

「日本におけるペンテコステ派の一つの奉仕: “일본 1천만
구령운동”」

(“One Pentecostal Ministry in Japan:

‘The Salvation Campaign for Ten Million Japanese People’”)

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Introduction

Japan has been an enigma to outsiders in different ways. Concerning religion, observers ask if Japanese people are Buddhist, Shinto, or some strange amalgamation of traditions. Regarding Christianity, missionaries and Japanese Christians have fervently served for generations, but the small Christian growth has not matched their efforts.

This study focuses on the “Salvation Campaign for Ten Million Japanese People,” a goal announced in 1979 by David Yonggi Cho (1936-2021) but still unrealized. This study’s special concern is what the campaign has meant for Pentecostal identity in Japan.

Japan in God’s World

Japan has had conflicting, fluctuating, and often tumultuous international relationships. Japan’s modernization has brought with it shifting constellations of congenial and contentious international relationships. To many foreigners, Japan is an enigmatic tapestry of beautiful aesthetics, unrelenting economic striving, wartime and colonial brutality, and inscrutable pleasantries. These cross-cultural interactions include the religious sensibilities of the Japanese and their limited reception of the Christian gospel. They constitute much of Japan’s complex roles in the world over which God rules, watches, and pours out his immeasurable grace.

Historical Development of Christianity in Japan

Several intertwined factors have contributed to the befuddling lack of receptivity to Christianity in Japan. For one, an indelible sense of Christianity's non-Japanese "foreignness" has been engrained over many generations. Various imported traditions have deepened their Japanese roots as well as sparked new indigenous movements (Mullins 1998). Even so, while pockets of revival and evangelistic growth have occurred, mass increases of Christian numbers remained unrealized.

Influential Japanese Christian leaders have regularly emerged, such as Uchimura, Uemura, and Ebina. Another was Kagawa Toyohiko (1888-1960), a well-known evangelist, theologian, social reformer, labor activist, and pacifist (Fukada 1988). Beginning in 1925 Kagawa even spearheaded a "One Million Souls Movement" (Bikle 1968, 201; Kagawa Memorial Center 2020), which will be examined later in comparison to this study's main topic.

After Japan surrendered in August 1945, several churches left the *Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan* (日本基督教団, "United Church of Christ in Japan") (Reid 1991, 80-81). Many new churches were started by missionaries pouring into Japan, particularly from the United States. Christianity thus experienced the same modest growth in postwar Japan as had occurred when the Portuguese came in the 1500s and various Westerners arrived during the first half of the Meiji Era. Similarly to these earlier two periods, Christian growth tapered off with reduced foreign influence—in this latest instance Japan focused on its economic recovery from the war's devastation during the 1950s and 1960s.

Japan Ministries of Jashil Choi and David Yonggi Cho

The Japan ministries of David Yonggi Cho and Yoido Full Gospel Church neither began nor progressed in a vacuum. Japanese historical developments sketched above were connected by relations between Korea and Japan that especially affected Cho's Full Gospel ministry in Japan.

Christian Interaction between Korea and Japan

Korea-Japan interaction involving Christians began long before late twentieth-century Korean missions to Japan. Some Koreans living in Japan were Catholics from the 1590s through the 1630s (UCLA n.d.). In 1883, before Western Protestant missionaries arrived in Korea, Japanese Christians conducted gospel work in Korea (Matsutani 2017).

At least one Korean had been baptized in Japan (UCLA n.d.). In the early twentieth century, Japanese churches' missions initiatives in Korea increased together with Japan's colonization of Korea (Anderson 2014; Hoshino 2015). Korean Christians started assembling in Japan in the early 1900s (Global Ministries 2020). Relationships between Pentecostal USA missionaries in Korea, beginning in 1928 with Mary Rumsey and fellow missionaries in Japan, plus Korean Pentecostals (particularly Seong-San Park) in Japan, led to the 1930s founding of the Pentecostal Church in Korea. A Korean Pentecostal church was established in Osaka but was forced to disband ten years later during the war years (Kim 2003, 56-60, 66-70; Lee 2009, 68).

