acquires even greater “value.”

Just so, says the teacher, “a word” (and *every* word should be considered by the speaker [= artist] to have the value of gold!) spoken in just the “right circumstance” (= “setting of silver”) will receive enhanced value in the ears of the hearer.

The teaching of this proverb is: the person who knows the appropriate circumstance for each word he speaks will be known to be a *wise person*.

“[Like] a club or a sword or  
a sharp arrow

Is a man who gives false  
testimony against his  
neighbor.” (25:18)

Here, skill is the focus of the proverb, but skill used for evil purposes. In the first line our attention is drawn, through the listing of war weapons, to the military man skilled in the use of these war weapons. Such a man has spent years in practice and has tested his skill in hand-to-hand combat in the battle field. He has proven himself adept at all the tricks and deceptions to entice his opponent to be careless just for a moment. And in that moment of carelessness, in that moment of “trusting” his attacker’s possible inability to get through his defenses, the opponent is overpowered. Suddenly he is beaten to the ground with the “club,” run through with the “sword” or pierced by the “arrow.”

As the warrior is skilled in the use of his weapons, so is the man who “bears false testimony

against his neighbor." He is skilled through years of practice and experience at the use of words (= weapons) to assassinate the character and reputation of another. Such a man would never think of engaging in crude physical violence, but the violence he does perpetuate against "his neighbor" inflicts grievous bruises and wounds. From such wounds the "neighbor" may never recover.

The teaching of this proverb is: it is *wisdom* to be constantly on guard against the man who practices bearing false testimony.

[Like] a bad tooth and an unsteady foot

Is confidence in a faithless man in time of trouble."  
(25:19)

Here, *misplaced trust* is the focus of the proverb. Food cannot be chewed by a tooth that is rotting away. A man cannot walk with sureness of step on a weak foot. Just in the moment he bites down on something requiring a firm tooth, the tooth breaks away. Just in the moment he steps out boldly, the foot turns and he falls to the ground. Both tooth and foot prove to be useless in the time of need, though they were *expected* to serve well.

Like the untrustworthy tooth and foot is the "faithless man" in whom one puts his trust in a time of trouble. The point of teaching here is *caution*. The wise man uses caution in selecting the persons in whom he places his trust.

Now it seems that in each of the above three examples, the "teacher" has taken an original one-line proverb, added to it an analogous human characteristic, thus creating a new two-line "teaching proverb." Perhaps the original one-line proverbs were:

"Like apples of gold in settings of silver."

"Like a club, a sword or a sharp arrow."

"Like a bad tooth and an unsteady foot."

The "Contrastive" Proverb. The focus of the "contrastive" proverb is the setting of one reality in opposition to another reality. Such a proverb announces that one thing is *good* and its opposite is *bad*. This type of two-line proverb is characterized by the conjunction "but" (J. *shikashi*) some 90% of the proverbs in chapters 10-15 are of this type. We will study three examples. (Note: in all three of these examples the conjunction "but" does occur in the Hebrew, but has been omitted in the Japanese [*Shinkaiyaku*] translation.

"The wise of heart will receive commands,

But a babbling fool will be thrown down." (10:8)

This proverb finds its setting in the teacher-student relationship. The "wise of heart" is the one who learns wisdom through submitting to the authority of his teacher. He willingly receives the content of his teacher's "commands." Such a student is contrasted with the "babbling fool" who likes the sound of his own voice too much to give attention to the wisdom of his teacher. His "babbling" is an outward indication of his inward indiscipline and his unwillingness to submit to authority and to learn.

The teaching here is that discipline leads to life, while indiscipline leads to death.

"Hatred stirs up strife,

But love covers all transgressions." (10:12)

This proverb finds its setting in community social relationships. It is concerned with the damage done to the well-being of the community by one who exhibits "hatred" and the contribution to the well-being of the community made by one who shows "love." Hate and love are opposite social attitudes that produce opposite effects. Hate awakens "strife," while love covers over all "transgressions." Hate seeks a permanent break between man and man. Love

endures and sets wrongs aside for the sake of communal peace.

Note how this proverbial teaching serves as the basis for teaching in 1 Corinthians 13:4-7 ("Love is patient, love is kind, and is not jealous, love does not brag and is not arrogant, does not act unbecomingly; it does not seek its own, is not provoked, *does not take into account a wrong suffered*, does not rejoice in unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth; bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.), James 5:19-20 ("My brethren, if any among you strays from the truth, and one turns him back; let him know that he who turns a sinner from the error of his way will save his soul from death, and *will cover a multitude of sins*"), and 1 Peter 4:8 ("Above all, keep fervent in your love for one another, because *love covers a multitude of sins*").

"An excellent wife is the crown of her husband,

But she who shames [him] is as rotteness of his bones." (12:4)

Here the value of the right kind of wife is the focus. The wife of "excellent" character is the "crown of her husband." This metaphore suggests that such a wife enables a man to attain fullness of dignity in his community. Contrasted with a wife of such excellent character is a wife who "shames" her husband before the world. A man with such a wife will never win respect nor carry influence in his community. To have such a wife is like having maggots ("rotteness") in his bones. Such sickness is painful and fatal!

The teaching here is *wise choice*, the utmost use of wisdom and caution in one's choice of a wife.

The "Numerical" Proverb. The "numerical" proverb contains several lines. It consists of the counting and listing of things. It is characterized by an introductory statement that includes numbers, such as three/four or

six/seven. The central focus of this type of proverb, too, is upon some human behavior or characteristic. The teacher here directs the pupil's attention to nature with the intention of discovering there analogies to human behavioral characteristics. There are five such proverbs in chapter 30 (vv. 15-16; 18-19; 21-23; 24-28; 29-31) and one in chapter 6 (vv. 16-19). We will study two examples.

