

2014

# Equipping Church Members for Contextualized Discipleship in Osaka-Central Seventh-day Adventist Church, West Conference, Japan

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ABSTRACT

EQUIPPING CHURCH MEMBERS FOR CONTEXTUALIZED  
DISCIPLESHIP IN OSAKA-CENTRAL SEVENTH-DAY  
ADVENTIST CHURCH, WEST  
CONFERENCE, JAPAN

by

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Adviser: Bruce C. Moyer

ABSTRACT OF GRADUATE STUDENT RESEARCH

Project Document

Andrews University

Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

Title: EQUIPPING CHURCH MEMBERS FOR CONTEXTUALIZED  
DISCIPLESHIP IN OSAKA-CENTRAL SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
CHURCH, WEST CONFERENCE, JAPAN

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Date completed: May 2014

Problem

The Seventh-day Adventist church in Japan has been on a steady decline in recent decades, at best maintaining the status quo. Although several factors may be responsible for this condition, a major factor for this is the failure of the church and its message in connecting with the Japanese culture and people in a relevant, meaningful way. The church seems not to be listening and observing the trends as she continues to apply evangelistic models designed by and for the Western nations to the Japanese. Consequently, despite the enormous funds and good programs, the church in Japan is not witnessing the expected results.

## Method

CLAP (Come and See, Learning, Application, Proclamation) model is the contextualized discipleship model adapted for equipping church members of the Osaka-Central Seventh-day Adventist church as a solution to the peculiar situation in Japan. This model consists of five parts: (a) Awareness and orientation seminars for all church members, and the training of the selected 10 church members for a period of one year; (b) Come and see (Invitation and Acceptance stage). At this point, the 10 selected disciplined church members will commence reaching out to, associating with, and inviting the Japanese to join the small groups' fellowship and will last for six months; (c) Learning (Experiencing God through Participation). This part will last for six months with the Japanese participating in the activities of the small groups and thus experiencing the love and fellowship of God's family; (d) Application (Expanding the Community). This stage will last for one year and focused on expanding the community. The Japanese in the small groups were encouraged to invite their family members and friends; and (e) Proclamation (Witnessing and Reproduction). This phase will last for a period of one year and focused on gradually introducing the Japanese to the Bible, beginning with the concerns of everyday living.

## Results

The project will be executed as designed. The CLAP model developed for the project will be used for the training of the 10 selected church members who will lead the five small groups. It is anticipated that Osaka-Central Church members will be enthusiastic and supportive of the project from its beginning to completion. This project is also expected to create positive opinion about the Seventh-day Adventist church in the

minds of the intended audience (the Japanese) and to inspire regular attendance at church activities, which will eventually lead to full commitment to the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church.

### Conclusion

Contextualized discipleship is an effective strategy for equipping church members for Japanese mission. The CLAP model designed for this project is anticipated to achieve the expected result (a contextualized approach for discipling the Japanese that is biblical and sensitive to the local context). This model will erase the fear of the intrusion of a foreign culture in the minds of the Japanese, since it will in many ways be similar to their local views and ways of life of the Japanese.

Andrews University  
Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary

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A Project Document  
Presented in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by  
Jong Hyun Ryu

May 2014

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Dedicated

to

My dear family and companion in Japanese ministry

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES .....	vii
LIST OF TABLES .....	vii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS .....	viii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ix
Chapter	
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	1
Statement of the Task .....	2
Assumptions .....	2
Delimitations .....	2
Definition of Terms .....	3
Description of the Process .....	4
Outline of the Project .....	5
2 SPIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION.....	6
Introduction .....	6
Discipleship .....	7
Definition of Disciple or Discipleship .....	7
Great Commission and Discipleship .....	8
Purpose of Discipleship .....	9
The Need to Equip Church Members Through Discipleship.....	12
Discipleship Models in the Old Testament .....	14
Jethro and Moses.....	14
Moses and Joshua.....	16
Elijah and Elisha .....	17
Elisha and the School of Prophets.....	18
Discipleship Models in the New Testament.....	18
Jesus and the Twelve Disciples.....	19

Barnabas' Model of Discipleship.....	21
Paul's Models of Discipleship .....	23
Paul and Timothy .....	23
Paul and Silas.....	24
Conclusion.....	25
3 LITERATURE REVIEW OF CONTEXTUALIZED DISCIPLESHIP .....	26
Introduction .....	26
Contextualization .....	27
Definition of Contextualization.....	28
Inevitability of Contextualization .....	29
Contextualization and Culture.....	32
Contextualization and Syncretism.....	33
Benefits of Contextualization.....	35
Issues in Contextualization .....	36
Importance of Contextualized Discipleship for Mission .....	36
Contextualized Discipleship Models in the Old Testament .....	37
God's Covenant With Abraham .....	37
Cultural Rituals in Semitic Era Expressed in Genesis 15 .....	39
Moses' Sanctuary in the Wilderness .....	40
Contextualized Discipleship Models in the New Testament .....	41
The Incarnation of Jesus Christ.....	41
Contextualized Discipleship in Ministry of Paul .....	42
Ministry to the Corinthians .....	43
Ministry to the Colossians .....	44
The Contextualized Life .....	46
Incarnational Life .....	47
Messenger Identity .....	47
The Contextualized Approach .....	49
Models of Contextualization .....	50
Translation Model.....	50
Adaptation Model .....	51
Indigenization Model .....	51
Anthropological Model.....	52
Praxis or Local Theologizing Model .....	52
Counter-Cultural Model.....	52
Translatability Model.....	53
Critical Contextualization .....	53
Message.....	54
Prioritizing and Sequencing of the Message.....	54

Elements of Authentic Contextualization .....	55
The Primacy of the Scriptures.....	55
The Primacy of the Holy Spirit.....	56
Relevance to the Recipient People or Culture .....	57
Flexibility.....	57
Historical Review of Contextualization of Christ Mission in Japan.....	58
The Entrance of Christianity Into Japan.....	58
Xavier’s Method of Evangelizing.....	59
Conclusion .....	60
4 METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION NARRATIVE .....	64
Introduction .....	64
Analysis of Japan and Demography .....	65
Geography and Population.....	65
Religion and Culture .....	68
The Samurai .....	71
Purification.....	73
Salt .....	74
Japanese View of Christianity.....	74
Toward a Contextualized Approach to Japanese Mission.....	76
The True Samurai.....	79
Purification by Water .....	81
Salt .....	82
Contextualized Worship Program for the Japanese .....	83
Reverence in Worship.....	83
Music.....	84
Offering and Prayer.....	84
Communion Service.....	84
Fellowship at Meal.....	85
Child Dedication .....	85
Wedding.....	86
Funerals.....	86
Other Elements.....	87
A Contextualized Liturgy for Japanese SDA Church.....	87
Project Implementation Strategy .....	88
CLAP Model: What is it? .....	88
The CLAP Model .....	89
Come and see .....	89
Learning .....	90
Application .....	91
Proclamation .....	92
Part One-Training of the ten Disciples (Small Group Leaders).....	93

Part Two-Come and see (Invitation and Acceptance).....	95
Part Three-Learning (Experiencing God Through Participation) .....	96
Part Four-Application (Expanding the Community).....	97
Part Five-Proclamation (Witnessing and Reproduction) .....	97
Assessment .....	99
Summary and Conclusion .....	99
5 PROJECT SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	102
Introduction .....	102
Summary .....	102
Conclusion.....	105
Recommendations .....	107
Appendix	
A MY SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION FOR MINISTRY .....	109
B GENERAL METHODOLOGY: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH (LFA).....	112
C GANTT CHART FOR THE PROJECT FOR 2014-2016 .....	123
D HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN MISSION HISTORY /CHURCH GROWTH OF SDA CHURCH .....	130
E JAPAN UNION CONFERENCE REPORTS .....	136
F WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS SUMMARY OUTLINE .....	152
REFERENCE LIST .....	160
VITA .....	169

## LIST OF FIGURES

1. Map of Japan.....	65
2. Earthquake of Japan.....	66
3. Climate Map of Japan.....	66
4. Land Utilization Map of Japan .....	67
5. Population Map of Japan .....	68

## LIST OF TABLES

1. Phases of Logical Framework Approach.....	115
2. Sample Logical Framework Matrix.....	118
3. The Logical Framework Matrix.....	121
4. Gantt Chart: Reverse Engineering Project.....	125
5. Gantt Chart for Year 1 of the Project.....	125
6. Gantt Chart for Year 2 of the Project.....	127
7. Gantt Chart for Year 3 of the Project.....	128

## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DMin	Doctor of Ministry Degree
SDA	Seventh-day Adventist Church
GC	General Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
JUC	Japan Union Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
EJC	East Japanese Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
WJC	West Japanese Conference of Seventh-day Adventists
LFA	Logical Framework Approach
NKJV	New King James Version
LFM	Logical Framework Matrix
MDiv	Master of Divinity Degree
NT	New Testament
OOPP	Objective Oriented Project Planning
OT	Old Testament
OVI	Objectively Verifiable Indicators
CLAP	Come and see, Learning, Application, Proclamation
VBS	Vacation Bible School

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Hallelujah! Praise the LORD! Now God is my success. First, I would like to express my gratitude to my God. He is always faithful and present with me no matter what difficult situation I face. Second, I would like to thank my parents who gave birth to me. I will never forget their love and sacrifice for me, especially, my dad who went to sleep in Christ in 2006. I am looking forward to meeting with my dad at Jesus' Second Coming.

As I reflect on the journey through the Doctor of Ministry Degree program, I am indebted to Dr. Stan Patterson who indeed invested his life in me and my colleagues during the course of the program. His experiential lecture inspired me to be humble and to love people and the church more. A similar praise also goes to Dr. David Penno for his dedicated service to his students. He encouraged me and others to never stop writing. His words were "write something on your paper day by day, then, one day you will recognize the fact that you are done." My advisor, Dr. Bruce C. Moyer, helped me to accomplish my project and helped me to developed deep, insightful thoughts. He encouraged me to not give up and inspired me to get insight and knowledge from his abundant experience in both academic and practical areas. And I also appreciate my second advisor, Bruce Bauer. His plentiful missionary experience in Asia and Africa gave me lots of insight and ideas for my project. Especially, I would like to express my appreciation for the support of my friend, Ugochukwu Elems. He corrected my poor English sentences and also served as my editor from start to finish. I also give my thanks

to Youngseok Cha who is pursuing a PhD and Nicolas Benjamin who is undertaking the MDiv program. They were very supportive of me whenever I asked for their help during the process of writing this project. Dr. Skip Bell, Chair of the DMin program, is also acknowledged for giving me a chance in the program and for his support. Thanks also to Yvonna Applewhite for her cheerful smiles and readiness to help.

Finally, I would like to thank my beloved wife, Sunny, who has been with me through my pastoral ministry in Japan. No matter how many difficulties she was in, while in Japan, she never gave up supporting me in the pastoral work. I am so delighted to share such joy, peace, love, and hope with her. And my appreciation also goes to our three precious children (Yeeun Ryu, Yemyeong Ryu, and Yejin Ryu). I hope that they will be great missionaries for God's glory in whatever they do and wherever they go.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### **Statement of the Problem**

While Japan is among the developed countries in the world economically and socially, it is spiritually bankrupt. The Christian population is a little over 1% of the entire population (Bunkacho, 2011). Moreover, the Seventh-day Adventist Church in Japan is a small denomination with 15,287 members (Inada, 2013b) against the vast population of the nation which stands at 127.18 million as reported by Statistics Bureau of Japan (SJB) (2014). As a matter of fact, regular Sabbath School attendees are under 6,000 (Inada, 2013a). In spite of all the evangelistic programs and the leadership changes from one constituency session to another, the church membership continue to decrease and churches are downsizing every year. Several factors may be responsible for this situation, however, it seems a major challenge to the growth of the Seventh-day Adventist message in Japan is the failure of the church to connect with the Japanese in a culturally relevant manner.

Unfortunately, the Seventh-day Adventist church in Japan has not intentionally, critically, and prayerfully analyze the factors militating against its growth. The result of this attitude is the steady decline of the church membership in Japan, which in turn discourages the few church members who are enthusiastic about evangelism.

### **Statement of the Task**

The task of this project is to develop and implement a contextualized discipleship model for equipping members of Osaka-Central Church in the West Japanese Conference of Seventh-day Adventists.

While the primary focus is on Osaka-Central church, the researcher hopes to influence the overall evangelistic approach to the Japanese.

### **Assumptions**

As good as this project may appear, its success hinges on certain assumptions: firstly, the researcher anticipates a full support from Osaka-Central church elders council, board members, and the entire church; secondly, it is also assumed that the researcher will be able to get ten volunteers to be discipled to lead the five small groups in pairs of two; thirdly, that the church will also commit to financially support the project.

### **Delimitations**

This project is about contextualization, yet it does not claim to have exhaustively discussed every aspect of a subject as broad as contextualization. What was done however, was to discuss contextualization in the light of its relevance and application to the Japanese and how Osaka-Central SDA Church members can effectively witness to their fellow Japanese in a biblically authentic manner and yet be culturally relevant.

Moreover, while this project attempted to engage the religion and culture of the Japanese, it is neither about culture, nor religion and should not be judged in that sense

at all. The effort in this project and the extent to which it interacted with culture is as it relates or intersects with the objective of this project.

The project also interacted with the art and process of discipleship, yet this was extensively limited to principles and examples of discipleship in the Bible. Therefore, it does claim to be exhaustive on the issue.

### **Definition of Terms**

*CLAP*: acronym for Come and see, Learning, Application, Proclamation. A contextualized model developed by the researcher for Osaka-Central SDA Church in WJC.

*Contextualization*: the process whereby Christians adapt the forms, content, and praxis of the Christian faith so as to communicate it to the minds and hearts of people with other cultural backgrounds (Moreau, 2012).

*The West Conference of Japan*: refers to the administrative unit responsible for governing of all local churches of the Seventh-day Adventist churches in the West part of Japan. Osaka-Central SDA Church (the primary context of this project) is part of this Conference.

*Union*: is a terminology has used in the Seventh-day Adventist that defines a group of Conferences usually within a given territory and is constituent of the GC.

*Conference*: refers to the administrative unit that oversees a number of associated local churches within a designated area (usually consisting of a state or states) within a given country (Neufeld, 1976, pp. 345-346).

## **Description of the Process**

The theological reflection focused on the biblical methods discipleship in the Old and New Testaments, especially the outstanding model of Jesus Christ. Careful thought was also given to the theology and process of discipleship.

Following the biblical and theological foundation for this project was an extensive, but not exhaustive review of current literature on the subject of contextualization. The writings of Ellen G. White on discipleship and contextualization of evangelistic approaches in cross-cultural evangelism was also explored.

The researcher developed a contextualized discipleship program for growing the Osaka-Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in WJC. And because the effort is to make it relevant to the Japanese, the culture and religion of the Japanese were explored with the intent to understand and appropriately contextualize the message. The effort began with gaining the support of the elders, church board, and the entire members of the Osaka-Central SDA Church in WJC. This was followed by a series of awareness seminars toward the need for contextualized discipleship to the Japanese for six months. At the end of these seminars, ten volunteers were selected for intensive contextualized discipleship training which lasted for a period of one year. The ten disciplined volunteers formed five groups of two in which they served as group leaders. They initiated the invitation and training of small groups of the Japanese in their various small groups, while they met weekly with the researcher for feedbacks, evaluations, encouragements, prayer and fellowship. The project was evaluated by the number of baptisms, church membership and attendance at the beginning of the project and at the official (because it continues beyond the official end) end of the project.

In the last part of this project, a summary, conclusions, and recommendations for future related efforts are provided.

### **Outline of the Project**

This project document “Equipping church members for contextualized discipleship in Osaka-Central Seventh-day Adventist Church in Japan” is divided into five chapters for the purpose of clarity and effectiveness.

Chapter one gives an introduction to the project, including a description of the statement of problem, statement of task, assumptions, delimitation of the project, definition of terms, description of the process, and outline of the project.

Chapter two presents the spiritual and theological foundation for the project—how Scripture describes discipleship for mission in both Old and New Testaments.

Chapter three deals with literature review (books, journals, articles) on contextualization and contextualized discipleship.

Chapter four develops the strategy for contextualized discipleship for Osaka-Central SDA Church in WJC. It proposed a model referred to as CLAP (acronym for Come and see, Learning, Application, Proclamation).

Chapter five provides a summary, conclusion, and recommendations based on the project.

## CHAPTER 2

### SPIRITUAL AND THEOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

#### **Introduction**

This chapter explores the theological foundations for equipping church members through contextualized discipleship in the Bible. God placed the church on this earth to achieve His will. Chan and Beuving (2012) say, “The church is God’s strategy for reaching our world” (p. 52). Therefore, church is the only holy place to achieve God’s will. According to Hull (1990), Christ gave his disciples this practical directive – to make disciples of all nations, the Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20) before he departed from his disciples at the Ascension. In addition, Christ clearly mentioned the context for the mission. It was not to one particular place, but to *all nations* which means multi-cultural ministry.

The chapter outlines the following: (a) a study of the definition of discipleship and its purpose in the Bible; (b) discipleship models in the Old Testament; (c) discipleship models from Jesus and Paul’s ministry in the New Testament; (d) lastly, the chapter concludes with a summary. All quoted Bible texts in this project are taken from the NKJV.

## Discipleship

### Definition of Disciple or Discipleship

The term for disciple appears in all four Gospels and in the book of Acts. According to the *Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible*, the meaning of disciple (Greek word, *mathetes*) signifies a learner, a pupil, a follower, and an adherent of a teacher (Hartman, 1963). Sometimes, this term could be translated as follower, believer, supporter, devotee, adherent, student, pupil, scholar, and learner. Smither (2008) explains his expanded definition of a disciple as “a pupil of a teacher.” Furthermore, the biblical concept of a disciple is a faithful learner, student, and follower of Jesus. Hull (1990) comments that a disciple is different from an elder or a deacon, and is not merely a church member.

Crocher (2003) defines discipleship as a strongly individual activity of two or more individuals assisting one another to experience an increasing relationship with God. He then mentions that discipleship is related with being, maturity, and character rather than doing, ministry, and career. In other words, it is to become an authentic follower of Jesus and to remain a self-sacrificing, self-reproducing follower of Jesus.

Putman (2008) comments that discipleship is to be a disciple of Jesus; it is to live, love, and leave. In addition, Putman explains that Jesus called twelve disciples, not just to be followers, but to live as He lived, love as He loved, and leave as He left them behind. He also emphasizes that discipleship is not a program, but a long process to be like Christ through one’s whole life. Horton (2011) reiterates that “disciples are lifelong learners” (p.194). Furthermore, Moroz (2011) states that discipleship is the process of growing a mature and dedicated disciple of Jesus Christ. Stanley and Clinton (1992)

state, “Discipling is a process in which a more experienced follower of Christ shares with a newer believer the commitment, understanding and basic skills necessary to know and obey Jesus Christ as Lord” (p. 48).

In conclusion, discipleship is the process of intentionally training, teaching, and developing people that have willingly repented and put their trust in Christ.

### Great Commission and Discipleship

Needless to say, biblical discipleship is related to world mission based on the Great Commission. The Gospel of Luke, especially chapter 10 indicates Jesus’ intense passion and mission for the lost. “The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest” (Luke 10:2). The Scriptures support the need for local churches to have discipleship training schools for the purpose of preparing trained and equipped gospel workers for the harvest, as reflected in Jesus’ statement. The discipleship training by Jesus recorded in Luke 10 is part of His plan for fulfilling the Great Commission and also equipping His apostles for the continuation of the mission. Horton (2011) says, “the Great Commission itself ties discipleship closely to the public ministry” (p. 138).

“All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

This is the Great Commission Jesus left behind to his disciples. In the above statement, the main verb is not “going,” “baptizing,” or “teaching.” These words are all subordinate to the action of the main verb, “disciple” or “make disciples,” in this passage. The main thing Jesus wanted his disciples to do was to make disciples. Therefore the church should take this as the first priority among its many tasks.

Unfortunately, as Dever and Stassen (1995) point out, the church has failed in one of its major functions: making disciples. Samaan (1999) looks more critically at the lack of discipleship in our church today. He mentions that “too many church members, as well as their pastors, are neither engaged in growing disciples nor seriously planning on it” (p. 13). Thus, becoming a disciple is more than making a profession of faith. Chan and Beuving (2012) present that making disciples is not a program but the mission of our lives. In sum, discipleship is the process God uses to accomplish His transforming work in the follower of Jesus, not a program or event. Therefore, every local church and church leader should launch discipleship programs for all believers as the first priority for world mission.

### Purpose of Discipleship

There are two main purposes for discipleship: Fruition (Maturity) and Multiplication (Reproduction). However, it’s impossible to accomplish these apart from an intimate relationship with God. In other words, being like Jesus Christ is a crucial element of discipleship. Jesus chose and appointed twelve disciples to go and bear fruit, and desired that their fruit should remain (John 15:16). Thus Jesus focused on equipping and training His disciples to bear good fruit, as well as to be disciplers who will make other disciples of Christ in the world (John 15:8, 27).

The first purpose of discipleship is fruition. Fruition is the process of bearing, growing, and maturing of fruit. It is required of all true disciples of Jesus. For Jesus, a disciple signifies more than just a believer in Him. According to John 8:31, Jesus told the Jews who are said to have believed Him, “If you abide in my word, you are my disciples indeed. And you shall know the truth, and truth shall make you free” (John

8:31, 32). The point we should never overlook is that Jesus was inviting Jewish believers to be His disciples. This means that they were not yet true disciples of Jesus even though they claimed to believe in God. To be authentic followers of Jesus, they needed to commit themselves to a full and personal relationship with Jesus, surrender to Him, and then abide in Jesus' word continuously.

In the gospels, the term "abide in" especially means continuous intimate connectedness with Jesus. The Gospel of John explains the secret of bearing fruit: "I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing" (John 15:5). It is natural that every branch connected to the main stem will receive nourishment and grow. This connection is essential to growth and maturity. Ogden (2003) states that "discipling is an intentional relationship in which we walk alongside other disciples in order to encourage, equip, and challenge one another in love to grow toward maturity in Christ. This includes equipping the disciple to teach others as well" (p. 129). Maturing means to deepen Christian experience through relationship with the living Savior. However, it takes a long time and process to become a mature Christian.

Evans (2006) comments on the immaturity of Christian life by saying,

The greatest tragedy is that we don't have enough Christians who know who they are. They may be genuine believers, but their faith is just another addition to their portfolio. When it comes to the bottom line, they define themselves in the terms of their name, their job, their possessions, or the people they know. (p. 107)

As Evans points out, ultimately today's church is becoming weakened and diminished by a lack of disciples who don't know who they are. Thus, the most urgent task of the church is to let them know who they are and equip them as trained disciples for church ministry.

The second purpose of discipleship is multiplication. It means to reproduce, increase, and generate other disciples as Jesus did on the earth. Jesus commanded His disciples to remain in Him in order for them to bear fruit as He did while on the earth. The word “remain” (Greek word is *meno*) in John 15 must be understood in terms of reproduction or multiplication.

One day my advisor, Dr. Bruce Moyer, asked me a question regarding the purpose of an apple tree. I replied that the purpose of the apple tree is to bear apples. However, he had a different answer: to multiply other apple trees. Likewise, the goal of church is to remain, reproduce, and multiply other churches in order to proclaim the gospel. Therefore, the second purpose of discipleship is to reproduce and multiply other disciples to be like Christ. Kuhne (1981) states that “discipleship training is the spiritual work of developing spiritual maturity and spiritual productiveness in the life of a Christian” (p. 117). The issue of multiplication is related to God’s blessing for creatures or human beings on the earth. Genesis 1:22 notes, “And God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.” In the creation story, God blessed Adam and Eve so that they would multiply their offspring on the earth.

Then God blessed them, and God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (Gen 1:28)

Therefore, God initially gave the blessing of multiplication to the first ancestors of the human race, Adam and Eve. In spite of Adam’s fall due to sin, multiplication as God’s blessing still continues from generation to generation with the same phrase. After Noah’s flood in God’s judgment, God blessed not only Noah and his family but also all creatures with the same blessing: be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth (Gen 8:17;

9:1, 7). God's blessing was repeated again to Abraham even when he had no child (Gen 12:2; 15:5; 17:16). God blessed Isaac (Gen 26:4), Jacob (Gen 28:3), and the twelve tribes of Israel (Gen. 48:4). The blessing of multiplication is also reflected in the New Testament. Jesus first chose twelve disciples to be with him and then sent them out to preach (Mark 3:14). Later on Jesus extended its number to 70 (Luke 10:1ff). When Jesus was ascending to heaven, he gave his disciples the Great Commission so that they would continue to multiply through their Christian life to the world (Matt 28:19-20).

Hull (1990) emphasizes the importance of discipleship in the following sentence: "there is probably no other primary matter of negligence in the church today than our failure to follow the Lord's command to develop disciples" (p. 10). Thus, for Hull, the church's failure to disciple other disciples is the gravest negligence of a crucial responsibility.

### The Need to Equip Church Members Through Discipleship

It is not enough to know the definition of discipleship or its importance, as crucial as these may be. The urgent issue is how the church promotes it (what kind of strategy is employed). In Ephesians 4:11-12, Paul describes the equipping of the saints through the gifts of the Spirit. "He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastor and teachers." Church leaders, as pastors and teachers, are called by God for the work of ministry, equipping the saints. Moreover, the church pastor is called as an equipper more than a minister. Understanding the pastor's role is deeply related to church growth. Thus, equipping church members through discipleship would be an effective strategy for church growth/church planting for mission especially when implemented from the start. The local church leader would

take responsibility to equip or train church members as faithful disciples of Jesus, not focused on church programs or events.

Kidder (2011) emphasizes that a leader should never do discipleship all alone, rather other church members should be trained and equipped for ministry. Chan and Beuving (2012) have a similar opinion that God wants church leaders to have partners in ministry and encourage them in return. Effective leaders follow the example of Christ who never did ministry alone, instead, He took His disciples along with Him into mission field to train and equip them. Oden (1983) states, “The pastor’s primary task is to equip the body, not try to do everything for the laity” (p. 156). This was the method adopted by Christ and is the most effective for discipleship. Jesus spent much of His time with His disciples in the mission field whether it was at the seashore, hills, valleys, mountains, town, villages, and homes rather than a lecture room or synagogue.

