

CONTEXTUALIZED SONGWRITING IN THE JAPANESE CHURCH

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## Glossary

**Bushido:** The way of the samurai; a code of honor which emphasized fearlessness and strength of spirit.<sup>1</sup>

**Contextualize:** To place in, or treat as part of, a context; *spec.* to study (phonemes, words, etc.) in contexts.<sup>2</sup>

**Kami:** Spirits or gods in nature which are the object of worship in Shinto.<sup>3</sup>

**Kirishitans:** A term to identify underground Christians in Japan during the intense Christian persecution in the years 1614-1873.<sup>4</sup>

**Meiji Restoration/Period:** The Meiji Period began in 1868 as a political revolution which brought about the end of the Edo Period (1603-1867). It is characterized as an era of major political, economic, and social change, lasting until 1912. A primary aspect of this period is the welcoming of western influence and the opening of Japan's borders.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Carolyn Francis and John Nakajima, *Christians in Japan* (New York: Friendship Press, 1991), 29.

<sup>2</sup> The editors of OED. "Contextualize" *Oxford English Dictionary* (Oxford University Press, 2018). Accessed December 14, 2018. <http://www.oed.com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/view/Entry/40215?redirectedFrom=contextualize>

<sup>3</sup> Esben Andreasen, Ian Reader, and Finn Stefansson *Japanese Religions Past and Present* (London: Routledge, 1993), 64.

<sup>4</sup> Mark R. Mullins *Handbook of Christianity in Japan*. (Boston, MA: Brill, 2003), 5.

<sup>5</sup> The editors of Britannica Academic. "Meiji Restoration" *Britannica Academic* (2018). <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Meiji-Restoration/51827>.

## Chapter 1 – Introduction

The Christian Church of Japan has very few songs written in their own language and style. Most songs are translated from English or another language. While Japan is a very westernized country, this is a problem because things can get lost in translation and these songs are not always representative of their musical style. Furthermore, they have a unique voice of worship that is currently missing from the global Church. My research project was intended to identify songwriters and encourage songwriting for the local church with the intention of expanding the Japanese voice in the global context and raising awareness of Japanese Christians. The project also contained an emphasis on worship, describing a few aspects of what worship is and what those aspects mean for the Church.

### **Need for Study**

This project was integral in filling a gap in research on songwriting and composition in the Japanese Church, as well as providing insight into the worship music the Japanese Church is creating. This was primarily a ministry project designed to encourage the church and equip them with a method for worship and outreach that they had not ventured into. It also gave them an opportunity to learn about worship and about the value of locally produced worship songs to their church body, community, and the global Church. Secondarily, this project served as a case study to show an example of what the songwriting process may look like in a Japanese context, specifically in Shizuoka, a prefecture on Honshu island's Pacific coast.

This thesis will document the composition process, the influences for the participants' song lyrics, fluctuations in attendance, and the experiences of each participant as they shared their perspective through an evaluative questionnaire at the end of the study. This research draws attention to the spiritual needs of Japan from the perspective of a Christian worldview and

could be used to inform others interested in missionally engaging with the Japanese church, whether through music or through another non-musical method of outreach. I hope to encourage others to facilitate songwriting seminars as well in order to build upon what has been done already through my project and the work of others who are currently serving throughout Japan in a similar capacity. Continuous opportunity to write and gain experience may encourage them to keep writing more songs.

### **Research Question**

The overarching question of my project is as follows: what may group songwriting look like among Christians in Shizuoka, Japan? Since this is a case study, my goal is to provide an example of what one might expect from a songwriting workshop in Japan and how the process may go for the participants. This study was conducted at a specific church in Shizuoka, so it will not be an all-inclusive representation of the process in other areas of Japan.

The three primary questions I hoped to answer center around the songwriting workshops I facilitated. (1) What were the preconceptions and attitudes the participants had toward worship and songwriting prior to the workshops? (2) What were the changes in the participants' beliefs or attitudes about worship and songwriting during the workshops? (3) Were there any lasting effects as a result of the workshops? I also collected data on their songwriting process along with their patterns, difficulties, collaborative process, and lyrical content.

*What were the preconceptions and attitudes the participants had toward worship and songwriting prior to the workshops?* No matter what country, the concept of worship is easily misunderstood. This is why I chose to speak in detail about worship at the beginning of every workshop, with the exception of the first. Without a proper understanding of what worship is, teaching them how to write new songs for worship would lose its value. I was not merely there

to teach the skill but to encourage them to express worship to God from themselves as the Japanese people through original songs. This information was obtained through the questionnaire given at the end of the workshop, giving me an understanding of what changed for them as they worked through the songwriting workshops.

*What were the changes in the participants' beliefs or attitudes about worship and songwriting during the workshops?* It is vital to know whether they truly learned anything through these workshops in order to determine whether or not they were a success. This data was collected in the questionnaire given at the end of the workshops. I wanted to educate them on the songwriting process as well as the real reason we write worship music. Why is songwriting important? Why does it matter if there are worship songs being written in Japan?

Worship is rarely defined in a church setting; it is usually only referenced. This was an opportunity to share what I have learned about worship, both through my education and experience. I believed that seeing a new perspective of why we worship God and what that looks like would not only draw them closer to Him but potentially inspire lyrics that capture their genuine expressions of worship. I also observed and documented their methods of composition, their patterns, and their process. In the songwriting process, how willing are people to share ideas? How are those ideas received by other members of the team? Is there a preferred process or order of composition? What instruments are used to compose? What influences or inspires the song(s) the participants write? Time is of particular importance in Japan because most people do not have much time to spare as a result of high demands from school, work, or personal commitments; therefore, it was necessary to document some of the difficulties that came with attendance. I collected data on how many continued to come back and what factors influenced the absence of those who could not return.

*Were there any lasting effects as a result of the workshops?* Did the workshops make any lasting difference in the church, community, or individuals? In other words, was the project a success according to the criteria determined by myself and my contacts in Japan. The participants were asked in the questionnaire whether they would continue to write songs. The church which I attended is an international church, so I included all countries in the invitation for the songwriting workshops. I also invited members of other churches from around Shizuoka. At the start, I intended to divide people into groups based on their country or church of origin. This way, they would be able to write according to the style and deep needs of their community with people they already know and may be comfortable with. As we progressed, it became clear that I needed to make some necessary changes. My original plan for this project would have been defined by a different idea of success. However, after changes were made, it altered how success would look in this context. The primary points of success became the continuation of songwriting, the relatability and impact of the song that was written, and any observable positive changes within the church, community, or individual.

### **Project**

Points of research I paid special attention to were current Japanese worship songs, stylistic patterns, influences and inspirations for lyrics, favorite songwriting tools or methods, general attitudes toward sharing ideas, approach to composing music and/or lyrics, difficulties encountered during the songwriting process, and the willingness to continue writing afterwards. My ultimate goal in this research was to help encourage them to write their own worship music rather than settle for the English songs that have been translated merely because that is all they have. Originally the project was meant to become an ongoing time for people to meet and write new worship songs. The meetings were intended to begin under my leadership

and gradually be passed on to members of the church who were participating. However, I was informed by my hosts that people are very hesitant to sign up for things that are ongoing, largely due to the amount of time that society demands of them. This makes it difficult for them to commit to other activities. Therefore, I modified the study to last once a week for four weeks. I believe this format actually turned out to be more effective for the church.

### **Limitations**

While the songwriting workshops in the Japanese church had many possible benefits, they also had the potential for negative ramifications. Many Japanese can speak English, but there were still difficulties in communication, even with an experienced translator. One concern I had was that in communicating the need for Japanese original songs I may unintentionally imply that their current music for worship is unacceptable. It could have also suggested that I saw them as lazy for not previously taking the time to write. Knowing possible negative outcomes or misunderstandings helped me prepare what I wanted to say in a much more simplistic and tactful way. I was concerned that they may write songs out of an obligation rather than an understanding of a song's value. Though the missionaries and I saw the need for Japanese worship music, that did not mean that the Japanese themselves thought of it as a need. I needed to know whether they saw problems in their community and how they understood or explained the reasons for the problems they wished to address.<sup>6</sup> I took a good deal of time to get to know the people and learn more about how they think and function before I fully formulated the project.

