



“I have always thought there was a high degree of risk involved when inviting a non-Christian friend to the church”, expressed a friend of mine as we sipped on a cup of coffee at Tim Hortons.

EVANGELISM

MY CHURCH

a “turn on” or ‘turn off’?

By Nori Kanashiro - General Director

He relayed to me an interesting but a tragic experience he had as a new Christian enthused about witnessing to his friends of the new life he found in Christ. This is his story.

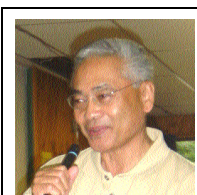
One Sunday morning I invited a friend to my church. It was an exceptionally cold and rainy spring day. My friend, drove to the church but could not find a parking space on the church lot and ended up one block away on the street. Without an umbrella he was soaked when he entered the church. Feeling somewhat embarrassed he stood in a corner of the foyer waiting for me. Unfortunately, I was delayed due to a minor car problem that morning. In the meantime, one of our enthusiastic ushers, expressing his joy at seeing a newcomer, and seemingly oblivious of my friend's desire to wait for me, escorted him right to the front row of the church. I arrived just as the offering was about to be collected. I hurriedly made my way to him after the prayer and saw that he was by himself on the front row. Just as I was approach-

ing him, I noticed that the usher collecting the offering went directly to him and stalling long enough for me to notice my friends embarrassment while fumbling in his pocket. I noted that he dropped in a \$20.00 bill. I later found out that this was set aside for grocery pick up that afternoon. The message that morning was from the Book of Daniel on the prophecy of the “Seventy Weeks”. I thought to myself, “this is a terrible first time experience for my friend”.

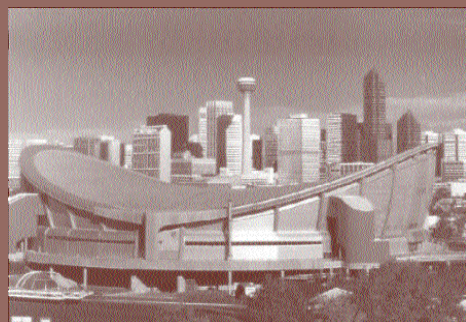
As the service was coming to a close, a welcome feeling of relief was coming over me. But that was short lived. Before pronouncing the benediction, the pastor asked the visitors to stand and introduce themselves. My friend is a meek and shy person. He looked at me, almost with alarm in his eyes. I said to him “I’ll introduce you”. So we both stood together. There were no other visitors in the service.

I relay this story because it is a true experience. I wish it were not so, but churches sometimes in their enthusiastic and well-meaning naivete become insensitive and oblivious to the needs of others. It is not surprising that this young man has never entered a church again.

In our endeavours to reach people for Christ, it is good to see guidance and encouragement toward seeker-sensitive services today. Churches do not have to be a threatening experience for people. It does however, require planning, training and communication with your congregation, so they are not caught off guard when they bring their friends and family to church. □



Nori Kanashiro has been the General Director of CJM since the AGM of 2000. He is also active as the chair of the Elders Board of the Japanese Gospel Church of Toronto.

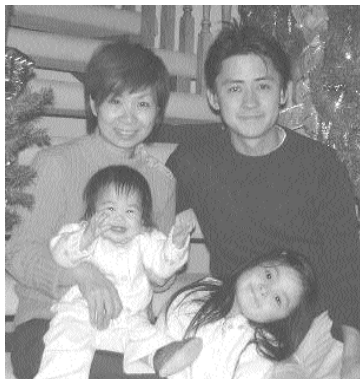


Canadian Japanese Ministries (CJM)

invites you to their weekend of fellowship, sharing, learning and ministries discussion.

at the **Calgary Japanese Gospel Church, Calgary, Alberta**
May 28 - 30, 2004

in addition to the Annual General Meeting, there will be a Pastors and Board members session and a Spouses Session with the ladies. For further information, please call Tina Sakon, secretary, at 403-242-0849 or Email: sakonb@telus.net



Yoshi & Makiko Nakao
Angela Inori 1, Noa 5 years

Changes in our Lethbridge Ministry

by Pastor Yoshi Nakao

This year is going well. We have much we want to share with you about the blessings of the Lethbridge Ministry.