Doing it alone might be comfortable and convenient for every worker who is involved in church ministry, but it’s not a biblical. The best effective discipleship training is to take someone to the hospital and demonstrate to them how to do ministry. (Kidder 2011, p. 56)

Horton (2011) also mentioned that the disciples learned in the field, like a mobile classroom in which learning occurred in the context of daily occurrences more than indoor lectures in a classroom. White (1886) strongly supports the above comments with the following sentence: “Ministers should not do the work which belongs to the church, thus wearying themselves, and preventing others from performing their duty. They should teach the members how to labor in the church and in the community” (p. 291).

## **Discipleship Models in the Old Testament**

Although the Scriptures do not mention the term “discipleship” in the Old Testament, there are some discipleship models such as Jethro and Moses, Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and Elisha and School of Prophets.

### **Jethro and Moses**

There are several stages in discipleship as a discipler: Listening, Observation, Raising an issue, Judgment, Suggestion and Teaching, and Assessment.

As the first stage, listening is one of the most powerful tools for leaders to move a follower’s heart in the right way. Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, was told everything that God had done for the Israelites through Moses (Exod 18:1, 9).

Observation is the second stage for discipleship. Jethro observed all things Moses did for the people on the next day (Exod 18:4). Jethro could see the blind side Moses didn’t notice in his leadership style. When a church leader as a discipler trains his/her disciples to be a gospel workers, he/she should observe all things that they are doing for people.

The third stage of discipleship is raising an issue with humility and honesty. So, Jethro brought him an honest question in his mind without any hesitation. “What is this thing that you do to the people?” (Exod 18:14). According to Asher and Sarah (2007), Jethro doesn’t ask Moses how he feels about the situation or whether he’s comfortable with it, but inquires about its effects on the well-being of the community. A leader has a tendency to do everything by his/her own power and authority without any assistance. Moses was not an exception any more than other leaders today.

The fourth stage for discipleship training is to make judgments with love and kindness. Moses was doing everything alone so far, even though people were waiting for his judgments day and night. Jethro, Moses' father-in-law, said to him, "The thing that you do is not good. Both you and these people who are with you will surely wear yourselves out. For this thing is too much for you; you are not able to perform it by yourself" (Exod 18:17-18). Jethro was honest with Moses about the situation and did not hesitate to offer his solution to the problem.

The fifth stage for discipleship is suggestion and teaching. Jethro gave Moses a better idea on behalf of the Israelites and Moses himself. Jethro instructed Moses to set aside other leaders who can share the burden of the leadership with him.

Listen now to my voice; I will give you counsel, and God will be with you: Stand before God for the people, so that you may bring the difficulties to God. And you shall teach them the statutes and the laws, and show them the way in which they must walk and work they must do. Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness; and place such over them to be rulers of thousands, rulers of hundreds, rulers of fifties, and rulers of tens. And let them judge the people at all times. Then it will be that every great matter they shall bring to you, but every small matter they themselves shall judge. So it will be easier for you, for they will bear the burden with you. (Exod 18:19-22)

Jethro's advice encouraged Moses to select, train, and multiply thousands of workers for the Israelites. Oden (1983) commented on Jethro's advice with the following statements: "Jethro's principle enables more people to share the leadership load and excessive heaviness" (p. 157). Jethro proposed a more effective strategy to Moses so that Moses could lead the Israelites in an effective way without being burned out. By putting this organizational structure in place, Moses became a more effective leader. In every sense, Jethro, priest of the Midianites, was a discipler or teacher to Moses.

The sixth stage is assessment of new strategy. In fact, Assessment is the final stage for Jethro's discipleship. After a new strategy starts to move, the discipler must confirm the new strategy to ascertain if it is doing well or not. "They brought the hard cases to Moses. But they decided the simple cases themselves" (Exod 18:26b).

### Moses and Joshua

Although the Scripture does not mention the reason Moses decided to have Joshua to be with him as a helper, it does introduce Joshua as an assistant of Moses. "So Moses and his helper Joshua set out. Moses went up Sinai, the mountain of God" (Exod 24:13). Joshua was young, brave, and a faithful believer of God. As a matter of fact, Joshua accompanied Moses wherever he went in the course of his leadership (Exod 24:13; 32:17; 33:11). According to *Nelson's Bible Dictionary*, Joshua was distinguished from the rest of the congregation:

Moses took his assistant Joshua with him when he went into the mountains to talk with God. Moses also gave Joshua a prominent place at the Tabernacle. As Moses' servant, Joshua would remain at the tabernacle as his representative while the great leader left the camp to fellowship with the Lord (Exod 33:11). When Moses sent spies to scout out the land of Canaan, Joshua was selected as the representative of the tribe of Ephraim (Num 13:8). Only Joshua and Caleb returned to the camp with a report that they could conquer the land with God's help. At Moses' death, Joshua was chosen as his successor (Josh 1:1-2). Supervised the division of the territory among the 12 tribes, and led the people to renew their covenant with God (Josh 13-22).

He was not only a faithful servant but also a brave warrior for the Israelites. Joshua learned obedience from Moses who followed God no matter how difficult the situation was. Joshua learned to be faithful to God no matter what happened. Joshua spent a lot of time with Moses and he experienced the glory of God's presence. He never left his position as a faithful servant and learner until Moses' death. Furthermore, Joshua had more opportunities to witness God's glory as Moses' assistant than Aaron,

Hur, and other elders. Moses trained and prepared Joshua to be the next leader by spending an immense amount of time with him.

### Elijah and Elisha

Elijah was a great prophet who was called by God during the reign of Ahab and Jezebel. Elijah as a prophet ministered God's word without fear to everyone, including the king, even when it was not favorable to the king. For instance, he warned Ahab about a severe drought in the land of Israel for three and half years and he stood alone against 450 prophets of Baal who served Jezebel (1 Kgs 17:1; 18:20-40). Toward the end of his ministry, Elijah deemed it necessary to disciple Elisha for the prophetic ministry. The Scripture describes, "So Elijah went from there and found Elisha son of Shaphat. He was plowing with twelve yoke of oxen, and he himself was driving the twelfth pair. Elijah went up to him and threw his cloak around him" (1 Kgs 19:19).

Elisha was a diligent farmer and he was plowing with his twelve yoke of oxen when he was called to the prophetic ministry. Elijah called Elisha to follow him by throwing his mantle on Elisha. This behavior signified a kind of sacred calling in that context. Immediately, Elisha left his oxen in the field and followed Elijah without any hesitation. Elisha demonstrated his faith and commitment to the call by slaughtering his oxen and eating it with the people present with him. From that moment, Elijah began to disciple Elisha and he abided with Elisha wherever he ministered (2 Kgs 2:1-13). Thus, Elijah trained Elisha in practical ministry situations.

Elijah's discipleship model entails a calling, asking for dedication, testing, training, and empowering. Elijah tested Elisha especially at the time of his ascension into heaven. Elijah told Elisha thrice, "Stay here, please, for the LORD has sent me" to

Bethel, Jericho, and Jordan (2 Kgs 2: 2, 4, 6). However, Elisha's answer was always the same, "as the LORD lives, and as your soul lives, I will not leave you!" Eventually, Elisha got a double portion of Elijah's spirit by taking Elijah's mantle, which Elijah dropped for him while ascending to heaven with horses and a chariot of fire (2 Kgs 2:9-11). It follows then that Elijah empowered and encouraged Elisha to minister and thereby multiply other disciples in Israel.

### Elisha and the School of Prophets

Elijah re-established the schools of prophets: one at Gilgal, one at Bethel, and one at Jericho. According to White (1943), "The schools of the prophets established by Samuel had fallen into decay during the years of Israel's apostasy" (p. 224). Before Elijah ascended to heaven with the chariot of fire, Elisha visited these three schools of prophets with Elijah. Elisha took over these three schools of prophets from Elijah. So, Elisha trained sons of prophets at school of prophets for the purpose of bringing true revival and reformation to Israel during an idolatrous era. Elisha wanted the sons of prophets to be spiritual leaders in a land paganized by foreign gods due to the negative influence of Ahab and Jezebel. Elisha encouraged the sons of the prophets to be strong disciples who could change Israel.

### **Discipleship Models in the New Testament**

Mainly, Jesus and Paul demonstrated an authentic discipleship model for mission in the New Testament. As a matter of fact, Jesus invested most of his time and labor in teaching and training his disciples in his ministry. Jesus relied on his disciples to change the world with the gospel. According to Hull (1990), "the church is called to make more disciples, to pray for more laborers, and to recognize leaders" (p. 175). Neither

did Paul do God's work alone. He always worked with his companions or his disciples in his missionary activities.

### Jesus and the Twelve Disciples

Discipleship was Jesus' strategy for fulfilling the plan of redemption. Jesus took a band of relatively untrained individuals and qualified them to be leaders in His plan to change the world – which they promptly began to do. Theologians typically refer to his method of doing this as discipleship. This approach was relational, intentional, informal, within the context of community, and outward focused.

Coleman (2010) perceives this (Jesus') strategy in stages namely: Selection, Association, Consecration, Impartation, Demonstration, Delegation, Supervision, and Reproduction.

The first stage is "Selection." It all started by Jesus calling a few men to follow Him. His concern was not with programs to reach the multitudes, but with men whom the multitudes would follow (p. 21). These twelve people had no academic qualification in the arts and philosophies of their era. Most of them were raised in the poor section of the country around Galilee (p. 23). However, Jesus noticed in these poor men the potential of leadership for the Kingdom. Jesus knew that a few dedicated people will in time shake the world for God. Victory is never won by the multitudes (p. 34).

The second stage is "Association." Jesus always walked along with them wherever He went and in whatever He did. Jesus spent most time with them and shared common daily life with them. Coleman (2010) comments: "Jesus made it a practice to be with them. This was the essence of His training program—just letting His disciples follow Him" (p. 38). The disciples were close at hand to observe and to listen. Without

neglecting His regular ministry to those in need, He maintained a constant ministry to His disciples by having them with Him. (p. 43).

The third stage is “Consecration.” Jesus set them aside for the purpose of the Great Commission—to save the world. So He taught them obedience and total commitment to God’s word. According to Coleman’s statement, “Jesus expected the men He was with to obey Him. They were not required to be smart, but they had to be loyal” (p. 50). True obedience is a fruit out of true love. Jesus said, “If you love Me, keep My commandments” (John 14:15).

The fourth stage is “Impartation.” Jesus taught His disciples by His lifestyle that there is greater joy in giving than in receiving. Jesus’ life itself was a gift and offering for others. He promised them His peace to sustain them in times of tribulations (John 16:33; Matt. 11:28). Coleman (2010) describes Jesus’ unselfish life as follows:

He gave them His joy in which He labored amid the sufferings and sorrows about Him (John 15:11; 17:13). He gave them the keys to His kingdom which the powers of Hell could never prevail against (Matt. 16:19; Luke 12:32). Indeed, He gave them His own glory which was His before the worlds were made, that they all might be one even as He was one in the Father (John 17:22, 24). He gave all He had—nothing was withheld, even His own life. (p. 61)

The fifth stage is “Demonstration.” Jesus’ prayer life was a demonstration of dependence on God and His word. The disciples should have learned how important prayer is from Him. As a matter of fact, prayer was the secret of His power and success. Jesus did not force the lesson upon them; rather, He kept praying until they asked Him to teach them how to pray (p. 74). Thereafter, Jesus repeatedly emphasized the importance of a prayerful life and the need to study the word of God. It was one of the indispensable parts of Jesus’ discipleship training.

The sixth stage is “Delegation.” Jesus had a plan that His disciples would have to take over His work, go out into the world and proclaim the gospel. His method was to get the disciples into a vital experience with God, and to show them how He worked, before telling them they had to do it (p. 82). Jesus involved His disciples in the various ways in which He ministered, such as distributing food, arranging accommodations for the group, and even letting them baptize people (John 4:2). And Jesus gave His disciples some specific instructions on their first missionary work so that they could experience a victory over the devil (Matt. 10:5-15).

The seventh stage is “Supervision.” Jesus allowed his disciples to experience ministry directly in the field, so that they could check and assess their own ministry by themselves. Jesus trained the disciples to check on their own ministry after they returned from ministering. For example, Jesus sent out 70 disciples to take the gospel to the villages and towns. And then, when the seventy came back from the mission field, Jesus called them to Himself and had them report on their work (Luke 10:17).

The eighth stage is “Reproduction.” Jesus made disciples who would reproduce and multiply other disciples that would continue the chain of multiplication. It did not matter how small the group was to start with so long as they reproduced and taught their disciples to reproduce (p. 106). Jesus expected his disciples to reproduce and sustain their fruit in Christ.

### Barnabas’ Model of Discipleship

It was not easy for the disciples and apostles to accept the conversion of Paul, due to the major role he had played in the persecution of the followers of Christ. Because he encountered Jesus on his way to persecute believers in Christ living in

Damascus, when he attempted to identify with the other believers, it was difficult to believe his sincerity (Acts 9:1-25). At that time, Paul was still not accepted by the twelve apostles or other Christians because they were afraid of him. “And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple” (Acts 9:26). Even though Paul had a passion for proclaiming the gospel, he had to go back to his hometown, Tarsus, because of the threats on his life by the Jews (Acts 9:30). As God began to bless and multiply believers in Antioch, the church in Jerusalem decided to send Barnabas to Antioch.

The Scripture describes Barnabas as “a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and full of faith” (Acts 11:24). Barnabas especially had the gift of encouragement and was also good at empowering others to discover and use their giftedness for ministry. And while the other believers were reluctant, Barnabas perceived great potential for ministry in Paul and extended an invitation to Paul, so that he could work with Paul and disciple him for ministry. He believed in Paul and was willing to support and stand by him until others began to accept Paul as a true disciple. Barnabas was also a good discipler as well as a learner. Needless to say, if it were not for Barnabas trusting and supporting Paul, Paul would have faced more difficulties in his ministry both within and without. Barnabas worked with Paul at the Antioch church for one year (Acts 11:26).

The ministry of Barnabas reveals several essential factors necessary for making a disciple of Christ. First, he was a spiritual person who could invite and accept others superior to himself for the work of God without pride or fear of losing his position. Barnabas was full of the Holy Spirit and honest at heart. One of the mistakes leaders often make is not accepting people who are more gifted than themselves in certain areas

of ministry. Barnabas perceived Paul as a great evangelist (more than he was) but was not threatened that Paul will become “greater” than he was.

Second, Barnabas was the kind of person who encourages and empowers others to be involved in the gospel ministry. He believed there was room for everyone to participate.

Third, Barnabas was the kind of person who was willing to stand with the weak. When Barnabas and Paul took Mark on their mission trip, Mark gave up on the way because of the hardship. On another occasion when John Mark was willing to return to the ministry, Paul strongly opposed John Mark, while Barnabas was willing to understand and to give John Mark another opportunity (Acts 15:37). Indeed, Barnabas was a son of encouragement (Acts 4:36).

### Paul’s Model of Discipleship

#### **Paul and Timothy**

When Paul visited Lystra during his second missionary trip, Timothy followed Paul as a dedicated Christian. Luke describes Paul’s disciple, Timothy, as follows: “Then he came to Derbe and Lystra. And behold, a certain disciple was there, named Timothy, the son of a certain Jewish woman who believed but his father was Greek” (Acts 16:1).

Paul called Timothy “my son” in his letters (2 Tim 1:2; 2:1). The relationship between Paul and Timothy could be said to be stronger than a regular father-son relationship. Ogden comments that, “These two are linked together as the prototypical unit” (Ogden p. 140). A Paul and Timothy model in discipleship is a typical teacher-student relationship in the Bible. Paul trained Timothy to be a faithful disciple of Christ

as well as to teach others; “And the things that you have heard from me among many witnesses, commit these to faithful men who will be able to teach others also” (2 Timothy 2:2).

Timothy was trained and equipped by Paul in order to make other disciples like himself, thus the chain of the multiplication was sustained. Paul spent a lot of time with Timothy in teaching and training. Therefore, Paul could ask Timothy to take care of the Ephesian church. Paul’s discipleship relationship with Timothy did not cease even when Paul was in prison (2 Timothy 1:8)

### **Paul and Silas**

Silas was one of Paul’s disciples and at the same time a strong partner in his ministry. According to the scriptures, Silas was a leader in the Jerusalem church and was sent to Antioch with Paul, Barnabas, and Barabbas who was one of the leading men among the brethren (Acts 15:22). Even after Paul separated from Barnabas because of John Mark, he decided to choose Silas to do a mission trip through Syria and Cilicia. Paul was always accompanied by Silas wherever he went in his ministry. Silas learned and was encouraged by Paul’s unfailing faith in Jesus. Especially, as they entered into city of Philippi, which was the foremost city of that part of Macedonia, they got into big trouble because of winning the soul of a certain slave girl possessed with an evil spirit. However, her masters got mad at Paul and Silas’s group because their hope of profit was gone. “They seized Paul and Silas and dragged them into the marketplace to the authorities” (Acts 16:19). After all this, the authorities laid many stripes on Paul and Silas, and they threw them into prison (Acts 16:23). What Silas learned from Paul was to praise and pray with hope in Jesus even though they were in a desperate situation.

This was not Paul's intentional training but his lesson of spiritual testimony based on his steady faith in Jesus. Silas experienced a lot by being with Paul in his ministry.

### **Conclusion**

Jesus Christ gave his disciples the Great Commission: to proclaim the gospel to all nations, races, tribes, and people in different contexts through discipleship. Thus, discipleship is the mandate for the church, not an option among many.

The Old and New Testaments present a series of models and examples of discipleship. Discipleship is not a new concept that began in recent times but is perhaps as old as human history after the Fall (Adam and Eve's rebellion).

Jesus Christ also modeled discipleship for His followers in every era to follow. In fact, Christ drives the need further by His command to make disciples in every nation. The church of Christ in every era should follow Jesus' principles of discipleship.

## CHAPTER 3

### LITERATURE REVIEW OF CONTEXTUALIZED DISCIPLESHIP

#### **Introduction**

The previous chapter presented the theological foundations for discipleship as a means of equipping church members for mission. Discipleship is indispensable when it comes to accomplishing the Great Commission Jesus gave the church. However, it would be a serious mistake to disciple anyone today (about 2000 years away from the time of Jesus Christ) without dealing with issues of contextualization. Thus, this chapter will review relevant literature on the subject of contextualization. It will attempt to provide a concise understanding of contextualization, its necessity, benefits, and the nature of its interaction with culture. Moreover, in view of the foundational nature of context in the Bible, the subject of contextualization in the Old and New Testaments will be briefly considered. Of course, any good contextualization endeavor must be cognizant of the contextualizer's presuppositions, the message, and the contexts.

Furthermore, given the history of contextualization over the centuries, an effort will also be made to discuss some of the models of contextualization in the past and present. Because the ultimate goal of this project is to design a program for equipping church members for discipleship in the West Japan Conference of Seventh-day Adventists, a historical review of contextualization efforts in Japan will be considered

and some basic elements of good contextualization will be outlined and briefly discussed. Finally, a conclusion will be given for this chapter.

### **Contextualization**

According to Lee (1999), Shoki Coe (Fund's director and a Taiwanese theologian) introduced the concept of contextualization as a missiological term in his "Theological Education Fund Report" in 1971. Since then, the term of "Contextualization" has become a popular topic of discussion in missiological journals (p. 1). In addition to this, Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell (2005) explain that "Contextualization" was initially used in 1972 and intended to go beyond traditional terms such as "Adaptation" and "Indigenization." In other words, contextualization was first used for the purpose of connecting the gospel and culture in ways that differed from the traditional usage.

Ott and Strauss (2010) comment, "some fear that contextualizing the gospel will open the door to watering down or compromising the gospel with culture." (p. 266). However, other evangelical missiologists such as Hiebert and Kraft strongly insist that contextualization is necessary to fulfill the proclamation of the everlasting gospel to all nations, races, and tongues (Rev. 14:6).

The debate on contextualization in mission naturally raises some questions: (a) How could some biblical terms such as righteousness, redemption, judgment, and love or faith be explained without any reference to culture? (b) How could the gospel and the values of Christian living be clarified without locating them within the culture of the recipients? (c) How can the ever-constant gospel be articulated in an ever-changing world?

These questions signify how crucial contextualization of the gospel is for our present generation. Therefore, biblical contextualization is critical in mission in order to communicate the gospel in a relevant manner to a people who live in differing and ever-changing contexts.

### Definition of Contextualization

While we recognize the importance of the Great Commission Christ gave the church, it is not easy for us to define contextualization. Flemming (2005) argues that contextualization is a difficult endeavor (p. 14). The definition of contextualization varies according to the manner of interpretation of the Scripture and the importance attached to culture (Moreau 2005, p. 335). According to Flemming (2005), “contextualization has to do with how the gospel revealed in Scripture authentically comes to life in each new cultural, social, religious and historical setting” (p. 14). Thus, making disciples or proclaiming the gospel is inseparably linked with contextualization. It seems that it is impossible to talk of one without the other. M. Cook, Haskell, Julian, and Tanchanpongs (2010) state that “contextualization is the process of making the gospel relevant to people in such a way to be able to speak to their hearts” (p. 58). Thus, contextualization is intrinsic to making the gospel relevant to its recipients.

Additionally, Moreau (2012) points out that “contextualization is the process whereby Christians adapt the forms, content, and praxis of the Christian faith so as to communicate it to the minds and hearts of people with other cultural backgrounds”(p. 36).

A key word in Moreau's view is adaptation. He believes that the gospel message is meaningful when it acclimatizes with people's primary needs and thus minister to their hearts.

For Hesselgrave and Rommen (1989), contextualization is:

The attempt to communicate the message of the person, works, Word, and will of God in a way that is faithful to God's revelation, especially as put forth in the teaching of Holy Scripture, and that is meaningful to respondents in their respective cultural and existential contexts. (p. 200)

Hesselgrave and Rommen introduce another crucial factor in contextualization by underscoring the importance of faithfulness to the Scripture in contextualization of the gospel. Indeed, contextualization becomes counter-productive when it negates the revealed will of God in the Bible.

Similarly, Ott and Strauss (2010) believe that "contextualization means relating the never-changing truths of scripture to ever-changing human contexts so that those truths are clear and compelling. It is the process of engaging culture in all its varied dimensions with biblical truth" (p. 266). Therefore, biblical contextualization is a process of applying God's unchangeable message in a relevant manner to the different cultures and contexts in which people live without compromising the gospel truth.

### Inevitability of Contextualization

It seems fitting to begin this section with a story from the life of Sadhu Sundar Singh, an outstanding 20th century Indian evangelist. The story goes:

Once when I was travelling in Rajputana, there was a Brahman of high-caste hurrying to the station. Overcome by great heat, he fell down on the platform. The Anglo-Indian stationmaster, anxious to help him, offered him water in a western cup. But the Brahman would not take the water, although he was thirsty. "I cannot drink that water. I would prefer to die." "I'm not asking you to eat the cup," the stationmaster said to him. "I will not break my caste," he said, "I am willing to die." When however, the water was brought to him in his own brass vessel, he drank it

eagerly. It is the same with the Water of Life. Indians do need the Water of Life but not in the European cup. (Moreau, 2012, p. 107)

Christians live in a world of diverse cultures that are ever-changing. There has always been a constant tension between the universal truth of the gospel and the reality of the world. Obviously, God's people have to face the reality of the world in which they live. As a matter of fact, it is a big challenge for them to bear a divine message in a multicultural world that is opposed to the content of the message that they bring. But it is a command from Jesus Christ (their Master) that has to be fulfilled. Therefore, every true follower of Christ has a burden to witness for Christ in the entire world as He (Jesus Christ) commanded (Matt 28:19-20). Nevertheless, one is immediately confronted with the need for contextualization in view of varied human cultural contexts. But Moreau (2006a) recommends that such contextualization must be holistic. He urges, "We must practice holistic contextualization" (pp. 325-355).

Theology of mission is incomplete until it speaks to the gospel's penetration into every aspect of a people's life and worldview. When the good news of Jesus enters a society, those who respond must decide what they will do with many of the old aspects of their culture. Will they celebrate the same holidays and participate in the same rituals? How will they ensure that they have divine favor to find a job, harvest a large crop, or conceive children? Can they use worship forms and rituals from previous religion to worship Jesus? As missionaries seek to explain the gospel in every new culture, they must determine the best word in the new language to use for the one true God. How will they explain key theological terms such as sacrifice, redemption, holiness, and faith? Every word that they might use from the local language to explain these biblical ideas already comes loaded with meaning from the people's culture and old religion. (Ott and Strauss (2010, p. 265)

Indeed, no missionary endeavor can ignore the local culture and belief systems and yet expect success. On the contrary, success is said to have been achieved when the gospel message penetrates the culture and worldview of a people in such a way that they not only adapt to but assume ownership of the biblical worldview. White (1948) comments: "Many efforts, though made at great expense, have been in a large measure

unsuccessful because they do not meet the wants of the time or the place” (p. 297). In other words, contextualization is necessary to attain success in the proclamation of the gospel message.

M. Cook et al. (2010) express the goal of contextualization thusly:

“The goal is to lead God’s people to reflect Christ with their hearts, head, and hands. Our theological reflection may score high marks for doctrinal precision. Or it may excel in relevance. But if it does not help to shape God’s people in their shared life of discipleship and their participation in God’s mission in the world, it is only a parody of authentic contextualization.” (p. 17)

For M. Cook et al., contextualization is authentic and worth any investment only if it impacts people at a foundational level and transforms their characters—this is the real focus of contextualization. The Apostle Paul understood the necessity of contextualization and contextualized his missionary efforts wherever he went as

Plummer and Terry (2012) observed:

Paul not only preached the gospel message, he contextualized Christianity in the cultures where he planted churches. Paul did not seek to represent the church of Syrian Antioch or Jerusalem when he went to new areas. Indeed, even those two churches had differing understandings of what a New Testament church should be, say and do, resulting in a major council of the church leaders in Acts 15. Paul’s wise insights were essential aspects for the resolution reached for non-Jewish background believers. (p. 203)

In a sense, contextualization of theology is really a theological imperative because of the need for the gospel message to be understood in a new and particular context. In fact, Bevans (2010) argues that there is no such thing as theology apart from contextual theology (p. 3). Gilliland (2000) states that “the goal of contextualization is to enable, insofar as it is humanly possible, an understanding of what it means that Jesus Christ, the Word, is authentically experienced in each and every human situation” (p. 225). Thus, contextualization is inevitable since the gospel message is for all people, cultures, tongues, and tribes.