Another limitation came with scheduling and attendance. Attendance for the workshops fluctuated each week. When someone from the group did not show up, that made it a bit more

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<sup>6</sup> Margaret LeCompte and Jean Schensul, *Designing and Conducting Ethnographic Research* (Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2010), 271.

difficult for the writers that did attend. If a participant did not attend all four weeks, they could not give a full assessment of the entire project because they were only there for a portion of it.

One final limitation came with the difficulties in collaboration. Songwriting can be difficult when working with other people, which can sometimes lead to division. Division is always a risk when trying to combine the ideas and styles from multiple people. These songwriting workshops were not merely meant to encourage them to write but to equip them with the tools they need to collaborate and an understanding of the value of their own, natively-written worship music.

### **Introduction to Shizuoka**

There is not much accessible information on Shizuoka, but I had the opportunity to interview the missionaries and their Japanese translator to learn more about the area. Most of the following information is taken from that interview (see Appendix). Shizuoka is a peninsula southwest of Tokyo. It is known largely for the production of green tea and mikans. Work tends to be prioritized, even over time with family. One's commitment to a company is considered a responsibility, both for the company itself and for honoring and taking care of the family. In Shizuoka specifically, the people live under more traditions than in the large cities such as Tokyo. Since it is a smaller region with a blend of both countryside and city, it is not as influenced by pop culture or tourism. Shizuoka is more relaxed and slower-paced than Tokyo or other large cities. There is not as much public transportation, and a lot of people commute by bike. There are very precise rules to live by, even in how to pack a backpack for school. Certain items must be in specific bags together and these bags must be organized within the backpack according to how the school dictates. Everyone is expected to follow the rules, no question. And it is my impression that many do not even consider doing anything different. People simply

do what is expected most of the time. If someone makes a mistake, they are rebuked because they did not meet expectations.

The Japanese people see Christianity as a foreign religion, and it is not surprising since the Japanese Church largely sings foreign songs. But another large factor in their perception is the integrated nature of their own religions into everyday life. Shinto and Buddhism have been a part of Japanese culture for over a millennium. This is all the Japanese people have known, and since the people function with a communal mindset, they rarely make decisions based on their own thoughts and feelings. There is a strong sense of duty to honor family and society, usually by following along with it. This duty stems into the afterlife as well. Some choose not to become a Christian because they do not want to be separated from their family for eternity. There is also a perception amongst the Japanese people that you cannot be both Japanese and a Christian. To choose a different religion from the majority automatically separates a person from society. This is evidenced in some traditions and ceremonies held in Japan that are rooted in Shinto or Buddhism. These are events that may or may not be used for a spiritual purpose anymore, but due to their religious roots, Christians are not likely to participate. On the other hand, Japanese Christians may participate in certain rituals that are so normal to Japanese culture that they fail to see the spiritual significance of what they are doing. For instance, some Japanese Christians will still go visit a memorial in the graveyard and pray to their deceased family members. Christians are perceived as incredibly holy and good-natured people that are too “good” to be near.

Living Way Church has developed its own sub-culture. Many things surprised me in my experience at Living Way because the typical understanding of Japanese culture looks a bit different from what I found at the church. One of the main surprises was how relaxed people

were with time. The church service frequently started at least fifteen minutes late, and congregants arrived at various times throughout the entire service, sometimes not until the very end. I anticipated that, much like the rest of Japan, the church would be very punctual and precise with everything. While this is the culture of Living Way Church, it does not necessarily represent the culture of Shizuoka as a whole.

### **Assumptions**

Before I went to Japan, I made up my mind that I was not going to go in with too many expectations. I figured that whatever I expected would likely be proven wrong in one way or another. When I learned new things about Shizuoka, I was rarely surprised and more intrigued by the information. However, there were a couple of things I expected to find within the Japanese Church. I did not expect much of the congregation to be outward worshippers. I knew that Japan was a more reserved society in terms of public behavior, so I anticipated a more reserved approach to worship within the church.

I did not know what to expect going into this project; however, I did anticipate having relatively low attendance, at least in the beginning. I was not expecting there to be much interest, and even those who were interested may struggle to find the time with their busy schedules. I expected collaboration to look a bit different among Japanese songwriters than it has looked in other cultures I've worked in. While America emphasizes individuality and opinion, Japan emphasizes community and a group mentality. I was curious to see how those values would manifest themselves in how they write together. I also expected them to collaborate at a similar pace to what I have witnessed in other collaborations, both in lyrics and in melody.

## Chapter 2 – Literature Review:

### Christian Ministry in Japan

Why is Japan such a difficult mission field and what methods to reach the Japanese people for Christ have proven effective in its urban cities? Although Christian missionaries have been at work in Japan since the 16<sup>th</sup> century, only about 1% of their population are professing Christians.<sup>7</sup> Japan desperately needs new pastors and missionaries, but with an aging community, those needs are not being met. According to the Association of Baptists for World Evangelism (ABWE International), within twenty years, half of the existing churches in Japan will have to close.<sup>8</sup> Most pastors are elderly and passing away with no young pastors to take their place.<sup>9</sup> This collection of history will give insight into how Japan's relationship with Christianity has developed to where it is now. In addition, it will provide context to our understanding of the songwriting project's results along with insight into who the Japanese people are and how they have been shaped to think and behave.

Japan has notoriously been a difficult mission field since Christianity was first introduced. This is due in part to the fact that Japan is one of the few countries which has no firm Christian roots. In 1548, the first Christian missionary to Japan, Francis Xavier, crossed paths with a Japanese man named Anjiro on a ship to India. Xavier asked Anjiro, “If I went to Japan, would the people become Christian?” In response, Anjiro replied, “My people would not immediately become Christians; but they would first ask you a multitude of questions, weighing carefully your answers and your claims...for the nation is one that always follows the guidance of

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<sup>7</sup> The editors of ABWE International “Japan” (ABWE: 2018). Accessed December 14, 2018.  
<http://www.abwe.org/serve/countries/japan>

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

reason.”<sup>10</sup> This conversation is what inspired Xavier to go serve on mission in Japan; however, within two years, he left discouraged, calling Japanese Buddhism “an invention of the devil”.<sup>11</sup>

Multiple factors encourage the Japanese people’s resistance to the idea of Jesus. Since Japan is an archipelago isolated off the coast of Asia, it is already set apart from its neighbors. Outside of trade, they once did not interact with other mainland countries or cultures on a regular basis.<sup>12</sup> This isolation contributed to the preservation of a particular “geographical identity.”<sup>13</sup> Japanese mythology also suggests that the islands of Japan were formed by a god and goddess, named Izanagi and Izanami.<sup>14</sup> The sun goddess’s grandson was sent down to become the first emperor of the Eight Island Country, making the sun goddess, Amaterasu, ancestress of the imperial line.<sup>15</sup> This was once taught as history in schools during the Meiji Period leading up to World War II, and the Japanese people believed that their ancestors belonged to the imperial family, ultimately making them related to the sun goddess herself.<sup>16</sup>

Another important factor to understand is Japan’s history with Christianity itself. As previously mentioned, Christianity was brought to Japan in the mid-1500s by Francis Xavier. In those days, missionaries customarily sought support from the leaders of a country in an effort to convert the people those leaders controlled. Xavier followed the same format to gain the favor of the emperor and the *daimyo*, or local feudal lords.<sup>17</sup> Some *daimyo* gave him permission to teach Christianity, but his request to meet the emperor was denied, and he and his fellow

<sup>10</sup> Francis and Nakajima, 8.

<sup>11</sup> Michael Hoffman “Christian Missionaries Find Japan A Tough Nut To Crack” *Japan Times* (2014). Accessed December 14, 2018.