Since last fall, the church continues to hold various monthly events such as the Afternoon Tea Club and Men's Club for the purpose of outreach. Last fall, the church hosted a flea market which included the "Kid's Club" lemonade stand. Then at Christmas, a sukiyaki party was attended by over 60 people. Each month, we have a "ramen" or "udon" day where members from each club participated and bring their families. In addition, we have had many opportunities to share our testimonies with people asking for our advice on various family issues.

Last summer, we were pleased that some people who had moved to Lethbridge have come to join our small group. We started a Bible study with some high school students who will be baptized in March.

Recently, a Japanese senior in the final stages of cancer placed his faith in Christ. At the Memorial service in Taber AB, we had an opportunity to share God's Word in front of many Japanese Canadian seniors. In all these things we have seen God working both inside and outside of our church.

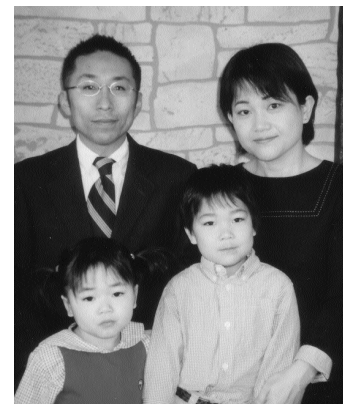
May 31 will mark 3 years of our ministry, after which we will pass the torch on to Satoshi and Maki Akiyama who had preceded us in the work here. During these past 4 years, including one year which I came every week during my time at Prairie College, we are grateful that this ministry was blessed with the support and prayer of so many people.

Finally, it is our deepest desire that you continue to support and pray for this ministry. I wish to thank you all for the faithful support you gave us. God bless you all. ☐

CJM wishes to thank Yoshi and Makiko Nakao for their faithful ministry during the past 3 years. Through their creative and innovative ministry, many were touched with the Gospel of Christ. We wish them every blessing of God and a clear direction in their future ministry.

by Pastor Satoshi Akiyama

Greetings to all in Jesus' Name! God is wonderfully leading us back to minister to the people of Lethbridge and area beginning in June of 2004.



Satoshi and Mari Akiyama,
Amy 3, Joshua 5 years

While we were students at Prairie Bible College the Lord opened a way for us to minister with the Lethbridge Japanese Christian Fellowship for a three year period beginning in the summer of 1997. Through this opportunity, I saw the needs of Japanese churches in Canada and began to pray for them. I also discovered that Japanese people tend to open their hearts to the Gospel when they leave their country and live in a different culture. Through our ministry in Lethbridge we have keenly felt that a church is not built automatically with preaching on Sunday but needs a full-time pastor who can take care of his/her congregation, by praying together, and encouraging them.

Last fall, Pastor Nakao shared with me that God has given him a new vision in ministry and that I should pray toward ministering here. Mari and I knew the huge challenge being suggested to us. We were in no hurry for God's answer but began to pray about this. It was at the fall Missions Conference in Briercrest College and Seminary that God confirmed to us that we should prepare to go to Lethbridge. Romans 10:14-15 and 2 Corinthians 5:17-20 have stayed in my heart since then.

Please pray that we would be Christ's ambassadors for His blessing, and to strive for the ministry to become stable. I am looking forward to my first full-time pastoral ministry in Canada. We would appreciate your prayers for God's guidance in this new venture. ☐

DONATIONS:
for the support of the
NAKAO'S or AKIYAMA'S
MINISTRY or for the
GENERAL FUND may be
sent to the CJM Treasurer:

Brenda Ohara-Peters
669 Hillman Cres.,
Mississauga, ON L4Y 2J1

CJM welcomes Satoshi and Mari Akiyama whose ministry commences on June 1, 2004. Satoshi graduates in a Masters program from Briercrest Biblical Seminary in Sask. in April 2004. We commend them to your prayers and faithful financial support over the next three years.