## Contextualization and Culture

It is difficult, if at all possible, to ignore culture while engaging in contextualization because culture lies at the center of contextualization (Ott & Strauss, 2010). Rheenen (2006) emphasizes finding what God is already doing in a particular culture rather than rushing to communicate God's eternal message within the cultural context. Rheenen's comment reveals God's role in the effort of contextualization for mission. Rheenen presupposes that God is at work everywhere, thus the case for the need of contextualization becomes stronger because if God is already at work in a particular culture, why impose a foreign culture? It also presupposes that if God is at work everywhere, then the message of God can be and should be made relevant to every culture. Pocock, Rheenen, and McConnell (2005), speaking on the issue of contextualization, insist that "the goal is to make the Christian faith as a whole—not only the message but also the means of living the faith out in the local setting—understandable" (p. 323). In other words, we cannot do without contextualization if the gospel message has to be understood (which it does).

Flemming (2005) contends that it is impossible to understand the gospel aside from culture, whether in Scripture itself or in our given context (p. 306). This fact is demonstrated by the incarnation of Jesus Christ, who though He was God, became a human being, so that He could communicate the gospel to the human race in our context (John 1:1, 14).

Revelation 7:9 further impresses one of the need for contextualization:

After these things I looked, and behold, a great multitude which no one could number, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, with palm branches in their hands

The question for the church then remains: how will the universal truth of the gospel be effectively communicated in ever-changing human cultures? What kind of mission strategy would be helpful in bridging the gap between the universal truth of the gospel and the changing world?

As revealed in Revelation 7:9-10, these saved people in heaven were from different cultures, which implies connectedness to Christ in a way that was relevant to their individual contexts. Therefore, Moreau (2012) explains that contextualization is at the “mixing point” of gospel and culture (p. 19). Without contextualization, people would not connect to Christ and the church could never proclaim the gospel in all nations, tribes, people, and tongues.

So what if Jesus was not a Jew? Obviously, He would have spoken and taught in the language of the culture into which He was born. His object lessons, examples, lifestyle, et cetera would have reflected the culture into which He was born. Nevertheless, He would have still commissioned His followers to go into the entire world and preach the gospel and make disciples of every nation on the earth. It follows then that the gospel commission to make disciples of every nation ought to be contextualized in every given culture so that it will be relevant to the recipients and meet its (the gospel commission’s) intended goal.

### Contextualization and Syncretism

It is very difficult for us to make a clear line between contextualization and syncretism. “Syncretism can be exceedingly complex to distinguish from contextualization, as the differences between them are often more fuzzy than binary” (Moreau, 2012, p. 129). Perhaps another reason for this condition is because syncretism

is like “an odorless, tasteless gas, likened to carbon monoxide which is seeping into our atmosphere” (Rheenen, 2006, p. 3). Syncretism often appears innocent, not easily identified, but is insidiously detrimental to the interest of the gospel of Christ and the overall efforts of the church. According to Rheenen (2006), contextualization and syncretism are “interrelated processes of faith and culture” (p. 3). Therefore, it is no surprise that they are interconnected. Moreau (2006b) defines that syncretism is “replacement or dilution of the essential truths of the Gospel through the incorporation of non-Christian elements” (p. 48). Rheenen (2006) defines syncretism as the blending of “Christian beliefs and practices with those of the dominant culture so that Christianity loses its distinctiveness and speaks with a voice reflective of its culture” (p. 8). Wherever syncretism prevails, the power of the gospel is diminished or worse still, lost.

How can the church guard against syncretism when the Gospel is to be proclaimed in human contexts? Moreau (2012) explains the difficulty of guarding against syncretism as follows:

Ultimately, evangelicals recognize that we must acknowledge that every church is in some sense syncretistic. The reality of sin, the dangers of cultural idolatry, and the fact that none of us has a complete grasp on truth are so much a part of our lives that syncretism is in some sense inevitable. Even groups such as the Amish who have withdrawn from the larger societies in which they live face these issues. We can never escape the fact that we are fallen and subjective human beings. (p. 132)

It is a critical issue that we should not lose the message of the Gospel itself while relating it in our constantly changing contexts. Rheenen (2006) suggests that the church can take some steps in protecting against syncretism. First, take the Bible seriously as the rule of faith and life. Second, recognize the work of the Holy Spirit in the lives of all believers who are open to God’s leading. Third, see how our cultural prejudices have hindered or corrupted our interpretations of the Scriptures.

Rheenen also stresses the need to balance the place of Scripture and culture in order not to fall into syncretism. P. G. Hiebert (2006) states as follows:

We need both-to study divine revelation and human contexts, and we need to communicate that revelation in ways that remain true to it, and are understood by people. Failure to do so leads to syncretism in which the truth of the Gospel is lost and the people go astray. (p. 40)

He further states that we must admit that our understanding of divine revelation is limited by our humanness prior to the effort of communicating the Gospel to any human context. Hiebert's opinion makes sense; we must pay attention to the context into which we carry the gospel message while at the same time preserving the authenticity of the message. Unfortunately, as humans, the tendency is to slide toward syncretism, but conscious effort can be made through the help of the Holy Spirit to overcome it and proclaim the truth as revealed in the Bible.

#### Benefits of Contextualization

Contextualization (Musasiwa, 2007, pp. 68-70; Plummer & Terry, 2012, p. 198) when rightly done can benefit the church in many ways including: (a) Serving as a collaborative means of disseminating the gospel truth in ways that are receptor-friendly. Contextualization invites the recipients to share or contribute from their local experiences and perspectives to the process. (b) Creating an avenue for developing indigenous understanding and practice of the gospel truth in a manner that is most meaningful to the local context, thus avoiding the suspicion of foreign intrusion. (c) Facilitating holistic development of the recipients or recipient group since they can relate with and understand the message better. (d) Enriching the recipient's language by introducing new concepts and belief systems which stretch the language to expand its vocabulary.

## Issues in Contextualization

The endeavor to contextualize is confronted with several issues such as worship style, type of music, leadership style, dress code and style, building architecture, prayer modes, styles of teaching, manner of showing reverence, language and so on.

Interestingly, the Bible does not exclusively present any singular culture as a model for these issues (Plummer & Terry, 2012, pp. 198-199), rather, it presents principles that can be contextualized as needed in a given local context.

There is wisdom to glean from the submission of the apostle Paul about his contextualization and missiological approach to win the Jews, those without the law, the weak and so on (1 Cor 9:20-23). On another occasion he expressed it in this manner: “Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God” (1 Cor 10:31).

### The Importance of Contextualized Discipleship for Mission

Contextualized discipleship is related with culture, people, and religious behaviors of the people in a local context. Song (2006) states as follows:

Contextualized discipleship is an application of contextual theology in following up and discipling new believers in a cross-cultural setting. By taking the receptor’s context seriously, it acknowledges, first of all, the simple and obvious fact that no one comes to Jesus in a spiritual vacuum. (p. 250)

In fact, it would be reasonable to assert that there is no such thing as discipleship but only contextualized discipleship. If discipleship is not contextualized to the receptor’s context, then the discipleship effort has failed because the implication is that it has not been fully understood and internalized by the receptor. And as P. G. Hiebert (2006, p. 40) noted earlier, when discipleship is not contextualized, it can lead to syncretism and consequently defeat the high purpose of the gospel. And the command

of Jesus Christ reads: “Go into all the world and make disciples in every nation.” This command entails going to the people where they are and making them disciples in their local context. It is logical to think that such discipleship will assume the outlook of its context, not a foreign culture.

### **Contextualized Discipleship Models in the Old Testament**

It can be substantially argued that the Old Testament is as much about mission as much as the New Testament is. In fact, the fundamental themes of contextualization are laid out in the Old Testament. Moreau, Corwin, and McGee (2004a, p. 27) identify four missionary acts of God in the Old Testament: (a) creation and the rebellion of Adam and Eve; (b) the divine call and consecration of Israel to God; (c) God’s redemptive work for His people; and (d) God sending Israel into exile. Kaiser (2000) got it right in his claim that:

The Old Testament was to see both Jews and Gentiles come to a saving knowledge of the Messiah who was to come. Anything less than this goal was a misunderstanding and an attenuation of the plan of God. God’s eternal plan was to provide salvation for all peoples; it was never intended to be reserved for one special group, such as the Jews, even as an initial offer. (p. 10)

God has revealed Himself in several forms such as: light, darkness, an unquenchable fire, and a still small voice, etcetera. God showed himself to Moses as a strange fire burning on a bush that would not be consumed at Mount Horeb. At times, God used insignificant things around people (Num 22:25-34) to communicate His purposes.

### **God’s Covenant With Abraham**

When God called Abraham to go forth as His emissary, Abraham was also to bear a witness of his experience that “God is a loving and faithful God, blessing those

who dare to listen and obey” (Tuttle, 2006, p. 15). Abraham was a living witness of the goodness of God—the Almighty God who desires to be in relationship with His people, the God who answers prayers, who provides for His people, who protects, who rewards faithfulness, who judges, who is loving, faithful, merciful, compassionate, and just (Gen 12:1; 14:20; 15:1; 17:3; 19:16, 24; 21:17; 22:8, 17-18).

As the Scripture records: “Abraham believed God...” and moved into action as God instructed, extending the same call to all with whom he came in contact as he journeyed (Gen 12:1-25:10; 15:6).

Abraham was a man of faith, compassionate, merciful, kind, courageous, but also a person who loved justice (Tuttle, 2006, p. 17). He demonstrated fairness and justice in letting go his right to take his choice of the land before Lot (Gen 13:6-10) and showed compassion and loyalty in the rescue of Lot (Gen 14:8-16). He proved his generosity by returning tithes to Melchizedek (Gen 14:18-20) and demonstrated outstanding faith in God by his willingness to sacrifice Isaac according to the command of God (Gen 22:1-19). God’s contextualized message was seen in the Old Testament, especially in Genesis 15 when God made a covenant with Abraham. According to Genesis 15, God said to Abraham to bring a “three-year old heifer, three-year old female goat, a three old ram, a turtledove, and a young pigeon”(Gen 15:9). God also requested for Abraham to cut them in two and place each piece opposite the other. Abraham followed everything God commanded him. White (1958) explains that “the Lord condescended to enter into a covenant with His servant, employing such forms as were customary among men for the ratification of a solemn engagement” (p. 137). God chose earthly forms and styles

that people had performed at those times in common rather than heavenly styles or forms.

### **Cultural Rituals in Semitic Era Expressed in Genesis 15**

The Hebrew *berîth* (covenant) was common practice in the Semitic cultures. It applies to two semantic fields in ancient Near East namely, oath and covenant on the one hand, and love and friendship on the other hand (Weinfeld 1975, p.256). Abraham himself was also raised in the same culture: he spoke the language of the people, interacted within same cultural values and understanding, ate same foods, and so on. Therefore, as White observed, God had to reach him in the language he could understand. *Berîth* has a variety of usages in the Old Testament including covenants between nations (Josh 9:3-27; 1 Kgs 15:19), between clans (Gen 14:13), for legal contracts (Jer 34:8-10), for marriage relationships (Mal 2:14), and even between two people on personal issues (Gen 31:44-55).

According to Wright (1950, pp.15, 54-55) Israel copied some of its social and religious practices including rituals, from the surrounding nations. However, due to her relationship with Yahweh, most of these rituals were transformed and improved. Raven (1933, p.12) observed that the Bible gives little information regarding the other religions in the Near East. Nevertheless, he believes that there are “priceless indications concerning that primitive religion which prepared for the religion of the patriarchs as the religion of the patriarchs prepared for the religion of Israel.” Thus, the covenant knowledge of Abraham did not emerge in a vacuum; it was a combination of experiences from his environment and personal relationship with God.

Moreover, the reference to Melchizedek as a priest of God most high (Gen 14:18-20) suggests that sacrificial system was already in place within the Near East culture before Abraham was called by God. As a priest, Melchizedek must necessarily offer sacrifices to the most high God. And this encounter between Melchizedek and Abraham underscores the fact that no one can claim a monopoly of divine oracle, the knowledge of God is not confined to any particular nation or race, but is revealed and active in the entire human race.

#### Moses' Sanctuary in the Wilderness

“And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, that is, the pattern of the tabernacle and the pattern of all its furnishings, just so you shall make it”(Exod 25:8-9).

God showed the heavenly sanctuary to Moses in vision and commanded him to build a sanctuary so that God could dwell among the Israelites in the wilderness. The materials to be used for sanctuary were not special or rare things beyond what they could find around them. God wanted them to build His sanctuary with the things they had. For example, they could find the acacia tree easily. Acacia wood was used for pillar, the ark of the testimony, the table for the showbread, and even the Ark of the Covenant containing the Ten Commandments in the most holy place. Gold, silver, and bronze were also useful things to cover them. The Israelites brought those materials with them from Egypt. Moses built the sanctuary by following the blueprint of the heavenly sanctuary that God had showed Moses. God's presence in the most holy place was the exclusively divine prerogative in the whole experience.

## **Contextualized Discipleship Models in the New Testament**

### **The Incarnation of Jesus Christ**

The gospel of John records that Jesus became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Kraft (1979) reflect that “God in Jesus became so much a part of a specific human context that many never even recognized that he had come from somewhere else”(p. 175). Unfortunately, most people who had longed for the Messiah failed to recognize and accept Jesus as their Savior because of His humble incarnation.

Flemming (2005) points out that Jesus was born as a Jew in a specific time and place (Gal 4:4) and “he was thoroughly immersed in his Jewish culture” (p. 20).

Moreover, Jesus was born in the first-century Jewish culture and He talked as a Galilean who lived in the local Palestinian context. He also had the same emotions like one of us, such as: anger, sadness, happiness, delightfulness, hunger, thirst and so on (Flemming, 2005, p. 20).

In addition, Jesus completely adapted to the food, dress, language, customs, and everything in His local culture. Jesus not only communicated with the people but also taught them and bore the heavenly message to them in Aramaic, not some heavenly language, not even in Hebrew. In a sense, the incarnation of Jesus Christ is the most powerful pattern of contextualization in the Scriptures. Interestingly, Jesus relied heavily on His local context for his sermonic illustrations. His parables, miracles, and proverbs, related with the everyday experiences of the people; His teachings likened heavenly things to the things in His local context so that the people could comprehend the intended messages and apply them in their lives. In fact, Jesus decided to live in the time and its contexts in which He was born and raised even though He is God himself.

Flemming (2005) contends that the “incarnation of Jesus Christ makes contextualization not just a possibility but an obligation” (p. 21).

### Contextualized Discipleship in the Ministry of Paul

If Jesus was the original model of contextualized discipleship, it can reasonably be argued that Paul could be the pioneer who applied contextualized discipleship into different mission contexts. Paul had a passion for the lost souls after his conversion to Christianity through his dramatic experience on the Damascus road (Acts 9:1-9). Moreover, Paul’s own experience led him to change his worldview and sense of value in his life. Paul’s confession expresses his changed theological view.

For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more; and to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the law, as under the law, that I might win those who are under the law; to those who are without law, as without law (not being without law toward God, but under law toward Christ), that I might win those who are without law; to the weak I became as weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all men, that I might by all means save some. Now this I do for the gospel's sake, that I may be partaker of it with you. (1 Cor 9:19-23)

Paul’s Christian worldview was not only different from devout Pharisee or zealot, but also switched his entire pre-Christian life after his conversion on the Damascus road (Flemming, 2005, p. 121). Paul did not stick to his religious tradition or law anymore and his focus became winning lost souls by proclaiming the gospel. For the purpose of achieving his new Christian goal, Paul decided to contextualize himself and the message he bore in order to proclaim the gospel in diverse situations or settings.

This strong desire for the salvation of lost souls is reflected in Paul’s extensive engagement in contextual theology (L. T. Johnson, 1999, pp. 271-273). His concern was not so much about systematic theology but to reach his converts as part of his missionary responsibility in ways that were relevant to their local context and

experiences (Schreiner, 2001, pp. 38-39, 60-68). In fact, the names of Paul's epistles (such as Romans, Corinthians, Colossians, Timothy) disclose their contextual intentions. He was "first and foremost a missionary-pastor who planted churches and wrote pastoral communications in order to build up his converts in their newfound faith in the crucified and risen Jesus" (Flemming, 2005, p. 90). Achtemeier (1994) posits that the writings of Paul are simply echoes of the resultant effects of clashes between the Gospel and the world --- how Paul responded and his counsels on how the church members were to react in thought, speech and conduct (p.25). It's no surprise then that the center of Paul's theology and ministry was the good news about Jesus Christ (Hays, 1996, p. 46).

### **Ministry to the Corinthians**

The church at Corinth was located in a complex, multi-cultural, sexually immoral, and religiously diverse society in the first century. There were two main groups in Corinth: the Jews and the Greeks (1 Cor. 1:22, 23). These two groups had different worldviews and theological thinking patterns. The Jews demanded signs, the Greeks sought wisdom (1 Cor. 1:22). But the church in Corinth had more to deal with including quarrels, divisions, gross sexual immorality, lawsuits between church members, eating foods sacrificed to idols, marital problems, and speaking in tongues.

Paul's concern, however, was to win souls to Christ by proclaiming the gospel in grace and power. He organized the Christian church in Corinth amidst paganism. Perhaps Paul was interested in Corinth owing to the fact that it was a "prestigious center from which the gospel could radiate out to the surrounding districts" (Morris, 1985, p. 19).

Moreover, Morris (1985) explains that “Corinth was one of the most important cities in Greece. It was populous and wealthy. It was the capital of the Roman province of Achaia” (p. 7). However the church at Corinth faced a lot of difficulties such as Gnosticism, sectarianism, sexual immorality, and eating of foods sacrificed to idols. Among those issues, especially, eating food sacrificed to idols was one of the most sensitive issues of contention between the Jewish Christians and the Greek ones. There were different understandings about the Christian faith among them. The Jews showed their negative attitude against eating food sacrificed to idols while Greek Christians did not. Paul reasoned with the Greek Christians that “We know that an idol is nothing in the world, and that there is no other God but one” (1 Cor. 8:4). Nevertheless, in addressing the issue, Paul adopted a love-oriented approach instead of knowledge-based arguments and admonished the believers to accept and tolerate one another’s level of faith (1 Cor 8:13). Paul warned that knowledge makes people proud, while love builds up (1 Cor. 8:1). He studied the Corinthian culture and context in order to proclaim the gospel without compromising it, at the same making it relevant to them. He revealed Jesus Christ as only true God to them (1 Cor. 8:6). In essence, Paul contextualized the gospel message to deal with the various problems in the church at Corinth by applying biblical, faith answers to local challenges and questions.

### **Ministry to the Colossians**

When I was pastoring church in Japan, I was told a personal story by one of my church members. Even though she was a faithful Christian for a long time, she had performed a Buddhist ritual prayer every morning at home since her husband had passed away. Not a few Christians are having a hard time keeping their individual faith

separate from family religion (Buddhism) or national religion (Shintoism), especially at times such as the celebrations thanksgiving to the ancestor (*Obong*), New Year (*Hatsumoude*), funeral (Buddhist ritual), and all kinds of Japanese festivals (*Matsuri*). This kind of story is not a surprising thing among Japanese Christians because there are considerable number of Christians who not only hold more than one religion but also they are accustomed the rituals since they was born and raised at home with their parents as a culture not a religion. Colossian Christians had similar problems to those of the Japanese Christians. Wright (1986) says that Colossian Christians had lots of problems: pre-eminence, false philosophy, dubious mystical and ascetic religious practices, sectarian Judaism, Gnosticism, syncretism, Colossian heresy, and angel worship (Colossian 2:8-18). As Flemming (2005) noted, these phenomena do not make us so surprised because “the cities of the Lycus Valley in western Asia Minor were intersections of various crisscrossing cultures” (p. 215). These cities of Asia were strongly influenced by paganism cultures and mixed with Greco-Roman culture in the first century. In these difficult situations, Paul tried to “counteract the syncretistic tendencies of the false teaching as well as empower the community to change elements of their basic worldviews” (Flemming, 2005, p. 217). Paul revealed a contextualized gospel to the Colossians by introducing Christ as the supreme and all-sufficient God who is able to change their worldview and save them indeed (Flemming, 2005, p. 218). Paul used their language and philosophical terms to deal with their problems and challenges.

## **The Contextualized Life**

The messenger is a critical factor in the process of contextualization since humans by nature are not entirely objective. We necessarily confront new situations from the standpoint of some previous presuppositions (Carson, 1984; Cortez, 2005, p. 348; Moreau, 2005; Nicholls, 1979, pp. 40-43). In fact, Hesselgrave contends that presuppositions and contextualization cannot be separated and that they are crucial to any contextualization effort. He observes: “in the consideration of any attempt to interpret or contextualize scripture-based religious faith, one is inevitably driven to a consideration of the contextualizer’s epistemic pre-understanding—how he views the scripture text with which he is working” (Hesselgrave, 1984, p. 69). By this Hesselgrave underscores the crucial role of the contextualizer or messenger. Every message comes tainted with the experience and/or presuppositions of the one who bears it.

The call to Christian missions and contextualization is intrinsically spiritual, hence, the need for the messenger to offer his or herself to God—be spiritual, besides other qualifications such as physical, educational and others. The one who bears the message must be loving, trustworthy, patient, wholly devoted to Christ—spiritually minded (H. R. Cook, 1954, pp. 96-111). Christ’s spiritual mind can be ascertained through the Scripture verses such as Philippians 2:6-8:

Christ himself was like God in everything. He was equal with God. But he did not think that being equal with God was something to be held on to. He gave up his place with God and made himself nothing. He was born to be a man and became like a servant. And when he was living as a man, he humbled himself and was fully obedient to God. He obeyed even when that caused his death—death on a cross.

## Incarnational Life

True contextualization is incarnational. It is impossible to experience or appropriate the benefits of the gospel without a relationship with Jesus Christ (Toren, 2010, p. 95). The Apostle John's account declares:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. (John 1:1, 2, 14)

God Himself set the example for us to follow in our missionary endeavor. It was possible for God to simply speak (as at Creation) into existence whatever He desired the human race would be or do; instead, in Christ the Godhead chose to put on humanity, so that God may identify with our experiences and be most fitted in every sense to deliver us (2 Cor 5:19; Heb 4:15). Jesus showed us what God expects of us by His life example and then empowered us to the same (John 1:12; 14; 12-14)—an example for incarnational missionary living. Stott (2009) argues the living God of the Bible is a missionary God, and he substantiates his position by referring to God's promise to Abraham (Gen 12:3) and its fulfillment (Gal 3:16; Rev 7:9) as shown by the Apostle Paul (p. 9). It is God who always takes the initiative to save us and in this sense He qualifies as the first evangelist (Tuttle, 2006, p. 15), leaving us an example to follow in all our missionary work.

## Messenger Identity

A messenger is one of the core determining factors in the success of missions more than anything else in a particular mission context. Messengers should communicate their message to the people who are living in their mission context through their lives. Petersen (2011) states how important the messenger is in mission work:

“A messenger is one who has a relevant and significant message. Often the messenger is not only a carrier of a message but one who must demonstrate respect for the sender and the receiver of the message. This is important in an oral community. The messenger is as important as the message.”(pp. 135-136)

It is critical for the missionary to use the germane kind of communication skill with recipients and to understand how to relate to them in particular contexts with the gospel message. Bevans (2010) urges that “The missionary is a subject of a particular culture; he or she needs to communicate the gospel message, which is wrapped in its cultural particularity, to subjects of another culture” (p. 46). In other words, a missionary needs to have a tactful wisdom in relating to a particular worldview.

As Jesus and Paul demonstrated to us incarnational life as authentic missionaries in the first century, I strongly recommend that all missionaries who are working in different cultural contexts should understand how the people think and learn, the language they use, and their poetry, music, and arts. The missionary must be totally immersed in the culture as Jesus was in Palestinian culture. For example, Matteo Ricci (1552-1610) would be a best case of a successful messenger in different contexts.

Matteo Ricci was an Italian Jesuit missionary who introduced Christian teaching to the Chinese empire in the 16th century. He lived there for nearly 30 years and was a pioneer in the attempt at mutual comprehension between China and the West. By adopting the language and culture of the country, he gained entrance to the interior of China, which was normally closed to foreigners. (Crowell, Collier, & Macmillan, 1993)

This is an interesting story about Ricci who was eager to proclaim the gospel in his early Chinese mission. After Ricci and his companions arrived in China, they went among the Chinese in dress similar to Buddhist monks (Bevans, 2010, p. 52). However, he changed to follow Confucianism’s style rather than that of Buddhist monks after realizing that the Chinese national religion was not Buddhism. Likewise, Ricci was eager to adapt Chinese culture into his real life as a missionary for the purpose of

winning the souls. Namely, he wanted himself to be immersed totally into Chinese culture and society. John Paul raised his hat to Ricci's successful missional work for the Chinese as equal to the work of Justin Martyr, Clement of Alexandria, and Origen (Bevans, 2010, p. 52).

### **The Contextualized Approach**

The human mind is wired to process new information by comparing and contrasting with previous stored information. We necessarily confront every new situation with bias. Flemming (2010) suggests that in order to make the gospel message relevant in a new setting, one has to learn the new culture and discover how to re-tell the story within the context of the people's day to day experiences through the help and guidance of the Holy Spirit (p. 16).

The need to contextualize the approach of proclaiming the gospel is not an option but an imperative to which we necessarily have to comply. Keller captured it in a very fine line when he said:

There is no "non-contextualized" Christianity. Jesus didn't come to earth as generalized being—by becoming human he had to become a particular human. He was male, Jewish, working class. If he was to be human he had to become a socially and culturally situated person. So the minute we begin to minister we must "incarnate," even as Jesus did. Actual Christian practices must have both a Biblical form or shape as well as a cultural form or shape. For example, the Bible clearly directs us to use music to praise God—but as soon as we choose music to use, we enter a culture. As soon as we choose a language, as soon as we choose a vocabulary, as soon as we choose a particular level of emotional expressiveness and intensity, as soon as we choose even an illustration as an example for a sermon—we are moving toward the social context of some people and away from the social context of others...So adaptation to culture is inevitable. (Plummer & Terry, 2012, p. 198)

The scope of the gospel commission itself inescapably premeditates contextualization, for if the gospel has to be preached and/or received in every culture,

then God Himself already destined contextualized approaches. After all, He is not simply the God of a particular nation, people or race; He is God and Creator of the human race.