<https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2014/12/20/national/history/christian-missionaries-find-japan-tough-nut-crack/#.Wn9bj-dG200>

<sup>12</sup> Joy Hendry *Understanding Japanese Society* 4<sup>th</sup> ed. (London: Croom Helm, 2012), 6

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., 8.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>17</sup> Francis and Nakajima, 8-9.

missionaries were met with persecution.<sup>18</sup> When Xavier left two years later, some of the *daimyo* began to grow suspicious of missionaries and the potential power that their message held. In 1587 one Japanese general, Hideyoshi, issued an edict commanding all missionaries to leave within twenty days.<sup>19</sup> Japan's long-standing loyalty to Buddhism was threatened by this new religion, and the mistrust of missionaries and their motives only grew. In 1597 twenty-four Christians were arrested and taken to Nagasaki where they were crucified. Soon after, the local governments forbade the *daimyo* from becoming Christian and ordered all missionaries in Nagasaki to be deported. As a result, many missionaries went into hiding.<sup>20</sup>

Hideyoshi's successor lightened the persecution of Christians for a time, enabling missionaries to come out of hiding and for churches to be rebuilt. Japan continued this rocky relationship with Christianity for centuries. Christianity would be tolerated for a time, but soon, suspicions would rise, and those in charge would crush any sort of revival with extreme force. The decades following 1614 showcased the worst persecution and the most martyrdoms, leaving the country without a single missionary by 1644. Those Christians who remained hid their faith and outwardly pretended to be Buddhist. This period, which lasted until 1873, came to be called the period of hiding, and the Christians who lived in this time became known as underground *Kirishitans*.<sup>21</sup> When the Meiji government took power, the bans on Christianity were lifted and the underground Christians slowly came out of hiding. However, religions were still evaluated based on their potential contributions to society and were dealt with accordingly.<sup>22</sup> Christianity was still given its limits in this newfound freedom, especially due to its foreign origins. It was

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid., 9.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., 10.

<sup>21</sup> Mullins, 5.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid., 36.

common in Xavier's time for the prominent countries of Spain and Portugal to expand their area of influence by travelling to other countries for trade, conquest, and religious propaganda.<sup>23</sup> This may very well have contributed to Japan's skeptical nature of Christianity in those times, since those countries regularly had ulterior motives.

Around the time that the Meiji government was established, Japan realized its need for modernization, despite its own resistance in opening its doors to foreign influence. Therefore, it began to establish relationships with the outside world, signing treaties with multiple countries, such as the United States, Britain, Russia, and the Netherlands.<sup>24</sup> Though it has adopted some of these Western technologies, Japan has remained unashamedly itself and is deeply proud of its rich culture. From Japan's earliest days, it has held and only modified its tradition of "natural revelation legitimized by its accord with reality".<sup>25</sup> Its interactions with other religions has only shown a desire to define and enhance its existing traditions.<sup>26</sup>

An aspect of culture that holds a large amount of influence on society in Japan is religion. Buddhism and Shinto in particular are deeply engrained in Japanese culture. Buddhism was introduced in Japan sometime in the sixth century, and it quickly took root and adjusted itself to suit Japanese values and their way of life. What is particularly interesting is that Buddhism, along with many other Japanese religions, is less concerned with philosophy itself and more concerned with putting such philosophy into action.<sup>27</sup> In other words, the traditions and religious practices of their faith are highly valuable to them and are perhaps the most important aspect of

<sup>23</sup> Ibid., 3

<sup>24</sup> Francis and Nakajima, 13.

<sup>25</sup> Paul P. Clark "Understanding the Resistance of Japan to Christianity: A Beginner Point for Developing Better Cross-Cultural Communication and Evangelism Strategies" (PhD diss., Deerfield, IL: Trinity Evangelical Divinity School, 1985), 51.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 51.

<sup>27</sup> Andreasen, Reader, and Stefansson, 94.

their many religions. Shinto is sometimes considered Japan's national religion because it is a religious tradition specific to Japan.<sup>28</sup> This religion is closely related to Japanese mythology, following the beliefs of gods in nature, or *kami*, and their interactions with humans.<sup>29</sup> Shinto is perhaps the longest standing religion of Japan, even before it had a name. It was the code that the early Japanese clans lived by.

While it is a prominent religion in Japan now, Buddhism was not immediately accepted in ancient Japanese society, proving that this resistance to outside religions is not new. When it was first introduced in the 500s, the Soga clan believed Buddhism should be accepted since many surrounding countries had already adopted it. They thought Japan should catch up with the rest of society.<sup>30</sup> However, the Mononobe and Nakatomi clans were against the nationwide acceptance of this religion, because they feared the *kami* would be angered by the acceptance of a foreign god.<sup>31</sup> The *kami* were the spirits or deities which were the objects of worship in Shinto.<sup>32</sup> The original practitioners of Japanese Buddhism suffered under persecution as well. Twice, when a chapel for Buddhist worship was established, an epidemic broke out and was quickly attributed to the wrath of the *kami* for worshipping foreign gods. Both times, the chapels were burned down, and in the second instance, the women who served in the temple were publicly flogged.<sup>33</sup> In modern Japan, nearly everyone identifies with Buddhism in some way. There are a number of ordinary aspects of life that are dictated or influenced by Buddhist traditions. For example, the Shinto religion centers around the life in this world, and its beliefs

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<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 64.

<sup>30</sup> Helen Hardacre, *Shinto* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 28.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 28.

<sup>32</sup> The editors of Britannica Academic. "Kami" *Britannica Academic*. (2018). Accessed December 14, 2018. <https://academic-eb-com.ezproxy.liberty.edu/levels/collegiate/article/kami/44481>.

<sup>33</sup> Hardacre, 28.

about life after death are unclear. They vary from the belief that souls go to a place of suffering and unhappiness to the belief that souls become *kami* that differ in excellence based on how much perfection they attained in their lifetime.<sup>34</sup> However, Shinto traditionally believes that contact with the dead pollutes those who make contact.<sup>35</sup> As a result, once Buddhism became widely accepted in Japan, a shift took place in which most funerals begun to be held according to Buddhist traditions, a religion that deals very closely and comfortably with death.<sup>36</sup> Certain religious practices have become traditions which have almost lost their religious significance, becoming a part of the culture that nearly everyone participates in.

Though Confucianism is not a prominent religion in Japan today, it has influenced Japanese values and mentality. The concepts of loyalty and filial piety, or respect for elders and ancestors, stems from this philosophy.<sup>37</sup> In addition, Shinto taught that service to the state was the ultimate filial piety toward the ancestors.<sup>38</sup> Loyalty has remained an integral part of Japanese society for as long as Japan has existed, and its people have always strived to live by this code of honor.

Religion is not closely associated with belief in modern Japan; rather, it is considered a sect of education and culture.<sup>39</sup> Many in Japan claim to be non-religious, but they may also routinely pray at shrines and altars.<sup>40</sup> Religion in Japanese society is almost synonymous with ritual. “When religious ideas pervade all areas of society, as is the case in many traditional worlds, the use of the word ‘belief’ is less appropriate, because there is really much less

<sup>34</sup> David L. Doerner. "Comparative Analysis of Life after Death in Folk Shinto and Christianity." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies.* (1977), 153-155.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid., 155

<sup>36</sup> Jacqueline Stone and Mariko Namba Walter. "Introduction." *Death and the Afterlife in Japanese Buddhism.* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2009), 3.

<sup>37</sup> Hendry (2012), 16.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 115.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid., 116.

opportunity for choice.”<sup>41</sup> Because it is not considered belief, but more of a daily routine, it is almost as if Christianity and the remains of Buddhist and Shinto influences cannot be addressed in the same context. To be “without religion” in Japan typically means that a person does not believe in one particular religion.<sup>42</sup> In Japanese society, adherence to one religious tradition does not necessarily exclude all others. One may pray for good luck at a Shinto shrine then pray for the dead at a Buddhist temple, but this is not perceived as contradictory.<sup>43</sup> This preference to ritual rather than the philosophy that functions behind the ritual may be a contributor to some confusion regarding what these religions are in modern Japan. Buddhism in particular struggles to be defined and is often debated in the Japanese Buddhist community.<sup>44</sup> The primary values of Japanese Buddhism appear to be character building and self-improvement, focusing more on reflections from personal experience rather than the study of doctrine.<sup>45</sup>

The new religions that are emerging in Japan are a bit different from the ones that shaped it. These began developing primarily in the 1940s and 1950s when the people were struggling with their defeat in World War II and the chaos that ensued afterward. In addition, traditional religions, Shinto in particular, had developed a bad reputation because of their association with the war regime.<sup>46</sup> These new religions do not emphasize human suffering, nor do they have concrete “personified agents,” such as gods or a sacred Other.<sup>47</sup> Instead, they focus heavily on

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., 116.