Along with the postwar splintering of the *Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan* and the formation of new churches came newly suspect foreign religious movements in the 1950s and 1960s. Perhaps none is more infamous than Sun-myung Moon's "Holy Spirit Association for the Unification of World Christianity," or Unification Church (Lee 2009, 63-64; Sakurai 2010, 6). More recently, the "fringe religious sect" Shincheonji Church of Jesus ("신천지 예수 교회") has been in news headlines worldwide—including in Japan (「新天地イエス教会」)—due to its central role in South Korea's COVID-19 outbreak (Mahbubani 2020; Tokyo Shinbun 2020). The appearance of such groups has continually heightened suspicions of the religion-wary Japanese. They already lack respect for Koreans, making the road bumpier for any Korean church desiring to minister in Japan.

Despite such barriers, God has used the witness of Korean Christians who were forcibly taken as laborers to Japan and other Japanese colonies, as well as succeeding generations of *Zainichi Kankokujin* or *Jaeil Hangug-in* (在日韓国人 or 재일 한국인, "Koreans in Japan"). The dark cloud of Japan's 1910-1945 Occupation of Korea, with its associated Japanese arrogance (obscured by politeness) and unresolved trauma of Koreans, casts its lingering shadow over the historical backdrop of Korean-Japanese Christian interactions. This includes Pentecostal circles, within which Jashil Choi's passion for Japan arose in the 1960s (DCEM 2003b; DCEM 2007a; Shigaki 2014, 74).

Jashil Choi and Japan

God gave Jashil Choi a burden for Japan well before her son-in-law David Yonggi Cho felt a special calling to ministry there in 1978 (DCEM 2007a; Shigaki 2014, 74-75). In 1974, Choi began a prayer meeting that birthed the eventual Full Gospel denomination in Japan (DCEM 2007a). Choi was in fact ordained in the Japan Assemblies of God in

1972 (Suzuki 2011, 510). Even so, in 1975, Cho and Choi became the first president and vice-president, respectively, of Yoido Church's newly created Full Gospel World Mission (Shigaki 2014, 43). The next year they founded the related Japan Full Gospel Association (DCEM 2007a; Suzuki 2011, 510).

During Choi's seminary days of the 1950s, she began her "triple-prayer" of tongues, overnight, and fasting (Kim 2003, 110-111). In 1973, Yoido Church's prayer center was founded (Kim 2003, 119; Yoido Full Gospel Church 2019a). The prayer center has a wide international influence, including among Japanese Christians who have visited for prayer and fasting (Choi 1978).

David Yonggi Cho and Japan

Like most Koreans who lived under the Japanese Occupation, Cho Yonggi (here in the common Korean order of surname first), who was born in 1936, suffered any number of humiliating hardships. He was forcibly instructed in Japanese and taught to speak Japanese. His family was assigned a Japanese surname—in Cho's case 吉田 ("Yoshida") (Kim 2003:121). Against that childhood backdrop of negative impact by Japan's colonial rule, Cho (Yoshida) was still an impressionable young boy at Korea's 1945 liberation from Japan and a teenager during the devastating 1950-1953 Korean War. Several events were pivotal for the birth and growth of Yoido Full Gospel Church. These included an injury in 1953 and ensuing sickness. Cho was diagnosed with terminal pneumonia that led to his coming to faith in Christ through a young Christian acquaintance. He was healed and cared for by nurse-trained Jashil Choi during seminary, and he was baptized in the Holy Spirit (Cho 2008, 1-15; Kim 2003, 122-125; Lee 2004, 145-159). Even so, Cho's bitter childhood experience under Japanese colonial officials, soldiers, and teachers was never erased. It became foundational in how God redemptively shaped the man now widely known as David Yonggi Cho.

It is no wonder that Cho Yonggi was not eager to preach in Japan after his international ministry began in 1964 (Shigaki 2014, 40-41). Early in his ministry Cho had aspirations to become "like Billy Graham . . . a very glamorous evangelist" (Cho 2015)—but one of Cho's early declarations to his Japanese hearers was an outburst of hurt, anger, and frustration (Shigaki 2014, 74). In 1978, soon after that expression of deep pain, and an accompanying healing of his hatred toward Japan, Cho heard the Holy Spirit specially calling him to an intensive focus for decades of evangelization in Japan (DCEM 2007a; Shigaki 2014, 75).

