

A CHALLENGE TO PENTECOSTAL MISSION IN JAPAN

Noriyuki Miyake

1. Introduction

Although it has been more than four hundred years since the first Catholic missionary came to Japan and more than one hundred years since the first Protestant missionaries brought the gospel into Japan, the percentage of Christians in all the population of Japan is less than one percent.¹ It seems that Christianity is totally ignored or rejected by most Japanese.

Why do the Japanese not believe in the gospel? It is very significant to examine the reasons for stagnation of evangelism in Japan and come up with effective strategies to win the Japanese people.

Needless to say, the Pentecostal movement has been powerful in spreading the gospel all over the world since the movement began in the beginning of the twentieth century. Yet, while this movement has impacted Christianity in Japan to some extent, it must be recognized that over 99% of the Japanese have not accepted Jesus Christ. For “[t]he priority for reason-for-being of the Assemblies of God is to be an agency for evangelizing the world,”² Japanese Pentecostalism should bear the fruit of the mission in Japan. Japan’s situation asks, “Is there any advantage for Pentecostals for evangelism in Japan? If so, what is the advantage of Pentecostal mission?”

¹ According to *Christian Year Book 2004* (Tokyo: Kirisuto Shimbunsha, 2004), the total number of Protestant churches is 8,083 and the number of members is 617,053. The Orthodox Church has 73 churches with 25,916 members. The Catholic Church has 1,027 churches with 477,624 members. The percentage of all Christians is 0.8%.

² V. M. Karkkainen, “Missiology: Pentecostal and Charismatic,” in *The New International Dictionary of Pentecostal and Charismatic Movements*, eds. Stanley M. Burgess et al. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), pp. 877-85 (877).

2. Japanese Religious Thinking

In order to win people to Christ, we need to know their worldview, such as their religious thinking. Only when their religious thinking is studied, then we can probe the reason for the difficulties of evangelism in Japan.

“The Japanese are among the most religious or least religious people on earth, depending on whom you talk to or how you define ‘religious.’”³ Much research and observations about Japanese religious thinking explore this statement. While about 70% of Japanese think of themselves to be “irreligious” (*Mu-Shukyo*),⁴ the gross number of members of the religions to which Japanese belong is well over the total population of Japan.⁵ For example, in Japan during New Year celebrations, about 80% of the Japanese visit Shinto shrines for the blessing of the year and this rite is called *Hatsumode*.⁶ At the same time, it is often said that when Japanese abroad are asked their religion, they are puzzled for an answer, because many do not think of themselves as believing in a particular religion.⁷

To understand Japanese religious thinking, we must know that there is a difference in the concept of religion between the ordinary Japanese and Christians. If “religious” means to believe in a particular doctrine like the Christian faith, then many Japanese do not think they are

³ Malcolm B. Davis, ed., *Japan: Insight Guides* (Singapore: APA Publications [HK], 1992), p. 71.

⁴ Toshimaro Ama, *Nihonjin wa Naza Mu-Shukyo Nanoka* [Why Do Japanese Have No Religion?] (Tokyo: Chikuma Shobo, 1999), p. 8. See also Kenji Ishii, *Gendai Nihonjin no Shukyo* [Today's Japanese Religion] (Tokyo: Shinyosha, 1997), p. 7.

⁵ Kenji Ishii, *Gendai Nihonjin no Shukyo* [Today's Japanese Religion] (Tokyo: Shinyosha, 1997), p. 118. According to this research, the total members of all the religious organizations are 215 million, while the total population of Japan is 126 million.

⁶ E.g., see, Hidetoshi Kato, “Nihon no Kamigami” [Popular Deities of Japan], in *Nihon no Kokoro 1 Bunka to Dento* [Inside the Japanese: Culture and Tradition], ed. Corporate Secretariat Division of Nippon Steel Corporation (Tokyo: Maruzen, 1992), pp. 2-3.

⁷ E.g., see, Ama, *Nihonjin wa Naza Mu-Shukyo Nanoka*, pp. 11-12. and Ishii, *Gendai Nihonjin no Shukyo*, p. 124.

religious. And yet, if it means to believe in something supernatural or something awesome, it seems that many of them definitely are religious.

Here are some characteristics of Japanese religious thinking.