<sup>42</sup> Victoria Lyon-Bestor, Theodore C. Bestor, and Akiko Yamagata, *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Culture and Society*. (New York: Routledge, 2011), 66.

<sup>43</sup> Erica Baffelli, Ian Reader, and Birgit Staemmler, *Japanese Religions on the Internet* (New York: Routledge, 2011), 9.

<sup>44</sup> Stephen G. Covell, and Mark Rowe, "Editors' Introduction: Traditional Buddhism in Contemporary Japan." *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 31, no. 2 (2004), 247.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 249.

<sup>46</sup> Baffelli, Reader, and Staemmler, 11.

<sup>47</sup> Daniel Metraux. "From Salvation to Spirituality: Popular Religious Movements in Modern Japan, by Susumu Shimazono." *Journal of Global Buddhism* 6 (2015): 3.

naturalism and psychotherapy, introducing alternative knowledge movements (AKMs), medicine, agriculture, and spirituality movements.<sup>48</sup>

Though Buddhism, Shinto, and various folk and emerging religions have their differences, they possess a few of the same values, such as a close relationship with humans and god-like spirits in nature, an emphasis on family and ancestor worship, and the normality of religion in every aspect of life.<sup>49</sup> In Japanese culture, any religious authority is subservient to political power, yet they possess an extremely close relationship with one another.<sup>50</sup> Loyalty to the state and its government has been one of the biggest forms of honor, dating all the way back to *bushido*, or the way of the samurai. This code, which emphasized fearlessness and strength of spirit, became a source of great pride and identity for the Japanese people.<sup>51</sup> Loyalty to the leaders was the greatest virtue for these warriors.<sup>52</sup> During the Tokugawa Period, this code simply became a way of life for all Japanese people, not just the samurai.<sup>53</sup> Japanese Christians were essentially faced with a choice: loyalty to the emperor or loyalty to Jesus Christ.<sup>54</sup> Christianity demands complete allegiance to a “foreign God,” and in the minds of Japanese officials, faithfulness toward Jesus ultimately questioned faithfulness toward the emperor and Japan itself.<sup>55</sup> The events of World War II added pressure to show absolute loyalty to the emperor because of increased nationalism, which resulted in a “Japanese Christianity” that blended both the Christian God and Shinto gods.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid.

<sup>49</sup> Francis and Nakajima, 15-16.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid., 16.

<sup>51</sup> Hendry (2012), 13.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 15.

<sup>54</sup> Francis and Nakajima, 29.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

<sup>56</sup> Ibid., 32.

The previous information only touches the surface of Christianity's history in Japan, but this knowledge is necessary in order to understand the relationship between Christianity and the Japanese people today. In 1882, according to the missionaries and Japanese colleagues of that time, the educated Japanese revealed that they were opposed to Christianity for a number of reasons: the doctrine of eternal life, its supernatural beliefs, its rejection of ancestor worship, and its conflict with modern science.<sup>57</sup> However, those Japanese who were considered uneducated gave different reasons for rejecting Christianity, including fear of offending the government or their friends, its strict moral code, and the perception that it was a demon's religion.<sup>58</sup>

While these reasons may have changed since 1882, they provide a foundation for understanding why these people have no desire to come to know Jesus even today. If religion in Japan is perceived as ritual and not belief as these sources state, then the concept of belief alongside ritualistic observation is fairly uncommon. They may view conversion to Christianity as simply switching from one set of rituals to another or changing their daily routine and nothing more. If that is the case, then Christianity does not appear to be necessary or potentially life-changing because, in their context, it is only a different set of traditions for them to follow, traditions they have lived without for centuries. Japan may be perceived as religious, but it is largely not spiritual anymore. This country, along with many others, are modernized in such a way that a "God" or "gods" seems unnecessary. So while they still follow many of the religious traditions, including praying and other rituals, most do not truly believe the core spiritual beliefs of Buddhism and Shinto.

In addition to being a modernized country, the Japan of today is significantly Westernized. Many Japanese wear the same clothes any Western culture would wear, and their

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid., 27.

music, while sung in their language, has western-style accompaniment.<sup>59</sup> Japan is a hybrid culture which has been influenced by both internal and external forms.<sup>60</sup> Its culture has become something that is considered “cool,” and many around the world are huge fans of anime, manga, and J-Pop.<sup>61</sup> However, for many Japanese this has caused a problem. They are unable to regulate the kinds of material that are made available for global enjoyment. Unfortunately, some of the works in circulation portray Japan in a very controversial manner, particularly with regards to children and sexuality.<sup>62</sup> Some of the themes presented in anime and manga in particular have altered Japan’s reputation, from its rich culture and glorious history as the “Empire of the Sun” to a morally questionable society.<sup>63</sup> They have become known for what they offer and what little culture is taught through their popular media, which provides a distorted view of who the Japanese people really are. Thus, we are presented with societal extremes. Some choose to view Japan for what it was, emphasizing its traditional culture, while others emphasize its pop culture of today, meanwhile leaving out integral parts of its society.

While Japan was adopting certain Western aspects of culture, they witnessed a shift from their traditional indigenous music to Western music. This took place largely between the 1870s and 1920s.<sup>64</sup> The idea of “modernization” was the driving force behind this shift, even changing the course of music education to be more Westernized. However, it was also influenced by imported music, such as Christian hymns introduced by missionaries and military band music.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>59</sup> Robert C. Provine, Yoshihiko Tokumaru, and Lawrence J. Witzleben, *Garland Encyclopedia of World Music Volume 7: East Asia: China, Japan, and Korea* (New York: Taylor & Francis Group. Routledge, 2001), 533.

<sup>60</sup> Jennifer Matsue, *Focus: Music in Contemporary Japan* (New York: Routledge, 2016), 38.

<sup>61</sup> Mark McLelland, *The End of Cool Japan: Ethical, Legal, and Cultural Challenges to Japanese Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 2017), 25.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., 26.

<sup>64</sup> Alison Tokita. "Bi-Musicality in Modern Japanese Culture." *The International Journal of Bilingualism* 18, no. 2 (2014), 159.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 159.

The process of Westernization in music created hybrid musical forms, some of which practiced bi-musicality.<sup>66</sup>

In a study on the mode and scale of shamisen music, one researcher, Alison Tokita, examines the development of music education in Japan, particularly the changes made during the Meiji Restoration. As Japan tried to actively incorporate Western music into their education system, this prompted a discussion on Japanese music scales. The first person to discuss Japanese scales in this period was Izawa Shūji, one of the architects constructing the new music education system.<sup>67</sup> However, he did not have a thorough understanding of either Japanese or Western music and was unable to recognize the scalar differences between the two. Unfortunately, the misunderstanding that these two systems were quite similar led him to believe that it would be insignificant to remove Japanese music from standard school curriculum.<sup>68</sup> This decision has been a detriment to Japan which has largely lost its musical identity. Only specialists are familiar with and able to play certain native instruments. They are also mainly used for special cultural events to pay homage to their past. It is more a testament to their historic music identity as opposed to their current music identity. Most Japanese citizens appear to be tourists of their own country's music since it is no longer functional in society outside of entertainment and preservation. Many have become onlookers and admirers rather than participants.

It is vital to have an understanding of a society's context prior to engaging missionally with the people. It is even more important to enter a culture with an open mind attuned to learning as opposed to teaching. Methodology and theology in missions are widely debated for a

<sup>66</sup> Ibid., 159-160.