Brenda and Wade Peters

CJM's New Treasurer

Testimony by Brenda Ohara-Peters

I was born and raised in Toronto, and youngest of three girls in the family.

I have been engaged in the accounting field for the past 22 years and currently, the General Accounting Manager at Nikon Canada Inc. I am working towards my CGA (Certified General Accounting) designation and will be completing my CIB (Certified Institute of Bookkeeping) designation this summer.

I became a Christian in 1996 when I attended the Billy Graham Crusade in Toronto. My sisters and brother-laws have been my greatest inspiration in guiding me towards the love and faith in Christ. My home church is the Japanese Gospel Church of Toronto and became a member in 1997. I enjoy the Bible class with a group of ladies at the church and cherishes the guidance, teaching and understanding of the Christian faith.

The Lord has led me to become an active member of the Canadian Japanese Ministries (CJM). I thank Him for becoming my Saviour and this opportunity to serve Him.

My husband is Wade Peters and we have been married for two and one half years and live in Mississauga, Ontario. I enjoy visiting and travelling to Prince Edward Island, where my husband's family resides. □

CJM wishes to thank Tomo Adachi for his dedicated and faithful ministry to the Lord and to CJM for the past two and one half years as it's treasurer. We wish every blessing of God upon his new ventures and new directions in his life.

Editors Note:

CJM welcomes Brenda to the office of Treasurer of CJM. The Board of Directors unanimously approved her appointment which followed the resignation of our previous treasurer, Tomo Adachi, during the past year.

New Westminster Evangelical Free Church

by Pastor Jacob Friesen - New Westminster BC.

The nature of our makeup may be a bit of a digression from that of other Nikkei churches in the CJM, in that we think in bilingual monologues! Within that context, some very encouraging developments are happening!

In support of the main body of regular service outreach, we conduct two 'in home' Bible centered activities: A Bible study at one location is conducted in Japanese only; on the fourth Friday evening of each month. A second outreach happens at another 'Nikkei' home with an 'Alpha' gathering in both English and Japanese, on two Sunday evenings each month. We have two sets of video; one dubbed in excellent Japanese. Both are evangelism focused, but the Alpha project appears to be attracting more non-church people.

In the church, our ESL program is attracting a large presence of multi ethnics. This is a total church effort for the very diverse ethnic mosaic in our community, and taught by our own teachers; themselves representing five different 'people groups'. The body is at work and we rejoice! □

From Pastor to People

"LIVING WITH PAIN"

by Pastor Stan Yokota,
Pastor Emeritus -
Japanese Gospel Church
of Toronto



The Japanese have a saying that a little bit of pain and a taste of something a little bitter is good for the health. The truth is in the "little bit" but the fact of the matter is that in our society, there are a lot of people living with a great deal of pain and bitterness.

What is the biblical perspective on PAIN? Romans 8:22 "all creation is groaning and is in pain." Pain is felt when there is a loss, an injury, a misunderstanding, or a failure. Pain was evident as soon as Adam and Eve disobeyed God's command and the creative bond was broken. The curse of Sin initiated upon mankind and all creation the unending, exponential occurrence of pain. In Noah's time, the prevalence of pain was terrible through escalated cruelty and violence, only Noah and his family were saved from judgmental surgery. An insight into the experience of Job portrays most graphically the all-consuming encounter with pain. The sorrowful loss of his children and property; the agonizing misunderstanding of his wife and friends; the excruciating pain of a bodily disease but the most unbearable suffering was the sense of his alienation from God. Job could not reconcile his unbearable pain with the silence of God. He cries out (Job 13:20) I ask only two things: Stop my pain - Speak to me. Yet in the darkest hour, Job firms his faith: "God may kill me, but still I will trust Him." "I know that my Savior lives."