There are *three* things that will not be satisfied,  
*Four* that will never say,  
 "Enough":

Sheol, and the barren womb,  
 Earth that is never satisfied  
 with water,

And fire that never says,  
 "Enough." (30:15-16)

The focus of this proverb is upon the "barren womb," that is, a wife who has no children. There was probably no greater social stigma that a woman must bear than to be a wife who could not give her husband children. From nature the teacher draws

three analogies: "Sheol," the place of death (people never cease dying), the thirsty "earth" and the greedy "fire." All are metaphors of this "barren" wife. As their appetites are never satisfied, so the "barren" wife's physical desire for her husband is never satisfied. But she is not an unduly lustful woman. Her unsatisfied physical desire stems from her fierce urge to remove the social stigma of her barrenness. She will not resign herself to such a fate; she will give herself to her husband with abandon. And it is for her husband's standing in the community that she does this, not for her own, for she has no standing in the community apart from her husband's.

(Note: the *three* is omitted in this next numerical proverb.)

"*Four* things are small on the earth,

But they are exceedingly wise:

The ants are not a strong fold,  
 But they prepare their food

in the summer;  
 The conies (= hyrax) are not mighty folk,  
 Yet they make their houses in the rocks;  
 The locusts have no king,  
 Yet all of them go out in ranks;  
 The lizard you may grasp with the hands,  
 Yet it is in kings' palaces."  
 (30:24-28)

The four creatures listed here are spoken of as if they were human beings. But they are small, weak "human beings." Yet they are the wisest of the wise. The "ant" provides for the winter by storing up food in the summer. In this the ant is a model of wise foresight and industry. The "cony" (rock badger, the hyrax) too is small and not powerful, yet is able to make a house for itself high in the rocks. In this the cony is a model of application of technical ingenuity. The "locusts" are well organized and disciplined. They are the analogy of a well

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governed and ordered community. The "lizards" are fragile and vulnerable creatures. Unlike the scorpion or serpent they have no dangerous sting or bite with which to defend themselves. One can take the lizard in the hand and crush it at will. Yet one finds the lizard (literally!) "in kings' palaces." The lizard, then, despite its weakness and vulnerability, makes use of its resources to attain a place of first rank. The analogy is perhaps that a man does not need to exert power and bravado to win a place in the presence of the king. Perhaps to be a wise *servant* would be more effective.

The "Legal" Proverb. There are several proverbial teachings that appear to have legal implications. Perhaps their origins go back to an earlier legal statement. One such example is:

"Do not move the ancient boundary  
Which your fathers have set."  
(22:28)

The same thought is again

expressed, with expansion:

"Do not move the ancient boundary  
Or go into the fields of the orphan;  
For their Redeemer is strong:  
He will plead their case  
against you." (23:10-11)

The legal commandment form of this is: "You shall not move your neighbor's boundary mark, which the ancestors have set, in your inheritance which you shall inherit in the land that the Lord your God gives you to possess" (Deuteronomy 19:14). The punishment incurred for violating this command is: "Cursed is he who moves his neighbor's boundary mark" (Deuteronomy 27:17).

The implication in this command is that a violation against ancestral land (in Israel) deserved the most serious consequences. Such a concept is related to the commandment: "No inheritance of the sons of Israel shall be transferred from tribe to tribe, for the sons of Israel shall each

hold to the inheritance of the tribe of his fathers" (Numbers 36:7 [and 9]). This is further related to the core concept that all Israelite land belonged to the Lord and could not be sold: "The land . . . shall not be sold permanently, for the land is Mine" (Leviticus 25:23). This view is the basis for Naboth's refusal to sell his land to King Ahab: "The Lord forbid me that I should give you the inheritance of my fathers" (1 Kings 21:4).

But in the proverbial saying noted above, the focus is not on such autocratic demands as Ahab and Jezebel made to Naboth. Rather, it is the sharp practices of the "land broker" to which the weak and defenseless members of the community were vulnerable. Proverbs 23:10 mentions the "fields of the orphans" as particularly vulnerable to such abuse.

In Israel, the orphan has a divine "Redeemer" (Hebrew, *go'el*, 23:11). This Redeemer is the one (male) who accepts social responsibility for his nearest kinsman and shields him in his defenselessness. Here the Lord takes up the legal defense of the orphans whose land is being denied because of their weakness. Beware! Those who try to acquire land at the expense of the weaker brother will lose their case when taken to court by the Lord, the Redeemer.

Our next study. The book of Proverbs begins with an admonition to avoid the "strange woman" (2:16-22). The book closes with a description of the "excellent woman" (31:10-31). From 7:4-9:18 the book contrasts "Lady Wisdom" with the "Strange Woman." In my next study we will study these three "women."



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DR. HOKE ESTABLISHED TOKYO CHRISTIAN COLLEGE AND SERVED AS ITS FIRST PRESIDENT.

IN 1973, DR. HOKE WENT TO LAUSANNE, SWITZERLAND, TO PREPARE FOR THE 1974 LAUSANNE CONGRESS OF WHICH HE WAS EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR.

DR. HOKE PRESENTLY IS SENIOR PASTOR OF THE CEDAR HILLS PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, KNOXVILLE, TENN.

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## **A LETTER TO THE LOCAL CHURCHES IN ASIA**

### **INTRODUCTION**

Greetings! Grace, peace and love to you from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ! We address this letter to our brothers and sisters in the Asian Church.