### Models of Contextualization

Several approaches otherwise referred to as models have been employed by Christian missionaries over the centuries in attempts to fulfill the gospel commission of Jesus Christ to proclaim the gospel in all the world. Roman Catholic scholars Stephen Bevans and Robert Schreiter, created and developed maps of the entire world of contextual models (Moreau 2012, p. 37). Bevans developed six models of the contextual globe, while Schreiter developed three major global contextual maps. According to Bevans (2010) “model is a case that is useful in simplifying a complex reality, and although such a simplification does not fully capture that reality, it does yield true knowledge of it” (p. 31). Thus, Bevans perceives model as a theoretical grouping rather than as actual reality. However, such theories usually describe the reality in understandable manner. Moreau (2010) discussed the models of contextualization that have been in use from early periods of Christian missions (pp. 168-171). These models include: translation, anthropological, adaptation, indigenization, praxis, synthetic, transcendental, countercultural, and translatability.

#### **Translation Model**

Translation model is the most popular model of all. Translation seeks to identify the fundamentals of the gospel and translate those fundamental into a new culture without losing those fundamental values (Bevans, 2010, p. 37). The term translation was first used by Krikor Halebblian to distinguish the approaches of Charles Kraft and

Robert Schreier (Haleblan, 1983, pp. 104-106). It usually occurs when missionaries' move with the gospel message into a new context and permit their concern and curiosity to shape and emphasize the gospel message in a manner relevant to the local context (Redford, 2004, p. 285). Walls (1996) postulates that it "involves the attempt to express the meaning of the source from the resources of, and within the working system of, the receptor language" (p.28). Translation usually brings about expanded meaning by introducing something new into preexisting context which impacts the language and norms (Van Engen, 2005).

### **Adaptation Model**

The adaptation model seeks to acclimatize historical emphases of systematic theology to a given local situation or culture (Gilliland, 1989, p. 315). It is a common model among many evangelicals and conservative Catholics. According to Schreier's map, adaptation model would be described as follows: "planting the seed of faith and allowing it to interact with the native soil, leading to a new flourishing of Christianity, faithful both to the local culture and to the apostolic faith" (Moreau, 2012, p. 42).

### **Indigenization Model**

Indigenization refers to the appropriate balance of the forms and life of the Christian faith and its local context (Van Engen, 2005). This model of contextualization became prominent in the nineteenth century, especially among the so called indigenous churches. P. G. Hiebert (1985, pp. 195-196, 216ff) identified four major characteristics of these indigenous churches: (a) they oversee themselves, (b) they finance themselves, (c) they proliferate themselves, and (d) they theologize for themselves.

### **Anthropological Model**

The anthropological model is a quite a radical model among the others. This model is focused on ever-changing settings, not an unchanging message unlike the translation model or countercultural model. Additionally, Moreau (2012) explains that the “primary concern of proponents of the anthropological model is the establishment of preservation of cultural identity by a person of Christian faith” ( p. 39).

### **Praxis or Local Theologizing Model**

This model deals with social justice due to social variation in the manner of theologizing within the recipient’s context. It is concerned with the manner in which theology is impacted by socio-political, economic, cultural and other factors within the local context (Van Engen, 2005, p. 192) and how changes can be made in favor of the relegated people (Moreau 2006, p.328). This model is reflected in liberation theology and the recent emerging “practical theology.”

### **Counter-Cultural Model**

Otherwise referred to as epistemological (Van Engen, 2005, pp. 196-200), this model attempts to “truly encounter and engage the context” in a critical manner and still remain biblical in theory and practice while upholding respect for the local culture (Bevans, 2010, p. 119). Proponents of the counter-cultural model are suspicious of culture because they believe that every culture has been tainted by sin, the reason they engage the culture (Moreau, 2012, p. 41). This approach opens the door for new insights about God as the gospel takes on a new outlook in the new context (Van Engen, 2005, p. 197).

## **Translatability Model**

This approach or model was promulgated by Van Engen on the basis of the incarnational nature of the gospel (as seen in the Catholic inculturation model). He argues that the incarnational nature of the gospel makes it “infinitely translatable into any and all human cultures” and that it is “a faith-relationship with God that can be woven into the fabric of any and all worldviews” (Van Engen, 2005, p. 187). The implication of translatability goes beyond plain communication, it entails complete adoption of the recipient culture in such a way that it takes on indigenous characteristics. In this model, it is the gospel (incarnational by nature) that undergoes the change which results in the harmonious blend (Van Engen, 2005, p. 188). And since the incarnation is what God did, it is believed that it is not subject to the control of the contextualizer, rather, the contextualizer contributes to the process and does not direct it (Moreau, 2010, p. 171).

## **Critical Contextualization**

Critical contextualization entails the process of bringing out the meaning of the biblical text and the cultural beliefs or practices and formulating a biblically authentic and culturally relevant response (Gilliland, 1989, p. 317).

While adaptation and indigenization focuses on more the local culture and context rather than the biblical message itself, “critical contextualization involves not making the message of scripture comfortable but rather speaking clearly to all areas of a context—beliefs, values, emotions” (Ott & Strauss, 2010, p. 270). It seeks to be biblically faithful while at the same time relevant to culture.

## Message

In recent years, there has been a rapid, widespread clamor for contextualized theology. Folks are asking and demanding answers to one mind-boggling issue: “what it means to follow Christ in the different cultural contexts in which the church finds itself” (Toren, 2010, p. 91). The response to this question, to a great extent, determines the level of success for any contextualization endeavor.

The Bible is the epistemological norm by which any authentic Christian contextualization can be done. Authentic contextualization is always faithful to the revelation of Scripture. Meral (2005) insists that the endeavor of contextualization is not “to create a new God, a new soteriology or a new gospel message. Rather it is simply to understand, teach, live and express the gospel in a way that is relevant to a particular context” (p. 212). The Bible is the message of God and as such expresses in it the normative character of God (Howell, 2001, p. 31). As a divine message, the Bible supersedes any human culture and practice; this reality cannot be compromised (Moreau, 2012, p. 61).

Flemming (2010) postulates: “When the voice of the interpreter or the context drowns out the voice of Christ revealed in Scripture, that reading moves out of bounds (p. 16). Therefore, the Bible is the infallible standard of Christian faith and behavior (Bautisca, 2005; Imasogie, 1983; Tano, 1981). In fact, authentic or true contextualization seeks to deliver the authentic or true intent of the biblical data.

### Prioritizing and Sequencing of the Message

There is certainly a sense of priority in the considering the message of the Scripture. Jesus Himself speaks of the “weightier matters of the law” (Matt 23:23) and

of “the first and great commandment” and the second (Matt 22:36-40). Toren argues that since the Bible is a set of contextualized messages, then, “the center of the gospel itself should be contextualized” (Toren, 2010, p. 95). He cites an example: the declaration that Jesus is both Lord and Savior. He contends that no matter the context, this statement is a core of the Christian faith.

### **Elements of Authentic Contextualization**

Having established the importance of contextualization and reviewed some the models of contextualization, it would be helpful at this point to set forth some parameters for assessment of any model of contextualization.

#### **The Primacy of the Scriptures**

Contextualization is first and foremost about the gospel message. “It “is not minimizing the impact of scripture that is to be shared with the receptor for the receptor’s comfort” (Redford, 2004, p. 284). It is not about the people, culture, nation, tribe or language. It is the gospel message that is being contextualized and that message must remain what it is—the gospel. Anything short of or beyond the gospel message makes any contextualization irrelevant and void. The Scripture declares: “To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, it is because there is no light in them” (Isa 8:20). The Bible also supplies rationale for this claim: “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work” (2Tim 3:16-17).

Hesselgrave (1995, p. 139) advocates that the Word of God as contained in Bible is the most reliable tool for contextualization. He insists: “Scripture must become not

only the substance but also the strategy—not only the message, but also the method—of authentic and effective Gospel contextualization” (p. 140). Nothing will suffice in place of the Word of God when it comes to contextualization of the message of God. The Bible is God’s message to humanity in every era, it is not the design or craft of human intellect (Ott & Strauss, 2010, p. 277).

### The Primacy of the Holy Spirit

The New Testament unveils a prominent picture of the Holy Spirit as author and guiding force for missions (H. R. Cook, 1954, p. 31). The mission and activities of the church as revealed in the New Testament would never have been without the work of the Holy Spirit—it began with His presence and was sustained all the way by His presence. Jesus Christ reiterates concerning the Holy Spirit: “I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth” John 16:12-13. According to Tennent (2010), the first responsibility of the Holy Spirit is to empower the church for fulfillment of the Great Commission of Christ (p. 412). This mission of the Holy Spirit was stated by Christ Himself to His disciples: “But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth” (Act 1:8). This promise was fulfilled ten days later when the Holy Spirit descended on the apostles on the day of Pentecost, empowered them for the mission, and opened the doors for contextualization as the gospel was proclaimed to other nations (Acts 2:1-12). Moreau (2012, p. 112) insist that the presence and manifestation of the work of the Holy Spirit is a strong indicator of the

authenticity of any contextual process. Truly speaking, “without the Holy Spirit, the Church would be a lifeless body, a corpse” (Luzbetak, 1989, p. 1).

#### Relevance to the Recipient People or Culture

As important as it is to be biblical in contextualization, if the biblical data is not made relevant to the recipient people or culture, its intended purpose cannot be achieved however good it may appear. Haleblian (1983, pp. 104-106) comments: “First, whenever the gospel is presented, it is presented in cultural clothing. Second, when the gospel is presented in ways that ignore the local context, much of culture and life remain unaddressed by biblical truth” (p. 266). The gospel is only meaningful when it is accepted by people, and people both live and operate within specific cultures. If the gospel ignores any aspect of a culture in which it operates, the result is usually syncretism or pluralism, which in turn negates the power of the gospel in the life of people. Ott and Strauss (2010) warn that if context is discounted, the church would take a risk of being seen as a stranger’s business with an imported message. Howard makes a valid point: if the gospel does not relate to the people, then it is foreign and people are hardly drawn to anything that is perceived foreign to their values.

#### Flexibility

Authentic contextualization has to be dynamic, not static. If, as stated above, it has to be relevant to the culture, then it has to be flexible and open to change since culture changes with time and people. Anthropologists perceive society as “an ongoing process of cultural evolution” (Musasiwa, 2007, p. 71).

## **Historical Review of Contextualization of Christian Mission in Japan**

Contextualization in Japan, especially in Protestant missions, was essentially Western with little or no regard for the culture of the people. In fact, it was necessary to be westernized in order to become a Christian. Unfortunately, the majority of these missionaries was syndicates or at least related to some imperial governments. This push to westernize Japan was further implemented through Western educational and medical institutions (Hunt, 2010, pp. 20-22; Schreiner, 2001, pp. 20-22; Yamamori, 1974, pp. 32-33). The missionaries should have understood Japanese culture and the recipients' lives prior to attempting to make them Christians.

### The Entrance of Christianity Into Japan

The beginning of Christianity in Japan dates back to August 15, 1549 (Mullins, 1998, p. 19; Yamamori, 1974, p. 26) when Francis Xavier (a Portuguese Roman Catholic priest), Yajiro (a newly baptized Japanese convert) and two other accompanying Jesuits arrived in Kagoshima, Japan. It all began in 1548 when Yajiro fled Japan via a Portuguese vessel bound for India. Francis Xavier introduced Yajiro to Christianity and the two became friends. In the process of their discussions, Xavier asked Yajiro, "If I went to Japan, would the people become Christian?" To this question Yajiro responded:

My people would not immediately become Christians; but they would first ask you a multitude of questions, weighing carefully your answers and your claims. Above all, they would observe whether your conduct agreed with your words. If you should satisfy them on these points—by suitable replies to their inquiries and by a life above reproach—then, as soon as the matter was known and fully examined, the king (*daimyo*), the nobles, and the educated people would become Christians. Six months would suffice; for the nation is one that always follows the guidance of reason. (Francis & Nakajima, 1991, p. 8)

This confession of Yajiro stirred Xavier's desire for Japanese mission which was actualized the following year.

### Xavier's Method of Evangelizing

Xavier's method of evangelizing was rather political. He sought to win the support of Daimyo (king or feudal lord) and nobles, hoping that their conversion would lead to massive conversions and open the way for him to meet with the emperor. Xavier soon gained some converts who were baptized and became Christians (including some *Daimyos*), but was refused access to the emperor. Two years later, Xavier left Japan for India where he recruited more workers for the Japanese mission.

Although he apparently succeeded, Christianity soon met with severe oppositions when the sincerity of the missionaries became suspect. The situation was made worse by the rivalry between the Jesuits and newly arrived Spanish Franciscan priests. The peak of the suspicion was reached in 1596 when the captain of a Spanish galleon from Manila Hideyoshi's (Japanese emperor's) sought to astound a Japanese official with the powers of the Spanish king:

The king of Spain begin by sending out teaches of our religion, and when these have made sufficient progress in gaining the hearts of the people, troops are dispatched who unite with the new Christians in bringing about the conquest of the desired territory. (Francis & Nakajima, 1991, p. 10)

This information ignited fires of persecution that would lead to the compilation of the names of the Christians and the crucifixion of 24 Christians (including three Franciscan fathers, three brothers, one Japanese lay Jesuit, two novice Jesuits, 15 employees of the missionaries including some teenage boys) by the order of Hideyoshi. And from that moment Christians were severely persecuted until Hidesyoshi was succeeded in 1598 by Tokugawa Ieyasu who relaxed the persecution of Christians.

However, after a while, rivalry among the Jesuit, Franciscan, Spanish Dominican, and Philipino Augustinian missionaries led to more suspicion that again resulted in severe persecution of the Christians in Japan. Christians were martyred in thousands for their faith in Christ, others expelled or deported, churches destroyed and many missionaries deported (Francis & Nakajima, 1991, p. 11; Miyazaki, 2003, p. 4; Yamamori, 1974, pp. 26-27).

Christianity met with great oppositions in Japan for several reasons: It presented a view of humans (created equal) that was contrary to the imperial Meiji government's view of all its citizens as subjects. It prohibited involvement in the traditional religious systems, their shrines, and their activities. Thus, Christianity was tagged as a dangerous and antipatriotic movement (Ballhachet, 2003, p. 37; Takeda, 1980, p. 8). Moreover, Christianity was also weakened by its failure to contextualize its message. Many Japanese converts began to feel that Christianity was a foreign religion since it essentially promoted Western ideas and practices, which would later lead to the rise of indigenous Christian movements (Mullins, 2003, p. 143).

In response to the perception of Japanese people, Christianity compromised its values and principles, adopted several traditional values, got entangled in nationalism and thus lost its uniqueness and ability to bring about transformation in the lives of the people.

### **Conclusion**

In this chapter, it has been revealed that contextualization is a necessary process for effective proclamation or fulfillment of the Great Commission as given by Jesus

Christ for all nations. Mission or the fulfillment of the Great Commission of Christ to His followers (Matt 2:19-20) could not be realized without contextualization.

Interestingly, the Bible itself is a series of contextualized messages over centuries of human existence at different places and time (Toren, 2010, p. 93). Thus, this condition allows for the extrication of the fundamental message of the Bible that can be contextualized for a particular culture or context or better still, as Wilkins expresses it, unveiling what is “timeless in the timeless pages of the Bible” (2004, p. 9). In fact, it is impossible for us to make sense of any divine message without contextualization since the heavenly realm is essentially and significantly different from our world. In the same manner, no one can make a disciple from a different culture without contextualizing the message in a way that is meaningful to the recipient in his or her own context. Perhaps as Bevans (2010, p. 16) insist, contextualization is the way of doing theology. However, while the gospel is expressed in cultural context, “it stands apart from and is distinguished from culture” (Ott & Strauss, 2010, p. 268).

Contextualization is an integral part of the Great Commission of Christ to the church (Matt 28:18-20; Mark 16:14-18; Luke 24:44-49; John 20:19-23; Acts 1:7-8) for if the gospel must be proclaimed in the entire world as commanded, then contextualization was already anticipated in the mind of Jesus Christ. Contextualization compels us to be open to new revelations and insights into the word of God

If the church can do nothing without Jesus Christ (John 15:5) and the Holy Spirit is the One who stands in Christ stead for the church today (John 14:1-17, 26; 15:26; 16:7-13), then the guidance of the Holy Spirit is crucial for contextualization.

Culture plays an important role in contextualization since the gospel is expressed in culture. However, the gospel is above every human culture and has to be permitted to transform culture where and when necessary (Moreau, 2012, p. 268).

Syncretism is a major threat to contextualization. Unfortunately, syncretism usually results from the endeavor at making the gospel relevant and acceptable to the recipient's culture. However, irrespective of good intentions, syncretism, wherever it prevails, always distracts from the desired result of the gospel proclamation—the fulfillment of the will of God.

There are various models of contextualization and there is no one model that fits every situation. Notwithstanding, whatever the model, it must be in agreement with the principles of the Bible (Moreau, 2012, p. 63). Especially, concerning Japanese mission, the translation model would be good for a Japanese context because we need to keep the Christian faith and message firmly while we are considering changing society with sensitivity in a postmodern era. Therefore, I humbly suggest that the translation model would be the most promising for the Japanese context because of its flexibility toward an ever-changing society, along with an unchanging Christian faith and heavenly message. Of course, the Holy Spirit is essential for the Japanese church and all gospel workers.

No doubt, contextualization exposes the church to the danger of syncretism and other abuses, nevertheless as Keller observed: “to fear and refuse to adapt to culture opens to abuses of the gospel just as much!” (Plummer & Terry, 2012, p. 200). P. G. Hiebert (1985, p. 98) also concurs regarding the advantage of contextualizing over avoidance of it and further advocates for critical contextualization. Contextualization

does not imply alteration of the content of the gospel; instead, it is about presenting the same content in an understandable and relevant manner.

Contextualization is a broad aspect of mission; many of the issues cited were not dealt with as would have been expected. This is not a result of negligence but for the purpose of keeping this research project focused and achievable within the frame of time and space. Such issues will be elaborated in subsequent research projects.

Finally, while there may be fear over the dangers of contextualization, the value and urgency of appropriate contextualization is ever in demand and ought to be promoted.

## CHAPTER 4

### METHODOLOGY AND IMPLEMENTATION NARRATIVE

#### **Introduction**

Having reviewed relevant literature on contextualization of the gospel, this chapter will focus on the strategies for a contextualized approach to the gospel message in a manner that is meaningful to the Japanese. This process will include the development of a contextualized discipleship model for equipping church members of the Osaka-Central Church in WJC. Takamizawa (2001) asserts in her article titled, “Missiological analysis of Japanese religiosity,” that “Considering all these factors for the mission to Japan, the most important and urgent task for the Japanese church is discipleship” (p. 16). In keeping with this assertion, this chapter aims at designing a discipleship model for witnessing to secular Japanese.

The first section of this chapter will attempt to provide a better understanding of Japan; it will describe the history, religion and culture, Japanese view of Christianity and the task of a contextualized approach to Japanese discipleship.

The second section of this project will present the researcher’s strategy for the implementation of the project: the CLAP model. CLAP is an acronym for Come and see, Learning, Application, and Proclamation. The strategy will be divided into five major parts for the purpose of clarity and to facilitate implantation, monitoring and evaluation.

Lastly, a summary and conclusion for the chapter will be provided.

## Analysis of Japan and Demography

### Geography and Population

Japan (日本, Nippon) is a large island country which is located in the Pacific Ocean. Japan is composed of four main islands (Honshu, Hokkaido, Kyushu, and Shikoku) and 6,852 small and large islands, of which some are inhabited and others uninhabited. Geographically, Japan is close to Russia to the North, China and Korea to the West, and Taiwan toward the South. The name Japan means “sun-origin” and Japan is known as the “Land of the rising Sun”(Japan, 2013). Figure 1 is a map of the land of Japan.



Figure 1. Map of Japan Source: (R. Johnson, 2014)

Figure 2 is a map showing earthquakes in Japan. Figure 3 is a climate map.

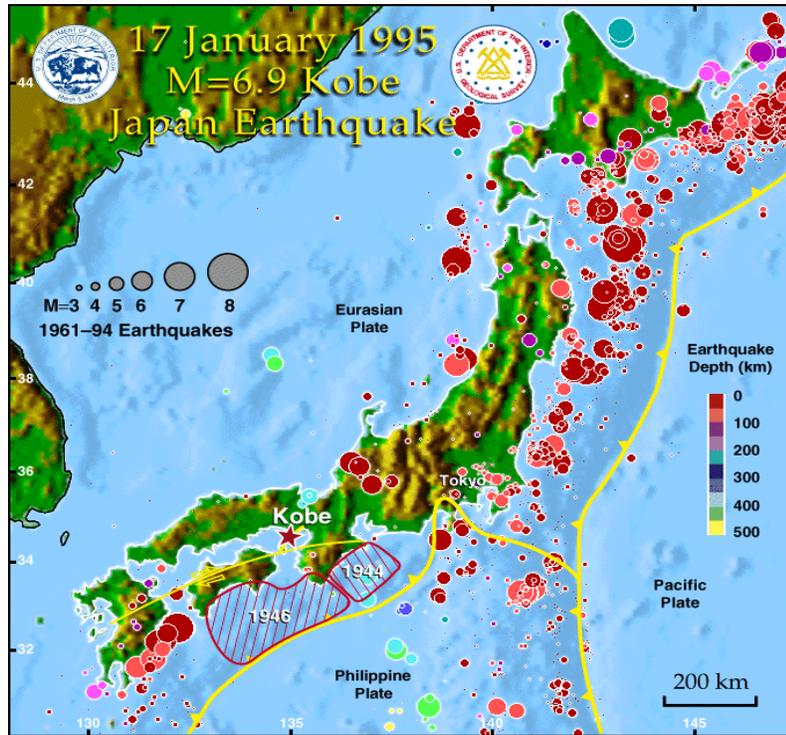


Figure 2. Earthquake Map of Japan

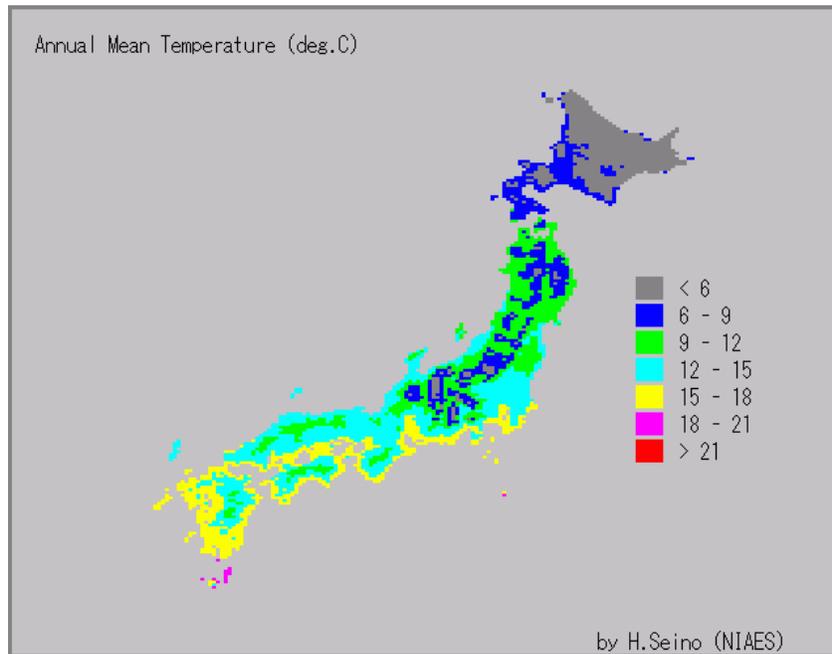


Figure 3. Climate Map of Japan

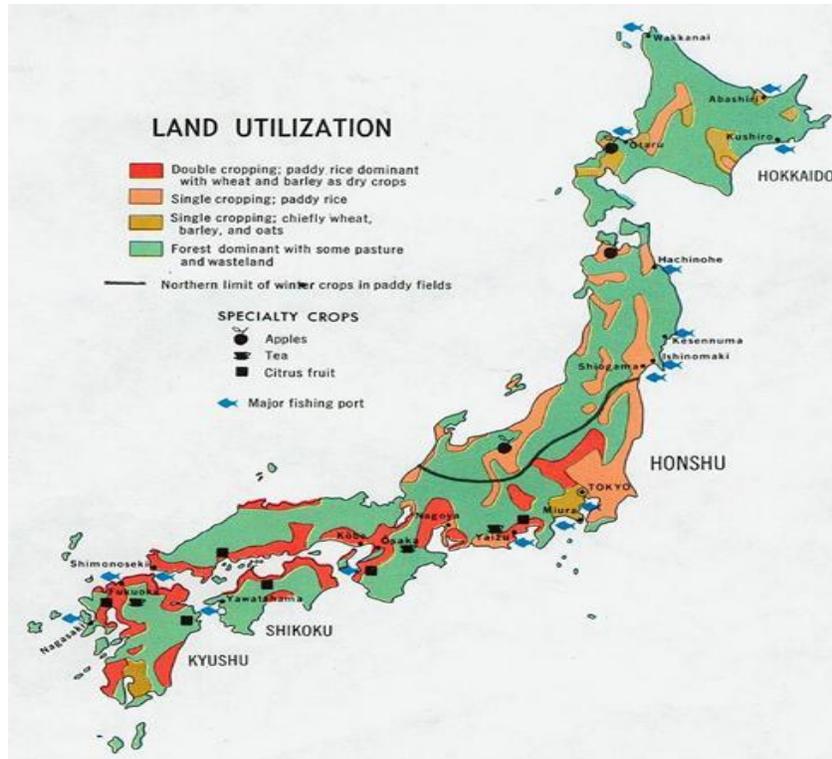


Figure 4. Land Utilization Map of Japan

The land of Japan is like a prone person facing toward Korea, Russia, and China. Unfortunately, Japan is a major earthquake country among the Asia countries. Perhaps this situation has influenced the Japanese belief in the gods of nature that protect them from natural disasters. The climate of Japan is mostly temperate except northern part of Hokkaido area and southern part of Okinawa area. Figure 4 is a land utilization map of Japan. From this map, it is easy to recognize that Japan is an agricultural country that supports itself largely from its own agricultural produce, from cultivation to harvest time, throughout the year. So, its worldview is built on group or community, rather than on the individual.

