

From "Macarthur Missionaries" to "McDonald Missionaries"

<http://Kennyjoseph.com/Articles/Mac1.htm>

As I Saw and Heard It: "Present at the Creation" by Evangelist Kenny Joseph

It was the "Macarthur missionaries" who kept asking me to write an eyewitness account of sixty years of post-war missions in Japan. I fought this for over five years saying, "Don't ask me; ask the ones who made history to write the history." But they said, "One by one we've got to get them before they retire." Like the big rush of MacArthur missionaries who came over in 1947-51. Out of the 5000, only 20 remain. Yet I kept saying, "Let George do it," until I talked to a "long-term" missionary. When I asked him what he knew about the Japan revival in 1955, he said, "Oh, you mean Toyama?" I said, "No, that was an afterglow, an "aberration." Often when God builds a church, satan puts up a tent next door.

He seemed surprised to hear that there was a genuine revival. That pushed me over the cliff and I said, "OK, I'll write a brief summary of "what my eyes have seen and my ears have heard and my hands have felt." So I made a list of 30 nation-wide inter-denominational ministries that I saw begin post-war. Each denomination or mission group writes their own histories with names, places and dates of interest only to them and their group. I decided to begin writing a broad range, wide-brush picture that does not pose to be an objective, historical, detached story, but a partly personal, admittedly prejudiced look from the only vantage point I know: my own. This is how I saw and heard it.

Postwar Ministry Waves

Part One

Before and during World War II, the big noise was, "Missionary, go home! You embarrass us as we bring "peace and coprosperity to Asia under Hakko Ichiyu (all Asia under our big Shinto roof!)" So all but 10 missionaries left Japan. Germans and Italians could stay under house arrest. Finally what began at Pearl Harbor ended in Hiroshima. Then, beginning in 1945, the expelled missionaries came trickling back. And the everchanging ministry waves began flowing over postwar Japan.

1946

The first wave after the war screamed, "Bring enough food for 5 years!"

1947

The next wave called out "Buy land. Buy land!" Some land was 3 yen (1 cent) a tsubo (36 square feet). Some was 60 (20 cents). A high price was Y3,000 (\$9) a tsubo. "Buy land even if you haven't got a church." Mainline churches listened, and others, especially the Southern Baptists, did too. But most evangelicals hesitated. After all, a missionary could live on \$125 a month. "Who needs land? And anyhow, Jesus is coming back in 1952!" CIM (China Inland Mission) said, "Just rent. We lost our shirts in Red China!"

1951

The "comity" (let's work this out together) wave rolled in when China fell to Communism and kicked 2,000 missionaries out. Many came to Japan with the word, "Let's not just buy land, let's also divide the country into comity plans so missionaries don't overlap as they did in China." So the Lutheran Brethren took Akita, CBFMS (Conservative Baptist Foreign Mission Society) took Sendai, CIM took Hokkaido, and so on.

1952

The next big wave was, "Forget buying land. Win souls on the street. Mass evangelism. Evangelize or fossilize!" The big YFC (Youth for Christ) World Congress, the PTL (Pocket Testament League) OMS (Oriental Missionary Society) soul-winning crusades and campaigns garnered 33,000 decisions.

1953

Now the shibboleth was, "Follow-up, Follow-up! Don't run around burning the land up, but follow up." The Navigators came along with follow-up offices at YFC, then PBA. Word of Life Press' Every Home Crusade, Emmaus, the Conservative Baptists, and others launched free Bible correspondence courses.

1954

The next big wave was the "indigenous principle" screaming, "Train the Japanese to do the job. Mr. Missionary, don't become a pastor. You just train the Japanese as they did in Korea with the Nevius method and the Three-Self program: "Self-supporting, Self-propagating and Self-teaching."

1955

Then came the revival wave. God did send a genuine, sovereign revival to Japan, mostly to and through the missionaries. Revival teams traveled the country holding mini-revival prayer meetings. It started to spill over to the Japanese. Some received. Some resisted. When one group tried to "bottle it and sell it with their label," the gentle Holy Spirit flew away.

1956

Next was the "Toyama" phenomenon, which, in the words of one missionary to his colleagues was, "You've sown much and reaped little; now watch us. We'll sow little and reap much," as they and 20 others left their mission organizations and went to Toyama City. There was a genuine move of God there, but with zealous, inept leadership, it withered. Most went back discouraged to their home countries. Two stayed.

1957

The next wave was "Preserve and train the fruit." Little Bible schools and Bible camps sprouted up all over. Some exploded. Many expanded and some later amalgamated.

1959

The following wave was "church planting": If you weren't a "church planting" missionary, you were zilch. So "para-missions" specializing in needed evangelistic ministries leaned over backwards, stretched and did mental gymnastics to make their ill-prepared missionaries "plant churches" or die trying. Some prevailed. Many quit.

