



# Letting HIS light shine in Japan!

Robert W. Nichols

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Avon Hts Church of Christ  
c/o Boyd Sellers & Vernon Shepherd  
1671 Andrews Drive  
Avon, IN 46123

Dear Brethren at Avon Hts:

I have often wondered about "Philip and the Eunuch," in Acts 8. Philip was successfully converting "multitudes" in Samaria, when the Lord directed him to meet only one man in the desert, the Ethiopian Eunuch. Later, history shows many in Ethiopia were eventually converted to Christ.

There is another story that you may not be so familiar with. Brother Bert Hon and his wife Laura with their four-year-old son Adrian, landed in Yokohama in 1910 to preach the gospel. Brother Hon was an experienced and successful evangelist from Iowa. At that time in America, a two week meeting often resulted in twenty or thirty baptisms. Expectations for success in Japan were very high. However, Japan was not America.

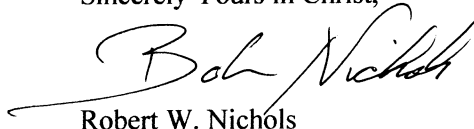
Instead of initially preaching the gospel, brother Hon's first year was spent in intense Japanese language study. He could not speak Japanese and the Japanese could not understand his English. Even when he could communicate with them, few Japanese wanted to hear anything about Jesus. The history of Christianity in Japan is a story of persecution, imprisonment, torture, and banishment. Thirty thousand people died at Shimabara, Kyushu, defending Christianity. A system of informing on Christians had been in effect for 250 years and signs offering rewards for information on Christians were still standing in Tokyo when brother Hon arrived in 1910.

After two years of exhausting labor, instead of the hundreds he might have produced in America his results in Japan were only two baptisms. One of these soon fell away and the other went to live permanently in America. Discouragement and ill health caused brother Hon to return to the U.S. He died without knowing the results of his labor. Was his efforts in Japan worthwhile or was he a failure?

**Brother Ishiguro**, brother Hon's second convert, moved to Los Angeles, California and stayed. However, he began to preach among the Japanese and soon established a Japanese language congregation. This church, the Westside congregation, still exist with a Japanese speaking congregation in 2002. One of brother Ishiguro's early converts in Los Angeles was an eighteen-year-old young man from Hiroshima. This new convert, **brother Shigekuni**, returned to Japan to preach to his own people. Before World War II, brother Shigekuni was one of the most zealous and successful evangelists in Japan. During the war Shigekuni san refused to abandon the Lord's church for the Protestant group into which "Christians" from all denomination were forced. Instead he worshipped in secret in his own home. After the war, Shigekuni san resumed his preaching and spreading of the Gospel. He baptized hundreds of people and was responsible for more Japanese becoming Christians than any other evangelist, Japanese or American.

My father was first introduced to brother Shigekuni in 1952, and later worked with him from 1957 to 1961. In 1956, my father met the Hon family. In the early 1970's, when sister Laura Hon was in her late 90's, my father spoke at her funeral. I mention this to say that we are quite familiar with the story above. Brother Hon left Japan discouraged, yet he was in the end responsible for giving spiritual life to many hundreds of Japanese. We must never give up our efforts to plant the Gospel seed in the hearts of the Japanese.

Sincerely Yours in Christ,



Robert W. Nichols

Robert Wesley Nichols

Statement of Support  
for  
February 2009

RECEIPTS

Orange View, Garden Grove, Ca	- \$ 400.00
Expressway, Louisville, Ky	- 150.00
Valley Station, Valley Station, Ky	- 75.00
Northside, Tucson, Az	- 100.00
Southside, Somerset, Ky	- 500.00
Clay CofC, Clay, Al	- 450.00
Pleasant Grove CofC, Pleasant Grove, Al	- 355.00
Lacey's Springs CofC, Lacey's Springs, Al	- 830.00
South Cullman, Cullman, Al	- 200.00
Hanceville, Hanceville, Al	- 500.00
Bartlett, Bartlett, Tn.	- 915.00
Westvue, Murfreesboro, Tn.	- 1000.00
32nd Street, Paducah, Ky.	- 300.00
Fremont, Woodville, Oh	- 300.00
Riverbend, Muscle Shoals, Al	- 200.00
Lakeview, Hendersonville, Tn.	- 600.00
Folsom Point, Folsom, Ca.	- 700.00
County Line, St. Joseph, Mo.	- 100.00
Mr. & Mrs. Gore, Easley, S.C.	- <u>100.00</u>
Total Received	\$ 7,775.00

EXPENDITURES

Travel	- \$ 1122.26
Hospitalization Insurance	- 378.35
Salary	- 3000.00
Social Security	- 432.20
Housing	- <u>3,780.97</u>
Total Expenditures	\$ 8,713.78

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Total Received	- February 2009	\$ 7775.00
Total Expenditures	- February 2009	<u>\$ -9,213.78</u>
Balance	- February 2009	\$ - 938.78
Balance	2-1-2009	\$ -9,750.42
Balance	3-1-2009	\$ -10,689.20

Prices in Japan increase as the exchange rate lowers against the US dollar. Japan remains one of the most expensive places to live in the world. The exchange rate has "fallen" to record levels. I am sincerely thankful for your support.