“At the end of the 1970s,” and arguably over the ensuing years as well, “Cho’s most important world ministry was to Japan” (Park 2015, 233).

「日本一千万人救霊運動」 / “Salvation Campaign for Ten Million Japanese People” / “일본 1천만 구령운동”

In 1979, Cho announced a new campaign to bring 10 percent of the Japanese population to Jesus Christ. That “Salvation Campaign for Ten Million Japanese People” has been the overarching banner under which Full Gospel ministry in Japan has proceeded ever since (Shigaki 2014, 2).

Impetus

The origin(s) and cause(s) of Cho’s “Ten Million” campaign declaration are multifaceted. Depending on the analyst’s viewpoint, the Holy Spirit’s role was to explicitly reveal the campaign to Cho, leading him to issue the declaration. Those with a more cynical standpoint consider that the Holy Spirit was uninvolved in what was essentially Cho’s decision.

Several phrases (in English) describe the campaign in relation to Cho. One common phrase is “Dr. Cho’s vision” (DCEM 2002; 2004b; 2006a; 2006c; 2006d). That phrase could be interpreted either that God or Cho initiated and formulated the campaign’s “vision”—or that divine-Cho cooperation was involved. Other phrases include “Dr. Cho’s goal” (DCEM 2006g; 2007a; 2007c), “Dr. Cho’s evangelistic theme” (DCEM 2007a), and “Pastor (Yonggi) Cho’s salvation campaign” or “‘The Salvation Campaign . . .’ of Pastor Yonggi Cho” (Shigaki 2014, 4, 74, 83).

Pentecostal Prophecy, Visualized Dream, or Strategic Motivator?

The various descriptions of the “Ten Million” campaign raise questions about the nature of Cho’s declared vision. (Cho’s reported explanation, given upon later reflection, is addressed further below.) For example, was Cho’s announcement of the vision a “prophecy”—including for some the year 2000 as the target date (Miyake 2020; Wagner 2009)? Another plausible understanding is that of a “visualized dream” developed out of Cho’s “incubating faith” (Cho 1983, 2935-2968).

A possible third explanation of the “Ten Million” campaign is that of a strategic motivator. Many involved in Full Gospel ministry in Japan point to Cho’s strategic desire to motivate stagnant Japanese pastors and their churches (Houlihan 2020). Indeed, “Pastor Yonggi Cho, who was

angry because Japanese pastors had said church growth is impossible in Japan, attempted to prove that they are wrong” (Shigaki 2014, 78-79). Another account notes, “Dr. Cho began to seek ways of evangelizing Japan in 1978. . . . For Christianity to take root in Japan, he thought that at least 10 percent of the Japanese population must be won to the Lord. Therefore, in February 1978[9?], he announced this motto and movement: “10 Million Japanese to the Lord” (DCEM 2003b). Furthermore, Cho saw Japan’s strategic role in reaching Asia (DCEM 2007a; Shigaki 2014, 80, 81).

The campaign’s three descriptive options of Pentecostal missions—prophecy, visualized dreams, or strategic motivator—cannot be separated. To opt for only one option could diminish important elements of the other two. (Note that the accompanying question of how best to describe the campaign *according to whose understanding* has not yet been raised.) Perhaps the “Ten Million” campaign is an example of all three descriptions aptly applied, each with its accompanying advantages and pitfalls, as explored further below.

Reception and Impact

Outreach activities accelerated over the next two decades following Cho’s calling to evangelize Japan and his announced campaign (Suzuki 2020; DCEM 2003b). While the majority of Full Gospel church members were Korean, some congregations became significantly Japanese (Mullins 1994, 95-96). International figures such as Peter Wagner became involved—particularly in strategic “warfare prayer” and expecting God miraculously to bring sweeping revival to Japan, marked by ten million Japanese conversions “by the end of 1999” (Adams 1991, 38; Miyake 2020; Wagner 2009; 2011).