We, the members of the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ, from 15 nations of Asia, met in Singapore from October 20-27, 1987 for the Asian Leadership Conference on Evangelization (ALCOE II).

We came from a wide range of denominational churches, organisations and theological schools in Asia, united in our commitment to the Lausanne Covenant. We came together to wait upon the Lord with one accord and to seek His renewal and guidance as we deliberated on the theme: "LET ASIA HEAR HIS VOICE! WITNESSING TO CHRIST THROUGH THE LOCAL CHURCH". The choice of this theme represented the logical progression from the ALCOE I theme of "Together Obeying Christ for Asia's Harvest". Our focus on the Local church, is a recognition that she is the primary agent for evangelizing our vast continent of Asia which is the home of three fifth of the world's population and which also contains the vast bulk of the world's unevangelised.

### **THE OBJECTIVES OF ALCOE II**

We came together with the following objectives:

- 1) To assess the status of evangelisation in Asia.
- 2) To encourage fellowship and co-operation among Asia's Christian Leaders.
- 3) To seek to understand the critical issues in Asian evangelization.
- 4) To share models of effective evangelization.
- 5) To stimulate prayer for the evangelization of Asia.

We wish to share our experience and our findings particularly with our sisters, and brothers who are members, elders and pastors of local churches in our continent. We praise God for His great salvation and rejoice in the fellowship He has given us with Himself and with each other. Our work and fellowship together at ALCOE II was a rich and meaningful experience. In our morning devotions we were led in the study of God's Word on the theme for the day. In the evening meetings some of the rich treasures in our Lord's Prayer were unlocked for our encouragement. A particularly uplifting experience was the time we spent in prayer. The conference began with a day of prayer. Each National group met regularly for prayer. The prayer rally on Sunday afternoon was enriched by the presence of local Christians from the churches in Singapore.

## THE ISSUES AND AREAS OF MINISTRIES DISCUSSED IN THE CONTEXT OF EVANGELISM THROUGH THE LOCAL CHURCH

The focus of our attention was the witness by *the whole church*. This is because God has blessed the church with varied gifts which need to be recognised, nurtured and utilised in the day to day life of the church. The pastor is a strategic person in the dynamics of developing and evoking the spiritual gifts within the church. This develops a unity through worship and meaningful service. A growing recognition of the vital role and place of women and youth in the corporate witness by the church was emphasised.

This led to the second issue of the *scope of the church's witness*. An authentic witness to the presence of God's kingdom expresses itself in creative and sensitive responses to the realities of Asia, namely poverty and underdevelopment, calamities and natural disasters. There is the struggle for justice and peace, the burgeoning of urban townships with the problems of housing, unemployment, crime, destitution, loneliness, the stress on the family, the impact of urbanisation on traditional rural economies. There must be a definite focus on the village which still is the basic unit for most Asian countries. We praise God for new, creative areas of ministry emerging in parts of Asia, for example in the world of sports where sportsmen have become significantly influential. An area that must continue to demand our attention is the vast number of children and youth.

The courage of the *suffering churches* in many parts of Asia brought home to the conference the centrality of the Cross in the witness of the church. Suffering for the sake of the gospel dispelled the fear and helped to clarify the content of our faith. We praise God that despite the continued persecution of the Church in many parts of Asia, the Church is growing both in numbers and maturity. God has been faithful and truly the gates of hell have not prevailed against the purposes of God. The witness of the persecuted Church added a sense of urgency to the ministry of prayer to which we are called. The growth of the church in Korea and some other countries in Asia is an eloquent testimony to the power of prayer in the local church.

The understanding of the gospel in its articulation can only be meaningful when there is a *serious appreciation of the cultural milieu in which the Church exists*. The need to recognise and understand cultures of different regions so as to appreciate the supra cultural aspects of the gospel were also voiced. The challenge of Asia's other faiths demands a thorough study and response. The influence of secular movements and ideologies cannot be glossed over or minimized if the witness of the Church is to be fruitful.

We felt anew the need for co-operation and partnership. Co-operation to be meaningful must be practised at all levels within the Church. Co-operation between the churches at local, regional and international levels need to be forged and fostered, seen in the exchange of ideas, sharing of resources both human and material.



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## CONCLUSION

In conclusion, we the members of ALCOE II praise God and affirm that He is in control and the earth belongs to Him. We recognize the magnitude and the complexity of the task, we repent shortcomings and renew our commitment to the task of evangelizing Asia. We are undaunted for we realise that "greater is He that is within us than he that is in the world". We therefore pledge ourselves:

- 1) To make more urgent efforts to participate meaningfully and fully in the life of our local churches by making available our God-given gifts for the edification of the church.
- 2) To support our local pastors by standing alongside them in the task of witnessing to Christ in our own cultural context.
- 3) To study the issues and share the concerns raised in this conference.
- 4) To be disciplined in our prayer life and to pray for the witness of the churches in Asia.
- 5) To identify with and uphold those churches that are being persecuted for righteousness' sake.
- 6) To stand in support of those who suffer because their human rights are violated.
- 7) To explore ways and means to foster and nurture relationships established in this conference, with a definite view of co-operating across national boundaries.
- 8) To constantly endeavour to live a consistent lifestyle which reflects the values and the aspiration of the Kingdom of God.
- 9) To facilitate the multiplication of the local church as we recognize the primacy she enjoys in God's scheme for world evangelism.
- 10) To do everything possible to share our joyful faith with the vast numbers of people who have yet to hear the Good News of Jesus Christ.

We call upon our co-labourers across the continent of Asia, to join with us in this our commitment as we go forward in the Grace, Counsel and Power of our victorious Lord.

