



Hibachi Theology

A Contextualized
"Teaching Tool" on
Life After Death in Japan

Kichijoji Kirisuto Shukai

Church Planting
in Japan Today



Paul Nethercott has been a member of TEAM Japan since 1987. Paul is the Director of CAN (Christians in the Arts Network). Paul's ministry focus is on training, equipping and empowering leaders. He is involved in church planting, Member Care & Development and teaches at CLTC (Christian Leadership Training Center). His interests include tennis, walking, playing guitar and reading.

The Arts in Mission: From Peru to Japan

Roger and Abi Lowther are talented and gifted artists, but what really counts is their heart for God in their sincere desire to see Japanese come to know Christ. In their role as missional artists to Japan, empowered to use their gifts and abilities within the context of a church planting team, they have made a significant contribution to building up the church. We can learn much from them and how Mission to the World has wisely created a "space" for them, so I have asked Roger to write the Worship and Arts department for this issue of Japan Harvest.

—Paul Nethercott, August 2008



Monica Ghali, a young missionary in Peru, wanted to tell the street children around her that God loved them. An eyesore of stepped on, run-over,

water-stained bus tickets littered the streets of Lima, so she asked neighbors and friends to help collect them for her. When questioned why, she replied, "I want to take that which has no value in the eyes of the world and give it value. I want to take that which is ugly and make it beautiful." Using her artistic training, she arranged the tickets into a collage of great beauty and worth. As Monica and the children continued to work and build relationships with each other, they "fleshed out" the tremendous beauty and value they have before God.

Joel Klepac, missionary with Word Made Flesh, finds art to be essential to the way he builds the church in Galati, Romania. Using sand, clay, paint, and a myriad of other materials, Joel develops community among street children and children at risk, giving them hope in life. With the children, Joel

made a movie about two apple seeds that were thrown away but eventually grew into a full and vibrant tree that produced fruit of its own. It had tremendous impact on these kids as they realized God saw them as those apple seeds, redeemed from a broken world and given the ability to flourish. This project brought these kids into Christian community and into nearby churches.

Sarah Lance works through the arts to build the church in Calcutta, India.



As an artist, Sarah saw the tremendous value of old pieces of sari considered worthless as clothes. She taught women who had been caught in the sex trade how to cut and sew sari pieces into beautiful wall hangings, bags, and other goods to be sold abroad. Now these women are given wages, retirement, and medical care in order to make art. At the same time they are given the Word of God through church services and Bible studies. The art of making these goods along with Sarah's friendship "speaks" the gospel to these women. Previously cut off in their sin, now they have been redeemed into beautiful creations in the hands of the great Artist, who came to cleanse them from their sins. These women have gradually come to see their beauty in the eyes of God through every knot stitched.

Japan can be a graceless and hard society, yet art through the gospel can enable the formation of freedom-filled community. Through the evangelistic concerts of a black gospel choir from Jackson, Mississippi, scores of people have joined gospel choirs, English classes, and Bible studies in the Tokyo area and are now hearing the Scriptures

preached every week. After Mrs. M_____ joined a choir, she regularly brought her son to church. Her husband soon followed. It was exciting to hear his thoughts upon attending a Christian worship service and opening the Bible for the first time ever! I invited the husband to join my English class, where we talked about the Bible every week. Through angst and beauty in the arts, Japanese come to know the gospel message of forgiveness and grace and people are brought into the church.

In Peru, Romania, India, and Japan, the arts help to flesh out and express "The Word." The gospel is being heard,

seen, and felt through stories like these repeated in many places of the world! Have you invited artists to be part of your church planting team? Do you also have great stories of the role of the arts in missions? I would love to hear about them! Please write me an e-mail addressed to rogerlowther@gmail.com.

Roger Lowther, missionary through the arts with Mission to the World, has been serving in Japan with his wife Abi and two small boys since 2005. You can learn more about them and their ministry through their website www.missionart.org.



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