<sup>67</sup> Alison Tokita. "Mode and Scale, Modulation and Tuning in Japanese Shamisen Music: The Case of Kiyomoto Narrative." *Ethnomusicology* 40, no. 1 (1996), 4.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 4.

number of reasons. In the past, missions have been misused largely as a result of cultural preference supported by misinterpretation of Scripture. From the sending country's perspective, the missionary can be perceived as a "hero" who sets out to overcome a dark force in a hypothetical "battle against heathenism."<sup>69</sup> However, this is not the purpose a missionary serves. Therefore, a proper foundation in missiology is an understanding of missionary theology.<sup>70</sup> Part of what helps prepare us for the field is seeing what has already been done. We can learn from previous missionary ventures, whether they are good examples or examples of what not to do.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gave His disciples instructions on what to do next. "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age." (Matthew 28:19-20) The Bible is also evidence of God's own mission work.<sup>71</sup> The Holy Spirit, the Church, and its ministry all possess a particular missionary nature.<sup>72</sup> This is evidenced in Acts 2 by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit which gave the early Church different tongues, and people began gathering in a crowd because they heard them testifying about God in each of their own languages. People were confused by this, but Peter stood up and explained what was happening and proclaimed the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus to them. Three thousand souls were saved that day.

Jesus lived and became the example for how to lower ourselves as His followers in order to serve others and point them to Christ. Throughout Scripture, both in Jesus' life and in the lives of His disciples post-ascension, we see how they each functioned within the context they

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<sup>69</sup> Midori Ichikawa, "American Missionaries in Contemporary Japan: Their Shared Expressive Practices." (PhD diss., Indiana University, 2009), 172.

<sup>70</sup> John Mark Terry, *Missionary: An Introduction* (Nashville, TN: B&H Publishing Group, 2015), 10.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 12-13.

were entering, yet still lived and spoke according to the truth which many times led to crossing cultural boundaries.

The early Church lived and ministered in a culturally sensitive way until the culture became a hindrance to the work of God, such as when Jesus spoke to the Samaritan woman at the well (John 4:1-42). It was not culturally acceptable for a man to speak with a woman, and furthermore, it was not acceptable for a Jew to converse with a Samaritan. In areas such as these, Jesus and His followers could not pay heed to cultural norms, since they were actually in opposition to the will of the Father and the truth of His Word. However, while they ultimately lived and followed Jesus, the disciples adjusted their methods and communication according to the context they were ministering in. Paul wrote about this in 1 Corinthians 9:19-23.

“For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, so that I may win more. To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law though not being myself under the Law, so that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, so that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some. I do all things for the sake of the gospel, so that I may become a fellow partaker of it.”

How does one minister and serve in the context of Japanese culture without sacrificing Biblical integrity to match their way of life? Some Japanese hosts for short term missionaries shared their thoughts on the subject with Ron Barber as he interviewed them for his dissertation. According to his research and the answers given by these Japanese hosts, a few factors affect the level of engagement between Japanese Christian churches and these missionaries, including language, length of stay, and the type of ministry being conducted.<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> Ron, Jr. Barber, "Experiences and Perspectives of Japanese Serving as Culture Brokers for Short-Term Missions in Japan." (PhD diss., Trinity International University, 2010), 102.

Regular and intentional interaction are vital in order to establish relationships and understand what the church's values and mission are and who they are as a people. The impact of any missionary is significantly reduced when individuals or teams are not properly integrated into the church's life and ministry.<sup>74</sup> One method these hosts emphasized was the usefulness of homestays. Many in the Japanese Church like this method because it is an incredibly effective way of teaching missionaries about Japanese culture.<sup>75</sup> In addition, it provides ample opportunity for evangelism, since few families are entirely Christian.<sup>76</sup> In this particular case study, the interaction between guest and host usually resulted in the attendance of those hosting to some of the events in which the guest was involved.<sup>77</sup> The ultimate goals of evangelism in Japan emphasized by these interviewees were the encouragement of Christians and connection with non-believers.<sup>78</sup>

Christians in Japan are a minority, but they are encouraged by witnessing the missionaries' eagerness and boldness to share the Gospel. In this, they are reminded of their place and their platform in the bigger picture of evangelism.<sup>79</sup> As for connecting with non-Christians, the missionary hosts proposed that the most valuable thing that the missionaries brought was not the Gospel but the opportunity to share it.<sup>80</sup> Through homestays and other events, the locals were reminded that the church exists and may potentially become curious enough to attend.<sup>81</sup> In the grander scheme, Japan needs long-term missionaries who can be more

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

<sup>75</sup> Ibid., 103.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., 107.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

invested with the people and are able to learn Japanese culture and the nature of Christianity in their country.<sup>82</sup>

What sort of ministries are currently at work in Japan? Several international organizations have developed a presence there by starting churches, initiating ministries and businesses, and building relationships with the people they encounter. One ministry is a business café that was started by a local church in order to serve and connect with non-believing customers. The clientele can come and eat while listening to live Christian music. The café also holds other events, such as English classes and Gospel music nights, giving artists a chance to explain the meaning behind their songs.<sup>83</sup> Through this missional café, they hope to build friendships with people they otherwise may have never come in contact with and evangelize through their interactions with them.<sup>84</sup>

Another example is that of a Scripture training workshop which was started by a missionary from the Christians in the Arts Network (CAN). According to research, the average church in Japan reads a Psalm and the passage that is related to the sermon, but no more than they deem necessary.<sup>85</sup> The reading of Scripture also tends to be done apathetically, with no attempt to convey the meaning to the listeners.<sup>86</sup> Many Japanese who have shown an interest in learning how to read Scripture in a way that conveys its message and emotion were already involved in dramatic arts and wanted to extend those skills into their church life.<sup>87</sup> The first goal was to develop relationships amongst the staff and build community while ensuring that

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

<sup>83</sup> John Stuart, “Coffee, Ginger Ale, and Friendships” (2017). Accessed December 14, 2018. [https://www.sim.org/-/coffee-ginger-ale-and-friendships?Ministry\\_ID=&countries=Japan](https://www.sim.org/-/coffee-ginger-ale-and-friendships?Ministry_ID=&countries=Japan)

<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> Nancy L. Nethercott “Developing A Scripture Reader Training Workshop for Christians In the Arts Network Worship Seminar in Tokyo, Japan” (PhD diss., Orange Park, FL: Institute for Worship Studies, 2006), 5.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., 6.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid., 70.

everyone was unified and was sharing the same goals for the workshop.<sup>88</sup> The second goal was to explain the importance of using Scripture reading as a means of leading worship.<sup>89</sup> Thus began the actual training. The final goal was a follow-up and evaluation of the participants, which gave the participants an opportunity to present and put to practice what they had learned.<sup>90</sup>

Another trend amongst the ministries at work in Japan is the use of music. Gospel music has actually become quite popular in Japan. Surprisingly, non-Christians are typically the main practitioners of Gospel singing. It is used as part of the business of teaching music and as classic Western repertoire in choral education.<sup>91</sup> One church associated with Send International started a Gospel choir, taking advantage of its popularity.<sup>92</sup> One of the issues with Gospel music in this context is that most songs are sung in English, a language of which many Japanese have a limited understanding. As a result, this church is intentional about aiding these choir members in comprehending both the lyrics and spiritual significance of each song.<sup>93</sup> After working on pronunciation, they discuss the meaning behind the lyrics and may use accounts from the Bible to help illustrate it. If new songs are introduced, the pastor explains the scriptural basis for the lyrics to help them understand what they are singing.<sup>94</sup> This ministry has already led at least one of its members to a saving faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>95</sup>

Another example of music missions in Japan is that of a young lady named Celia Olson and her Japanese Christian companion, Shino. These two travel around Japan performing

<sup>88</sup> Ibid.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., 70-71.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid., 74.

<sup>91</sup> Waseda Minako, "Gospel Music in Japan: Transplantation and Localization of African American Religious Singing." *Yearbook for Traditional Music* 45 (2013): 189.

<sup>92</sup> The editors of Send International, "Singing the Gospel" (2015). Accessed December 14, 2018.