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# GIVE US BREAD AND FORGIVENESS

ANDREW FURUYAMA

*ALCOE II at Singapore during October, 1987, brought together church leaders from fourteen Asian countries, all speaking in English. Rev. Andrew Furuyama, Pastor of the Musashino Chapel, challenged delegates with an exposition of a portion of the Lord's Prayer, the topic of the evening sessions. Rev. Furuyama's message has been condensed for publication.*

## Give us Today Our Daily Bread!

Our gracious Lord teaches us to pray and ask for our daily needs all the time, 365 days a year! It says "Give us today our daily bread!" In the original Greek, "our bread" comes in the very beginning of the sentence. Therefore, emphasis is very likely being placed on this phrase "our bread" or "our daily bread". Now, what is "our bread"? Martin Luther, 16th century reformer, interprets the word to mean simply all kinds of things that are necessary in our daily life — such as food, gardens, domestic animals, servants, government, weather, peace, health, knowledge, etc.

It's a very inclusive term. It includes material, physical and even mental realms of human affairs. It speaks of all different sorts of resources we have in this world. And all those resources become available if we only pray and ask God for them for they all belong to the Father, who is the Creator and the Ruler of the whole universe.

Our Heavenly Father, as we have been reminded over and over again during this week, is willing, waiting, ready and able to give everything that is really necessary for us only if we ask for it. You know, we tend to forget this tremendous truth in the Bible.

Now there are three lessons we can draw from this first request; "Give us today our daily bread".

1. It teaches us that we are to totally depend and completely

rely on God for His every provision. We have a tendency to take everything for granted. Life becomes so routine and except at times of some of the crises we face from time to time, we do not really depend on God the Father for everything we need either in our life or in our ministry. For instance, when we say grace at the meal table, we do not really exercise our faith or have the sense of utter dependence on God.

But, are we really able to thank God even if we have very little or nothing on the table? Can we say "Give us Today our Daily Bread" no matter what kind of situations we are in because we have 100% confidence in God the Father? Let's seriously ask this question.

2. The second lesson we can draw from this request is found in this short first person plural pronoun "us". "Give US Today our Daily Bread". Who is involved in "US"? Again, it is a very inclusive term. Of course, whenever you pray this request, "Give US such and such". . . , you can immediately think about your loved ones, i.e., spouses, parents, children or brothers and sisters being included here, or your church folk, or perhaps your co-laborers in your own ministry. Sometimes, we can include a much wider circle, i.e., your local communities, cities, nations, regions or even the whole world.

Some people insist that only those who are in the household

of God should be included in "us". And yet others feel that those who are outside of God's family should also be included here, I don't know. Anyhow, this request teaches us that our prayer should be unselfish in its motive and should not be centered around myself or ourselves but should embrace all others who need God's supply.

3. Thirdly, we are not supposed to pray this prayer or request merely to satisfy ourselves. To be filled up with all the resources God has provided for us both for our daily needs and ministry needs is not enough. "Fullness prayer" should be accompanied by "fulfillment prayer!"

We are to give to others what has been given to us so that His purpose will be fulfilled in due course. We've heard a lot about those who are in suffering, suffering of many sorts.

There are millions of people who are suffering from natural disasters, such as earthquakes, famines and floods, etc. And also great numbers of people are still starving to death. And quite a considerable number of people are being persecuted because of their faith in God and losing everything for Christ's sake. And still there are the multitudes of people who live in spiritual darkness and cry out for help. "Meet our needs every day so that we can go out and reach those who have needs to be met.

## Forgive Us Our Debts As We Have Forgiven Our Debtors

Now, we come to the second request. Obviously, our Blessed Lord is not teaching us here that in order to be forgiven we have to forgive others. "As we have forgiven our debtors" "As" here doesn't denote "Because" or "On the basis of", rather it speaks of the attitude and the spirit on the part of the one who offers this prayer.

We are forgiven completely by the blood of Jesus Christ, shed on the Cross of Calvary some 2,000 years ago, for it says, "The blood of Jesus, the Son of God, cleanses us from all sin" 1 John 1:7. "In Him, we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God's grace." Eph. 1:7

You see, when God gives us forgiveness, it is complete and perfect! He remembers our sin no more! Psalm 103:12 says, "As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our

transgressions from us."

But we as human beings find it very difficult to do the same. We often say we have forgiven you for what you have done to me; you have done something wrong; you have harmed me; you have hurt me but it's all right now, because we have forgiven you! But very often we haven't really completely forgiven that person yet. We still hold something against that man and can not readily accept him. Once in a while, we recall what he has done to us and resentment is still being felt here.

But by the grace of God, yes, by the grace of God alone, we can forget the past and forgive those who did cause us harm and receive them as they are. Just like we have been forgiven, and have been restored and received by God's grace, we can now accept them as true brothers and sisters in the family of God.

Have you really forgiven your neighbours? Have you really forgiven your fellow-workers?

Have you really forgiven your non-Christian friends who might have been quite opposed to you?

What about your own sin? Have you confessed your sins before God and others and have been forgiven? Is nothing being held back and hidden in the closet of your rooms of your heart? Outstanding Christian leaders have fallen into scarlet sins. What about each one of us here tonight?

"Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective!" James 5:16

Why don't you ask for the fullness of Christ's life in you, for spiritual awakening, first. Then, only then, can you pray for the fulfillment of Christ's purpose for world evangelization in your area.

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# Missionaries Can Use Computers Too!