2.1 Participation in Religious Events

Ordinary Japanese respect participating more than believing. For Japanese, participating in religious events such as *Hatsumode* (visiting a Shinto shrine for blessing the year, normally during the first three days of January) and the *Obon* festival (a memorial service for household ancestors at the middle of August) is very important. Also, there are many traditional rituals based on Japanese folk religion such as special religious observances for the pregnant woman, birth (*omiya mairi*), early childhood (*Shichi go san*), marriage, and death.⁸ It seems that ordinary Japanese do not sense the truth by knowing the teachings of religions, but sense religious truth by practicing some religious rituals.

2.2 Plurality

Ordinary Japanese do not think it unnatural or un-right to have plural religions. For a long time, Japanese have accepted other religions which came from other countries (mainly from China via the Korean Peninsula), adding them to their own folk religions. When they received a new faith, the Japanese did not deny their own folk religions, but rather they changed a new faith to some extent so that they could easily incorporate it. For example, the Japanese adopted Buddhism in the sixth century without denying Shinto, which was originally based on Japanese folk religion, and began to use the rituals of Buddhism for aspects of ancestor worship that Shinto could not adequately cover.⁹ Although it seems that only Christianity struck against this Japanese religious pluralism and was rejected, some events from Christianity such as

⁸ Soboku na Gimon Tankyukai [Simple Questions Research Association], ed., *Eigo de Hanasu Zatsugaku Nippon* [Japan Trivia] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1998), pp. 166-67.

⁹ Ama, *Nihonjin wa Naza Mu-Shukyo Nanoka*, pp. 50-55. Also Yasuo Yuasa, *Nihonjin no Shukyo Ishiki* [Japanese Religious Thinking] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1999), p. 120. See also Kazuo Osumi, "Nihon Niokeru Shukyo-Sinto Bukkyo no Seiritu to Heiritu" [Religion in Japan: The Interweaving of Shinto and Buddhism], in *Nihon no Kokoro 1 Bunka to Dento* [Inside the Japanese: Culture and Tradition], pp. 14-27.

Christmas and St. Valentine's Day are now deeply rooted into Japanese lives. Ordinary Japanese do not think it a contradiction to go to shrines at the New Year one week after they celebrate Christmas.

2.3 Sense of Belonging

Japanese have a sense of belonging by participating in religious rituals. In other words, for the Japanese, religions (Shinto and Buddhism) have provided the ties that in turn formed the village community and the household. Japanese have been obliged to belong to two groups: one to the local village community (*mura*), and the other to a household (*ie*). Shinto shrines have been the center of each village community. Buddhist temples have been the facilitator of ancestor worship. As previously mentioned, however, the main reasons are not from their beliefs, but a kind of social pressure. Mark R. Mullins, a professor at Meiji Gakuin University, analyzes this as follows:

Most Japanese naturally participated in the annual festivals and rituals of the local Shinto shrine and Buddhist temple. Participation in religious events and rituals was primarily motivated by the sense of duty and obligation that accompanied membership in a household and community, not by clearly defined beliefs or exclusive creeds.¹⁰

We can say that Japanese religious thinking is closely related to a sense of belonging.

2.4 Worldly Benefits (*goriyaku*)

Japanese religious thinking tends to seek for worldly benefits (*goriyaku*).¹¹ For instance, Japanese get talismans from temples and shrines for their entrance examinations, road safety, easy birth, healing, prosperity of business, and other life events.

While Japan has become one of the most developed countries in the world, many folk beliefs are still affecting Japanese thinking and acting. For instance, the ages 25 and 42 for men and 19 and 33 for women are thought to be the years that an individual is most likely to experience

¹⁰ Mark Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, Nanzan Library of Asian Religion and Culture, 1998), pp. 7-8.

¹¹ Masami Katsumoto, *Nihon no Shukyo Gyoji ni Dou Taiou Suruka* [How Do we Deal with Japanese Religious Events?] (Tokyo: Inochi no Kotoba, 1990), p. 38.

calamities or misfortunes (*yakudoshi*).¹² To avoid the misfortunes, many people of these ages go to the shrines to be prayed for or to get talismans. Divination is popular among many Japanese. Words or expressions associated with or considered to bring bad luck are strongly avoided. It is not unusual to see Japanese do something for luck.

2.5 Challenges for the Mission

There is no concept of the absolute in the Japanese religious thinking. Traditionally, they have accepted any religious truth into their culture (except for Christianity) and even modified the teachings for them. For most Japanese, a religious truth is not what they have to follow, but what they can employ for their own benefit. It is difficult for Japanese in their mindset to grant that there is the absolute and only God who rules everything. This point is the biggest challenge for the mission of Christianity.