<https://www.send.org/story/singing-the-gospel>

<sup>93</sup> Ibid.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

classical music concerts in churches, giving its members opportunities to connect their friends with the church and hear about Jesus.<sup>96</sup> This also encourages the Christians who often feel isolated since they are small in number.<sup>97</sup> In addition, learning an art is more than just expression to the Japanese; it is the passing down of a tradition.<sup>98</sup> According to Olson, artistic expression is one of the few culturally acceptable ways to express emotion or relieve stress in Japan.<sup>99</sup> However, many Japanese prefer technical competence in music over too much emotional expression.<sup>100</sup>

Japan, like the rest of the world, is in desperate need of Jesus. It is important to remember that missionaries are not bringing God to Japan. God is already there and is working through those He has already commissioned. The primary purposes of this research project were to encourage Japanese Christians in a deepening personal relationship with the Lord, to emphasize the need for unity and love for each other as the body of Christ, and remind them of their place in the global Church and the Great Commission. They are not forgotten and they are still valuable to the global Church and its mission to share the good news of Jesus with the world. This thesis is also to encourage the calling of long-term missionaries to Japan. It is vital in Japanese society to stay long enough to learn about and appreciate their culture, thereby earning their trust and respect. They need those who are willing to make a long-term commitment to build close relationships and invest in their people, being patient and continuing to serve though the reward may go unseen.

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<sup>96</sup> The editors of OMF International, “Q&A: Celia Olson on Creative Arts Ministry in Japan” (2018), Accessed December 14, 2018. <https://omf.org/blog/2018/02/05/qa-celia-olson-creative-arts-ministry-japan/>

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.

<sup>100</sup> Joy Hendry, *An Anthropologist in Japan: Glimpses of Life in the Field* (London: Routledge, 1999), Ch. 16.

### Chapter 3 – Methodology

The research conducted on these songwriting workshops was collected primarily through observation and interaction. In order to have a better understanding of the culture before trying to facilitate in it, I researched current available sources on the history of Japan, its culture, its relationship to Christianity, and the various ministries functioning throughout the country. I gathered a great deal of information from books, articles, dissertations, and interviews. This gave me a broad understanding of the people; however, I needed to learn more about Shizuoka specifically and the culture of Living Way Church. I contacted the missionaries by video chat months before my arrival in order to ask them questions specific to the area and the church. Our conversation provided me with further knowledge on the way they hold their church services as well as what they like to sing on Sunday mornings.

Once I arrived in Japan, but prior to the start of the sessions, I was able to meet the church members and witness the church services myself. I was able to see how the members interact with both the leadership and each other. I could also see how they expressed themselves in worship, which was much more outward than I had previously expected. The missionaries and their translator shared stories from the church's history and gave me insight into how I should structure the workshops in order to suit this culture's needs.

The first three weeks were intended to be a time to adjust and simply get to know the people, the community, and their way of life. However, due to a major ten day national holiday, we had to move much quicker, and by my second Sunday there, I had already made and distributed flyers and given an announcement in church. The next four weeks were spent analyzing the culture, adjusting the workshops as needed, planning the workshops, and advertising it to other local churches and individuals.

Once the workshops began, the data I collected included fluctuations in attendance, the participants' preconceptions of what the songwriting process would look like, their thoughts as they progressed through the writing process, observations on how they collaborated, their inspirations and influences in their writing, and their willingness to continue songwriting after the workshops ended. Follow-up data was collected as well through a group discussion and questionnaire. The information gathered through these pertained to a comparison of the perception of both songwriting and worship before and after the workshops began, any difficulties they encountered as a group and how they worked through them, whether they wanted to continue songwriting, and what their personal thoughts were on the workshops. Observations were documented in a field research journal. Attendance was monitored via a sign-in sheet that was available at every workshop.

I paid attention specifically to what influenced the participants' song topic and style of collaboration. Because none of the participants could make it all four weeks, I paid attention to their reasons for why they could not come each week. It could have been for any reason, from scheduling to disinterest; therefore, it was important to know what kept them from coming. In addition to the data gathered during the workshops, I looked for any lasting effects after they ended.

The project was assessed by a group discussion and a questionnaire which was handed out to all participants and submitted at the end of the project. The group discussion was conducted at the end of the fourth workshop in order to hear the processes and experiences of the group. The questionnaires allowed the participants to give an honest assessment of the sessions in addition to provide changes of perspective of songwriting and worship and share if they have the intention to continue writing. They were also asked why they would keep writing or why not

in order for me to learn more specifically what they connected to and what they weren't interested in. I kept the questionnaires somewhat anonymous, though they gave their forms directly to me. They were not required to put their name on the form. I wanted them to feel free to answer honestly.

The format chosen for the workshops was once a week for four weeks, each one lasting an hour and a half. Originally, I intended to divide the participants into groups of four or five and switch up how they are divided for the last two weeks. This was with the idea that they would have completed a song with their first group by the end of the second week and would be able to start a new song with a new group on week three, giving them a more diverse songwriting experience. However, I only had enough participants for one five person group, and they moved at a very different pace than what I expected. Because of this, it became four consecutive weeks working on one song with one group.

At the beginning of every workshop, I decided to do a series I entitled "Worship Is..." which would discuss a few different aspects of worship. I chose to do this because the idea of writing new worship songs can be exciting, but it is pointless if we do not have a true understanding of what worship is. Each session varied in length, and the information for those sessions was taken from Scripture.

I was blessed to be hosted by the missionaries who started the church along with their Japanese translator and their adopted kids, all of which were Japanese. They were both gatekeepers and stakeholders in my research and were a key to planning and organizing the songwriting workshops according to what would work in their society and in their church specifically.<sup>101</sup> These connections helped me to analyze the data within its proper context. The

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<sup>101</sup> LeCompte and Schensul, 244.

participants themselves helped me answer my research questions merely by their willingness to participate. I was able to collect data on their behaviors and attitudes toward collaborative songwriting and the methods they used.

Additional tools used for research were audio recordings, videos, and pictures, all of which were collected by my phone. I transcribed the finished song with Finale and created chord charts with Word. I recorded its premiere to the rest of the church, and with the participants' permission, it was uploaded to YouTube for everyone to enjoy. In the last two weeks, I held an interview with the missionaries and my translator, discussing in detail about Shizuoka and Living Way Church. I also collected and translated the questionnaires during this time.

I went to Japan on a tourist/business "visa-free" ninety day stay. This is only available to a few countries, the United States included. Since my project was one that could be done in less than ninety days, I chose not to go through with the Certificate of Eligibility required to obtain a longer visa.

In order to communicate with my advisor and with my financial supporters and prayer warriors, I set up an account with Mail Chimp and sent emails to them with pictures, stories, and prayer requests. These were intended to be bi-monthly, but were occasionally once a month during busier times.

I had been learning Japanese on my own for a year and a half before I went to Japan, so I was familiar with the basics of their language. I was able to learn much more on site and was able to speak in Japanese at times to communicate with the people myself. Oftentimes if I wished to speak in full sentences, I had to switch between Japanese and English to say what I intended to say since I was still not fluent. Most of the Japanese people I met could understand

enough English to process what I was saying and would speak to me in sentences with mixed Japanese and English as well.

While in Japan, I began studying kanji, the more difficult characters that are the original Chinese their language is derived from. Though I only learned around fifty out of more than two thousand, it was helpful both to learn new words and improve my reading. Though knowledge of the Japanese language was needed in order to communicate, it became incredibly necessary when I was left with the responsibility to compose the melody to the song written in the workshop. Because I knew the characters I knew how to read it, even if I did not understand every word. Since I was familiar with how the language works, I could distinguish words that I had not learned yet. This enabled me to create a melody that did not sound awkward with the natural functions of the Japanese language. To ensure that things did not sound strange, I played the song for my translator and her daughter. There were only a couple of spots I needed to fix. Language acquisition may end up being important for more than just communication, so it is vital that we learn it.

The results I strived for were a continuation of songwriting for the Japanese Church and an awareness in the church of the value of locally written songs. I wanted there to be positive lasting effects. That needs to be measured differently in each context. In this case, I wanted people to keep writing and I wanted them to be encouraged that their own people composed a song for the Church. I believe that this touched, not only the participants, but also the entire congregation. Because of this, I thought that even those who did not participate may be encouraged to try songwriting on their own.