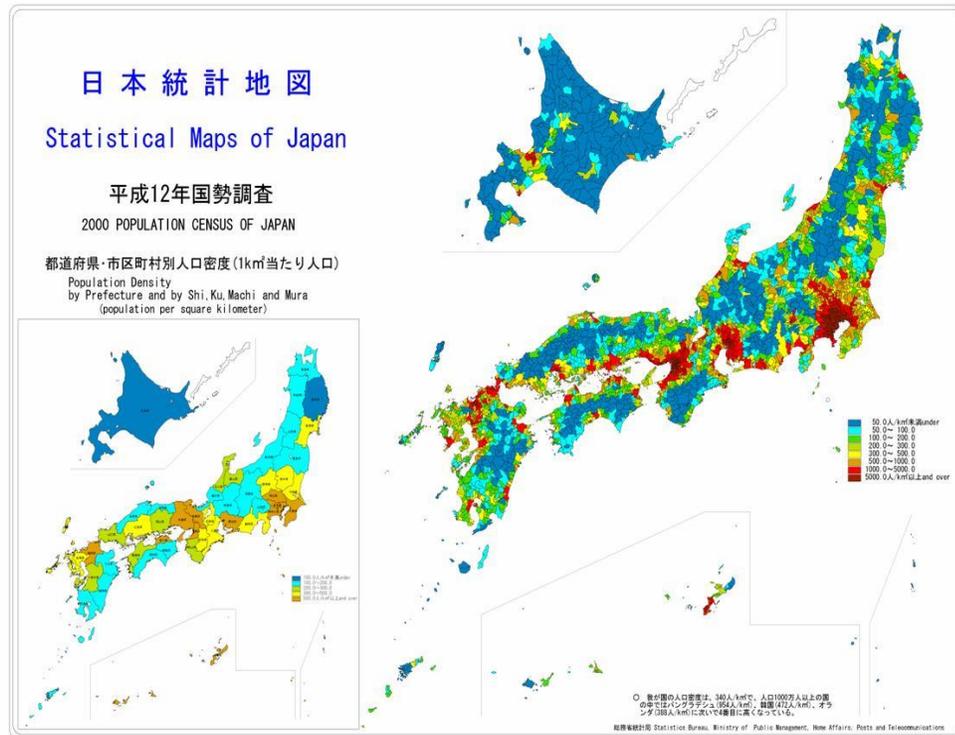


Figure 5. Population Map of Japan

According to Statistics Bureau of Japan (SJB) (2014), the current population of Japan is estimated to be about 127.18 million people. Japan is the second leading economy in Asia next to China. Figure 5 shows the population of Japan.

### Religion and Culture

When it comes to religion, it is difficult to tell whether or not the Japanese are religious. Davis (1992) states that “The Japanese are among the most religious or least religious people on earth, depending on whom you talk to or how you define being ‘religious.’” (p. 71). In addition, Miyake (2006) explains that the Japanese perceive religion in terms of participation and not belief. Moreover, they can participate in several religions based on their affinity to them through their family or community, not

necessarily a particular doctrine or commitment to an absolute being as in the Christian faith. Therefore, if religion means to believe in the Christian faith (or any other belief-based), then, Japanese do not think they are religious (p. 84). As for the Japanese, “religion is has been *a way of walking* or living, not a belief or a theory to be philosophically expounded” (Ross, 1965, p. 3).

The term *Yaoyorozu no kami* (八百万の神) is a common saying among the Japanese which typically describes the Japanese religious condition; it means that there are myriads of gods in Japan. Japan is even commonly referred to as a “department store of deities” or “rush hour of gods” (Takamizawa, 2001, p. 1). In fact, ordinary Japanese people think that anything special could be the dwelling of a god, even a dead person. Mullins (1998, p. 130) uses the term “constellation” to describe the plurality of Japanese deities and belief system. So they believe that spirits dwell everywhere and that there is nothing wrong in having or believing in many gods. Therefore, they freely embrace whatever deity from other nations that they admire in addition to what they already have (Miyake, 2006, p. 85).

Perhaps due to this strong belief in the plurality of gods, Japanese resist any sense or concept of an absolute God who is above all and to whom everyone must pay exclusive homage. This may partly account for the reason Christianity is strongly resisted in Japan, since it presents the absolute God of the universe who is the sole Creator and Sustainer of all creation and to whom all must bow in adoration (Miyake, 2006, p. 87).

People, household or family, and community are central to the life of the Japanese. The Japanese participate and believe in religious festivals, rituals or events based on their affinity to household and community (Mullins, 1998, p. 8).

Another prominent feature of the Japanese religious system is its high regard for participation. In fact, Miyake (2006, p. 85) contends that “ordinary Japanese respect participating more than believing.” He defends this claim by citing the importance attached to participating in *Hatsumode* (an annual visit to a Shinto shrine for blessing, at the beginning of the year) and the *Obon* (a service held about mid-August in honor of household ancestral spirits). He also mentions other traditional rites for marriage, pregnant women, childbirth, and death (Miyake, 2006, p. 85).

Worldly gain (*goriyaku*) is another key value in Japanese culture which is reflected in the religious life. They so crave for material things that it drives them to consult with sorcerers and various shrines to seek favor for success on examinations, healing, prosperity, easy childbirth, road safety, and other desires of life (Miyake, 2006, p. 86).

The Japanese admire and worship nature as *Kami*, a natural god, so that they may be protected from natural disasters and be blessed. Miyake (2006) believes that “Japanese adopted Buddhism in the sixth century A.D. without denying Shinto, which was originally based on Japanese folk religion” (p. 85). Strangely, Japan is very receptive to other religions. However, while they are very receptive to new religions, they accept new beliefs alongside old ones, their own folk religions. Hence, Buddhism became locally adapted, making Japanese Buddhism unlike that of China or India. Japanese have a totally different worldview of deity than the West. Shintoism and

Buddhism are Japan's main religions. Shintoism is deeply related with Emperor Worship, nationalism, and militarism. Although the emperor was declared a human being after being defeated in World War II, Japanese emperors are still admired and respected by the people due to their high regard for *Kami* (god of nature). They believe that all Japanese are naturally influenced by Shintoism unless an individual makes deliberate effort to resist Shintoism which pervades the Japanese worldview.

Furthermore, in relation to departed souls, Ama (2005) states that the Japanese believe that after a person dies, the soul of the person finally becomes a deity (*kami*) and the *kami* will keep the family safe from evil things. Thus, memorial services are an important means of honoring their ancestors. They are afraid of possible disasters caused by their ancestors if they do not give them honorable ceremonies.

### The Samurai

Samurai (侍) fondly called *bushi* (武士), or *buke* (武家), was a military class of nobility in feudal and early modern Japan (Samurai, 2014). They were extremely skilled militia that slowly emerged in Japan as a result of the Taika reforms in 646 CE. These reforms required land redistribution and increased taxes to sustain the expanded empire structure and activities that had been patterned after the Chinese style. The heavy tax system compelled small scale farmers to sell their lands and work as tenants for large landholders. This resulted in more power and affluence for the large landholders, which in turn led to the need for their lives and their wealth to be protected. Hence, the samurai militia was born (Szczepanski, 2013).

Some of the samurai served their relatives, while others were simply hired on financial agreement. The samurai code required loyalty to their masters or lords even

above family ties. However, experiences indicate that the most loyal samurai were those who shared family ties with their lords or masters (Szczepanski, 2013).

The Samurai were professional fighters whether on horseback or on the ground. They usually wore two swords (one long and the other short). The long sword (daito-katana) measured over 24 inches, while the short sword (shoto-wakizashi) measured between 12 to 24 inches. Samurai fondly named their swords which they believed were the key to their warrior-spirit. They were also highly skilled in fighting with bows and arrows (McGee, 2013).

The Samurai followed the bushido code. Bushido literally means the “way of the warrior.” The core Bushido belief is freedom from any kind of fear including death. Thus, a samurai devotedly serves his master or lord in any circumstance without fear. The samurai gradually grew into a distinguished class in Japan between the 9th and 12th centuries C. E. (McGee, 2013). Nitobe comments on the Bushido as follows: “Bushidō, then, is the code of moral principles which the samurai were required or instructed to observe.... More frequently it is a code unuttered and unwritten.... It was an organic growth of decades and centuries of military career” (Bushido, 2014).

The samurai warrior code required unwavering commitment to a certain code of conduct which includes: loyalty, devotion, obedience, duty, filial piety, respect, self-sacrifice, and honor in death. Any samurai who failed under this code was compelled to perform the seppuku (ritual suicide) rite. “In its purest form, it demands of its practitioners that they look effectively backward at the present from the moment of their own death, as if they were already, in effect, dead” (Big Bear Academy, 2013).

There are modified forms of bushido still in practice today. They include: judo, karate, jujutsu, aikido, kendo, kenjutsu (Big Bear Academy, 2013).

There are eight virtues (bushido code) crucial to the samurai. They are: (a) Rectitude or Justice – martial and personal justice. This was well-described by a samurai as follows: “Rectitude is one’s power to decide upon a course of conduct in accordance with reason, without wavering; to die when to die is right, to strike when to strike is right;” (b) Courage – doing what is right; (c) Benevolence or Mercy – sympathy and affection toward others; (d) Politeness–courtesy and good conduct; (e) Sincerity – simplicity and abhorrence of riches; (f) Honor – awareness of one’s value and self-esteem; (g) Loyalty – unwavering commitment and obedience to another person; (h) Self-Control – adherence to unconditional moral norm beyond reason (Clark, 2007).

### Purification

As seen in the demographics of nation, Japan is an island country surrounded by water. Therefore, the Japanese are acquainted with water and water plays critical role in the life of the Japanese. This is, in part, a result of the impact of Shinto religion which stresses the notion of purity. Thus, cleanliness is important to the Japanese not necessarily on health grounds but as reminiscent of their inner quest for religious purity. Water is used as a cleansing agent from evil and bad luck. Water basins are usually placed in temples and shrines for worshippers to wash their mouths and hands as a religious ritual of cleansing before offering their prayers (Picken, 1980, p. 52; Sell, 2010). Shinto worshippers customarily perform *temizu* (washing of their mouths and finger tips with water) as a means of purification (Ono, 1962, p. 52). Moreover, Shinto worshippers also undertake *misogi* (ceremonial purification bath) to purge themselves of

sin and iniquity (Mitsou, 1992, p. 223). Waterfalls are considered sacred among the Japanese and it is believed that one can be purified by going under a waterfall (Abrams, 2000; Picken, 1980, pp. 53-54).

### Salt

Salt is commonly used for seasoning food to improve taste. However, the use of salt among the Japanese expands to a purification agent. Salt is used in the *misogi* (washing an individual's body) ritual to remove impurities. It is believed to have the powers to ward off evil spirits. The reason salt is commonly and freely distributed in certain places is to cleanse the area. For instance, when a baby is born, salt is scattered all over the room to dispel evil spirits and the mother of the baby takes a salt bath to cleanse and purify herself. At funerals, *shio-hana* (two small sets of salts) are placed at the entrance and used to purify the room after the casket is taken away. Furthermore, during wedding ceremonies, salt is placed at the entrance of the home to purify the home as the bride departs, since the departure of a bride from her maiden family is considered as death, because she is considered forever united with her husband's family. Collections of salt are commonly found at entrances in public places such as restaurants, stores, or theatres to ward off evil spirits and purify those who go in and out (Camara, 2014).

### Japanese View of Christianity

Historically, Japan had a closed-door policy for two and half centuries against foreign intrusion due to the fear of being influenced by the Western culture. They usually feel uncomfortable with foreign religions. This xenophobic behavior has made the Japanese appear strange and unfathomable to other nations especially the West. In

fact, to this day, in some rural and conservative areas, Christians are referred to as “*Yaso*”(耶蘇)—a derogatory term for a Christian (Lee, 1999, p. 14). And strangely, this behavior is also being exhibited by Japanese Christians. Nishioka explains that Japanese are not open to Christianity and that the culture of the churches (including non-Japanese Christians) in Japan unconsciously excludes outsiders, “non-Christian” Japanese (Moreau, 2012, p. 145).

The traditional Japanese understanding of divinity leads them to believe that their worldly benefits (*goriyaku*) come from the gods of nature. And therefore, they are reluctant to embrace the Christian view of a Supreme God. Instead, they hope that their gods of nature will protect their nation as well as their houses from all kinds of disasters.

Another important aspect of the Japanese worldview is based on shame and honor, not guilt. According to Lewis (2001), Japanese are governed or motivated by a sense of shame, rather than feelings of guilt (p. 15). This Japanese sense of shame differs from the biblical view of shame and honor. In Scripture, shame is the result of sin (Gen 3:7-11), which is first and foremost against God. On the contrary, the Japanese sense of shame is directed toward honoring and receiving the approval of a fellow being. The Japanese respect and remain loyal to their lords even at the cost of their lives. Surrendering to an enemy is a shameful behavior toward their lords; therefore, typically the Japanese would rather die than surrender to an enemy at the expense of their lords. This attitude was evident during World War II, as Japanese soldiers would never surrender to an enemy army in order to uphold their dignity before their emperor. They believe that this kind of behavior (a willingness to die for the honor of their lords) is noble and a demonstration of the spirit of the Samurai.

## **Toward A Contextualized Approach to Japanese Mission**

Any mission effort (including Christianity) that aims at success among Japanese must be sensitive and relevant to the communal spirit of the Japanese. The sense of community and belongingness is deep-rooted in the Japanese self-image. The Japanese are considered to belong to two groups: the family (referred to as *ie*) and the village community (known as the *mura*). Thus, belongingness (in the family and community) is critical to the worldview of Japanese (Miyake, 2006, p. 86). Neui (2010) postulates:

If Christian mission in Asia and most of the non-western world is ever to advance, it must seriously consider the importance of family networks. For too long the strategy of a 'one by one' approach has stifled the spread of the gospel, reinforced by highly individualized unbiblical theology and destroyed social relationships that might lead to conversation, conversion and social transformation. (p. i)

Indeed the importance of the family unit cannot be overemphasized; it is the basic unit of all society and an important core of all human activities. Hence, Christian mission cannot expect success when its activities ignore the family unit in any way.

Sherrill (2008) contends that community formation has been a defining characteristic of Japanese religiosity from its earliest times. A foundational source of this emphasis on connectedness is the cultural understanding of the combination of the physical and spiritual realms. In contrast to the Western thought of a superior or exclusive God, traditional Japanese religion understands the "gods" to be immanent (a god can be superseded because it is not absolute, therefore, gods are pending).

Moreover, as earlier indicated, in the religious and cultural life of Japanese, a contextualized discipleship approach for Japanese must be one that promotes participation which will create some sense of ownership of the discipleship program, since they are participating in it. Believing is secondary to experiencing and participation in the Japanese worldview. In fact, Miyake (2006, p. 91) proposes a three-

step approach to mission in Japan: (a) to belong, (b) to experience, and (c) to believe, contrary to the believe, belong, and experience approach that has been tried and which has failed to accomplish its desired result. He argues that in the Japanese mindset, to belong to a community is to share in the beliefs of that community. He further asserts that unlike the Westerners who define themselves in terms of their belief, the Japanese's identity is rooted in the community in which they belong and participate. Any Christian mission effort that undermines the communal value system of Japan is most likely destined to fail (Miyake, 2006, pp. 90-91). In essence, any truth or doctrine (however important and accurate) that is void of human feeling is irrelevant to the Japanese.

Furthermore, in view of the high desire for *goriyaku* (worldly benefits) in the cultural and religious practices in Japan, a contextualized mission approach in Japan must address the day-to-day needs of the people such as food, clothing, shelter, security, success in academic pursuits and business, and so on. As earlier discussed, the drive to fulfill these needs sometimes lead some Japanese to various idolatrous practices.

Komuro (2003) appeals to Christian organizations and missions regarding the way forward toward authentic Christianity in Japan. He comments:

I argue here that Japanese Christians should examine closely their interpretation of Christianity and the process of Japanization. This process is essential if we are to understand how Japanese people think and if we are to find ways to approach them with true Christian theology. Furthermore, we should search for a scheme to establish a more genuine Christian faith for Japanese people. If this quest is neglected, then we shall fail to allow a more authentic indigenization of Christianity to occur in Japan. (p. 67)

No doubt, Christian effort in Japan will not assume a Western or any other cultural outlook if it must triumph. It has to be Japanese, so that it would be relevant to the people. Komuro advocates for a scheme (or approach) that will be culturally relevant to the Japanese as the way forward for authentic Japanese Christianity. While

he did not propose any specific approach, this dissertation project will attempt to provide an approach. Uchimura Kanzo (a famous Japanese Christian who lived from 1861-1930), quoted in *The Clash of Civilization: An Intrusive Gospel in Japanese Civilization* by Lee, commented on the need for contextualization of the gospel in Japan:

“When a Japanese truly and independently believes in Christ, he is a Japanese Christian... A Japanese by becoming a Christian does not cease to be a Japanese. On the contrary, he becomes more Japanese by becoming a Christian. A Japanese who becomes an American or an Englishman or an amorphous universal man, is neither a true Japanese nor a true Christian.” (Lee, 1999, p. 4)

Kanzo is clear on his persuasion about the necessity of the contextualization of Christianity in every culture, especially Japan. He perceives Christianity as compatible with Japanese culture; hence he argues that Christianity makes Japanese Christians more Japanese than ever. For him, since it is impossible to be a universal Christian, the best option for Japanese is to become a Japanese Christian. He believes that a samurai does not need to give up his samurai spirit entirely except that which contradicts the Christ. In fact, in his perception, to entirely disconnect from one's culture of origin and adopt a Christianity that portrays another culture is unnecessary. Hence, a Japanese Christian to him is Japanese indeed, who in addition, believes in Christ as his or her Savior. This Japanese Christian will speak in the language of the Japanese, dress like the Japanese, think like the Japanese, and above all is committed to Christ as his or her Lord and personal Savior. That is, a truly Japanese Christian upholds everything in the Japanese culture that does not contradict the Bible.

After World War II, some religious sects classified as “New Religions” began to flourish exponentially in Japan, while other religions (including Buddhism, Shintoism, Christianity) were experiencing massive decline (Lee, 1999, pp. 135-136). Interestingly, these groups (Soka Gakkai, Rissho Koseikai, PL Kyodan, Seicho-no Ie, Sakai

Kryuseikyo) borrowed their teachings and principles of practice from Buddhism, Shintoism, and Christianity. The secret to their success was simple as described by Lee (1999):

Into the midst of the cultural crisis, the new religious bodies came forward with their alternatives for filling the spiritual vacuum. They came not with high-sounding intellectual apparatus for coping with the crisis at a macroscopic, theoretical level of astute philosophical and cultural diagnosis. Rather, they came with a faith for personal crisis that met immediate and real needs, bread-and-butter problems felt on the plane of the ordinary, daily existence. Their approach was not that of lecture on dietetics for hungry people. Instead, they were interested in the ways and means of securing food to fill empty bellies. (p. 140)

These “New Religions” were simple in their methodology, practical in their response to the people’s need and optimistic in the face of hopelessness. They simply discovered where the people were aching and ministered to their needs in a loving and caring manner.

These new religions also explored the value of small groups to accomplish their mission. Lee (1999) comments further: “Here the science of group dynamics and group therapy is employed with amazing practical skill. These small group discussions create an atmosphere that engenders personal involvement and excitement” (p. 143). These small groups were destined to prosper because they were more like the households or families to which the Japanese belong and were familiar with. Therefore, the transition into these new religions was almost effortless.

### The True Samurai

The call to follow Jesus is a call to be a true samurai. To be a disciple of Christ is an endeavor of total commitment much like the samurai spirit of the Japanese, but with the greatest benefits possible. The samurai order or spirit is a good connecting point for contextualizing the gospel to the Japanese.

Commenting on the cost of discipleship Jesus declares:

Then Jesus said to His disciples, “If anyone desires to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Matt 16:24-26)

To be a disciple of Christ requires unreserved commitment to Him. Therefore, a follower of Christ (the true samurai) must first denounce self and be willing to lose his or her life. Interestingly, while the samurai in the Japanese context only received financial benefits in return from their masters or lords, the true samurai (disciple of Christ) is promised benefits in this present life and eternal life in the future world to come (Matt 19:27-29).

To further emphasize the nature of this call to be a true samurai, Jesus in response to the Scribe’s question for the greatest of the commandments said:

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: you shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets. (Matt 22:37-40)

Thus, Jesus here declares that the true samurai is one who is unreservedly devoted to God. His or her love for God is the highest purpose of one’s life, second to none, not even self. This absolute commitment to God is in turn manifested in loving relationship with fellow beings. Thus, the true samurai is enabled to fulfill all eight virtues of the bushido code.

The apostles understood what it meant to be followers (true samurai) of Jesus Christ. Peter and John would not stop when threatened at the expense of their lives to stop proclaiming Jesus (Acts 4:5-22), nor did the other apostles (Acts 4:23-31; 5:29). Stephen was bold and fearless in the face of death for proclaiming the gospel of Christ

(Acts 7:1-60). Paul and Silas rejoiced when persecuted, beaten, and thrown in jail for preaching Christ (Acts 16:20-33).

In effect, the call that Jesus extends to all His followers is a call to be a samurai indeed.

### Purification by Water

Water is an essential element of life. Like the Japanese culture, the Bible attaches much importance to water. There are at least 692 references to water in the Bible. In fact, there was water in the void earth before God said, “Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear” (Gen 1:9).

In the Old Testament era, water was used for cleansing. Water was used for personal hygiene such as washing clothes (Exod 19:10; Lev 11:25, 40; 13:6, 34, 54, 58). Those who ministered at the altar were required to wash their hands (Exod 30:20-21). The priests were ceremonially cleansed with water (Exod 29:4). Moreover, any Israelite who became ceremonially unclean also had to be cleansed with water (Lev 22:6). On the Day of Atonement feast, there were ceremonial washing for high priest, the one who bears the scape goat (Lev 16:4, 24, 26).

Washing is also symbolically used to express the divine act of forgiving and purifying us from our sins. David, after committing adultery with Uriah’s wife (Bathsheba), prayed that God should wash him with hyssop and make him free from his sin (Ps 51:2, 7).

Water is symbolic of the blessings of God upon His people and of spiritual reviving (Isa 35:6-7; 41:17-18).

In the New Testament, water also carries symbolic meanings. Water is used in the baptism of John the Baptist to represent repentance (Matt 3:11; Mark 1:8; Acts 1:5; 11:16). It is also used to symbolize the New Testament baptism (Acts 8:36-39; Heb 10:22; 1 Pet 3:20) and cleansing from all impurities (Heb 10:22).

Jesus also speaks of giving those who believe in Him the water of life that becomes an ever running spring of everlasting life in them (John 4:14). In the new earth, Jesus promises to give the redeemed the water of life; John reports: “And He said to me, It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts” (Rev 21:6).

Baptism by immersion will be a great connection point for the Japanese with the high value and symbolic use of water in Shinto worship. Thus, the value and symbolic meaning of baptism by immersion as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist church will resonate effectively with the Japanese.

### Salt

The biblical usage and symbolic meanings attached to salt can open another common ground for effective contextualization of the gospel to the Japanese. Salt was commonly used in sacrifices offered to God in the Old Testament (Lev 2:13) and was established as an everlasting covenant with Israel (Num 18:19). Salt was used by the prophet Elisha to cleanse a spring that was producing bad water (2 Kgs 2:19-22).

In the Sermon on the Mount, as recorded by Matthew, Jesus symbolically describes His followers as the salt of the earth (Matt 5:13). Thus, He attributes to His followers the qualities of salt. They should be agents of love, peace, blessing to others; and like salt, their presence should be desired by many.

## Contextualized Worship Program for the Japanese

Seventh-day Adventist church recognizes worship as a spiritual experience in which worshippers encounter God personally and corporately and as such, the church does not operate any rigid set of liturgy for worship (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2010, pp. 75, 80), rather, it encourages intentional, prayerful planning that facilitates a “smooth flow of the worship elements (Ministerial Association of Seventh-day Adventists, 2009, p. 123) that are consistent with biblical principles of worship as understood by the Seventh-day Adventist church (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2010, p. 95). Moreover, local congregations are encouraged to adapt the liturgy to the needs of the local context within the parameters of the accepted principles of worship as taught by the church (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2010, p. 95).

Hence, this project document will endeavor to propose a contextualized liturgy for the Japanese.

### **Reverence in Worship**

Seventh-day Adventists emphasize reverence in worship (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2010, pp. 75-76, 80). Fortunately, reverence is a fundamental feature of Japanese Shinto worship. Therefore, in the Seventh-day Adventist liturgy for the Japanese, it would be meaningful to the Japanese to walk into the church, bow or kneel, and reverently clasp their palms and clap as in the Shinto worship but in this case directed to the Almighty God. This could be repeated during the doxology before the invocation.

## **Music**

The choice of music and musical instruments should largely be of Japanese origin. The church in Japan does not necessarily have to use the Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal that is largely Western-oriented. In fact, there is no statement in the *Seventh-day Adventist Church Manual* that prohibits contextualization of music.

## **Offering and Prayer**

In Shinto worship, the Japanese are used to giving their offering/gifts just before they offer their prayers. The Seventh-day Adventist liturgy can also be organized to have the “call for offering” just before the intercessory or pastoral prayer time. Moreover, the prayer time should be made a special intercessory time in which the congregation is invited to share their personal problems since the Japanese consult in the Shinto temples and shrines for favors such as success in business, family matters, examination success, and so on. Such an adaptation of the pastoral prayer time will meet the Japanese desire for supernatural help in their daily experiences and thus make the message of the Seventh-day Adventist church more appealing.

## **Communion Service**

Although communion services are customarily celebrated once per quarter in the Seventh-day Adventist church (General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist, 2010, p. 81), there is no statement that prohibits celebrating the ordinance more frequently than quarterly. Jesus Himself at the institution of the ordinance simply said, “This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me” (1 Cor 11:25b). The Japanese are traditionally visual and ritualistic people as is evident in Shinto worship. Thus,

celebration of the communion service in the Osaka-Central Japanese Seventh-day Adventist church can be done monthly.

### **Fellowship at Meal**

To encourage and facilitate fellowship and community, the church can organize breakfast every Sabbath so that worshipers will get to have more opportunities to interact with one another and those who skip breakfast in order to be early to church might have some food and be more attentive during the entire worship service.

### **Child Dedication**

Child dedication is a big deal to the Japanese. When a child is born, the child is taken to the Shinto shrine for blessing. It is usually celebrated by family, friends, neighbors and acquaintances. Seventh-day Adventist church in Japan can connect with Japanese through child dedication. The church can offer to dedicate any child born in the neighborhood regardless of the religious affiliation or belief of the parents. During this dedication, the church will also present a certificate of dedication to the parents and other gift items that can assist the parents in raising the child. This way a bridge of relationship can be established between the church and the Japanese people. When a child has been dedicated, the church will periodically follow up with the parents of the child to know how the child is faring and thus continue to strengthen the relationship between the child's parents and the church. Moreover, whenever the church has a Vacation Bible School (VBS) program or Adventurer and Pathfinder Clubs program, such kids would be invited.

