

I NEEDED SOME REALITY!

KEN TSUKAMOTO
NATIONAL FGBMFI
PRESIDENT, JAPAN

Whenever God uses this humble school teacher to pray for the sick, and they get healed, I quietly reflect back to my years growing up and culture.

My father was a Christian pastor in the Methodist Church. In 1958, churches in Japan were so small. Pastor's families are mostly very poor. I was raised up in the church until I was six years old. My father had a conflict within the denomination, so he quit being a pastor from his church. The day when he quit his job being a pastor, he had no money, nothing. So he went to his father, my grandfather, to live. He started working a secular job. Since that time, my family quit going to church. Little by little, my father even lost his faith in Jesus Christ. My parents left their Christianity.

Since I was raised in the church, I had no problem believing in God. God is always in my heart. When I became 15 years old, I started reading the Bible again. I re-accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I started going back to church when I was a junior high school student. Then I went to the university and graduated with a major in English.

I thought there should be more Christian teachers in school. We have very few Christian teachers in school in Japan. I took an examination to be a teacher. In Japan, a teacher's salary is relatively high. People respect teachers in Japan. I passed the test and they hired me nearly 20 years ago. I am now an English teacher at a high



*The Tsukamoto family (left to right):
Ken, Yoshiki, wife Masako, Hiroki,
and Yukako.*

school in Kobe. I think my students notice something different than other teachers. I like the relationship with my students.

Japanese people, through their culture, they want to be like others. We are "group-oriented" people. Since Christianity is such a minority, people are afraid to be different from others. Regardless of what others may say, I am proud to be a Christian. I am not believing in Jesus like a religion. I believe Him because I met Him, because I know Him, and He is my Lord and Savior.

But my life had no real joy. Of course I was happy to go to heaven in the future, but I was just 17. I said, "I cannot live like a saint for the next 50-60 years before I get to heaven. Lord, I can't do that! I need some reality of God. I need some power."

At that time, somebody told me that many spiritual things were happening in Korea in Dr. Cho's church, the world's largest church. Many people were getting healed and delivered. I asked, "How can that happen?" Some people explained to me that miracles had ceased! Some told me, "Now we have a complete Bible, we don't need miracles, signs or wonders anymore."

But when I heard about Korea, I felt, "Lord, You might have started working again in Korea, like the days of the Bible. I want to know if it is true or not?"

One day a pastor came to the church near my home. He was from Korea. So I went to his meeting. He was a Spirit-filled man. For the first time in my life, I saw the man shine with joy and happiness. He jumped up and down and praised God. He was so happy. He told us about the Baptism of the Holy Spirit. I had never heard of this before. That night was the first time for me to feel the presence of God in this meeting.



Ken teaches English at a high school in Kobe.

I was so touched by his testimony. I went back to my apartment that night and prayed, "Lord, I do not like Pentecostals, I don't like to become charismatic, I want to make sure of that, but Lord, if that pastor became as happy as he is, because of the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, I want that! But Lord, make sure, I don't want to become a Pentecostal or charismatic. Fill me with the Holy Spirit. I want to be like him. I want to be as happy, on fire, with joy, serving the Lord." But that night, no answer.

I went on a church tour to Korea to visit Dr. Cho's church. I was so surprised to see thousands of people at an all-night prayer meeting on Wednesday night. Many people were getting saved and healed. On the third day at the early morning prayer meeting, Dr. Cho's mother-in-law was praying with the people from Japan. I didn't know she was coming to me, because my eyes were closed. She laid her hands on my forehead. Something began to come all over me. I felt the Holy Spirit fill me. That really changed me!

A few years later, I interpreted for a FGBMFI group that visited my country. It was so powerful. I wondered what kind of people they were? I thought they were professional evangelists, or something like that. But they said they were just businessmen, like me. They were so bold. They were so happy. They were so confident in what they were doing, that it was just wonderful to have people like them. That is what I wanted to do. They prayed for the sick, and the sick recovered. I was kind of shocked, because ordinary men like them could not do such a thing. For me, only pastors or great evangelists could do signs, wonders and miracles. But they were ordinary people, so I was very touched.

Little-by-little, I was involved in FGBMFI that really changed my life. I've been active in FGBMFI since 1985. I helped to start the Kobe Chapter of FGBMFI. The first few years, we always had some guest speakers. I thought that I couldn't be a speaker. Whenever we have a speaker from America or Australia, then I set up a meeting for him. But I was just helping at first, all of the time.

After one meeting, one of the ladies came to me and asked me for prayer. I needed to get somebody else to pray, but there were no other people right there, so I prayed for her. I laid my hands on her

and she fell under the power of the Holy Spirit. That kind of thing started happening to me. So after a few years, I started giving my testimony, praying for the sick, deliverance; and since that time, I've seen hundreds of healings.

At first I was just interested in FGBMFI in what they were doing. I went to their meeting just to watch. But I quickly realized that Japan needs this kind of ministry. I felt God was calling me to

FGBMFI, to introduce this ministry to the country of Japan. I encourage ordinary people like myself to be filled with the Holy Spirit and start doing something for the Lord.

Through FGBMFI, I encourage businessmen to stand up for the Lord, because we have such few Christians in Japan. Every step of my life has been blessed, secured by the Lord Jesus Christ; because I know who I am. He helps me and protects my family, my job and myself. Without His help, I could not achieve anything!

Japan is at a crossroads. We are in near-chaos right now because the economy is not like it once was. Politics is in confusion. Nationalism is rising up. Young people have no hope in the future. Many family relationships are breaking up. Many people are looking for hope and healing in my country. They enjoyed a good economy for many years. They enjoyed being rich. They have almost everything in their homes. But now, the times are different.

Less than one percent of Japan is Christian. But if Christian people in my country will stand up, boldly, and start proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ to people, I believe many of them will come to know Christ. The Church in Japan needs to be strong. Many churches are afraid to speak up. But when they start doing so, combined with the FGBMFI ministry, I believe there is an opportunity for revival; much more than just a social Gospel. But it will take much spiritual warfare because the devil is also working hard in Japan!



A woman stands up from her wheelchair after Ken's prayer.