There were setbacks in the 1990s. A leadership disagreement and split in the flagship Full Gospel Tokyo Church brought deep pain and loss of property from the Full Gospel organization (Houlihan 2020; Mullins 1994:95). At the turn of the new millennium, expectations for ten million Japanese conversions (and Jesus’s return) went unmet, disappointing many. Especially for those Japanese Christians who understood the “Ten Million” campaign as a prophecy or at least Dr. Cho’s visualized dream, the lack of a fulfillment must have been confusing (Miyake 2020). It struck a blow to their own faith and their confidence in Dr. Cho and the Full Gospel movement (Miyake 2020).

However, the new David Cho Evangelistic Mission (DCEM) *DCEM Journal* issues of 2000 give no hint of any disappointment or reconsideration of the validity of the “Salvation Campaign for Ten Million

Japanese People.” Indeed, the campaign’s overarching, galvanizing role for evangelism in Japan is vigorously asserted throughout the journal’s ten-year collection (DCEM n.d.; 2003b; 2009a).

Many informed accounts of the reception and impact of four-plus decades of Cho’s Full Gospel Japan ministry were carried out under the banner of the “Salvation Campaign for Ten Million Japanese People.” They label the growth as “truly remarkable” (Mullins 1994, 95), the campaign as having “left good fruits among the Japanese church” (Miyake 2020), and the overall ministry as having “succeeded very well and [given] an impact to many Japanese Christians” (Suzuki 2020).

On the other hand, a high percentage of Japanese Christian leaders, and a much higher percentage of long-time expatriate (non-Korean) missionaries in Japan, either never heard of the “Ten Million” campaign (or of Cho) or have a second-hand and (sometimes) unfavorable impression. Some Japanese Christian leaders viewed the campaign gatherings as “little more than a ‘spiritual fireworks display’” (Jennings 2020). Not all Japanese Christians welcomed Cho’s ministry, and some Japanese pastors were unhappy about apparent sheep-stealing of their church members for Full Gospel pastures (Suzuki 2020).

While the growth and impact of Cho’s evangelistic ministries in Japan have been “remarkable,” sobering assessment notes Full Gospel churches numerically within the overall church landscape of one-hundred denominations in Japan. As of 2015, they ranked #33 in congregations (85) and #37 in membership (3,000) (Johnson and Zurlo 2020). The clearest (albeit complex) identifying picture of Cho’s “Salvation Campaign for Ten Million Japanese People” comes into focus when viewing it as the banner for his and Choi’s Japan ministries—within the overall historical development of Christianity in Japan and Japan’s place in God’s world.

Analysis

A sympathetic contemporary Japanese Christian leader remembers that “the expectation for the Great Spiritual Awakening in Japan strongly increased in 1990’s” [sic] (Jennings 2020). Post-2000 descriptions of the campaign have continued to wave the banner of the “goal” and “vision” of ten million Japanese conversions. It would seem that Full Gospel believers and other campaign-participants are wholeheartedly committed to believe and expect that there will be ten million Japanese believers in Jesus Christ in the future.

It is instructive at this point to compare Kagawa Toyohiko’s “One Million Souls Movement,” mentioned earlier. Kagawa announced the

campaign in 1925, realizing that his social movements for urban laborers and tenant farmers needed a more explicitly Christian focus. The new evangelistic and discipleship campaign enabled Kagawa to reconnect with a wide swath of churches in Japan as well as foreign mission organizations (Bikle 1968, 201-203; Mullins 2007, 81-82). Kagawa believed that a certain critical mass of Christians was needed in Japan to meet the vast needs of impoverished people (Wright 1991, 190) and for the “young church in Japan” to maintain “a self-sustaining, self-supporting independence” (Kagawa 1934, 136). Kagawa never imagined that the number of Japanese Christians would dramatically swell to one million (Bikle 1968, 201). “One Million Souls” was clearly a calculated and motivational target, although it was at the same time a spiritual vision “born in [both] the brain and heart” of Kagawa (Axling 1932, 8).