The way of recognizing religious truth by the Japanese is also totally different from the one for the westerners. Japanese accept or understand religious truth not by intellectual studying but by acting out rituals. Unless they can participate and experience something, they never believe in the truth.

Another significant point of Japanese religious thinking is that for Japanese, the import of believing in a religion is close to the import of belonging to a community. Belonging to a household means believing in Buddhism; belonging to a village community means believing in Shinto. Ordinary Japanese cannot separate a religion from a community or group they belong to, and vice versa.

3. Improper Approaches to Japanese

Reviewing the discussion above, I want to suggest several reasons why mission strategies of the church have not been a success in gaining the lost as expected. There seem to be some improper approaches in reaching out to the Japanese. I mainly present three major problems.

¹² *Keys to the Japanese Heart and Soul*, ed. Eibun Nihon Daijiten [English-Japanese Dictionary] (Tokyo: Kodansha, 1996), pp. 226-27.

3.1 Absolute First

One of the biggest reasons why many Japanese cannot accept biblical truth is that there is no concept of absoluteness in their minds. Japanese have historically granted there is religious truth without denying their former faiths. When Buddhism was introduced to Japan in the sixth century A.D., Japanese did not deny their original Shinto and skillfully made both religions compatible. In the same way, the Japanese accepted Confucianism and other philosophical thoughts from China. Japan even granted western civilization entrance after the opening of the country in the nineteenth century. The Japanese succeeded in acquiring foreign notions without grasping a fraction of their conventional values. Over all, since Japanese do not possess the concept of absoluteness, they can easily receive foreign thoughts and sometimes even change them into suitable ones for the Japanese.¹³

Japanese cannot understand the basics of the biblical faith because they are polytheists and tend to deny absolute existence. "For Japanese, such belief that God is the only one is not 'truth,' at least not meaningful truth, no matter how veritable this belief may be."¹⁴ If we insist on absolute Christian concepts at first to Japanese, we may see that many people will become upset or cannot accept the concept. Japanese just do not or cannot believe in the biblical faith concept all at once. At the same time, I am not saying that teaching the absoluteness of Christianity is not necessary. Needless to say, it is imperative to fix biblical truth as absolute truth in the minds of Christians. What I will say is that, if we consider that acceptance of the concept of absoluteness is the entrance of mission for Japanese, we might find that the beginning of Christian faith is too narrow for most ordinary Japanese to enter.

It may be better to think that it takes time for Japanese to understand biblical faith as indispensable because of their existent views. Therefore, it may not be wise to urge the Japanese to believe in the biblical truths such as the absolute and only God, original sin, and the notion of salvation at the first stage of evangelistic encounters. Even if many Japanese deny believing in Jesus Christ as their own Savior at the first step, they may just be confused. If we conclude that they reject the truth

¹³ Reiji Oyama, *Nihonjin to Kirisutokyo no Juyo* [Japanese and the Acceptance of Christianity] (Tokyo: Yogansha, 1995), p. 89.

¹⁴ Makito Nagasawa, "Religious Truth: From a Cultural Perspective in the Japanese Context," *Journal of Asian Mission* 4:1 (March 2002), pp. 43-62 (44).

at that time, we might be tempted to abandon contact with them from that point.

It is crucial to assume that it takes time to make Japanese fully understand Biblical truth. Therefore, it might be good to allow Japanese to go through the gateway of Christian fellowship first and give them biblical truth step by step through their experiences in church.

3.2 Intellectual Approach

As stated before, Japanese by nature receive religious truth through experience such as participating in rituals. And yet, many Japanese think of Christianity as a knowledge-centered religion. We must understand that biblical truth, based on knowledge, is very important for Japanese Christians to live in a pagan society like Japan. However, if we present the gospel as no more than knowledge, we notice that many of the Japanese do not have an interest in the gospel. Makito Nagasawa, a Japanese minister, makes the following suggestion about the mission for reaching Japanese:

In the Japanese context, truth is experiential and personal. Truth as philosophical or conceptual, separated from feeling, is almost meaningless to the Japanese. Thus they are looking for communities in which spiritual experiences are tangible and real. We have to start with personal experience.¹⁵

As he says, it is vital that we introduce the gospel as something we can experience. Did Jesus preach the gospel as just knowledge? When the disciples of John the Baptist asked Jesus who Jesus was,

Jesus answered and said to them, "Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them (Luke 7:22, NKJ).