The Apostle Paul constantly struggled with a life of pain. "Three times, I begged the Lord to make this suffering go away. But God replied, "My grace is sufficient for you, my power is strongest when you are weak." The most explicit description of pain and suffering endured by our Lord Jesus Christ is prophesied by Isaiah 53. Such unimaginable pain that the Son of God took upon himself reflects the pain in the heart of God when sin first entered the human race and each time we sin and breach the love of God. Pain inevitably gets our attention to find relief. God invites us to COME and find rest. □

An Analysis of FRIENDSHIP EVANGELISM

by Pastor Ed Yoshida,
Wesley Chapel Japanese Church, Toronto, ON

Let it be said that the roots of Friendship Evangelism are founded in Holy Scriptures. Who was Philip? Was he not one of the earliest disciples of Jesus? It was he who led his friend, Nathanael, to the Master.

Friendship Evangelism recently bore fruit in our church. About three years ago, an international couple (Japanese and Mexican) immigrated to Toronto with their son. His Japan-born mother wanted him to keep up his Japanese, and enrolled him at the Nikka Gakuen, one of the several half-day Japanese language schools in our city. Midori Chikira, one of our church members, also had her daughter attending the same school. The two mothers soon became friends from this contact. Their friendship was further strengthened by their proximity to each other in North York. However, this couple from Mexico were not Christians and had no church connection.



Pastor Ed Yoshida with Rumi Chikira.
Akemi Sugai (center) with Midori
Chikira on her left

When she was admitted to the emergency department of a local hospital-suffering from an acute vision problem, our church member prayed, encouraged and supported her in every way. She even delivered dishes of SASHI-IRE (prepared food) for her non-Christian friend and family.

Then from the fall of last year, her husband began attending a Spanish-speaking church. She also accompanied him from time to time, but Spanish was her second language. One day the kind pastor of the church gave her a Japanese Bible. For the first time in her life she started reading this Bible, and more fervently after her husband received Jesus into his life and began to change. The more she read, the more questions she seemed to have. She was now calling on her Christian friend with all kinds of questions. One such question was: "Who was the disciple that Jesus loved?"

So on Valentine Sunday in our church (2/15/04), Sergio & Akemi Salmoren, and their son, Kenta, attended our Sunday Worship. After the Service she requested time with the pastor. The couple met with the pastor and went over the Four Spiritual Laws in both English & Japanese. When the prayer to invite Jesus into her life was read, Akemi was like a ripened fruit ready to be picked. She became a wonderful example of Friendship Evangelism before our very eyes. Every church and each Christian should try it with one or more friends outside their church circle. □

Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church

"Being Witnesses of Christ"

by Pastor Robert Brown

The Pastors and members of Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church chose "Being Witnesses of Christ" (Acts 1:8) as our theme during the past year. We discussed the need for each member of the church to be filled with the Holy Spirit and set as a goal to evangelize both Japanese living in Vancouver, as well as the local residents of our neighborhood.

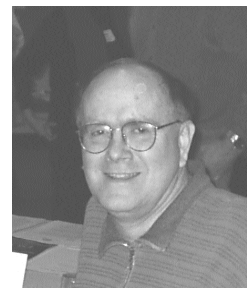
During the course of the year, we conducted "two" one-day seminars, focusing on Rick Warren's "Purpose Driven Church" model and teaching/instruction on personal evangelism.

Here are some of the ways we have endeavored to do this:

- 1) we showed the "JESUS" video (English with Japanese subtitles) on the Saturday of the Easter weekend and the "Jesus for Children" video in the lower auditorium.
- 2) an outreach to young mothers and children through a monthly get-together, as well as seasonal "parties" where the gospel has been clearly presented.
- 3) a monthly conversational English meeting (TalkTime) on the 1st Saturday of each month, which has subsequently fed into a weekly Bible TalkTime during the Sunday School hour (the attendees of this activity choosing to remain for either the English or Japanese worship services).
- 4) at Christmas, ESL students and a few members of the church were invited to a "traditional" Christmas dinner, after which we went door-to-door singing carols in the neighborhood and handing out invitational, informational brochures about Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church, along with a shortbread cookie or two.
- 5) members of the church have used various avenues of engaging those not-yet-Christian, as an opportunity to invite acquaintance, friend and neighbour to a venue where they can be reached in a non-threatening manner.