## Chapter 4 - Fieldwork

### **Preparation for the Workshops**

Once I arrived in the field, I planned to spend the first three weeks adjusting to the new culture and getting to know people before planning the workshops in detail. This was to ensure that I did not rush into a plan without a genuine understanding of the culture which would aid in contextualizing the workshops. However, during my first week in Japan, I was informed that a series of holidays known as Golden Week made it necessary to have the workshops about two weeks earlier than I had planned. They also asked me to make a flyer (see Appendix) to advertise for the event because, in their experience, people liked to make plans a whole month in advance. This made it necessary to begin advertising it early. I got to make a personal announcement on my second Sunday, and the leaders in the church made an announcement every Sunday morning to remind the congregation about the workshops until the last one had ended.

I also originally planned for the workshops to be ongoing, providing a time for the worship team and any interested church members to meet with each other and write together. In my experience, it is difficult to make time to write when busy, even as a regular songwriter. However, the Gordons shared that people are less likely to engage in activities that do not have a clear beginning and end. Following the advice of those who live there long-term, I quickly modified my study to last only four weeks and changed the format of how I would conduct the workshops so that it had a definite ending. This was to encourage more people to take part, and after spending more time in Japan, I believe this was a wise decision. Ideally, advertisement for the event should begin months in advance, and it may be beneficial to have a compressed project that takes place over a few days. However, this format would only work with a sufficient

amount of advertising to multiple churches over an extended period of time. This would give people plenty of time to prepare for participation and it may be easier for them to commit for the entire workshop or seminar.

### **First Workshop**

On the day of the first workshop, I showed up an hour early to set up and pray over the areas where people would be writing. After I was done, I set a table near the entrance with the sign-in sheet and waited. When it came time for the workshops to start (10:30 a.m.), no one was there. I became quite nervous, fearing that I would have no participants. The first three participants did not arrive until 10:40, and one more arrived shortly after. Ironically, Living Way Church is not known for punctuality, which is a characteristic unique to them. This is a counter-cultural aspect of their church. I could not figure out how their relaxed culture developed within their church body. However, there are a few aspects that could have influenced this. Living Way Church is multicultural, and some of those cultures are not so concerned with punctuality as the Japanese are known for. This church also began quite small and has only been around for the last thirty-five years approximately. Many people know the leadership personally and have known them for years. These may be factors that influenced relaxed nature of Living Way Church. Knowing this tendency, I came to expect late arrivals and not worry so much when the time for the workshops to begin passed. I ultimately had five participants in these workshops, four females and one male.

I started the workshop by welcoming those who came and giving them an overview of what the workshops would look like (see Appendix). I then shared that I would be beginning each workshop with a small series I called “Worship Is...” which would delve into the study of a few specific aspects of worship. I explained why I believed this to be important to learn

alongside songwriting, stating that “‘worship’ and ‘songs about God’ are not the same thing.”

While they learned to write new worship songs, they also needed to learn more about what worship is. I then shared why songwriting was particularly valuable, supporting my statement with Scriptures.

After the overview, I gave them some pointers on how to get started on writing a new song, dividing it between content and music. Before the workshop began, I asked each participant if he or she could play an instrument. After learning that none of them could, I determined that I would skip what I had planned to say about composing accompaniment, since it would be irrelevant for this particular group. For the content, I gave them three starting points from which to write: Scripture, the needs of their community, and personal experience. I advised them not to use Scripture word for word as it is written but to use it as a base for what to write about, incorporating a portion of it into the lyrics. I told them this because taking something that is pre-written and trying to make a melody that matches both the words and the rhythm is much more difficult to do, particularly in Western music. Furthermore, I really wanted them to attempt to write their own lyrics. For the melody, I gave them a demonstration of how to use the rhythm of the words to compose a tune.

When it came time to divide the participants into groups, I chose to put all four of them together since I originally intended to have four to five people in each group. I asked them if they had any questions before they got started, but at that point they had realized they were not going to completely understand it until they got started. Before I left the room to let them discuss ideas, I advised them to write down every idea because they may end up using it later, or it may morph into another idea that is chosen for the song. I then left them to collaborate for about thirty or forty minutes.

When I came back to check on their progress, I took notice of how full their papers were. They had written down a lot of ideas and were forming an organized structure for the song. As they explained their process to me, they shared that they began by thinking of ideas individually first. After they had gotten some ideas on their own, they shared them with the group and began compressing those ideas into a single topic for the song content.

After sharing their thoughts on what to write about, they narrowed their topic down to fear of death. This idea was shared by a participant who works as a nurse and frequently works with patients who are afraid of their own death. Her idea was to take that fear of death and contrast it with the hope and life we have in Jesus. The others in the group wanted to write about this hope using a comparison of darkness and light, using Scripture as proof and tying in first-person stories to show a progression of how God brought the person in the song from darkness and death into hope and life. I took notice of the fact that rather than picking one of the three suggestions I gave them to compose content, they chose to incorporate all three. They thought deeply about real issues that their society faces.

During the writing process, they debated whether to use the Japanese word for death (死 “Shi”) because that is a very strong word in their language. However, they chose to use it rather than alluding to it because they felt that the strong language was necessary in order to make a stark contrast between death and life. By the end of the workshop, one of the participants shared with me and my translator that they were nervous at first and unsure if they could do it. However, as they progressed and solidified their idea, they began to think that maybe they could write a song after all!

## Second Workshop

At the second workshop, two of the original four participants were not able to make it due to a scheduling conflict. This left us with only two participants that week. I began the “Worship Is...” series with “Worship Is Humility and Sacrifice” (see Appendix). This was one of the most important lessons in the series because I believe it was the most relevant in Japanese culture. Religion in Japan is treated in such a way that worship and ritual are a means of getting something from the gods or spirits. Worship has much more to do with receiving wealth, luck, fruitfulness, and prosperity. Sometimes, Christians in Japan, particularly new ones, can follow this same mentality, acknowledging God in parts of their lives that they believe they could benefit from His influence. However, Christianity does not work this way, so I put an emphasis on the humility and sacrifice that come with Christian worship and why those aspects are important.

After the series portion, I put our two participants together again to continue the work they had begun the previous week. Since they had come to the point of writing lyrics, I discussed with them some ideas on how to create a melody along with them. They really had no idea where to start in composing a melody. I suggested that composing a melody was similar to singing to oneself but was done intentionally. However, one of the participants admitted that she had never sung to herself something that was not a song she already knew. I then suggested listening to their favorite songs to draw inspiration without copying, but I did not know how else to help them. In order to compose a melody, they needed to be able to make one up. I then left them for a while and allowed them to prioritize lyrics.

When I returned, they had organized their format and set the song into four different parts with a clear progression: before Christ (fear of death), when Christ came in, thankfulness for

what Jesus did, and joy. These were written like stanzas, but the participants wanted to write the song with a verse, chorus, and bridge format. I discussed with them ways in which they could resolve this issue in chronology for that particular format.

By the end of the workshop, I felt as though they were more discouraged, having moved past the idea stage into actual composition. It was also made more difficult by the absence of half the group. With fewer minds, they had a harder and slower time coming up with content. I tried to encourage them by reminding them that this is the hardest part of songwriting, one that is easy to get stuck in. I told them to think of the lyrics as a rough draft and not try to perfect everything before it is written down and called a lyric. They seemed to think of “lyrics” in a more formal and cohesive way that made them think their lyric ideas were simply ideas, not lyrics. This was tested by their answers to the questionnaires after the workshops. Their homework after the second workshop was to practice singing to themselves, not songs they have heard but with tunes they make up spontaneously.

The difficulties I began to encounter during the second workshop made me rethink how to contextualize. Creativity is not necessarily something that is encouraged in Japan, though not particularly discouraged either. The community mindset and the requirement of perfection I believe were some of the biggest contributors to their discomfort in writing lyrics and melody. I am aware of some local Japanese songwriters, so I know they are capable of creating lyrics and melody; however, my participants did not have any musical background. With only two workshops left and still a large quantity of the song to write, I was concerned we would not have a single completed song in the end. I began wondering what the best way to help them would be, considering that Scripture songs or melodies from old hymns put to new lyrics would be the best way to finish. But I really wanted them to write their own lyrics and melody. They had already

put in a great deal of work and had a wonderful idea that I believed needed to be completed. This raised up the thought that I needed to contextualize the workshops, not only to the culture, but also to the individuals who chose to participate.