TIM SELANDER

"If you're going to do the job right, then you need the right tools!" I can't tell you how often I heard that line from my father when, as a boy, I would huddle with him over some broken piece of machinery learning how to "teach some manners" to obstinate gears, levers, switches, clamps, piston rings and push rods.

Now I'm in Japan as a missionary, faced with the enormous task of leading the Japanese to Christ. The "right tools" for this job are primarily spiritual—gifts from the Spirit to help accomplish the building of the Church.

A significant amount of my time is spent on mundane, mechanical, repetitive tasks—specifically

## Paper Work!

You know as well as I do what a chore letter writing, record keeping, and finance juggling becomes for the typical missionary. Fortunately, there's a "right tool" to help with this less than appealing side of missionary work. That tool is the personal computer.

There are two very distinct levels in which a personal computer can be used: on a personal/family level and on a business/office level.

## Personal Uses

Be honest now, are you as caught up with your letter writing as you'd like to be? Are your supporters hearing from you regularly, getting REAL letters, not "Dear Friend" stale, xeroxed circular letters?

Your biggest boost in productivity from using a computer will most likely come in the area of letter writing. We tend to put off writing because it's such a huge chore that's never really done. Most of us have hundreds of people on our mailing lists. Not all of these people should necessarily be getting personal letters from you, but certainly anyone who is giving to your ministry financially, or who is praying for you should be regularly hearing from you.

When we do write letters, we generally spend a few lines on personal greetings, thanks for continued prayer or for a special gift, and answering their last letter. Then it's a few paragraphs of information about your work, your joys and your heartaches. The content of these paragraphs gets repeated over and over in all the letters you write.

With a computer it becomes exceedingly easy to write a letter, then go back and appropriately change a few lines for the next person you write, leaving the "general info" part of the letter intact. The computer lets you use those paragraphs over and over—without having to re-type them each time!

In the amount of time it took you to write three or four letters, you and a computer can write a dozen or more. Often you can go on and write another letter while the computer types out the one you just finished. It's a great feeling to seal up a stack of air-forms and drop them off in the

neighborhood postbox!

Since we've started using a computer to help with the letter writing we've had several friends and acquaintances back home say how great it is to hear from us so often!

There are other tasks besides letter writing that a computer can help you with. Keeping track of your mailing list is one of them. Simply having your names and addresses in a computer is not particularly useful. But if you do your mass mailings from Japan, then you can use the computer to quickly and easily print all the addresses on the envelopes. You can also easily sort your list for special mailings—for example, address envelopes only for financial supporters because you want to send them a special thank you note for their faithful help.

Hand addressing envelopes for a prayer letter mailing used to take my wife and me all weekend, and maybe longer. Now, the computer addresses them all in 30-40 minutes!

There is a myth floating around "Out There" that claims a computer will solve all of your personal organizational woes, that it can organize your life, and make you perfect. Well, it ain't so! If you're the organized type, a computer will greatly aid and abet your organizational drive. But if you're hopelessly disorganized, the computer will just become one more thing to be disorganized about.

Having said that though, you

can keep various information in the computer and use the machine to organize and use that information. Possible uses could be to keep tract of and follow up contacts and seekers; keep the books for personal and work related budgets; to index the contents of your filing cabinet; etc. The possibilities are almost endless—anything you now are (or ought to be) keeping track of on paper could be done with less trouble on a computer.

One company has even put the entire Bible on computer disks (KJV, NIV, Greek and Hebrew) and given the user powerful commands for searching and cross-referencing functions. If you were preaching on the topic of poverty, for example, you could have the entire Bible scanned for all verses that refer to “the poor”, “oppression”, “poverty”, etc. You can read through the verses, attach “margin” notes, even check the Greek and Hebrew. You can build up your own lists of references under a variety of topics, and even cross reference your topics; (say, cross reference a list of verses concerning women in the Bible with a list of verses concerning “ministry” and quickly access all verses that talk about women in ministry!)

One final use for a computer in the home is for the education of your children. Having a computer in the home will allow your children to become comfortable and proficient with the machines, but more importantly there’s quite a lot of software that can be used by parents who are teaching their children at home. This could be the topic of an entire article in itself, but let it suffice to say here that there are a lot of resources that parents shouldn’t over look—especially if they are teaching their children at home.

#### Office Uses

Many missionaries find themselves working in administrative roles in an office situation. While most offices these days are taking advantage of personal

computers, for those of you who are still relying on typewriters and ledger books, some suggestions may be in order.

For office correspondence, writing letters on a computer is faster and more convenient than using a typewriter. Also, making carbon copies for office files becomes unnecessary. Every letter written is saved on a computer disk, and is easily retrieved. And since a typical disk can hold 180 typed pages, big bulky file cabinets are not needed. And the messy job of using carbon paper is eliminated.

Doing accounting on a computer is also a natural task for a business office. I’m not an accountant, but I have been told by one that doing the books on a computer is not only easier, but is also safer in that mistakes are more difficult to make. It used to be that accounting programs for personal computers were extremely expensive, and difficult to use by anyone who wasn’t a CPA. Now, though, there are a variety of programs that cost \$100 or less that are easy enough for anyone to use.

Programs that file and manage information can also be put to good use by a business office. Mailing lists, personnel records, project scheduling, and appointment books are just a few of the kinds of things a computer can keep tract of with little difficulty.

“Desktop Publishing” is a new buzzword within the personal computer industry. The job that this phrase refers to is that of using a personal computer and a laser printer in the place of a typesetting machine. Laser printers use the same technology as a copying machine to create printing that far surpasses the quality normally associated with computer printers. With appropriate software, a personal computer and a laser printer can create brochures, fliers, newsletters, even magazines of such high quality that only people trained in the printing/graphics arts industry can readily tell the

difference. If your organization is spending \$2,000 or more a year on typesetting, pasting up, etc., a personal computer and laser printer set up could well pay for itself in a relatively short time.