The result has been a steady increase in the number of individuals attending church each Sunday, as well as numerous individuals engaging in individual Bible study with the Pastor with a view toward salvation and/or baptism.

This year our theme is "Walking by His Word" (Psalm 119:105). □



Pastor Robert Brown

Pastor Brown is an Associate Pastor of the English Ministry at VJGC since 2001.

He is ordained by AGC of Canada, in addition, has rich pastoral experiences in other denominational and non denominational settings.

Pastor Brown and his wife, Jennifer, have 3 grown children.

EDMONTON JAPANESE CHRISTIAN CHURCH EVANGELISM REPORT *by Pastor Yuri Nakano*



Tyrannus House

A unique evangelism opportunity that we have in Edmonton is the ministry at "Tyrannus House". The name "Tyrannus" is a strange one, but it comes from Acts 9: 19 where the apostle Paul taught in "Tyrannus Hall" in the city

of Ephesus. Apparently, a missionary in Japan established some male student dormitories after this same name and several pastors and missionaries were borne from this ministry.

In Edmonton, the church uses this house for its office space as well as for many activities such as bible studies, youth activities, prayer meetings, cottage meetings, potluck suppers, etc. The house also serves as a great place for Japanese ESL students and also other people to stay for an affordable price. What a blessing this has been to our church! Many of the young people who have stayed in the house have become Christians because of the many opportunities to be in contact with the church people and

to hear the gospel. This place has provided a place for many people to feel comfortable in a home setting to learn from God's Word and to grow in their relationship with God.

Every Wednesday night we have bible studies at the house after serving a meal. Many of the young people have brought their friends to this Bible study and it has become a great evangelism entry point for our church.

We have other ways to evangelize (evangelistic services, outreach activities, personal evangelism, etc.) but the Tyrannus house ministry has been the one chosen to be highlighted. In the last seven years, I believe that this ministry which God has established here in Edmonton has been the most productive and effective in encouraging people to come to faith and grow. May God continue to bless and use this house for His glory and as one of the many ways our church can reach out to our lost sisters and brothers. □



Tyrannus House Bible Study Group

Japanese Gospel Church of Toronto: In our English department, we are using two main evangelistic programs: (1) our Summer Camp Program which is focused on evangelizing kids in public school, high school and the Japanese language schools on Saturdays and (2) Alpha classes which we are hoping to do around 30 weeks during the year. Our first Alpha class began on Feb 1/04. We are appreciative of your prayers!

New Nichigo Pastor: the Japanese speaking congregation welcomes Pastor Haruo Sato with his wife Yoko, who will commence ministry with our church on April 1, 2004.

(Japanese Gospel Church of Toronto meets each Sunday at the Japanese Canadian Cultural Centre - JCCC)



JGCT Alpha Group

Reaching Japanese for Christ Conference

by Pastor Robert Brown, Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church

The first-ever National, Reaching Japanese for Christ Conference was held in Bothell, Washington, February 19-21st 2004 with Pastor Robert Brown, and Shinobu Ueno of Vancouver Japanese Gospel Church in attendance.

The conference was an unprecedented opportunity to be equipped by missionaries, pastors, Japanese Christian nationals and para-church staff. Over a three day span, through over 20 workshops; general sessions; discussion groups and panels attendees received training in ministry to Japanese.

Some of the workshops offered:

- 1) What Everyone Should Know About Japanese Culture
- 2) Rights of Passage: From Birth to Post-Grave
- 3) Barriers to Belief
- 4) Understanding Japanese and the Gospel
- 5) How to Communicate the Gospel to Japanese—John Whitehouse
- 6) Preparing Japanese Christians to Return to Japan.

Shinobu & I were challenged, equipped and encouraged in our efforts to reach the Japanese residing in Canada, as we joined our American neighbors in this event.

We look forward to seeing more Canadian involvement, and might even consider hosting a similar event in Vancouver at a future date. □

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News items, reports, testimonies and notices of events are welcomed by the editors.

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