Clearly Cho tried everything he knew to motivate Japanese pastors to believe and work for more dynamic church growth. In 2011 Peter Wagner claimed, “Cho admitted . . . he had set the goal of 10 million Believers [sic] in his flesh” (Wagner 2011). Even so, Cho’s ongoing statements indicate that the goal of ten million Japanese conversions was a visualized dream and goal to believe wholeheartedly. Perhaps “‘provisional’ and ‘calculated’ visualized dream” is the most accurate description of Cho’s “Ten Million” campaign declaration.

Historical-Contextual Location

The emergence of Cho’s “Ten Million Japanese” campaign—as “unrealistic” (Wagner 2009) as the vision appeared to many—makes sense when viewed from within its particular context of late-1970s Korea-Japan relations. Cho had been ministering internationally for over a decade, with encouraging receptions. For two decades in Seoul, “when he dreamed to increase his [church] members from 5 to 10, from 10 to 300, from 300 to 3,000 to 10,000, and from 10,000 to 100,000, and then [later] to 750,000 members, God [had] fulfilled his dreams one by one” (DCEM 2007g; Kim 2003).

How did Cho’s vision of the “Ten Million” campaign take shape when it did? Cho’s ministry experience took place against the backdrop of his non-Christian upbringing and enduring (while named “Yoshida”) Japanese occupation, poverty, and sickness. Setting Cho’s individual life in the wider framework of comparisons and relations between Korea and Japan, including in terms of Christian growth, sheds more light on the timing. Japan had oppressed Korea at certain points in history, most painfully during the 1910-1945 Occupation. By the 1970s, Korea’s economic growth was accelerating but still lagged far behind Japan’s

bustling economy (Hsiao and Hsiao 2017). Korea's drive to "catch up with Japan" was deep, real, and long-term (Zhang 2003). It was fueled by Koreans' unresolved trauma, hurt, and anger vis-a-vis their larger island neighbor.

Christian growth patterns in Korea and Japan were a different story. Smaller, oppressed Korea experienced spectacular growth and the outpouring of God's Spirit amidst acute suffering of occupation, war, and poverty, especially since their early twentieth-century revivals. Korean Christians' nationalistic sense was that they were God's chosen people to succeed the West in leading worldwide Christian missions. That compelled Cho and others to bring about mass revivals and conversions, including in unprecedented ways in Japan (Adams 1991, 42).

Given these personal and wider contextual realities, David Yonggi Cho's 1978 "visualized dream" of leading ten million Japanese to Jesus by CE 2000 is understandable.

Cross-Cultural Realities

Japanese who have interacted with or heard about David Yonggi Cho and his fellow Full Gospel Koreans, will consider *Korean* as their first and foremost set of distinctions. Similarly for Cho and fellow Korean Full Gospel Christians, they have been evangelizing and ministering among distinctively *Japanese* human beings. The way these groups interface with the primarily Korean "Ten Million" Campaign involves a host of cross-cultural complexities.

Views of Japanese Christian History

This study seeks to be as comprehensive as possible in presenting Japanese Christian history. No single sector of Christ's transdenominational and multiethnic body represents the whole Christian movement in all its complexities. That is true in Japan for the "Ten Million" campaign and any other ministry or tradition, though the campaign and other ministries tended to promote themselves at the expense of the wider Christian movement.

Theological Positions

Genuinely representative surveys of Japanese Christian history, leaders, and churches are unavoidably marked by theological variety (Johnson and Zurlo 2019, 433-437). Full Gospel theology added to that variety in Japan. Cho's and Yoido Church's type of Pentecostalism

staked out a distinctive presence in the Japanese Christian landscape. It added its seven “focuses of faith” or “theological foundations,” “Fivefold Gospel,” “Threefold Blessing,” and “Fourth Dimensional Spirituality” (Tokyo Full Gospel Church n.d.; Yoido Full Gospel Church 2019b). Part of the challenge that the “Ten Million” campaign will continue to face involves acknowledging different Christian theological formulations while maintaining its own distinctives. Recognizing God’s work through Christian streams other than its own could expand the boundaries of the campaign’s goals.