## **Wedding**

Wedding is another key event in the life of the Japanese. Interestingly, the Japanese usually conduct their weddings in Christian churches whether or not they are Christians. This can serve as another bridge to connect with the Japanese and thereby communicate the gospel to them.

## **Funerals**

The last crucial rite, and perhaps the most important to the Japanese, is the funeral. When a Japanese dies, he or she is usually taken to the Buddhist temple for the final rites (Japanese funeral, 2014). This event is usually highly attended and is a moment of sober reflection. This can also be another point of establishing connection with the Japanese. However, unlike in Buddhism, the church will not pray for the dead, instead it will use the opportunity to speak words of hope and comfort to the bereaved family and to remind the living that one day we shall also be done with life and die. It is a common practice among Japanese and even the Koreans that a special rite is organized exclusively for the family members to end the mourning period. It is also believed that the spirit of the dead person hovers in the family and the 49<sup>th</sup> day is when the final judgment is passed on the dead person and the world where the dead is to be reborn is decided. It is also the time when all the ties with the spirit of the dead are symbolically cut off and the dead is bidden farewell (Smith, 1974, pp. 71-74). The church can also organize a worship service with the bereaved family on the 49<sup>th</sup> day and turn the attention of the family to Christ, the One who has defeated death in our behalf and His promise of a resurrection unto eternal life for all who believe in Him.

## **Other Elements**

Some other simple but significant things can be done to make the worship experience more relevant and meaningful to the Japanese, such as publicly sprinkling salt into the baptismal pool as a cleansing agent before baptism. Water could be placed in a bowl or two at the porch leading into the church for members who feel impressed to wash their hands before entering the church. Such a practice is in keeping with hygiene and does not violate any biblical principle. Pastoral attire as much as possible should also reflect the culture of the people instead of the usual western outfit. Moreover, the church building should also reflect the architecture of the Japanese. There is something about us as humans that draw us into something we are familiar with. If the architecture of the church building does not reflect something Japanese, it immediately gives an impression that the church itself is not for the Japanese.

Below is a suggested order of worship service for the Japanese. This order of service is expected to last for about an hour, including the sermon. The program will flow smoothly without announcements. The progression of the activities will be displayed on the screen so that worshippers can easily follow.

### **A Contextualized Liturgy for Japanese SDA Church**

**Doxology-** (meditational songs playing at a moderately low volume)

**Individual Moment of Meditation and Prayer** (each worshipper uses this time, about 5-7 minutes, to personally meditate on God and worship Him)

**Congregational Singing** (not necessarily hymns, preferably Japanese indigenous praise songs)

**Offering** (worshippers come forward with their offerings, followed by prayer, as in Shinto worship)

**Scripture** (preferably short Bible texts in the Japanese language)

**Prayer** (members share their concerns, prayer requests and the officiating minister together with the congregation presents those requests before God)

**Special Music** (another music selection that is relevant to the context, just before the preacher stands to preach)

**Sermon** (the message should be simple and brief because they are accustomed to worshipping in the Shinto temples usually about 10-20 minutes)

**Congregational Singing** (Japanese songs that ascribe praise to God, not necessarily hymns)

**Benediction**

## **Project Implementation Strategy**

CLAP Model: What is it?

Generally thinking, clap is a basic human emotional expression and communication tool by which we make sound with our two hands. Clapping is a useful tool for cheering up someone or applause when someone does something great. It is impossible to clap with one hand; both hands are needed to make sound. In the same manner, the mission of the church cannot be accomplished by a single individual, it requires a community.

This concept of CLAP model was inspired by the manner of the Japanese prayer in the Shinto shrine. When Japanese stand for prayer in front of Shinto shrine, they

usually clasp their hands and clap twice before they bow down and then again a final time after they have completed their prayer (Picken, 1980, p. 52). It is a traditional ritual prayer ceremony. Therefore, most Japanese are familiar with the practice of clapping even if they have nothing to do with Christianity.

The church of Christ was established to serve two functions: discipleship and mission. Without having both functions in the church, the church will be lacking. CLAP in this project is used as an acronym with each letter in the word symbolizing an important aspect of discipleship.

C stands for “Come and see” (Invitation and Acceptance)

L stands for Learning (Experiencing God through Participation)

A stands for Application (Expanding the Community)

P stands for Proclamation (Witnessing and Reproducing)

### **The CLAP Model**

#### **Come and see**

“Come and see” is a simple but powerful approach of inviting people to Jesus Christ. Jesus used this expression to invite His first two disciples of which Andrew the brother of Peter was one (John 1:39). The next day, Jesus said to Philip, “Follow me.” Philip decided to follow Jesus and became one of His disciples. And then, Philip found Nathanael and told him that he had found the long-expected Messiah. And when Nathanael doubted, Philip said to him, “Come and See” (John 1:46). “Come and See” is an invitation to experience for oneself the love of God manifest in Christ (Kostenberger, 2004, pp. 81-82). This love of God is experiential; it ought to be demonstrated.

The invitation to “Come and See” (experience) is very relevant to the Japanese context in the light of the cultural and religious worldview of Japanese as earlier discussed. At this stage, friendship and family values of the Japanese people are shared in an atmosphere of openness in which everyone is loved and accepted. Nothing about doctrine is discussed; it is simply a forum for friendly association, getting to know one another, sharing some common values, supporting, and serving one another (Miyake, 2006, pp. 93-94).

This invitation however, is not to the church but to a “neutral ground” (a church member’s home, a public park, amusement center or any public place). Such a venue will remove any bias for the church, the thought or fear of being disconnected from family members or community.

### Learning

Learning refers to “1, the act or experience of one that learns 2, modification of a behavioral tendency by experience” (Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary, 2003, p. 708).

This stage is an invitation to experience the love of God through participation. Jesus Christ was big on participation in contrast to a theoretical experience. Mark comments: “Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach” (Mark 3:14). John the Apostle reports that Jesus made more disciples than John the Baptist, although unlike John the Baptist, He did not do the baptisms Himself, rather, He engaged His disciples to participate in the process (John 4:1-2). In fact, if Jesus’ approach to discipleship were to be highly intellectual, then He probably would have chosen Pharisees, Scribes, and Sadducees among others, who were

highly educated. However, on the contrary, because of His experiential and participatory emphasis, He chose fisherman and other people of low academic proficiencies.

The emphasis of this stage is to involve Japanese and engage them in a meaningful and relevant manner. At this stage the strategy of the apostles in Acts 2 will be very applicable. The Greek *Koinonia* (sharing material such as food and spiritual things such as fellowship together) will constitute the main focus of this part of the project. The early church built a community that flourished and shared divine love (*agape*) for one another in so much that it became a powerful witness that drew many people to join the church. Their love for one another was real and members even sold personal properties to help other members of the group in need (Bock, 2007, pp. 149-152). Japanese would be given the privilege of participating in sharing the love of God by giving and receiving love. Like the early church, members of the group will learn the joy of sharing and supporting one another in meaningful ways that meet the needs of the members of the community of faith.

### Application

At this point, participation moves to another level; every group member is encouraged to invite other friends and family members in the larger community. James strongly emphasizes the need for practical faith that produces works. He dares to state that, “faith without works is dead” (James 2:17). Some people who claim to be religious like to talk about faith or righteousness by faith, without works. However, James point out the danger of such religious piety. He cites the story of Abraham.

Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered Isaac his son on the altar? Do you see that faith was working together with his works, and by works faith

was made perfect? And the Scripture was fulfilled which says, “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” And he was called the friend of God. You see then that a man is justified by works, and not by faith only. (James 2:21-24)

Jesus also condemned the lifestyle of the scribes and Pharisees for lack of works of mercy in their religiosity and He called them hypocrites (Matt 23:2-4). In contrast, Jesus never condemned the people who were called sinners, tax collectors, or outcast of society.

If the church lacks works of faith, it would also be condemned by Jesus like the scribes and Pharisees were. Therefore, this stage is important so that the Japanese who have heeded the invitation and are participating in the group might apply and adapt the teachings of Christ in their daily lives by sharing with and inviting others to also experience what they have been enjoying.

#### Proclamation

The fourth letter of the CLAP model is ‘P,’ Proclaim. A crucial aspect of discipleship is witnessing (proclaiming the gospel of Christ). God’s plan is to make His church proactive and reproductive in its community. Burge (2002, p. 849) reiterates that a disciple is bound to make other disciples. Here, Burge implies that like sheep make sheep, a disciple makes disciples, but God is the Shepherd who takes care of entire flock. This is in line with Jesus’ statement when He called His disciples. He said to them “follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Matt 4:19). Jesus here called His disciples so that they will make other disciples. In fact, the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 is a commission to go and make other disciples. The meaning of church is beyond the building, it entails the person who takes the gospel message to the world (1 Cor 3:16; 6:19-20). According to the Great Commission, Jesus commanded

believers saying, “Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations...” (Matt. 28:19a). This strategy calls for reaching out to lost souls where they are and not waiting for them to come to us (the church). Therefore, Jesus selected disciples and paired them in twos and sent them out to villages and towns (Matt 10, Luke 19).

In line with Jesus’ model, at this stage those (the Japanese) who have been invited and participating will gradually be introduced to the doctrines of the church. The group will gradually transition into a learning community that is accommodating and supportive of one another. However, this learning process will not be heavily cognitive, but as practical and easily understood as possible.

### **Part One–Training of the ten Disciples (Small Group Leaders)**

The 10 disciples (small group leaders) will be trained before the commencement of the witnessing activities. This training segment for ten selected disciples (small group leaders) will last for a period of about one year. In the first month of the first year, the researcher will commence by holding some meetings with the board of elders of the local church to sensitize and orient them on the need for the church to be involved in active, on-going witnessing activities as commanded by our Lord Jesus Christ (Matt 28:18-20). After obtaining the support of the elders of the church, a local church board meeting will be convened to also secure the church board support and a formal motion to proceed with the project. When that has been achieved, the researcher will proceed further to convene a Church in Business Session to also motivate and get the entire church to support the project.

By the second month, a series of seminars will be conducted for the entire church: (a) The Mission of the Church; (b) How to Make Our Church Mission-Minded; (c) The Need for a Biblical Worldview.

In the third month, another set of seminars will be conducted, including: (a) Understanding the Secular Japanese Mindset; (b) What Secular Japanese People Need; (c) Strategies for Witnessing to Secular Japanese People.

During the fourth month, the seminars will focus on the dynamics of the church. It will consider the Church in the Past, Present, and Future in different cultures. Moreover, implications for the SDA Osaka-Central Japanese church will be highlighted.

The seminars for the fifth month will focus on the need for Christ-centeredness in all the activities of the church. It will seek to exalt the value of Christ in the life of the church and emphasize our helplessness without Christ. The seminars will include: Christ our Redeemer, Christ our Example, Christ our Righteousness, Christ our High Priest, Christ our Advocate.

In the sixth month, 10 church members will be selected for intensive discipleship training. Moreover, it is anticipated that while 10 church members will be chosen for further discipleship training, every church member would have been awakened to the urgency and importance of witnessing during this phase of the project.

The seventh to ninth months will focus on equipping the 10 selected church members for witnessing. Areas of focus will include: (a) Spirituality of the individuals (the 10 chosen church members). No one can give what they do not have; therefore, intentional effort will be made to lead the ten disciples into a stronger personal relationship with Christ. The importance of Bible study, prayer and meditation on the

Word of God will be emphasized. (b) Time will be extensively devoted to studying Jesus Christ and His witnessing methods. Particular attention will be given to the belongingness elements in Jesus' approach in view of the Japanese attitude to religions. Interestingly, from pastoral observation during the period of the researcher's ministry in Japan, while the Japanese are intellectually inclined people in other areas of life, in religious matter they simply work by faith (instinct), almost as though they lose their reasoning faculty.

The 10th to 12th month will be devoted to studying the book *Acts of the Apostles* with particular attention to strategies of the *oikos* (small group) approach in chapters 1-15. Moreover, at the end of the training, the ten people chosen will form five groups of two people each, for witnessing.

### **Part Two-Come and see (Invitation and Acceptance)**

At this point the 10 disciplined church members would have been divided into five groups of two. Each group selects a suitable place (private home or any public place). The Japanese people are invited into this circle to share in the fellowship. Like the Early church in the book of Acts, the goal of the group is to create a loving, caring atmosphere in which relationships with the Japanese will grow. This group will intentionally seek to minister to their felt needs (physical and emotional). The meetings will be held weekly for about one hour for every session. Activities will include tea ministry (a gathering for drinking tea and freely sharing issues of general concern), picnic at the beach, movie night, listening to music, children's day out, health talks, free-talk on how to improve your marriage life, hiking, nature walk, how to cope as a single parent, and any other

areas of need as suggested by the invited Japanese, and so on. This part will last for a period of six months.

Additionally, between group meetings, the group leaders will endeavor to keep in touch with group members via telephone, email, and Facebook or other social networks.

Throughout the various stages or parts of the CLAP model, the researcher will hold weekly meetings with the small group leaders for feedback on the various group activities and progress. During this meeting, small group leaders will share their joys, hopes, and challenges. They will also have the privilege of learning from one another's experience, interact with one another, and ask any questions of concern that they encountered in their groups. The researcher will offer some words of encouragement, thoughtful biblical responses to the group leaders' questions, and the researcher and small group leaders will pray together for each other and for all the participants in the various small groups.

### **Part Three – Learning (Experiencing God Through Participation)**

This second stage of CLAP model affords the Japanese the privilege of experiencing the joy of service. At this stage the activities of part two above are still being done. However, the invited Japanese are taken to another level by being gradually assigned some leadership role within the group. For example, a volunteer will be assigned to lead out as coordinator for the next week's free-talk on how to improve marriages. The objective here is to get the participants to begin to own the program, especially because Japanese people begin to believe in something by participating, as earlier discussed in this chapter. By this process also, it is expected that the Japanese

will begin to gain confidence in the group and be more open to share some personal and intimate concerns. Part three will last for six months.

As in part two above, group leaders will endeavor to keep in touch with group members via telephone, email, and Facebook or other social network between the weekly meetings.

#### **Part Four–Application (Expanding the Community)**

After sharing in the group (community) for one year, participants are encouraged to invite other family members, friends or neighbors to join the group. No one will be under pressure to invite someone but to voluntarily do so based on how much they have personally benefitted from the program. Part four will last for a period of one year.

As in part three above, group leaders will endeavor to keep in touch with group members through various means.

#### **Part Five–Proclamation (Witnessing and Reproduction)**

At this point, the groups would have lasted for about 18 months and participants will have built confidence in the group leaders and other members of the group. Then the group will gradually transition into religious discussions. These discussions, however, would not be heavily intellectual and prolonged but practical and simple. It would commence with simple discussions such as: (a) What do you think about life? (b) Why are we here? (c) Where do we go from here at death? (d) How can I ensure my life for the future? (e) Is there any such thing as God? (f) Am I obliged to love my neighbor?

After this first stage of religious/biblical discussions, the discussion goes deeper to discuss issues such as: (a) What is sin? (b) How can I gain victory over sin? (c) Why

do innocent people suffer? (d) Will there ever be judgment against the wicked? (e) When will good people be rewarded for acts of love? (f) What to do about the ancestors?

From the ninth month in the second year of the project, the local church will organize a monthly Community Guest Day and Potluck for the community, especially for inviting all the participants in the small groups. The entire church service (Sabbath School and Divine Worship) will be made as interesting and as brief as possible. There will be musical selections, kids' presentations, and other interesting activities for young people. As the small group participants gain confidence with the church members at large, they too would gradually be invited to share their experiences in the small groups and any other contribution they can make to the worship services.

The group will progress on the study with further discussions such as: (a) Who is Jesus Christ? (b) Is there any value in praying? (c) Why forgive my enemy? (d) Who should I worship? (e) Does God care about what I do with my body? (f) What does God say about my home?

During this stage, one week each month will be devoted to a social activity to maintain liveliness and interest of the group members. However, if a group feels so interested in the religious discussion and does not see the need for a social activity, the group is free to do as it pleases.

There is possibility for group leaders to be confronted with questions they cannot answer and when that occurs, they will ask for time to do more research on such questions and then present such questions to the researcher during the weekly meetings with the researcher.

While the group meets once a week, group leaders will endeavor to keep in touch with group members via telephone, email, and Facebook or other social network.

This part will last for a period of one year.

### **Assessment**

This project will adopt a simple assessment method: the researcher will ascertain the number of church members involved in witnessing activities at the commencement of the project and will confirm the number of church members involved in witnessing efforts at the end of the project. Moreover, it will also ascertain the number of baptisms and church membership at the beginning of the project and at the end of the project.

### **Summary and Conclusion**

In this chapter, the focus has been on the methodology and the implementation narrative. Given the need for a background of the local context of the project, effort was made to present concise knowledge of the Japanese context. It began with basic information about the geography and population of Japan, but also dealt with the economy, politics, and social life in Japan. Japanese have high regard for honor and shame and are usually very patriotic. The religious life of the people was not left out; it highlighted the deplorable situation of religious consciousness in Japan, and especially as it relates to Christianity.

Effort was also made to contextualize the strategy of presenting the gospel message to the Japanese. However, while contextualizing the approach and the message, care was taken not to violate the principles of the Bible as taught by the Seventh-day Adventist church.

CLAP model (Come and see, Learning, Application, Proclamation), a contextualized approach for discipleship in Japan was inspired by Jesus' model of evangelism and the usual Japanese gesture before the Shinto shrine. It commences with an invitation, followed by a learning process through participation, then application, and proclamation. Jesus never compelled anyone against their will but demonstrated love toward people and then invited them to follow Him. His teachings were simple, practical, and relevant. The church should follow Jesus' strategy for mission. There is no better mission strategy than that of Jesus Christ, regardless of time and place. Jesus desires His church to be mission-minded and to make disciples of every nation on earth. White (1942) expresses it thus:

Christ's method alone will give true success in reaching the people. The Saviour mingled with men as one who desired their good. He showed His sympathy for them, ministered to their needs, and won their confidence. Then He bade them, "Follow Me." (p. 143)

Jesus was never coercive at any point throughout His ministry; instead, He demonstrated by example what He required of His followers. The church ought to be a place where love is demonstrated in action: a place of solace for the emotionally broken, a place of hope for the hopeless, a place where everyone is invited, accepted, granted opportunity to develop with loving support from members of the community.

If a church had small groups designed to meet the needs of these new members, it would be a better place for them to learn and practice the church culture without pressure of any kind. People who are invited into the church might have quite different expectations based on their age, sex, lifestyle, hobbies, and the like. Therefore, the church should be prepared to embrace them as they are and give them the opportunity to learn and practice through the discipleship program in each small group. This way, the

church might succeed in helping them change from their secular worldview to a biblically informed worldview through discipleship training program in small groups.

Finally, it is fitting to conclude that no church can exist without discipleship and mission. This is why Jesus commissioned His church to make disciples in every nation, so that the mission will be accomplished.

## CHAPTER 5

### PROJECT SUMMARY, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Introduction**

In chapter four, I presented my methodology and project implementation strategy; in this chapter the pursuit is to summarize the entire project, deliberate on the expected outcome, present a conclusion of the study, and make some relevant recommendations for future related studies.

#### **Summary**

This document focused on developing a contextualized discipleship model to train and equip church members at the Osaka-Central SDA Church in Japan.

In chapter two, a theological foundation for the project was provided using the Old and New Testaments as primary source. Moreover, this chapter also considered the definition, necessity and importance of discipleship for mission. It emphasized purpose of discipleship with particular attention to two major functions which it serves, namely: fruitfulness and multiplication. Fruitfulness relates to bearing, growing, and maturing, while multiplication relates to increasing, remaining, and reproducing. Furthermore, Jesus' method of discipleship was also emphasized.

In chapter three, the literature review focused on the task of contextualization with special attention to mission to the Japanese. The researcher reviewed current relevant literatures that are related to contextualization with consideration to biblical history as revealed in the Scriptures and in the writings of Ellen G. White. This chapter also discussed several models of contextualization for mission including their pros and cons.

If contextualization as Flemming (2005) argues has to do with the “how the gospel revealed in Scripture authentically comes to life in each new cultural, social, religious and historical setting” (p. 14), then the gospel message and the approach of passing on the message must be contextualized to the various settings in which it is presented.

Contextualization is a subject that runs through the entire Bible (Old and New Testaments). In the Old Testament, Moreau, Corwin, and McGee (2004b, p. 27) observes that contextualization is revealed in creation and the rebellion of Adam and Eve, in the divine call and blessing of Israel, in God’s redemptive work for His people, and in the divine act of God sending Israel into exile. In the New Testament, God once again involves in contextualization through the incarnation of Jesus Christ. In His teachings, Jesus also contextualized message by using earthly things (especially from His local context, Israel) to illustrate heavenly things. Apostle Paul also did a great work on contextualization as proclaimed the gospel among the Gentile nations. His contextualized approach often brought him into argument and/conflict with some of his fellow Jewish believers (Acts 15:1-23), he maintained that circumcision was unnecessary for Gentiles (Rom 2:25-29; 3:1-2, 27-31; 4:1-25; 1 Cor 7:15-20).

As (Musasiwa, 2007, pp. 68-70; Plummer & Terry, 2012, p. 198) there are benefits derived from contextualization of the gospel which include but not limited to (a) making the gospel friendlier to the receptor-context; (b) promotes indigenous understanding and practice of the gospel; (c) provides a better understanding of the gospel; (d) enriches the language of the recipient culture. Other benefits of contextualization include: creating a sense of belonging and acceptance in the minds of the recipients of the gospel message; removing the fear of intrusion into the recipient-culture; and providing a healthy environment for fellowship and growth.

Authentic contextualization must be faithful to Scripture, relevant to its local context, and dynamic, so that it can accommodate relevant changes in the culture when necessary.

Chapter four dealt with developing and implementing a contextualized model for Osaka-Central SDA church in Japan. The chapter began with a survey of Japan: its demography, including its geography, religion and culture. More so, the chapter also dealt with how the religious and social life in Japan impact the way the Japanese perceive religion and behave in certain situation. The intervention plan, CLAP discipleship model, was developed by the researcher. The CLAP model (Come and See, Learning, Application, and Proclamation), focused on discipleship and mission in church ministry. The purpose of CLAP discipleship model was to equip and train local church members at Osaka-Central SDA church for effective witnessing among the Japanese. The selected 10 church members in Osaka-Central SDA church will be disciplined for ministry during the three and half year period of this project. The first six months will be used for general seminars for all church members, after which one year

will be devoted exclusively to intensive training of the 10 selected church members. At the end of that training process, the remaining two years will be used for practical ministry on the field. Moreover, these 10 selected church members will also be discipling some Japanese in their various small groups. These Japanese so disciplined in the small groups will be expected to continue the cycle as they mature, by discipling other Japanese.

### **Conclusion**

Discipleship is crucial for the task of growing the church. When Jesus called His disciples, He immediately made it clear that they were going to be “fishers of men,” that is, disciples who in turn will make other disciples. This is how Christ designed to grow His church. Any church therefore, that must grow must be engaged in some form of discipleship activity. And once the call to be a follower of Christ is accepted, then the endeavor at discipling others becomes a command that must be fulfilled; for the call is: “follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.” Every true disciple must reproduce his or herself in others.

However, since the Great Commission of Matthew 28:19-20 entails proclaiming the gospel in the entire world and making disciples of Christ in every nation, then contextualization becomes an imperative. There is no way in which a message will pass from one culture into another (especially a message such as the gospel message which fundamentally impacts worldview, religion, and culture), without being contextualized. Hence, this research project has dealt with the issue of contextualization.

Contextualization is a mandate if the mission of the Seventh-day Adventist church is to succeed effectively in Japan. A contextualized approach for discipleship is a necessity for Christian mission in Japan. Hitoshi (1996) asserts:

It is within the frame of reference provided by folk religion that organized religions have made their way into Japanese society. Only as they accommodated themselves to folk religion and its implicit norms did the institutional religions find acceptance and begin to exercise influence on people in their daily life. (p. 80)

It will be very difficult, if at all possible, to conceive of the success of the gospel ministry in Japan without adequate consideration of the way of life of the Japanese and making the gospel message meaningful to them within their context. As Hitoshi observes, success in the gospel endeavor to the Japanese have occurred so far only when the message was contextualized.

The Japanese worldview, culture, language, is far removed from the culture of Jews (the primary culture of the Bible), therefore, to make the message of the gospel understandable to the Japanese, contextualization is needed. And such contextualization must be faithful to the Bible to avoid syncretism, while at the same time sensitive to the culture and local needs (physical and material) of the Japanese.

The CLAP model was an adaptation of the principles of Jesus' model of discipleship to the Japanese character, geography, religion, culture, and social context based on the understanding of the Japanese gathered from this research process. Contrary to the surface (that Japanese are not religious) impression, Japanese are religious. The CLAP model is a simple, practical approach for relating to all classes of the Japanese, since it is not so academically inclined. This model is able to appeal to all classes of people, since relationship is a universal human need irrespective of status. It

is indeed an effective contextualized approach to penetrate the Japanese with the gospel message.

### **Recommendations**

The following recommendations will be useful in facilitating a contextualized discipleship model (CLAP) for the Japanese.

1. A contextualized discipleship for witnessing in all Japanese SDA churches.

Up to this moment, witnessing/evangelism in Japan have been patterned after the traditional western approaches. Little or nothing has been done to study the Japanese context to ascertain relevant approaches for the Japanese context. This could be the reason the church in Japan is experiencing decline.

2. Replanting the biblical model of servant-leadership in all SDA churches in Japan. From my personal experience of ten years of pastoral ministry in Japan, it is obvious Japanese prefer servant leadership to charismatic leadership. The respect and influence which my mentor in the pastoral ministry exerts on his church members is typically evidence of the Japanese's acceptance of servant-leadership. My mentor was a compassionate, caring, and humble spiritual leader. On certain occasions, even to my surprise, he wiped tables before a potluck fellowship began, so that his church members would eat on clean tables. Interestingly, instead of such activity leading to some belittling of him in the eyes of the church members, it made them respect and honor him even more as one who taught by example.

3. Regular training workshops/seminars for local pastors on contextualized approaches for discipleship in the local churches. The conference should organize and sponsor training workshops/seminars for all local church pastors in contextualized

discipleship so that they will in turn train their church members for effective contextualized witnessing.