The ministry of Jesus was total and was accompanied by something visible and tangible. In other words, it was something that humans could experience. Therefore, if we present the gospel as something which one can experience, we may be able to see the Japanese people becoming interested in it.

¹⁵ Nagasawa, "Religious Truth," pp. 55-56.

Pentecostal ministries have the advantage in this matter. They can preach the gospel, proclaiming the experience and the work of the Holy Spirit. The gospel that we preach must involve the experiences of biblical truth so that people will know that Christian faith is not merely knowing but also experiencing.

3.3 Disregarding the Japanese Nature of Group-Orientation

The last inadequate mission approach is forcing people to leave the community to which they belong. The Japanese are a group-oriented people. They fear being isolated from their communities of family, school, and work place. On the contrary, perhaps unconsciously, it seems that the traditional mission approach by the Christian church is to encourage people to move away from their communities. "In Japan, people do not act according to the standard that they regard as right. They always watch other people and think that it is better to do what other people do."¹⁶ For the people who are not in Christian homes, they cannot imagine being a Christian, not because of denying the Christian faith, but because of being unable to leave their community, especially their families. "In fact, membership in Japanese religious organizations has typically been by families and not by individuals."¹⁷

One Japanese pastor points out as follows: "It is necessary for Japanese to have one more decision other than the decision to believe in the Gospel. This is the decision to join the church. This is one more difficult and crucial phase."¹⁸ For Japanese, it is vital whether it is worthy to belong to the church. In other words, a local church should be a community which gives comfort and is easy to join. It is not sensible to make the unchurched afraid of cutting off their former lives before they find the church can be a replacement for community. Unless church provides the unchurched with a safe and a comfortable community in which to belong, we will not see people willing to enter a church.

¹⁶ Reiji Oyama, *Nihonjin to Kirisutokyo no Juyo* [Japanese and the Acceptance of Christianity] (Tokyo: Yoganisha, 1995), p. 103.

¹⁷ Timothy Dale Boyle, "Communicating the Gospel in Japanese Cultural Terms: Practical Experiments at the Shintoku Kyodan Church" (Doctor of Ministry diss., Fuller Theological Seminary, 1986), p. 67.

¹⁸ Makito Goto, "Nihon Senkyo-Gaku ga Toriatsukaubeki Han-i Nitsuite" [About the Range What the Japanese Missiology Should Deal with], in *Senkyo-Gaku Riidingus* [The Readings of Missiology], KMRC Mission Series, ed. Mitsuo Fukuda (Hyogo, Japan: RAC Network, 2002), pp. 151-63 (153).

4. Suggested Mission Approaches

The fundamental mistake seems to come from a wrong premise. We have believed that we have to make people go through the following process in order to become saved.

[To hear] → [To understand] → [To believe]

This process shows that we have to lead people into hearing the gospel at first, understanding it, and then believing in it. Yet, if we try to push people through this procedure, we must push them to accept absolute truth at the first stage. This approach is knowledge-centered and does not consider the fear of being isolated from community.

In other words, this approach is quite individualistic. Even if it does work in western cultural society, it does not always work in Japan which is traditionally group-oriented. My suggestion is that the process for becoming a Christian for Japanese should be as follows:

[To belong to] → [To experience] → [To believe]

For many Japanese, accepting a faith means to belong to some community. While westerners find their identity in their belief, Japanese find their identity in the place to which they are attached. Unless they find a place in which to belong, they cannot fully think about faith. And, unless they feel that they are accepted, they never open their hearts. Then, as I mentioned, experience is very crucial for Japanese religious thinking. Japanese cannot grasp a sense of faith until they experience something religious.

Next, let us think about the type of place to which we bring people. We might have had a premise about evangelism up until now, that is, an assumption that we must bring people into a church. (We may be able to say that it is “a place under God’s control.”) Yet, there are high walls for Japanese to climb over to enter a church.

If we regard evangelism as a one-time event, we will lose many souls. It is not true that Japanese do not want to believe in Christ, but they need some time to overcome their own worldviews. If we push them to decide right away, many of them cannot do so, and both we and they may have to give up.