1960

Now "short-termers" was the answer to "so few recruits for lifetime career missionaries." It became the next wave. Many came and left. Japanese pastors wailed, "We finally get to know the missionary and he leaves." But some good men and women of this group remained to carry on.

1962

The newest yet oldest wave was, "Teach English. Teach English. They won't come to hear the gospel any more, but they'll come for English and you can give them the gospel." So off flew "Captain English" to the rescue. Despite the potential pitfalls, thousands heard the gospel in this way. (Renowned Japanese evangelist Koji Honda came for cookies, tea and English -- in that order! and found Christ!)

1966

"Muddle through somehow," "S.O.S. (Same Old Stuff)," was the answer to "What's new in missions?"

1987

The "Christian Wedding" wave gains strength and visibility. Some feel it is a Christian "racket" to make money, while others see it as an avenue for "pre-evangelism." With 80 to 100 unsaved in attendance each time (who have never been to church before coming to a Christian wedding chapel), tens of thousands each year hear a minimum gospel presentation during the wedding ceremony. Bibles and tracts are given away to the bridal couple and other guests. The entire message and ceremony is videotaped and is replayed to hundreds of friends for years to come.

1988

Another new wave is the "tent-making" entrepreneur evangelist (an entrepreneur being one who assumes the risk and management of a work; enterpriser, undertaker). These self-supporting, pay-your-own-way-business-for-Jesus maverick missionaries ("a recalcitrant individual who bolts his group and initiates an independent course -- after Mr. S.A. Maverick, a Texas cattle owner who did not brand his calves!") have valiant hopes. But after a 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. work and commute, dinner, TV and sleep beckon. Still, there's Sunday! And they reach some people the preachers can't.

Through it all for the past 60 years, long-term missionaries have seen these and other waves come and go. We admit that the Holy Spirit has used many methods and men and avenues in Japan. Each has left an impact -- some more than others. Only eternity will reveal the final results. God never orders a great seed sowing unless he plans a great harvest!

The Genesis of Post-war Christian Ministries in Japan

<http://Kennyjoseph.com/Articles/Mac2.htm>

Part Two

The war ended following the two atomic bombs that finally got the attention of Prime Minister Tojo and the Emperor. General Douglas MacArthur signed the unconditional peace treaty aboard the USS Missouri. Though it was an absolute defeat and unconditional surrender, the Japanese did not use the word *haisen*, or "defeat," but *shusen*. "completion of the war." Within a month of the emperor's August 15, 1945 radio broadcast announcing Japan's surrender, Harry R. Fox, Sr., of the Church of Christ, became the first missionary to arrive back in Japan, serving as interpreter for the Atomic Bomb Casualty Commission. Bobby Wright, of Ireland, a prisoner of war, was released. A Salvation Army missionary died in the prison camp. Some German missionaries and their children were allowed to stay as allies. Mabel Francis, Ann Dievendorf, Miss Parr and other lady missionaries were released from house arrest.

But Japan was so devastated that a survey group of 21 missionary leaders who came to look decided each missionary who would come must bring enough barrels and crates of food, clothes and equipment to be self-sufficient for 5 years. Some came in 1947, like the Owen Stills, the Harold Coles, Harold Sims, and a few others. MacArthur finally issued a call for 5,000 missionaries and 10 million Bibles through telegrams and letters in 1950.

Here we begin with the coming of missionaries and their ministries and projects.

First was the Japan Bible Society, which was here, but laid low during the war. Since they had branches in every country, the "thought police" considered them spies for America.

To describe what Japan was like in MacArthur's 1950 sounds like describing another planet to a missionary in Japan 50 years later. There were no McDonalds, KFCs, Burger Kings or Dennys. There were no hamburgers! A single missionary's monthly support was \$125 per month, a couple's \$250. That would buy a couple of days of goodies in Japan today, but the prices back then were also 100% cheaper. A postcard was 5 yen, letters were 10 yen, soba on the street, 30 yen, train or bus, 10 yen. And if you looked like an American, they'd sometimes put you on for free, thinking you were either with the military or CIA. We got 360 yen for the US dollar, and some even got 400 yen on the "gray market." A haircut was 70 yen, and a taxi 60 yen. A house helper cost 3000 yen a month plus a dress, and food if possible. A carpenter worked all day for 800 yen and built your house. Language students-(eat your hearts out) -the average teacher got 35 yen an hour. A good-professional Japanese teacher got 50 yen an hour, and came to your house. I had 3 different teachers daily, sometimes studying 10 hours a day.

Anyway, I'd like to briefly trace life from '47 to '51, and later continue with my bird's eye view, since I came in '51. It was in this dark period right after the war that General Macarthur made his stirring speech, summarized thus: "For the rehabilitation of Japan, there must be a revival of the spirit if we are to save the flesh."