#### Some Objections

*It’s too expensive!* These days, a computer, printer and software can be had for what many of you have paid for a good electric typewriter. By smart shopping, you can get set up for home use with \$1,000, give or take a little. If you can buy equipment in the States and bring it back, prices can be as much as 30% lower.

*How can I justify it to my supporters?* Most of your supporters will appreciate hearing from you more often and will recognize that reducing the time spent on paperwork can mean that there’s more time for ministry with people.

*It’s too hard!* In the past little while, I have met many folk who just started out using a computer; *most* of these are in their late 50’s and 60’s, and these people *love* using the machines and wish they’d had them years ago! Learning to use a computer is a lot like driving. You start out with a little fear and trepidation, you grind the gears a few times, stop too suddenly a few times, but before you know it, you’re driving like it was a second nature and no one could ever convince you to go back to walking all the time!

Folks, getting the right tool for the right job is the smart way to go. Getting started can be a little intimidating — computer makers and dealers love to talk a confusing jargon, maybe so they can impress the average guy and squeeze more money out of him. If you’re interested in getting one of these machines, talk to your friends that have one. Find out what they like about theirs and what they don’t like. Find out what they would recommend. Or feel free to contact me—I’m in the JEMA Directory and would be more than happy to answer questions and offer a little advice!



## What is JEA? Who Cares?

ROGER HEDERSTEDT

The morning after U.S. presidential contenders fought it out in the Iowa caucuses, I donned my running suit and trotted to the station to pick up a newspaper to see how the candidate from my home state had fared. I would tell you his name and my political preference, except that I would probably lose some readers. I think it was Charlie Brown who said, "I've learned to not talk about three things—politics, religion, and the Great Pumpkin." I'll avoid politics and the Great Pumpkin, but will talk about religion here.

Returning home, I hopped into the shower, a place where an inordinate number of my ideas get spawned. Thoughts about the 1988 JEMA Plenary Session, which had also come to a close just the day before, crowded my mind. One thing in particular stuck in my mind. Throughout the JEMA meeting mention was made of JEA, or the Japan Evangelical Association, and I began to wonder if many missionaries in Japan had any idea in the world what JEA was all about. If my experience was any indicator, I concluded that, when "Japan Evangelical Association" falls on missionary ears, it evokes little more than a vague image of some Japanese group that is trying to do something. Just a blob in the mind, even to many of those whose churches actually hold membership in JEA.

One year ago, if asked to describe JEA, I would probably have said, "It's the Japanese

counterpart of something like the NAE" (National Assn. of Evangelicals in the U.S.). While such name-dropping sounds a bit erudite, the fact remains that I can only make educated guesses as to what the NAE is all about; in unpolished terms, I'm ignorant.

One thing, however, started me on the path to understanding at least a little of what JEA represents. I was asked to join JEA's International Relations Commission with the specific purpose of editing an English newsletter for JEA, *Japan Update*, which JEMA has graciously offered (at no extra charge!) to include as a package with the *Japan Harvest* beginning with the current issue. You've probably already glanced over it.

At I lathered up in the shower that morning, I thought, "Missionaries here ought to know more about JEA, and maybe I can do something to interpret it to the missionary audience here."

That statement assumes a lot, of course. We are all bombarded with newsletters and appeals for subscriptions or contributions from missionary and theological journals, evangelistic organizations, Christian booksellers, etc. They all promise to accomplish something great (with the help of our money) or to help us somehow—to write better prayer letters, preach better sermons, raise healthier children, etc. Sounds familiar?

In spite of all the organizations—most of them good—clamoring for your attention, I

am still brash enough to propose that you spend the next 10 minutes learning about yet another one, this time JEA. I will admit right now that I am going to try to be persuasive, but as a consolation—just so you won't think this is strictly advertising—you should know that this is a totally unsolicited manuscript, and that I intend to mention some of the shortcomings of JEA as well. (I'm also wondering whether the editor will print it.) Without trying to be dishonest, as missionaries we nevertheless are accustomed to painting a generally positive picture of our work to our constituency at home. There is nothing wrong with that—I would probably be the first to say that I wouldn't always be willing to write my supporters and say, "Please give in proportion to the growth you see in the church I work with here in Japan." On one hand we need to convey the need without always being negative, while on the other we need to share the hope and vision God has given us without always sounding so sugary positive that we lose credibility. (This is what makes the Bible so much more believable than other religious texts; the people portrayed in Scripture are not peachy-clean characters with whom we can't identify; they include people like David, who had great faith but was nevertheless guilty of horrendous failure.)

### Why Learn About JEA?

Recently a Japanese pastor told me about a conversation he'd had with a pastor in another country. As they talked about mission/church relations in Japan, the other pastor was amazed to hear that pastors and missionaries in Japan don't do things together. Of course, in Japan missionaries and Japanese pastors work closely on a wide variety of church planting and other projects, but when do missionaries and Japanese leaders sit down regularly for prayer, fellowship, friendship and strategizing to reach Japan for Christ—across denominational boundaries? What we may have come to consider a "normal" church/mission relationship in Japan looked to this pastor like two groups doing their own thing and not enjoying the process and benefits of getting to know and work with one another more closely.

That's one reason to learn about JEA, which has worked hard to bridge this gap by integrating one or two missionaries on each of its working commissions (explained more below). At the organization level, JEMA and JEA are very cordial partners. And since JEA is now the major voice of evangelicals in Japan, we do well to know how it works so that we can work with it and for it, for God's glory.