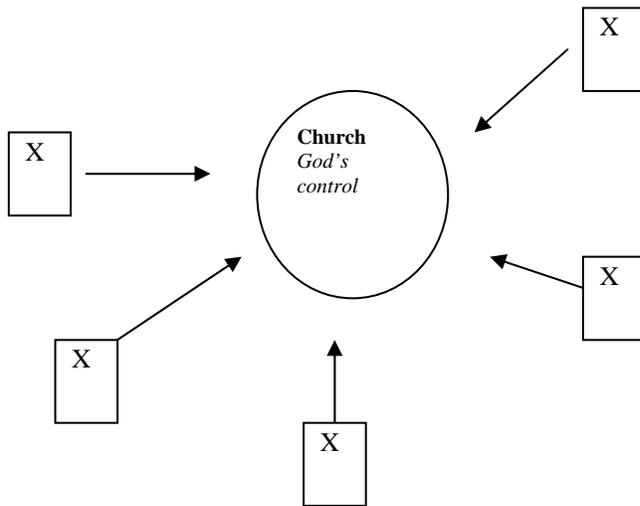


Figure 1 X=an individual. We try to make people come into a church, but there are high walls around a church.

To solve this problem, how about having a concept of “a pre-church?”

People cannot be a member of God’s kingdom unless they confess that Christ is Lord. And yet, the Holy Spirit can influence even those who are not involved in a church. Jesus mixed with many people who did not know who He was. He ate meals with those who were ignored, discriminated against, and regarded as sinners; He just plunged into the crowd. Then, Jesus healed and liberated many who were suffering from sicknesses and evil spirits.

Thus, we can bring our Christian fellowship outside of a church and receive the unchurched into it. In the fellowship arena, we can make developing human relationships a first priority before we preach the gospel. We should understand them before they understand us. At the same time, we should expect the Holy Spirit to lead us and powerfully act in the spiritual community.

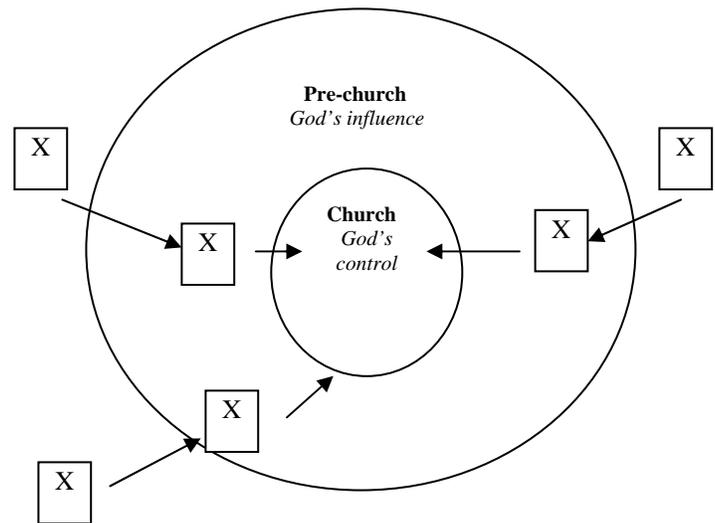


Figure 2: An individual can be led into Pre-church and then into Church.

In the field of God's influence, people can take time to think about the Christian faith without any pressure. Then, we can encourage them to decide to follow Jesus Christ and become a member of the body of Christ. Needless to say, we have to enlarge the realm of God's influence as large as we can so that many people will come into the fellowship.

4.1 Fellowship with Love

In the field of God's influence, we should expect that people will see a spiritual community where people can be open, feel accepted and loved. Mitsuo Fukuda, a missiologist, points out that "In the Japanese context, the mission/pastoral ministry which makes much of human relationship is the functional approach."¹⁹ I agree with this idea. Before we preach the gospel, we should hear their voice and develop the human

¹⁹ Mitsuo Fukuda, *Bunmyakuka Kyokaino Keisei* [Developing a Contextualized Church as a Bridge to Christianity in Japan] (Shizuoka, Japan: Harvest Time Ministries, 1993), p. 216.

relationship. We should invite people to come to our fellowship, because people are seeking a place where they can feel befriended, loved, and accepted. We should show the presence of God's love from the beginning. If we can present the Christian community by showing them how we love, help, and serve each other, we can remove their fear and prejudice, and thus encourage them to join the community in which the Holy Spirit exists.