4. Budget allocation. The local conference and every local church in the conference should endeavor to set aside funds for this approach to witnessing as it would certainly cost some money for the training of the disciples and the actual ministry.

APPENDIX A

MY SPIRITUAL FOUNDATION FOR MINISTRY

## **Family background**

I was born on January 21, 1972. My family religious background had nothing to do with Christianity. My father was dedicated to ethical Confucianism and my mother was a Buddhist. There was no family member who related with any Christian church. When I was six years old, my older sister tried to go to church in a neighboring village. However, my sister had to quit attending the church because of my father's severe opposition. When I was in the third grade of elementary school, I was invited to participate in a summer school (Vacation Bible School) organized by the SDA church by one of my friends. Through this summer school program in church, I was taught about the Creator God for the first time in my life. That experience changed my whole life because I had questioned not only my being but also my roots, based on the influence of the Darwinian theory of evolution taught by my teacher at school. I became the only Christian in my family. By God's grace, my parents came to believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. After I graduated from the seminary, I got married to my wife who had a Christian family background and with whom I presently have a lovely Christian home with three children. What a mighty God I believed in! God has saved my family and I in amazing ways so far. I will never forget God's grace toward me and my family.

## **Call to Ministry**

Although I cannot recall the exact time of my call to ministry, I am quite sure that God has called me to be a minister in spite of my humble talents. However, as I read of Jeremiah in the Old Testament, I realize the fact that God provided everything for me. "The Lord spoke these words to me: Before I made you in your mother's womb, I chose

you. Before you were born, I set you apart for a special work. I appointed you as a prophet to the nations” (Jeremiah 1:4, 5). My family was in difficult economic situation when I was young. So, I had to take care of some cows after I came back home from school. That was my daily duty at home. At that time, I thought deeply about my roots theologically and philosophically. As a boy, I believed in Jesus Christ as my Savior, His death on the cross, resurrection, and second coming. When I was in the third year of high school, my teacher asked me about my future career and without hesitation I answered that I wanted to be a pastor. By God’s grace, I was led to be His servant despite my poor language and introverted attitude.

## APPENDIX B

### GENERAL METHODOLOGY: LOGICAL FRAMEWORK APPROACH (LFA)

## **Logical Framework Approach (LFA)**

Logical Framework Approach was first designed in 1969 in the United States of America to facilitate management of international projects. It was designed by Leon J. Rosenberg who then served as a principal for Fry Consultants. It is also called Goal Oriented Project Planning or Objective Oriented Project Planning (Logical framework approach, 2012).

LFA is a conceptual, systematic, operational strategy for planning, implementation, and evaluation of project that gives room for a broad range of application. It helps to simplify a complex project so that it can be easily understood at every level or phase throughout the duration of the project. It facilitates the overall intention of a project by refining the project implementation, monitoring, and evaluation on a regular basis. As a collaborative process, it connects beneficiaries of a given project with its stakeholders in a meaningful dialogue that expresses the implications of the project in an understandable manner to both parties (Bank, 2000). Logical Framework Approach gives a series of connecting recurring processes that are helpful for a structured and systematic analysis of a project (Dillon, 2012; Saldanha & Whittle, 1998, p. 1).

The European European Commission (2004) believes that LFA was designed to deal with three major issues in management:

1. The challenge of the ambiguous nature of planning, which poses difficulty for determining the objectives that could be utilized for appraising a project, to ascertain its success or failure.
2. The confusing relationships of management roles.

3. The challenge of multiple objectives which a project is intended to achieve due to a lack of consensus around a common goal.

It is important to distinguish between Logical Framework Approach and Logical Framework Matrix. The LFA is deals with the procedure (such as stakeholder, cause-effect, objective and alternative analysis) of planning and implementation of a project, while the LFM is the product of the LFA (Dillon, 2012).

#### Phases of LFA

Ahmad (2010, pp. 5-6) posits that the LFA is comprised of two major phases; the analysis and the planning phases.

#### **Analysis Phase**

Analysis phase includes: stakeholder analysis, problem analysis, objectives analysis, and strategy analysis. The stakeholder analysis shows the ability evaluation, gender analysis, and special groups such as handicapped people. It also helps in dealing with the challenge of distribution and social impact of the project. The problem analysis displays the key problems with its cause-effect relationships. The objective analysis provides a projected picture of the completed project. Finally, the strategy analysis compares the possible options for dealing with specific situations (European Commission, 2004, p. 60).

#### **Planning Phase**

The planning stage is when the outcomes of analysis are utilized to deal with practical situations and effective plans are prepared for use. Three major activities happen at this stage: (1) the logframe matrix is prepared; (2) activities and the required

resources are identified and calculated; and (3) the budget for the project is prepared (European Commission, 2004, p. 60).

The European Commission summarizes these two phases as shown below:

Table 1

*Phases of Logical Framework Approach*

Analysis Phase	Planning Phase
<b>Stakeholder analysis</b> – identifying and characterizing potential major stakeholders; assessing their capacity.	<b>Developing Logical Framework Matrix</b> –defining project structure, testing its internal logic and risks, formulating measurable indicators of success.
<b>Problem analysis</b> –identifying key problems, constraints and opportunities; determining cause and effect relationships.	<b>Activity scheduling</b> –determining the sequence and dependency of activities; estimating their duration, and assigning responsibility.
<b>Objective analysis</b> –developing solutions from the identified problems; identifying means to end relation.	<b>Resource scheduling</b> –from the activity schedule, developing input schedules and a budget
<b>Strategy analysis</b> –identifying different strategies to achieve solutions; selecting most appropriate strategy.	

Advantages of LFA

According to Bank(2000) and Dillon(2012), LFA offers some benefits for planning and implementing projects. These benefits or advantages include:

1. Provides the privilege of assessing a project at its early stage to ascertain the project’s dependability and value.
2. It defines the project’s objectives.
3. It enables one to ask relevant questions that will facilitate the project.

4. It facilitates a systematic and rational evaluation of the interconnected elements of a project.
5. It provides consistency for repetition of successful outcomes.
6. It explains the connections between the project and peripheral influences.
7. It provides a key reference point for formulating a comprehensive plan of work, terms of reference, budgets and so on.
8. It provides information about the required financial resources for the implementation of the project.
9. It promotes effective relationship a through improved communication and understanding between all the parties involved in the project.

### **Logical Framework Matrix (LFM)**

Logical Framework Matrix refers to a format, usually in table or framework, which provides relevant information about a project. It is the document of a Logical Framework Approach (Logical framework approach, 2012). It is a crucial component of any project because it gives the helpful details about a project such as purpose of the project, rationale for the project, outputs and the crucial activities necessary to accomplish the project.

LFM is comprised of four headings with sixteen frames that summarize the project (Saldanha & Whittle, 1998) arranged in a vertical and horizontal order. The first column explains the rationale of the objective of the project and clarifies the differences between the project's goal (strategy), impact, outputs and other core constituent activities. The second column displays performance pointers and the goal for each stage. The third column expresses the origin of the data for verifying the performance

pointers. This entails describing the people, process, events, and relevant information that would be necessary throughout the process of the implementation. The fourth column explains other factors on which the project relies for its success (Bank, 2000, p. 14).

Dillon (2012) provides a sample LFM as shown below:

Table 2

*Sample Logical Framework Matrix*

<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</b>	<b>Sources or Means of Verifications</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
<b>Goal</b> What is the overall broader impact to which the action will contribute?	What are the key indicators related to the overall goal?	What are the sources of information for these indicators?	What are the external factors necessary to sustain the objectives in the long term?
<b>Purpose</b> What is the immediate development outcome at the end of the project?	Which indicators clearly show that the objective of the action has been achieved?	What are the sources of information that exist or can be collected? What are the methods required to get this information?	Which factors and conditions are necessary to achieve that objective (external conditions)?
<b>Outputs</b> What are the specifically deliverable results envisaged to achieve the specific objective?	What are the indicators to measure whether and to what extent the action achieves the expected result?	What are the sources of information for these indicators?	What external conditions must be met to obtain the expected results on schedule?
<b>Activities</b> What are the key activities to be carried out and in what sequence in order to produce the expected results?	<b>Means</b> What are the means required to implement these activities (for example: personnel, equipment, supplies, etc.)?	What are the sources of information about this progress? <b>Cost</b> What are the costs?	What pre-conditions are required before the action starts?

## **Objectives**

### **Objectively Verifiable Indicators (OVI)**

OVI explains what the project is about in ways that are functional and quantifiable; it stipulates the standard necessary to attain the set goal, the purpose, and outputs. Consequently, OVIs are indicated in relation to quality (nature), quantity (how many or much), timing (when), target group (for whom), and place (location, where). A reliable OVI should possess the following characteristics: (1) specificity—reveals the essence of the objective in detailed manner; (2) measurability—possessing objective quality that allows it to convey consistent meaning to the project supporters and those who are against it or who have some reservations about it; (3) availability—being obtainable at reasonable cost, based on assessable data; (4) relevance—credible and appropriate to the information need of the project managers; (5) time-bound—ability to specify when the project target is realized; (6) independency—ability of indicators to be independent of one another so that each indicator relates to a single objective in the intervention logic (Miklič, 2011, pp. 41-42).

### **Source of Verification (SOV)**

SOV is also known as Means of Verification. It assists in revealing the ability of the indicators to be measured within time, effort, and financial feasibility. Thus, when an indicator lacks reliable means of verification, it is dropped for a more dependable one. The Source of Verification clarifies the following: (1) who is to collect/deliver the needed information such as extended field workers; (2) what information is to be delivered; (3) where and in what nature is the information to be gathered; (4) when the information (including its frequency) is to be provided (Miklič, 2011, pp. 41-42) .

## **Assumptions**

Assumptions refers to some conditions or elements that are capable of hindering or facilitating the project and which are beyond the control of the project manager such as weather conditions, policy changes and so on (Ahmad, 2010, p. 25). They are external factors that can potentially impact a project's implementation and its long-term profits. Assumptions can easily be spotted in the analysis phase, but some assumptions can be identified from elements in the intervention logic which are embedded in the project. In essence, assumptions can be derived from the intervention logic, they are constructive environments, they are connected to various levels in the LFA, and are valued according to prominence and prospects (Miklič, 2011).

Table 3

*Logical Framework Matrix*

<b>Project Description</b>	<b>Objectively Verifiable Indicators</b>	<b>Sources or Means of Verifications</b>	<b>Assumptions</b>
<p><b>Goal</b> To get the members of SDA Osaka-Central Japanese church actively involved in witnessing activities.</p>	<p>1. Increase in baptisms and church membership by at least 10% by June 2017. 2. Intensive discipleship training for the ten selected church members commenced in the local church by June 2015.</p>	<p>1. Local church baptismal records. 2. Church membership record. 3. Church Guest record book.</p>	<p>The elders of the church, the church board, and the church in business will support the project.</p>
<p><b>Purpose</b> To equip church members for contextualized discipleship in Osaka-Central Church in West Japanese Conference</p>	<p>Osaka-Central Church membership increased by at least 10% by December 2017.</p>	<p>1. Local church baptismal records. 2. Church membership record. 3. Church Guest record book.</p>	<p>Church members are excited and committed to the project.</p>
<p><b>Outputs</b> 1. Orientation talks and awareness seminars. 2. Meetings with the local church elders to cast and explain the vision of the project. 3. 10 church members disciplined for witnessing through five small groups.</p>	<p>1. Orientation talks and awareness seminars held in Osaka-Central church. 2. The 10 disciples selected and discipling activities commenced and on-going. 3. More church members disciplined for effective witnessing by December 2017. 3. Discipling process maintained</p>	<p>1. Local church baptismal records. 2. Church membership record. 3. Church Guest record book.</p>	<p>1. Elders and church members are all enthusiastic about the project and supportive. 2. The 10 selected church members are disciplined for effective witnessing.</p>

	in the Osaka-Central church beyond December 2017.		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Activities</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convene church board meeting to take an action on the project.</li> <li>2. Convene Church in Business meeting to ratify the recommendation of the church board.</li> <li>3. Selection of 10 church members to be disciplined.</li> <li>4. Training seminars for the 10 selected church members.</li> <li>5. Five small groups established at various locations.</li> <li>6. Small groups social activities commenced and on-going.</li> <li>8. Small groups religious discussions.</li> <li>7. Feedback sessions.</li> <li>8. Assessment.</li> </ol>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Means</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Action of local church board and church in business meeting.</li> <li>2. Seminar materials.</li> <li>3. Budget.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Local church baptismal records.</li> <li>2. Church membership record.</li> <li>3. Church Guest record book.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The local church board and the entire church membership will be willing to embark on the project.</li> <li>2. At least 10 church members will be willing to volunteer for discipleship training.</li> <li>3. Seminar materials would have been prepared.</li> </ol>

APPENDIX C  
GANTT CHART

## The Gantt Chart

A Gantt chart is a plan that is comprised a set of horizontal lines which displays the extent of work done or production finished within a stipulated block of time in relation to the amount planned for the designated periods. It shows the span of a project from beginning to end (Rodriguez, 2013). When a task is concluded, that portion is indicated on the chart by being shaded (Tague, 2004). It was first developed by Henry Gantt in an attempt to elucidate a project schedule in 1917 (Rouse, 2012) and usually includes terminal and immediate elements of a project (Gant chart, 2013).

### Advantages of Gantt Chart

Rodriguez (2013) believes that the use of a Gantt chart can facilitate implementation of a project in the following ways:

1. It presents the various segments and activities of a project in ways that can be easily understood by anyone, especially those who are not part of the project.
2. It allows the use of some methods of highlighting (by use of bold fonts or shading of bars) to emphasize some crucial moments in a project.
3. Gantt charts help in the organization of projects and reduce problems associated with scheduling, especially when they are regularly updated as the need arises.
4. Gantt chart allows for the use of computer software to implement updates when needed.

Below is a sample Gantt Chart for Reverse Engineering Project

Table 4

*Gant Chart: Reverse Engineering Project*

	February		March			April			May
Task	19	22	3	8	12	9	23	30	7
Assign Teams									
Select Reverse Engr. Project									
Write Proposal									
Make Charts & Diagram									
Mechanical Dissection									
Component Sketching									
Computer Modeling									
Material Analysis									
Writing Final Report									

Table 5

*Gantt Chart for Year 1 of the Project (January 2015 – December 2015)*

Activities	Months of Year 1											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
<b>Output 1: Awareness/Church Support</b>												
1.1 Pre-Meetings with Elders of the Local Church												
1.2 Church Board Meeting for Action to Commence the Project												
1.3 Church in Business Meeting for Action on the Church Board's Recommendation												
<b>Output 2: Seminars</b>												
2.1 The Mission of the Church												
2.2 How to Make our Church												



Table 6

*Gantt Chart for Year 2 of the Project (January 2016 – December 2016)*

Activities	Months of the Year													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	A	B
<b>Output 1: Practice and Application</b>														
1.1 Door to Door Witnessing	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█		
1.2 Training and Feedback	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█		
1.3 Meeting with the 10 Disciples	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█		
<b>Output 2: Feedback and Debriefing</b>														
2.1 Listen to Mentees' Perceptions														
2.2 Provide Encouragement and Support														
<b>Output 3: Monitoring and Evaluation</b>														
3.1 Monthly Reports Collected	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
5.1 Quarterly Reports Collected			█			█			█			█	█	█
5.2 Annual Report Summaries Evaluation												█	█	█
5.3 Internal Midterm Evaluation						█	█						█	█
5.4 External Midterm Evaluation						█	█						█	█

Table 7  
*Gantt Chart for Year 3 of the Project (January 2017 – December 2017)*

Activities	Months of the Year													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	A	B
<b>Output 1: Practice and Application</b>														
1.1 Door to Door Witnessing														
1.2 Meeting with the 10 Disciples														
<b>Output 2: Feedback and Debriefing</b>														
2.1 Listen to Debriefing from Disciples														
2.2 Offer Reinforcement and Support														
2.3 Continue Training														
<b>Output 3: Monitoring and Evaluation</b>														
3.1 Monthly Reports from Disciples Collected														
5.1 Quarterly Reports from Disciples Collected														
5.2 Annual Report Summaries Evaluation														

## Budget

In view of the nature of the activities of the CLAP model, a budget for the five groups/teams would be necessary to facilitate the implementation of the project. Below is a suggested budget for the project:

Description of Item	Income	Expenses
Renting of Venue	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,600.00
Activities Programming	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Entertainment	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Tracts/Literatures	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Transportation	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 4,000.00
Miscellaneous/Emergency	\$ 3,000.00	

APPENDIX D

HISTORY OF CHRISTIANITY IN JAPAN  
MISSION HISTORY/CHURCH GROWTH  
OF SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTIST  
JAPANESE CHURCH

## **History of Christianity in Japan**

Christianity was introduced to Japan by Francis Xavier, a member of the Jesuit order of the Catholic church, in the 16th century. He was the first missionary to an oriental country and began his mission work in India. Then he decided to proclaim the gospel to Japan and arrived in Kagoshima prefecture in 1549. Kagoshima's commander, Shimazu Takahisa, welcomed him and his companions and allowed him to proclaim the gospel within the area. Xavier and his group stayed for 13 months and gave 100 people baptismal ceremonies (Kwang su Kim, *A History of the Expansion of Christianity in Asia*, Seoul: 1973, p.125). The reason why Xavier went to and proclaimed the gospel was the fact that during his stay in India he met Portuguese captain, Alvares. Xavier met Anjiro who settled in Malacca illegally in 1547 through an introduction by Alvares (Otis Cary, D. D., *A History of Christianity in Japan*; Tokyo Tuttle, 1975, pp. 37-38). Later, Xavier confessed that he could see Japan itself through Anjiro. Xavier said that there are no people like the Japanese—they are moral, talented, kind, and have integrity (Kogoro Yoshida, *Xavier*; Yoshikawa: Hongmunkan, 1959).

During the reign of the shogunate, Oda Nobunaga, Christianity was prevailing in Japan because lots of Daimyo became Christians everywhere. Oda Nobunaga supported Christianity for the purpose of his political goal and objected to Buddhism. He destroyed a lot of Buddhist temples because of their unwillingness and opposite attitude against Oda's political policy. Oda protected Christianity so that he earned a lot of favor from the Western missionaries and became interested in Western science, culture, and materials.

In fact, the real reason why Oda shogun protected Christianity was the fact that he could achieve his political goal through Christianity rather than being interested in Christianity or understanding its doctrines. In that, Oda could approach the Western culture by protecting Christianity and lessen the power of Buddhism (Sawa Masahiko, History of Japan Christianity, Seoul: Korean Christianity books, 1995, p. 45).

Unfortunately, Oda was killed by his follower, Meiji Mitsuhide who in turn was killed by the Toyotomi shogun. Toyotomi showed a good attitude toward Catholics in his early reign, but he gradually started to persecute the Catholics because of strong protests from Buddhists.

Francis Xavier gave us a big tip for effective and contextualized mission in Japan even though his stay there was short:

Francis Xavier, of the Society of Jesus, was the first missionary to Japan from the West. In spite of the fact that he stayed there for only two years and three months, he formed a good understanding of the Japanese people. According to Takashi Gono, in his study of the early stages of Christianity in Japan, Francis Xavier recognized that 'ancestor worship was the root of the faith and strength of blood ties in Japan'. Francis Xavier recognized that the most important concern of the Japanese people was the salvation of the dead, especially the way of salvation of blood relations, from hell. How to deal with the salvation of the dead was therefore the most important problem which missionaries faced. As Gono observes, 'Xavier understood deeply how Japanese people desired the salvation of blood relations.' This was a difficult problem for Xavier to solve, but although he could not reconcile it with Christianity, identifying it made him successful.

## **Mission History of SDA Church**

### Mission History of Early SDA Church of Japan

According to Land (2005), Abram La Rue (1822-1903) was the first Seventh-day Adventist missionary to Japan, although he was not sent by the church. He distributed

denominational publications in Yokohama and Kobe in 1889. Oyama (1981) wrote in his book that La Rue started to proclaim the gospel in Kobe and Yokohama with books about the second coming of Jesus (pp. 16-20). La Rue's efforts took place about seven years before W. C. Grainger was officially sent by the General Conference of Seventh-day Adventist church in 1896 as a missionary to Japan. Grainger arrived at Yokohama with Teruhiko H. Okohira. He developed interest in the Japanese people as a result of contact with some Japanese students (especially T. Okohira) at Hillsburg College where he then served as president and decided to dedicate his life to the Adventist mission in Japan. T. Okohira was born in Kagoshima Prefecture in 1865. He converted to Christianity from Buddhism while studying in the United States of America. He was the first Seventh-day Adventist church member in Japan. Land (2005) recalls Okohira's effort in the early history of Seventh-day Adventism in Japan:

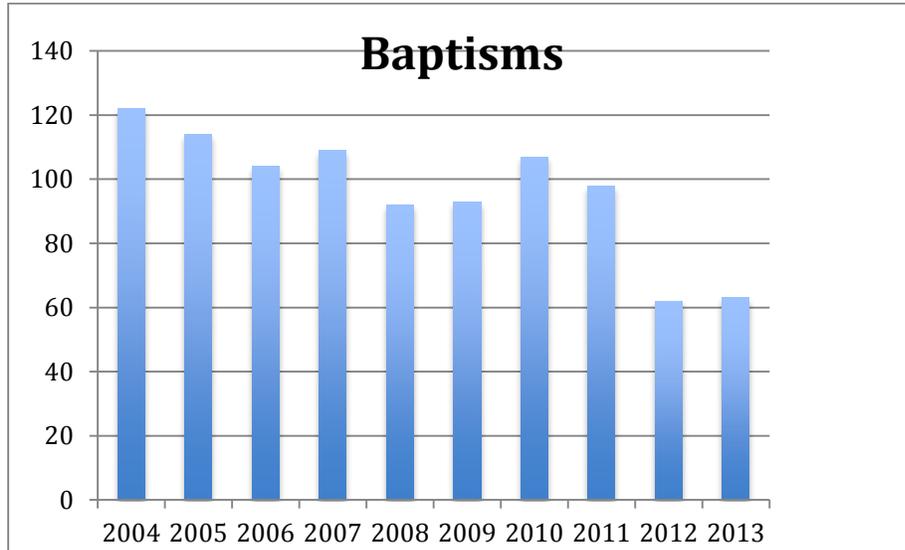
In 1896 W.C. Grainger and Teruhiko H. Okohira, a native of Japan who had lived in the United States, arrived as missionaries and opened the Shiba Bible School in Tokyo. Other missionaries soon followed and in 1899. And then, Seventh-day Adventist Church organized with a membership of 25 and a publishing house started operations. (p. 152)

### **Current Church Growth in WJC**

According to the JUC secretary's report (Inada, 2011), SDA church membership in Japan began with 286 members in 1920, and stood at 15,287 in 2010. The number of SDA churches in Japan was 114 in addition to 38 companies and 40 Bible study groups. Amazingly, the Seventh-day Adventist church in Japan has flourished and multiplied after it was planted by W. Grainger and T. Okohira in 1899. These following graphs show the current rate of church growth in West Japan Conference.

### Baptism number

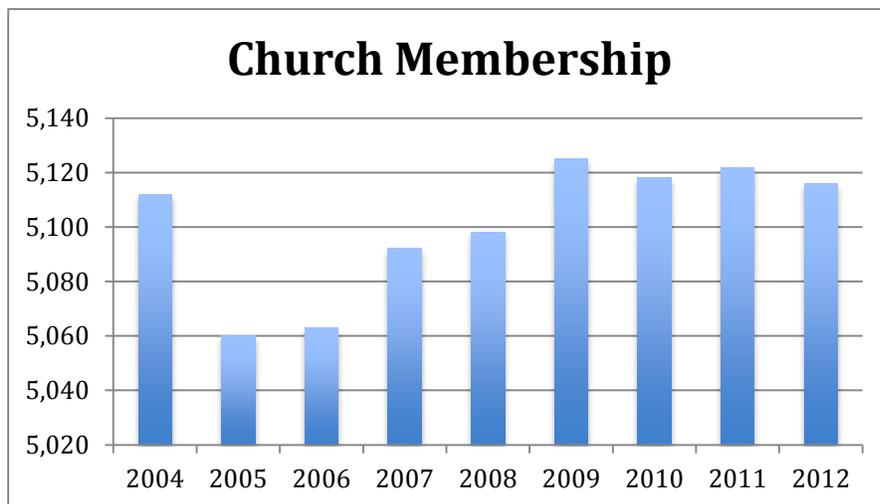
This following report is the baptism number of the West Conference of Japan from 2005 to 2013.



As the graph shows, the baptism report from 2004 to 2013 is almost in steady decline yearly.

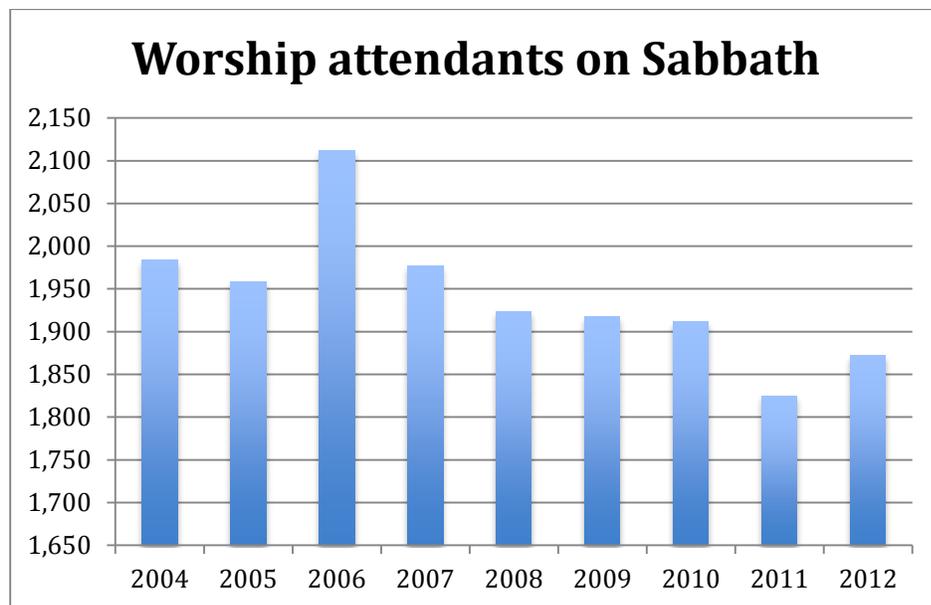
### Church membership

The West Conference is the second largest next to the East Conference in Japan.