Another simple reason to learn about JEA: It's always wise to know something about the groups in which you hold membership! If you belong to JEMA, you yourself are affiliated with JEA, because JEMA is an associate member of JEA (its largest one at that).

Does your church belong to JEA? If you don't know, find out. Some of your church or denomination's people might even be serving on JEA commissions. (Each summer issue of *Japan Update* will carry the latest roster of JEA members, to

save space I'm not providing the list here.)

There are many other missionaries who know a lot more about JEA and have followed it from the beginning. Perhaps they should be writing this. But as a new kid on the block maybe I'm in a little better position to interpret JEA to others who, like me one year ago, know almost nothing about JEA. I am deliberately writing this in first person instead of using the more formal but impersonal third person viewpoint. From my perspective—and I'll admit it is limited—here is JEA.

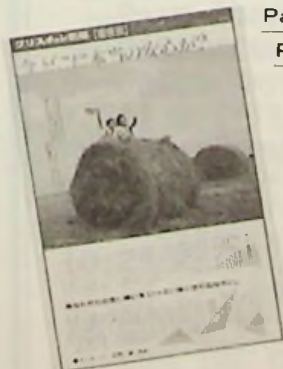
### Association of What?

In one sense, there are two Japan Evangelical Associations, the old one and the new one. In 1968 three founding members—the Japan Evangelical Federation (JEF), the Japan Protestant Conference (JPC), and JEMA—gave birth to the "old JEA." This was good, but JEA felt the need to reorganize in order to more effectively represent local

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churches, not just a conglomeration of church, parachurch, and mission organizations.

Just two years ago, after much planning, the old JEA was re-organized to become the current JEA, which has two membership levels, full and associate. Only local churches applying together as a block (ten churches or more) and denominations representing local churches can become full members. These groups, which number nearly 50 and represent over 1100 churches, form the core of JEA. Besides these, about 25 parachurch organizations comprise the associate membership. JEA funding comes from membership dues, which are assessed in accordance with the type and size of members.

If you remember nothing else about JEA, remember this: JEA represents local churches (about 1/6 of all Protestant churches in Japan). JEA leaders rightly take pride in this fact, for it means that when JEA takes a stand or makes a move, it is not just speak-

ing on behalf of, for example, a few dynamic Christian leaders who head up certain movements but who may not have a strong church base themselves. It speaks on behalf of actual churches. Being church-based is JEA's hallmark.

#### Who Runs JEA?

Rev. Akira Izuta (Baptist General Conference) is the first-term chairman of the new JEA, which means that he leads the 12-member Executive Council (names of council members appear on the back page of *Japan Update*). This council has broad-ranging powers, including the right to approve membership applications. Every year at the annual meeting in June, JEA members vote to re-elect or replace six members of the council; each member serves for two years and may be elected to a maximum of two consecutive terms.

Rev. Koji Ishikawa (Domei) now serves as JEA secretary, act-

ing as liaison between the various commissions and the Executive council and also as liaison with some organizations overseas.

If you looked at a list of all the members of each JEA commission (this will also appear in each summer issue of *Japan Update*), you would soon realize that JEA does *not* reflect its evangelical constituency very well in one way: none of the commissions has any women. Thankfully, there is talk about establishing a commission on women's concerns, and I am reasonably sure there won't be many men on that commission!

One woman you should know about, however, is Mrs. Kokubo. She's the office secretary for JEA, and I often tell her that even though most people look up to all those men as the true JEA leaders, she can rest assured that at least I know the whole association would fall apart without her assiduous work at the JEA office on the third floor of OSCC (next to the JEMA office). Stop in

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*Mr Sanders, a trained lawyer, for twenty years was Superintendent of the Bible College of New Zealand. In 1945 he joined China Inland Mission as Director for Australia and New Zealand, and he served as General Director of the Mission from 1954 to 1969. In 1973, Mr Sanders went to Papua New Guinea as Principal of the Christian Leaders' Training College, which position he held for two years. Mr Sanders is in demand as a conference speaker; he is also author of thirty books.*

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and tell her thanks sometime.

### What Does JEA do?

This question should probably read, "What does JEA *want* to do, and what does JEA *really* do?" In answer to the first part, JEA wants to do a lot, and has set up five commissions (a fancy word for "committees"). Technically these are *working* (*jitsumu*) committees each with 6-7 members; so they have been established to get something done. Here's a synopsis of the commissions, along with their expressed purposes (as I understand them):

**Disaster Relief—Self-explanatory Evangelism Strategy—Among**

other things, to help plan for the Third Japan Congress on Evangelism slated for 1990.

**International Relations—To act as JEA's contact point with overseas organizations like the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia, other national evangelical associations, the Lausanne Committee for**

World Evangelization, etc.

**Social Action—To develop strategies primarily to deal with two major issues: Yasukuni Shrine and the cults.**

**Theology—To serve as a guardian and promoter of sound evangelical theology in JEA and the Japanese church.**

Next, what have the commissions actually accomplished? All five of the commissions are officially "operative", which means that they are meeting on a fairly regular basis, although some are more active than others. Just as necessity is the mother of invention, so necessity is often the mother of action. Because JEA needed to establish its role early with outside groups like the World Evangelical Fellowship and others, the International Relations Commission was active very early. The Disaster Relief Commission quickly got off the ground as it faced the need to respond to the challenge of helping churches on Oshima after Mt. Mihara erupted. The Evan-

gelism Strategy Commission is embarking on an ambitious survey of churches planted in the last 10 years in order to gather data for the upcoming Third Congress on Evangelism.