The most important point is that we should present communities that meet the needs of the unchurched Japanese people. Although Japan seems to be a sophisticated and relatively wealthy country, there are many serious social problems, just as there are in other countries. It can be said that many of the problems are based on problems in human relationships. Many people are suffering from broken relationships with others and I believe that we can and should help them restore their injured hearts and minds.

4.2 Experience of the Holy Spirit

Once in the fellowship, we can expect that people will experience something spiritual. We should express ourselves to each other and share even our problems and needs. We minister and pray for one another. When we have a fellowship filled with the Spirit, we can anticipate that even non-believers can feel God's power.

Blessing can be a powerful message. The Japanese church has tended to emphasize only "notional domains," such as eternal life and deliverance from sin and not so much on specific living needs. However, people long for worldly benefits such as health, financial success, and protection from evil by religion. When they find that God can answer their requests, they will desire to have contact with the God of Christianity. We should expect that the Holy Spirit will meet their physical, emotional, and spiritual needs.

Needless to say, a power encounter is one of the most effective points that non-believers can experience. Even in Japan, a sophisticated and high technology society, many people are (consciously or unconsciously) aware of spiritual reality. "The appearance of new religions which emphasize healing, miracles, ancestor worship, spells, and good or evil genius, and the boom of fortune telling, occult, and New-age movement show the Japanese original worldview."²⁰ In the

²⁰ Mamoru Ogata, *Nikkan Kyokai Seicho Hikaku Bunka to Kirisutkyoshi* [The Comparison of Japanese and Korean Church Growth, Culture and History of Christianity] (Yamanashi, Japan: Hope Shuppan, 1997), p. 310.

depth of their minds, people believe in invisible spiritual power. We should expect that people will see that Christian faith has spiritual power.

4.3 Accepting the Truth

The next stage is the truth encounter. When they realize that they are accepted and loved, and experience God's work in their lives, they finally are ready to be taught biblical truth. It is important to open the Bible together and help them to understand the truth step by step.

On this point, I would like to suggest that we should begin with what is relevant to their needs. What are their problems in life? Do they have a problem in their marriage, in their interpersonal relationships, or with their children? We should focus on what they need or what they want to know. Then, let us connect these problems with the Bible. In general, Japanese respect the Bible, even if they have a negative image of Christianity and the church. Ordinary Japanese know that the Bible is the oldest sacred book, and that it has produced many cultures, great arts, and life teachings. We can show that there are answers to our life problems in the Bible. By finding solutions from the Bible, people come to know what a Christian is little by little.

We should encourage them to do something specific that the Bible says about their daily lives. We should not make the word of God just a book of knowledge. "It is more appropriate for the Japanese to define the Bible as the canon designed for teaching, which is to be practiced, rather than teaching which is to be accepted as beliefs."²¹ It is necessary for non-believers to realize that when they put the word of God into practice, they will experience God's love and power and be blessed. There are many teachings that change the Japanese worldview in the Bible and by experiencing God's word in their daily lives, Japanese can recognize what they should follow.

Then, we can introduce them to who Jesus Christ is. We do not lead them into a religion, but to Jesus himself. If they become aware of Jesus and the power in the Christian life, they may then pursue the purpose of their lives. It is meaningful to help them discover how Jesus can be concerned with us in our specific daily life. We must tell them why we need Jesus, how Jesus saves us, where Jesus brings us, what Jesus expects us to do and other basic teachings. It goes without saying that we should expect the Holy Spirit, who points to the cross of Jesus Christ, to lead them into the full presence of God during the sharing of the Word.

²¹ Nagasawa, "Religious Truth," p. 59.

4.4 Modeling of Lifestyle

Lastly, we should conclude this process by demonstrating a model of a Christian who powerfully walks in this world. "In the context of fellowship with Christians, they will see a living example of the new life and how it works."²² Many Japanese are seeking for a visible model, as many are oppressed with anxiety about such things as the future, family, finances, human relationships, low self-esteem, and addictions. If Christians can show the unchurched how they live free in this world and what the difference between Christian and non-Christian is, people will desire to be like Christians. They will follow a model Christian who really lives in this world and deals with actual problems, and when they realize that faith in Christ Jesus is the key, they will decide to follow him. This is the moment of believing and becoming a member of the Church.