According to this above graph of church membership of the West Conference of Japan, it seems the conference did not lose much of its membership from 2004 to 2012. However, the number of church attendants on every Sabbath is gradually decreasing, while these missing members are still retained in record. In reality, the West Conference of Japan is faced with the challenge of membership decline. According to Yutaka's report (Secretary of Japanese Union), the number of dead members and those who are taken away from church record book is overwhelming when compared to the number of baptism by every year.

It is not difficult for us to imagine the condition of the Japanese church in the next five to ten years. The West Conference of Japan as well as the East Conference needs an intervention strategy to save the situation.



APPENDIX E

JAPAN UNION CONFERENCE REPORTS

## **2013 JUC Secretary's Report**

JUC Secretary, Yutaka Inada

This year, since we exist to accomplish the Lord's mission, I think that this year was one in which we realized anew that we cannot continue to exist without mission. There was the NSD mission conference, and then the Tokyo13 meetings were held. Several churches have felt and sensed that it is time for a transformation from looking inward to looking and moving outward.

Mission to the Cities has just begun this year. Our churches and institutions will be expected to take up this challenge anew. As secretary, I want to firmly support this evangelistic movement from below.

### **Baptism Numbers**

Through Tokyo13, it was nearly assured that the capital city area would have the highest number of recorded baptisms of the last 10 years. Unfortunately, because the other areas in Eastern Japan district have continued their slowdown, as a whole the numbers are not good. But judging from the 4th quarter statistics, we anticipate that the number of souls saved in Eastern Japan will increase as well. Next year, large city evangelistic meetings will be held in Kansai and Naha. Also in Tokyo, it's not as if things will end with this year-efforts will continue at the district level. Our prayer is that this same current will flow across the whole country. The national total was 162, which is 3 less than the same period in 2012, and 1 more than the number for this period in 2011. The gender ratio is as follows: 2011: 36% males, 2012: 46%, and this year: 38%

of baptisms were of males. That the 13-15 year old female group was the most numerous has not changed this year. A characteristic for the chronology of the conference this year is that the number of baptisms for elderly males has increased somewhat, and the groups for females aged 45-49 and 60-64 has also increased. Also worth noting is that immigrant evangelism has seen large growth.

### **Membership Numbers**

In comparison to the 162 souls saved, the number of deaths and names removed from membership total 169. Accordingly, church membership has decreased. At the end of the 3rd quarter, membership was 15,242. By district, the totals are: East - 8,051; West - 5,114; Okinawa - 2,077. The influence of the membership investigation [cleaning up membership records] has also been apparent. The rate of progress is currently about 50 percent. From now, for about 2.5 years, we will proceed with the membership investigation.

### **Worship Attendance Numbers**

The average attendance for the 3rd quarter was 5,525 people. The previous quarter was, as has been the case since 2006, around the 6,000 mark, but that number has again dropped. We are hoping to see 4th quarter growth. By district, attendance was: East - 3,127 (3,149); West - 1,777 (1,733) (1,749); Okinawa - 621 (716). \*Note: In parentheses are from the same quarter of previous years.

Once again this year, we saw an upward trend in urban area churches, especially the larger churches. We hope that this trend will be a consistent one.

## **Miscellaneous**

Beginning last year and continuing into this year, the general affairs and administrative office conducted a large-scale member consciousness [or awareness] survey. We want to thank each church for its cooperation. A summary of the results appeared in "Adventist Life" magazine.

The full report is set to arrive at each church within the month. We think that these materials have made it possible for much analysis to be done.

### **Church Growth Awareness Survey**

(Adapted from "Seventh-day Adventist Church in Japan: Historical Context; Present Trends, Future Prospects," a report by David Trim)

In the Seventh-day Adventist General Conference, there are currently 122 conferences. Among these, there are 10 whose membership are consistently decreasing, and are considered declining conferences—these 10 are all in Europe. We are told that Japan is now at the precipice of becoming a declining conference. Japan, like many countries in Europe, is experiencing the growth of secularization and as a result, evangelism is decreasing. In this way, we share common ground. For the Mission to the Cities initiative, which the General Conference is strongly promoting, Tokyo was chosen as the target city for the Northern Asia-Pacific Division (NSD). But before considering an evangelistic strategy, the General Conference recommended that we conduct a survey called "Church Growth Awareness Survey," which Holland, a sort of "model" declining conference, carried out.

In November of last year, we actually conducted this survey directed at every church belonging to the Japan Conference. Despite it being a busy time at the end of the

year, 2,272 individuals participated—we wish to extend our heartfelt gratitude for this. With the Administrative Office staff at the center, the Japan Conference staff translated, conducted, collected, and aggregated the surveys, in a hurried series of tasks. The results were sent to the General Conference's Administrative Office, where Dr. Trim, director of the Office of Archives, Statistics and Research, and his team analyzed the results, summarized them in a report and sent back their report.

The report consists mainly of three sections:

(1) An overview of the history of Christianity and Adventism in Japan, with observations.

(2) Historical statistics of the Adventist church in Japan, with comparisons and analysis of the survey results

(3) Survey results and associated comments

There is not nearly enough room in the present volume to publish the full translation [of the General Conference's report]. Of the observations regarding the historical overview, [historical] statistics, and survey results, only a summary will be presented. Because of space limitations, only 7 of the 38 pages of survey results could be published here. Although all of the comments related to the results appear here, we intend to send a full version of the remainder of the survey results to each church. Please refer to that document [for further information]. Truthfully, the research team completed their analysis in a limited amount of time, but has said that further time should be spent in analysis [of the data].

Table 1

*Japan Conference Membership Changes*

	1920	1930	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990	2000	2010
	286	741	1,781	4,645	7,483	9,973	12,893	14,662	15,287

There is a possibility that a more detailed analysis will come out in the future, but we thought it imperative that we report the survey results without delay. Because of the amount of time and labor that so many people spent, we decided to let the additional future analysis wait for later and first fulfill our responsibility to the survey participants and everyone involved by going public with the results.

In the comment section of the survey, we received 474 comments. Of these, half were criticisms of the contents or the methodology of the survey. While holding such feelings, you faithfully completed the survey; for this, we are that much more grateful [for your participation].

Of course, there were a great many who participated positively. Already, we have begun efforts to engage in evangelistic methods on the basis of this report. "The 7 Principles of Mission," which was shared in this periodical [previously], was based on the results of this survey and born out of conversations with General Conference leaders. We intend to continue making use of this survey's results in the future.

#### 1. Outline of Observations on the History of Christianity and Adventism in Japan (Summary)

In the history of the Christian church in Japan, there has never once been a mass conversion, or time when the people converted and accepted Christianity *en masse*. Conversion happens on an individual basis. Therefore it is believed that personal evangelism and witnessing are the most effective means of evangelism in Japan. It is the conclusion of many experts that the Japanese themselves must engage in the

evangelization of Japan. A general observation is that evangelism done by foreigners only shows limited effectiveness.

## 2. Observations from Analysis of the Historical Statistics of the Adventist Church in Japan, and the Results of the Current Survey (Summary)

One praiseworthy aspect of the Japanese church is its faithfulness in returning tithes. The portion of people who diligently tithe is a level which one does not often see among the Adventist churches around the world. One could say that Japanese Adventists are loyal in supporting the General Conference. Concern for youth ministry is strong, and many thought that there is a need to increase the number of youth in churches, as well as their participation. On the other hand, many people felt that our engagement in youth ministry is not sufficient. It is also worth noting that concern for outreach evangelism was strong. Isn't there also a need for our conference to reconsider the importance of outreach evangelism?

## 3. A Synopsis of the Church Growth Awareness Survey, Results, and Analysis (Excerpt)

### Overview of the Seventh-day Adventist Church's Work in Japan

The work of the Seventh-day Adventist church in Japan began near the end of the 1800s. We can trace the oldest records of membership back to the year 1899. The Japan Conference (now Japan Union Conference) was formed in 1917.

Total church membership in 1920 was 286. During World War II, the church saw a decrease in membership, but by the year 1950 membership was up to 1,781. In 1990, the church began to see negative growth. In the 5 years following, the numbers

generally remained consistent. In 2010 the conference recorded zero growth, with only 4 percent growth in the 10 years since the year 2000 (see figure 1).

Yearly baptism numbers had begun to decrease in the 1980s. Since then, we have recorded about 400 to 500 souls saved annually.

**Figure 2 Besides Sabbath worship, where do you meet other Adventist church members? (Multiple answers possible)**

Place	#	%
Bible study meeting	730	32.1%
Meeting at your church	913	40.2%
Conference or District-sponsored gathering	634	27.9%
Visiting an Adventist friend's home	603	26.5%
When visiting a sick church member	534	23.5%
When visiting an elderly church member	393	17.3%
A meeting at a local or neighboring church	313	13.8%
Coincidentally met in town	554	24.4%
Had no opportunity to meet outside of Sabbath worship	349	15.4%
Other	306	13.5%

**Figure 3 Approximately how often do you meet church members during the week?**

Frequency	#	%
Several times a week	726	32.0%
Once a week	1,057	46.5%
Once a month	184	8.1%
2-4 times a year	146	6.4%
Never	176	7.7%

**Figure 4 What is your level of involvement at church?**

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly agree
I support my fellow church members in church work.	46 2.2%	56 2.7%	218 10.6%	1201 58.5%	530 25.8%
I stay late after worship to help clean the church.	418 21.1%	680 34.3%	346 17.4%	432 21.8%	107 5.4%
I do my best to care for first-time visitors and guests at church.	49 2.3%	197 9.4%	398 19.0%	1113 53.0%	343 16.3%
I help make it possible for visitors and members to enjoy fellowship together.	44 2.1%	116 5.5%	374 17.7%	1265 60.0%	310 14.7%
I devote much of my time in fellowship with members.	37 1.8%	338 16.1%	480 22.8%	1059 50.4%	189 9.0%
I sometimes spend money on fellowship activities with friends from church.	60 2.9%	277 13.2%	407 19.4%	1189 56.6%	168 8.0%
I joyfully cooperate with all church members.	17 0.8%	90 4.2%	358 16.7%	1302 60.6%	382 17.8%

Presently, the Japan Union Conference holds a membership of around 15,000, and weekly attendance is around 7,000.

#### Profile of Survey Participants

In this Awareness Survey, including all 3 [regional] conferences, a total of 2,272 people participated. This comes out to about 1 in 7 of total church members participating. If church attendance is 7,000, that means we gained participation from about 1 in 3 attending members.

70 percent of respondents were female.

Most of the respondents were adults or elderly. Over half were age 65 or older. One third were between 40 and 64, and only 11 percent were under 39 years old.

The average age of female members was slightly higher than that of male members. A large number of the young generation came from homes where either their father or both parents were Adventists.

The level of education was higher among female respondents than male. The 40-64 age group had the highest academic background of any group.

If we look at the home situation by age group, married persons form the largest group.

Almost all respondents said that the expense and time spent in attending church was not a burden.

Almost all respondents (91.8%) attend church every week. Among those who attend church every week, 92.4% attend worship, and 84.5% attend Sabbath school.

79.9% of respondents are members of the church where they were baptized, and about half (46.8%) have some kind of duty or responsibility at church. Many

respondents (73.4%) were members of a particular Sabbath school class, however, many had also attended 1 or more other classes, or had multiple overlapping membership in other classes.

#### Church Participation

Figure 2 shows in what kind of activities and places respondents interacted with other church members. Figure 3 shows with what frequency respondents met with other church members.

Figure 4 seeks to understand what level of involvement respondents had with their church by asking several questions. Many respondents were actively involved, and 84.3 percent said they wanted to support other church members in doing work for the church.

Figure 5 shows how much time respondents spent doing work for the church every week. Many respondents said they spent less than 1 hour, and many said their circumstances don't allow for participation in church work.

#### Relationships with Other Church Members

Figure 6 is the results of questions asked regarding relationships with other church members. Many respondents were positive, and the fact that many responded, "I don't know" suggests that some did not understand the meaning of the question.

#### Giving and Tithing Practices

More than half of respondents (56.0%) said they returned a tithe based on their gross wages, not their net wages. Also, 77.4 percent said they return a tithe of at least 10 percent of their salary. And 69.1 percent said they return 10% or more of their salary to their local church. Regarding the responses about how much is given to various Sabbath

school offerings, special offering, and the comparison of average salary by gender and age group, please reference the full version of the survey results which will be sent to each church.

A summary of the responses to various questions regarding tithe is shown in figure 7. For the most part, it appears that many respondents understand and accept the Seventh-day Adventist teachings and principles regarding tithing.

#### Youth and Young Adults

The response of respondents toward youth was largely positive. However, for several questions, the number of "I don't know" answers was very high.

#### About Non-Japanese ["Foreigner"] Churches

More than 90 percent of the respondents were born in Japan, most of who probably have no knowledge about foreign homestay audiences. It follows, then, that many people responded "I don't know" in this section.

#### Outreach Evangelism

The number of "I don't know" answers in the area of outreach was also large. For the general idea of outreach evangelism, the responses were generally favorable.

#### Interaction with the Japan Union Conference

In this section as well, on the one hand, there were quite a few "I don't know" answers. But generally, church members expressed cooperation with the conference (55.6% answered "Strongly Agree"), and think support from the conference is necessary (55.6% answered "Strongly Agree" or "Agree"). There was disagreement with the idea that only churches that are growing should receive financial support from the conference (73.0% responded "Strongly Disagree" or "Disagree"). The area where many responses

expressed opposition to an attitude of cooperation with the conference and negative opinions was regarding the decisions of Adventist Life (36.4%), [the Conference] website (75.1%), or the conference itself (55.8%). This suggests that there is a need to continuously improve communication between the church in Japan and church members.

#### Minority Groups

Because of the strong homogeneity of Japanese society, the results for questions about relationships with minority groups, to which many responded "I don't know", is an expected result. Nonetheless, it is worth noting that 53.8 percent responded that churches should be accepting of all minority groups.

#### ADRA

It is safe to say that there is general support for the work of ADRA. On the other hand, there is room for enlightening members about ADRA's funding, gathering methods, and how the funds are used.

**Figure 5 How much time do you spend every week in the following ministries/duties?**

<b>Ministry/Duty</b>	<b>None</b>	<b>0-1 hrs</b>	<b>1-3 hrs</b>	<b>3-6 hrs</b>	<b>6+ hrs</b>
Elder	986	69	72	35	15
	83.7%	5.9%	6.1%	3.0%	1.3%
Deacon or Deaconess	751	395	229	74	17
	51.2%	26.9%	15.6%	5.0%	1.2%
Church board	851	258	276	44	3
	59.4%	18.0%	19.3%	3.1%	0.2%
Church activity organization	638	453	328	45	32
	42.6%	30.3%	21.9%	3.0%	2.1%
Sabbath school	504	773	344	55	24
	29.6%	45.4%	20.2%	3.2%	1.4%
Children's Sabbath school	1087	288	80	6	4
	74.1%	19.6%	5.5%	0.4%	0.3%
Youth ministry	1253	91	35	8	0
	90.3%	6.6%	2.5%	0.6%	0.0%
Divine Worship	745	723	80	13	3
	47.6%	46.2%	5.1%	0.8%	0.2%
Assisting with worship or other gatherings	544	781	307	61	27
	31.6%	45.4%	17.8%	3.5%	1.6%
Music ministry	929	510	172	26	11
	56.3%	30.9%	10.4%	1.6%	0.7%
Technical support for worship or other meetings (projector, A/V, or other)	1170	347	74	9	3
	72.9%	21.6%	4.6%	0.6%	0.2%
Greeter	772	720	156	21	10
	46.0%	42.9%	9.3%	1.3%	0.6%
Food or drink preparation for worship or other meetings	684	822	338	42	4
	36.2%	43.5%	17.9%	2.2%	0.2%
Childcare for worship or other meetings	1179	428	94	17	6
	68.3%	24.8%	5.4%	1.0%	0.3%
Cleaning	991	634	177	25	4
	54.1%	34.6%	9.7%	1.4%	0.2%
Assisting anyone who needs help	1126	462	113	23	24
	64.3%	26.4%	6.5%	1.3%	1.4%
Other-1	833	123	106	19	24
	75.3%	11.1%	9.6%	1.7%	2.2%
Other-2	811	60	36	12	8
	87.4%	6.5%	3.9%	1.3%	0.9%

### Individual Faith

Including the time spent in meditation and personal evangelism, participants were asked how much time they spent on their devotional life. Half of the respondents

said they spend time in meditation [and prayer], but the results show that fewer participants had spent time doing personal evangelism.

### Faith Experiences

In general, the response about faith experiences was largely positive; however, on the other hand, we discovered several areas which ought to be addressed through magazine, book, or other publications, and through pastors' sermons.

### Life Goals/Purpose

It is apparent that most of the respondents were positive about their life goals/purpose and outlook for the future.

**Figure 6**      **Your Relationships with Other Adventist Church Members**

Question	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Don't know	Agree	Strongly Agree
Adventists treat guests fairly and impartially.	1.1%	7.7%	26.7%	53.3%	11.1%
Generally speaking, I trust other Adventists.	0.1%	1.7%	9.3%	63.3%	25.5%
Adventists keep their promises.	0.4%	2.7%	21.0%	60.6%	15.3%
I am satisfied with the way my fellow Adventists make decisions.	1.5%	9.2%	36.1%	44.2%	9.0%
Adventist members have a great influence on what is done in the local church.	2.4%	10.2%	56.6%	26.3%	4.4%
Other Adventists and I meet one another's expectations.	0.5%	5.8%	47.4%	42.0%	4.3%
I give more than I receive from other Adventists.	1.5%	11.0%	55.6%	29.3%	2.5%
I give less than I receive from other Adventists.	4.2%	22.8%	60.6%	11.2%	1.2%
Fellow Adventists meet my needs.	1.1%	6.9%	33.7%	51.6%	6.7%
I am satisfied with my relationships with other Adventists.	1.3%	7.3%	22.0%	58.2%	11.2%
I think having a relationship with other Adventists is beneficial.	0.2%	0.4%	8.9%	61.5%	28.9%
I think I would like to maintain a lasting relationship with fellow Adventists.	0.1%	0.6%	6.7%	55.9%	36.7%
My fellow Adventists listen to me when I have questions.	1.1%	4.4%	30.8%	52.6%	11.0%
When I need help, Adventists help me.	1.0%	3.8%	29.4%	54.6%	11.2%
Adventists are generally accepting of each other and accept each other's position.	1.0%	5.1%	19.8%	62.2%	11.9%

**Figure 7 Opinions about Tithing**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Strongly disagree</b>	<b>Disagree</b>	<b>Don't know</b>	<b>Agree</b>	<b>Strongly agree</b>
Tithe is equal to 10% of my net income.	5.4%	12.6%	15.4%	45.6%	21.0%
It is my duty to return tithe to the church.	1.0%	1.6%	6.6%	51.2%	39.5%
I give tithe because it's what God expects of me.	1.0%	2.1%	6.6%	48.2%	42.0%
I want to know exactly how the conference is using my tithe.	3.9%	6.9%	18.1%	48.0%	23.1%
I wish to be able to explain clearly how my tithe is useful.	3.3%	9.0%	28.6%	42.4%	16.5%
If I had to choose, I would prefer to give my tithe to my local church, instead of the conference.	14.0%	22.9%	41.5%	15.3%	6.3%
I believe it is my duty to support other charitable organizations (like ADRA) in my church.	1.4%	6.5%	31.8%	50.6%	9.6%
It's OK to count donations to charitable organizations (besides the church) as tithe.	23.2%	29.8%	33.6%	11.2%	2.1%
Volunteer work within the church is one part of the act of returning tithe.	20.0%	30.3%	27.7%	18.2%	3.7%
Various donations to the church do not count as part of tithe.	3.1%	6.1%	22.4%	43.4%	25.0%
Donations toward volunteer work, such as ADRA, do not count as tithing.	2.7%	5.6%	22.3%	44.0%	25.4%
If I tithe, I will not be able to survive economically.	31.5%	41.7%	17.9%	6.9%	1.9%
I receive a blessing as a result of tithing.	0.3%	0.9%	18.6%	47.6%	32.6%
Donating to charitable organizations other than the church is a Christian's duty.	2.7%	17.7%	36.4%	36.2%	7.0%

### About this Survey Itself

Finally, we have the reaction to this survey itself. Once more, we saw many responses of "I don't know." However, the number of respondents who expressed a desire to cooperate with further surveys (like this one) for the purpose of church growth was as high as 63%, and only 5.6% said they didn't wish to comply.

### The Possibility of More Detailed Analysis

We believe that performing a more detailed analysis on the results of this survey hereafter would be helpful for the revitalization of the church in Japan. For example, it

may be possible to examine how behavior and faith life are affected by age, gender, scale of the member's church, home situation, or other factors.

Church leaders and those interested in the survey results could also determine what kinds of further research may be necessary.

With this survey, our prayer and wish is that these results will contribute to the strengthening of the Lord Jesus' remnant church, and, even if only by a little, that it will help hasten the return of our Lord Jesus.

-Yutaka Inada

APPENDIX F

WORKSHOPS/SEMINARS SUMMARY OUTLINE

## Mission of the Church

### Objective

The objective of this seminar is to articulate the mission of the church in a way that is understandable and applicable to the Japanese context.

#### A. The Church as Founded by Christ

1. Christ is the head of the church.
2. The church was founded on Jesus Christ, the Rock of our salvation.
3. The Church is subject to Christ in all things.

#### B. The Church in the Apostolic Era

1. The church is the body of all believers.
2. The church has a divine mandate to proclaim the gospel in all the world (Matt 28:18-20; Acts 1:4-8).
3. The church was organized for the great commission of the gospel.

#### C. The Remnant Church and its Mission

1. God has a remnant people in this era of human history (Rev 12:17; 14:12).
2. The remnant of God has special messages to proclaim to the world in these last days (Rev 14:6-12).

### Outcome

Church members will understand that Japanese people are included in the plan of redemption and that they have a duty to proclaim the message to all Japanese people.

## **How to Make Our Church Mission-Minded**

### **Objective**

This seminar is meant to help church members of Osaka-Central church become mission-minded.

#### A. The Church

1. The purpose of the church

#### B. The Mission of Church

1. Proclamation
2. Reproduction/Multiplication
3. Nurture

#### C. Who is a Disciple?

1. The call of a disciple
2. The preparation for discipleship
3. Patterns of discipleship (Luke 17; 1 Cor 12)

#### D. The Work of a Disciple

1. Following the teacher/disciple
2. Continual abiding in Christ

### **Outcome**

Church members will develop a mission mindset that is driven by a sense of love for Christ and a total commitment to His command to proclaim the gospel in all the world.

## **The Need for a Biblical Worldview**

### **Objective**

The goal of this seminar is to help church members begin on a journey to view and approach the issues of life from biblical perspectives.

#### A. What is Worldview?

1. Assumptions of a Christian worldview
2. Importance of Christian worldview
3. Cultural transformation

#### B. Biblical foundations

1. The creation narrative
2. The flood
3. The Abrahamic covenant
4. God's covenant with Israel
5. The incarnation
6. Jesus Christ and the church
7. Christ's second advent

#### C. How Should a Christian View and Approach the World?

1. God's love for the human race
2. Christians as agents of God's love
3. All humans are God's creation and objects of His love

### **Outcome**

Church members are applying biblical principles in their daily living.

## **Understanding the Secular Japanese Mindset**

### **Objective**

To understand the secular Japanese mindset so as to make the gospel message relevant to them.

#### **A. History of the Japanese People**

1. Origin of the Japanese
2. The Japanese dynasties
3. Community centeredness among the Japanese

#### **B. Japanese Worldview**

1. The Japanese folk religion
2. Shintoism
3. Buddhism
4. Christianity
5. Other religions

#### **C. Postmodern Japan**

1. Post-World War II
2. The impact of industrialization on the Japanese lifestyle
3. Coping with the younger generation of Japanese

### **Outcome**

## **What Secular Japanese People Need**

### **Objective**

To discern the needs of secular Japanese people.

- A. Answers to the Fundamental Questions of Life
  - 1. Where did we come from? (Origin)
  - 2. Why are we here? (Meaning)
  - 3. What is good and what is evil? (Morality)
  - 4. Where is civilization headed? (Destiny)
- B. Jesus the Man for All People
  - 1. His love demonstrated by His incarnation
  - 2. His love demonstrated in His works of love
  - 3. His love demonstrated by his sacrificial and atoning death
  - 4. His love revealed in His promise of a second advent and final restoration
- C. Authentic Christian Living
  - 1. A community of caring people
  - 2. Exhibiting the fruit of the Holy Spirit

### **Outcome**

Church members are well-informed of the needs of secular Japanese people and how best to witness to them.

## **Strategies for Witnessing to Secular Japanese People**

### **Objective**

To explore some effective strategies for witnessing to Japanese people.

#### **A. The Way of Love**

1. The unequalled love of God revealed in the gift of the sacrifice of His only Son, Jesus Christ.
2. Jesus' love for the human race and His willingness to pay the price for our salvation.
3. Our divine duty of love to one another, including those who are yet to submit themselves under the leadership of God.

#### **B. Mingling with the People**

1. Identifying felt needs
2. Empathizing with the people's needs
3. Reaching out to families

#### **C. Personal one-on-one Contact for Bible Study**

1. Jesus' method of personal witnessing
2. Jesus' method of two-by-two witnessing strategy

### **Outcome**

Church members are involved in active personal witnessing activities, using the various strategies to maximize result.

## **Church in the Past, Present, and Future**

### **Objective**

To explore the history of the church in the past, present, and future with an intent see how the church has related to its mission and how that relationship impacted the growth of the church.

#### **A. The Church as Founded by Christ**

1. A body of believers to called to be followers of Jesus Christ
2. A people made holy by the grace of God and separated unto Him
3. A people committed with a mission to make other disciples of Christ

#### **B. The Apostolic Church**

1. A body of believers with a message of love and salvation for a lost world  
(Matt 28:19-20; Acts 1:4-8).
2. Dealing with contextualization and multicultural challenges (Acts 15).
3. Contextualization in the church planting efforts of the apostle Paul.

#### **C. The Seventh-day Church**

1. God's Present-day remnant with special warning messages for the world  
(Rev 14:6-12).
2. Dealing with contextualization and multicultural challenges.
3. Implications of the Seventh-day Adventist mission in Japan.

### **Outcome**

Church members understand the church, how it has dealt with its mission in the past and is mission-focused as they live in the present and project into the future.

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1998-1999 **Japanese Saniku College** Finished English communication department

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