JEA has already coordinated Japanese participation in at least two Lausanne-related conferences and one sponsored by the Evangelical Fellowship of Asia (EFA). Another key platform of JEA leaders: developing close relations with churches in other Asian countries and encouraging the Japanese church to develop a burden for mission in Asia. As has already been announced in the *Kurisuchan Shinbun*, there is even the possibility that the Third Japan Congress on Evangelism will be held in Korea. To understand JEA, you must understand its ardent desire to serve the whole church in Asia.

In Japan, however, the church is small and Christian organizations have a small pool of prominent leaders from which to draw for service as board members.

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We are all familiar with the fact, good or bad, that many of the well-known churchmen in Japan serve on the boards of dozens of Christian organizations, so that sometimes the lists of board members changes little from one organization to the next.

JEA, in trying to be the best, finds itself in the same situation. If you want some of the best and most prominent Christian leaders in Japan, you will also get the *busiest* leaders, those who are in great demand both in their own churches and in other organizations they serve. This—and perhaps the absence of some immediate crises—goes a long way toward explaining why some commissions or commission members haven't been able to devote a great deal of time to their allotted tasks. When I asked a member of one commission what they were doing in relation to a certain task that was rightfully theirs, he responded very simply and without a hint

of criticism, "Nothing." I know of another member who hasn't attended any of his commission's meetings in the past year because he was out of the country at the time each meeting was held.

Don't read too much into the above lines, though. I don't want you to think that the commissions are all trudging along without purpose or sense of need. It's just that there is a lot of work to be done and a very capable group of people with little time to do it. In some ways, it is an unavoidable set of circumstances, in others perhaps not. At any rate, JEA is still an infant, and we don't expect 2-year old geniuses to teach at Oxford or ride unicycles, but we wouldn't be surprised if they could do those things after a few years. Please read this with the realization that JEA is growing and developing, and that some of the commissions' work which is not yet being tackled will likely be on track in the near future. Just as you and I hope to grow in

good ways in the coming year or two, so will JEA improve. Pray for JEA.

As mentioned above, everything written here constitutes only my own observations. Perhaps I stand to be corrected in several areas, and would encourage anyone who can to shed more light on JEA and the role it plays in uniting evangelicals in Japan. It will be exciting to see how JEMA and JEA work together in the coming years, and I offer these observations so that early on you can have some insights into the organization that shares many of your same goals and beliefs and will be a close partner in the days ahead.

#### How Japan Update can help you

Since you're going to receive *Japan Update* regularly along with the *Harvest*, you may find it helpful to know a few things about this new publication. First of all, it is not intended to compete in any way with the *Harvest* (the editor didn't tell me

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to say that). It will retain a newsletter format, and JEMA deserves a pat on the back for supporting JEA by distributing it. Because JEMA buys a large number of copies of each issue, JEA is able to print more copies and offer them both to JEMA and others at a lower cost-per-copy—a win-win situation!

A glance at page 8 of the enclosed issue of *Japan Update* will give you an idea of who receives the publication. Unlike the *Harvest*, which as a JEMA organ focuses on informing the missionary community, *Japan Update* focuses on explaining the situation here to “outsiders”. Still, it will probably be of value to missionaries in Japan, especially those who are unable to decipher various Japanese resources which might contain some of the same news and information.

We are working to coordinate the publication dates of both the *Harvest* and *Japan Update* so that by later this year they will both be published at about the

same time. Even without this coordination of efforts, however, information that goes into *Japan Update* is not the kind that sounds very old only a month later; readers should find even back issues helpful in learning about broader trends and movements within the church here.

Ideally, *Japan Update* would be offered free of charge to anyone interested. Unfortunately, we would break JEA’s budget!—newsletters don’t have space through which to raise advertising income. However, I would like to suggest how you, as a missionary, can use *Japan Update* effectively in your own ministry (and make it possible to print more copies at a cheaper cost-per-copy, thus making it possible to reduce subscription fees or improve the quality).

1) Send one copy to each of your main supporting churches (or supporters) and ask if they would be willing to subscribe in order to keep better informed about the field where you

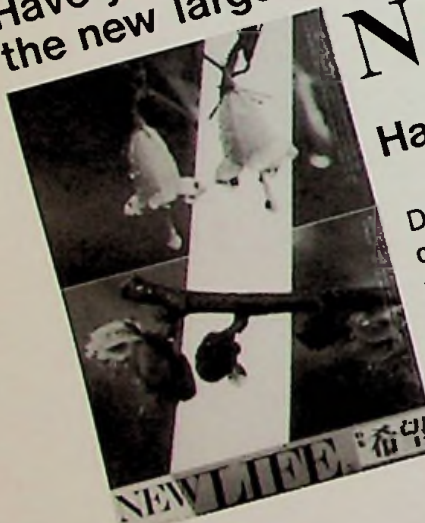
serve. If necessary and possible, pay for a subscription or two yourself and have it sent to interested supporters.

- 2) Use the above method to introduce *Japan Update* to
- interested family members and friends
  - the library of the Bible college or seminary from which you graduated
  - prospective missionaries to Japan
  - Sunday school classes and Vacation Bible Schools

Anyone wishing to buy bulk copies of a future issue to distribute while home on furlough should let me know early so that we make sure enough are printed. Significant discounts can be offered for orders of 50 or more copies and could be mailed (by you) at cheaper rates. All of this, of course, helps JEA and goes a long way toward helping the outside world know more and pray about what God is doing in Japan. . .for Christ and His Kingdom.

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