As pointed out, it is difficult for Japanese to take large steps toward an unknown realm all at once. Human relationships may make them move toward the Christian faith step by step. As we have seen, we need to change the paradigm of evangelism. And the most important point in that is reliance upon the Holy Spirit. "There are no rules and regulations for mission, because Spirit leadership is central."²³ Only the Holy Spirit knows the needs of the lost and can touch their lives. The Bible tells us that God has set eternity in human hearts (Ecc 3:11). Even Japanese have a longing for spiritual eternity and it is imperative that we do not overstep the authority of the Spirit.

5. Concluding Remarks

I conclude that one of the biggest reasons why Christianity does not penetrate Japanese minds is that the conventional approach of Christian mission does not seem to fit the ordinary Japanese religious mind. That is to say, we may have been trying to force the Japanese to accept the Absolute God as the first step within an intellectual approach.

We need to first present a community filled with true love and power. If Japanese can find a community to belong and experience God's existence in the fellowship of Christians, they can easily understand that

²² Nagasawa, "Religious Truth," p. 61.

²³ Clark H. Pinnock, *Flame of Love: A Theology of the Holy Spirit* (Downers Grove IL: InterVarsity Press, 1996), p. 145.

Christianity is meaningful to them. I believe that the spiritual community has the power to attract lost people and if we can meet their physical and mental needs with love and power from God, we can open their hearts. When people realize that the true love and power that they are seeking are in the Christian community, they will want to join and will eventually open their hearts to the good news. If they can see and touch what God is doing, through Christian fellowship, they will come to understand that they need Jesus Christ as their Savior.

I believe that there is an essential key Scripture for Pentecostal mission in Japan. The Book of Acts describes the first Christian community as,

And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved (Acts 2:42-47, NKJ).

The first Christians eagerly learned the word of God and prayed together (v. 42). There were signs and wonders in the Christian fellowship (v. 43); their needs were met through each other (vv. 44-45), and they had joy (v. 46). I especially would like to stress that they had favor with people who were outside the Christian community, and daily people were being saved (v. 47).

We can say that the first Christian community was attracting people who were outside the church. If we can build a real Spirit-filled church like the first Christian fellowship described in the Book of Acts, we can make the Pentecostal movement a great influential Christian movement in Japan.

Pentecostalism has become a global phenomenon that has made an impact upon almost every country on earth.³ The Pentecostal movement began in the early 1900s as a simple, spontaneous and emotional form of Christianity,⁴ claiming that the "gifts of the Spirit"TM, as recorded in the New Testament book of Acts,⁵ including such Cite this Item. Part One: Thematic. Quite a lot has been written about the contribution of western missionaries to Pentecostalism in India. Narratives about the work of Syrian Christians in Pentecostalism in the Indian subcontinent are plenty. However, the contribution of Dalit¹ Christians to Pentecostalism in the subcontinent is something that has not yet been properly researched. Pentecostal Distinctiveness in Missions. Peter Wagner says that "probably the greatest contribution that Pentecostalism has made to Christianity in general is restoring the miracle power of the New Testament: and that his was for the purpose of drawing unbelievers to Christ. McClung L. Grant Jr., *Azusa Street and Beyond: Pentecostal Missions and Church Growth in the Twentieth Century*, p.129. Anderson, Allan, *Towards a Pentecostal Missiology*, (CESNERM, School of Mission, Selly Oak Colleges, Birmingham England, 1998). First point is that Pentecostal mission is grounded in a conviction that the Holy Spirit is the motivating power behind all activity and its "theology" can be named as "theology on the move." Challenges to missionaries.. Challenges to you and me... Pentecostal converts among Brazilians of Japanese descent (Nikkeis) in Japan will serve as a case study to delineate this concept. Temporality figures as a central theme in their stories of migration to the supposed ancestral homeland as well as in their narratives of conversion in Japan. I will illustrate the ways in which conversion addresses common concerns regarding time among the migrant converts, such as "putting aside living for the future". The article concludes with an observation that Nikkeis often experience Pentecostal conversion as a "return to the present", where life is no longer perceived to be suspended. View. Show abstract. In "Japan's Defense Policy in Cyberspace," Takahisa Kawaguchi (Senior Fellow, Tokio Marine and Nichido Risk Consulting Co.) assesses the intersection of cyberspace and Japan's security, emphasizing the need to deter cyberattacks while also taking preemptive actions. Discussing the development of Japan's cybersecurity policy, Kawaguchi notes the challenge in identifying a threshold for cyberattacks outside of the gray zone, which still encompasses many types of cyber incidents. The limited role of the SDF and constitutional restrictions on surveillance capabilities pose unique difficulties that...