An important example is in pneumatology, or theology of the Holy Spirit. The central role of the Holy Spirit as the Christian’s “Senior Partner” (Cho 1989) permeates the distinctives of Cho’s Full Gospel Theology. One helpful way of understanding how Cho’s pneumatology undergirds all of his theological formulations is to pinpoint his “over-realized eschatology.” This stresses the “already” side of the biblical spectrum at the expense of the “not yet” side. Some of Cho’s critics may have misunderstood some of his pneumatological emphases by failing to account for the role of his “over-realized eschatology.” One cannot decouple Cho’s pneumatology from its anchor in trinitarian theology (Chan 2004:1593-1610). Again, the way Full Gospel ministries in Japan respond to such input will affect how critics view the “Ten Million” campaign. It will influence the campaign’s cooperation with Christian groups in Japan whose pneumatological understandings are not identical with those taught in the “Fivefold Gospel,” “Threefold Blessings,” and “Fourth Dimensional Spirituality.”

Missiological Approaches

Cho consistently attributed the fruit of his ministry to “the help of the Holy Spirit” and “personal fellowship with the Holy Spirit and complete obedience of His guidance” (Shigaki 2014, 1). The essence of Cho’s missiological approach to Japan is prayerful dependence on the Holy Spirit, in tandem with the accompanying “visualized dream” of 10 percent of the Japanese population converting to Christ.

Not surprisingly, Cho understood the role of territorial spirits as central for the campaign. The topic of territorial spirits and strategic spiritual warfare is a controversial approach. Evangelical missiologists, representing “a broad spread of the different views” on the topic, have discussed this (Lausanne Movement 2000). While maintaining its spiritual foundation, the “Ten Million” campaign will continue to face the challenge of recognizing the various, accompanying components

of gospel ministry in Japan that can help to shape effective, biblical approaches.

Understanding of God and History

God has always dealt with Japan in his own way and time. He has brought various Christian witnesses to Japan over the years. Many suffered and served faithfully alongside countless Japanese Christians. In more recent times, Full Gospel Korean Christians inspired by Jashil Choi and David Yonggi Cho have joined the many other Christian witnesses who have labored in Japan.

The campaign's perspective seems to be that God patiently endured slow-moving gospel ministries in Japan until their long-awaited fulfillment in Full Gospel witness that will bring in the harvest of ten million Japanese conversions to Christ. This study's framework favors seeing God's Spirit having used all along a wide variety of witnesses—both expatriate and Japanese—within his mysterious "plan for the fullness of time." While those two viewpoints may not necessarily be mutually exclusive, it is vitally important to believe that, as with the many other believers whom God has been using, the "Ten Million" campaign is one of a wide variety of gospel ministries in Japan. Efforts of other various ministries to evangelize must not be seen as having gone "down the drain" (Shigaki 2014, 78). In fact, numerous "significant and successful evangelistic movement[s]" have existed throughout Japanese Christian history (Mullins 2007, 82). God's "manifold [multifaceted] wisdom" is "made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places" through the complex tapestry of Christ's entire church, not just one part of it (Eph 3:10 ESV).

A healthy adjustment for the "Ten Million" campaign would be to change its self-understanding from being the centerpiece and long-awaited fulfillment of gospel ministry in Japan to being one of many small gospel ministries. Each makes its small contribution to God's ongoing dealings with Japan. The responsibility for collaboration falls on other groups as well, particularly those that harbor "deeply rooted" suspicions toward the Holy Spirit movement in Japan (Ikegami 2003, 138-139).

Conclusion

The gospel ministries in Japan begun by Jashil Choi and David Yonggi Cho are among the numerous initiatives that the Holy Spirit has used throughout world history. Various Christian traditions will continue

to serve in Japan. The triune God will continue to bring Japanese people to faith in Jesus Christ and build his Church in the manner and at the pace he determines.

The continuing Japan ministries that have sprung from the initiatives of Jashil Choi and David Yonggi Cho would benefit from cultivating an identity of serving within the ongoing histories of the world, of Japan, and of world Christianity. This study prays that God will continue to use all gospel ministries in Japan, including those heretofore associated with the “Salvation Campaign for Ten Million Japanese People.”

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