I lament the fact that there was no General Macarthur to stand up for Russia after Communism was defeated and the Lenin and Stalin statues came down. There was no Christian leader to say "Come over and help us," so in Communist Russia we had a proliferation of lone rangers, one-night-standers, 90-day wonders and a Co-Mission which tried to coordinate missions into the region.

In Japan, Macarthur was of such stature that he eclipsed even the Emperor, who came to his office with hat in hand and in essence said, "I am responsible for all the political and military decisions made. You do with me as justice in your country decides," which was offering up his head on a platter. But at the same time it was the well-worn Japanese amaeru -- literally "to throw myself on your mercy, which having done, I know you'll be nice to me."

Macarthur did have mercy on the Emperor, whereas Hitler was killed and Mussolini was hanged upside down. The U.S. State Department and Macarthur felt they might end up with another revolt if they did otherwise.

The Emperor had to make his ningensengen (disclaimer of deity). So he asked a missionary, Vories (who was married to a distant relative of the Emperor) to meet him at a certain spot in a garden for a walk. He then asked Vories, "What does the West think God is?" Vories answered, "Well, of course, the only true God of creation. He created the heavens and the earth." To this the Emperor said humbly, "Well, I didn't do that." And he could honestly say, according to that standard, that he was not that God.

The first group invited back in 1945 was the Japan Bible Society, and Macarthur called for 10 million Bibles. In his letter of March 1, 1950, to the American Bible Society's President Eric North, Macarthur wrote:

Dear Dr. North: I have read your report that the American Bible Society, working in conjunction with the Japan Bible Society, has made possible the distribution of more than 4,000,000 copies of the Scriptures since the beginning of the Occupation. My Chaplain.., tells me that people officially one denominations in forty-eight States have contributed to this project. That your expenditures have now passed the \$1,000,000 mark is an indication of the great generosity of the American people and represents a very gratifying achievement. You are well on the way to reaching the goal of 10,000,000 copies which I requested. I confidently believe you will succeed...

Sincerely yours,
Douglas Macarthur.

At the same time as he sent a telegram to the Pocket Testament League (PTL), and Glen Wagner, former football star, responded saying, "We can print a million Gospels of John". Macarthur answered, "Make it ten million!"

Thus began Japan's greatest postwar evangelistic crusades. The Pocket Testament League (PTL) had large meetings with distributions of these red Gospels backed with the song, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." Most of the meetings featured American evangelists, youth workers and ministers for short terms. None of them stayed and learned the language. Thank God for interpreters. God bless them!

Another 1950 telegram from General Macarthur went to Chicago to the Gideon's as follows:

"I have publicly stated my firm belief that Christianity offers to Japanese a sure and stable foundation on which to build a democratic nation. Japanese are becoming increasingly aware of fundamental values of Christian religion and appreciative of its spiritual and moral blessing. Your assistance will be of inestimable value.

Copies of Holy Scriptures, especially New Testaments, both English and Japanese, are essential for success of Christian movement as basis for study and acceptance of the faith. Japanese texts more in demand and can be read with fuller comprehension by more people. Your representatives are welcome to come to Japan as missionary to make firsthand survey of situation. Information being furnished you by airmail will be helpful

for your planning. I assure you of my deep appreciation of your interest in spiritual rehabilitation of Japanese people."

Douglas Macarthur
SCAP Tokyo, Japan

The Gideon's sent over a singing engineer, Dick Holzwarth. Some said he could have become the Cliff Barrows for the Billy Graham team. He came in 1950 and without the language, organized the first Gideon camp in Tokyo. Soon after, they printed the first of the 23 million New Testaments they have distributed since then to Japan's hotels, hospitals and schools. They have 263 camps with 1,520 men's and 798 women's auxiliaries.

Now if you can multiply 23 million times 200 yen, the basic printing cost of a New Testament, you will get the amazing figure of 460 million yen, which comes out to \$4,600,000. Even in America, that would be a lot of money raised for missions. But the fact is that 60% of it was raised right here in Japan by Japanese men who cleared the way from the average missionary dependency on the homeland and the "Home Mission Board." An amazing feat!

In the examples of these three men, Macarthur, Wagner, and Holzwarth, there is one common thread that would be repeated over and over in all of the ministries to come: that God looks from heaven to find one man -- not a committee, but one man -- as in Isaiah he sought for "a leader, a man, to stand in the gap." And he found his man: a leader among the people. And what is a leader A leader is a man who knows where he is going, causes others to follow, and stays ahead of the crowd. As it says in Isaiah 55:4: "Behold, I have given him for a witness to the people, a leader and commander to the people."