### **Third Workshop**

At the third workshop, we had one of the participants from the first week return, and a new participant joined the group. These were the only two who could come that week. This week in the “Worship Is...” series, I shared how “Worship Is Warfare” (see Appendix). I spoke about the power of worship because I wanted them to see that worship is more than just singing and giving praise to God. It is also a weapon because of the God who is being worshipped. It is immensely powerful, and that part of worship is easily forgotten or overlooked.

Since there was no one else for the new participant to write with, I put her with the participant who attended in the first week to continue the song that had already been started. I gave the new participant some of the advice I shared at the first workshop on how to get started and how to compose lyrics, then I left them to collaborate. When I returned, they shared that they wanted to incorporate the issue of suicide into the song as well since it is a major issue in Japan. Since that would make the song deal with both the fear of death and the fear of life, which seem to be contradictory, I advised them to divide those topics between the first and second verses.

In order to help them think of a melody, I asked them about some lullabies they grew up listening to or songs they had a strong connection to. One participant mentioned “You Raise Me Up” and “Amazing Grace”. Even though I tried to get them to sing the songs they thought of, they were not very willing. One sang a little, but it was difficult to get them to comply. In the end, they shared that they did not really want their song to sound like a lullaby, which was not

really my intention. I simply wanted to get them to think about melodies and become more comfortable with singing them out loud, since that is a necessary part of collaboration. They clearly felt much more comfortable discussing lyrics rather than trying to compose a melody. After this exercise, I left for a while to give them time to collaborate.

When I returned, they had potential lyrics for the section on suicide and the section on fear of death, with a chorus that used John 14:6 to tie both topics together under the hope we have in Christ. They really did not see their words as lyrics yet, so I learned that they were just uncertain of their own ability. They perceived lyrics to be more complete than what they had and did not think of their ideas as lyrics because they did not seem good enough. We reached the end of the workshop, and they still only had content and no melody.

Though the third workshop had ended, the participants who attended that week kept working on the song. The next day, which was Sunday, one participant brought me a paper with some lyrics on it that she had come up with. She knew that she would not be able to come to the final workshop, so she made sure that I had a copy in order to give the attendees something to build off of from the previous week. This proved to be a massive contribution and writing aid to the participants in the last workshop.

After evaluating the third workshop's results, I decided to focus on helping them complete the lyrics. I determined that after the song is completed at the last workshop, I would research Japanese worship music along with some more traditional music and compose the melody and accompaniment myself. After I composed the melody, I would then sing it for my translator to ensure that the melody complements the language and does not sound awkward. Though I would have loved for the melody to be written by the participants themselves, in the end I had to contextualize according to the participants I had. The most important thing at that

point was ensuring that we finished the workshops with one completed piece. I did not want them to walk away, having never finished the song and feeling as though they failed. That sense of failure would only encourage what they already believed, which was that they could not write a song.

### **Fourth Workshop**

Once again, two participants returned to collaborate in the last week. For the “Worship Is...” series, I spoke on how “Worship is Transcultural.” One issue within Living Way Church and the Japanese churches in general that was continually brought up to me was the problem of disunity. While I did not see any within Living Way Church, there is also an issue with racism in Japan, particularly toward resident foreigners. According to the missionaries I stayed with and some of the residents from other countries at Living Way Church, it can be incredibly difficult to find a well-paying job, even with qualifications. Employers for positions other than those as English teachers and convenience store workers tend to prefer hiring someone who is Japanese by nationality. As a rule, tourists and visitors are treated very kindly, which was my own experience as well. However, those who have lived there for many years claim that the experience is different once you try to become “Japanese.” In addition, there were a few causes for disunity within the church itself, as is common in most churches unfortunately. This typically centered around worship style, song choice, frustrations between members, and other similar sources of division. These were the reasons I chose to speak on the transcultural aspect of worship.

When discussing it with my translator beforehand, we determined there is not a word for “transcultural” in Japanese, which was not surprising. For the purpose of translation, I worded it as “worship connects across cultures.” I used this topic as an opportunity to talk about the

different ways we worship and how we can learn from those who worship differently from us. I talked about how we should encourage each other in our diversity and artistic expression, within Biblical guidelines for worship.

When it came time to write, I informed them that they did not need to worry about writing a melody and that they should spend their time completing the lyrics. Since one participant had already written a great deal of the lyrics, they were able to move quicker in developing the lyrics and a clear format. After leaving them for about twenty minutes, they had already divided the lyrics between verses and the chorus. However, they were stuck on what to do about the length of the verses, which was rather long. In order to resolve the issue, I suggested that they take part of each verse and make those parts into pre-choruses. This would allow them to keep all the content without creating a never-ending verse. Since a pre-chorus has a different melody and rhythm from the verse, it changes it up just enough to keep the song interesting and lead into the chorus. They decided to follow my advice and chose a section at the end of each verse to make into two different pre-choruses.

I would like to reiterate that modern Japanese music closely follows Western music principles. This process of westernization began in the mid-1800s, so the music that people sing now closely follows that of the Western world. Though they have preserved their traditional music, it is only performed for special occasions, festivals, or religious activities. This music is not the music people have used conventionally in many years. Though it is sad to see this culture loss since traditional Japanese music is so beautiful, it would not have worked to try and push the idea of writing their song according to Japanese music theory. Many are not even familiar with it. In a culture in which the people have already become observers of their

historical music rather than participants, the song would potentially be more of a testament to their past as opposed to a genuine expression of worship as who they are now.

The participants chose to change a few of the lyrics from the participant's lyric idea sheet in order to follow the topic more closely. The song ended up being more focused on suicide and depression than fear of death, but the second verse still alludes to the hopelessness that can come with that fear. They still used John 14:6 in the chorus as a reference to the hope we have in Christ, but since the song was written from the perspective of the person struggling, I recommended that they change the words from "I am the way, the truth, and the life" to "You are the way, the truth, and the life." This way, they would maintain the same point of view throughout the song, making it a stronger piece.

They wanted to make a few alterations to the bridge, so I left them for about fifteen minutes to give them time to discuss what they wanted to do with it. Upon returning, they were struggling with what to do with a stand-alone lyric that had been placed on the idea sheet right before the chorus. I told them they didn't have to use it if they didn't have a spot for it, but they seemed to want to use it somewhere. This lyric consisted of two questions. Near the beginning of the chorus were two sentences that seemed to be answers to the two questions. Noticing this, they chose to incorporate the lyric into the chorus, having each question followed by the lyric that seemed to be its answer. The original first line of the chorus was moved to a later spot. Lastly, they changed some lyrics in the second pre-chorus in order to make a progressive distinction from the first to second pre-chorus. This transition made more sense after singing the chorus, which declared such truth. It would not make sense to still be entirely hopeless in the second verse. The second pre-chorus showed the person in the song have a glimmer of hope that they are unsure what to do with. As we completed the song, I was able to give more relevant

suggestions in the moment. It also gave me an opportunity to watch them work and see them come up with ideas all on their own. It was incredibly exciting once it was finished, and I celebrated the moment with them.

### **Making the Melody**

Originally, I analyzed two traditional Japanese lullabies because I wanted to incorporate elements of that into the new song's melody, particularly the mode the lullabies were written in. However, because the songwriters wrote the lyrics without melody in mind, the song was very wordy. The pentatonic scale which is used in traditional Japanese music became an issue because I did not have enough room for variety considering how many words had to be sung. I also faced a problem with tempo. The amount of words in each section required a quicker tune in order to keep the sections from dragging and seeming too long. However, the topic of the song had a very serious tone, making an upbeat tune and rhythm inappropriate. I had to find a proper balance between slow and swift.

Due to the replacement of Japanese music with Western music in music education during the Meiji Restoration, modern Japanese music is written according to Western music principles. Considering this, I chose to write the song in that fashion without using traditional modality. There are a few distinctions in Japanese worship music that I chose to implement instead. After listening to many Japanese worship songs and analyzing a few of them, I noticed that there is usually an extra measure or half a measure of music alone before the chorus. Their music rarely goes straight out of the verse into the chorus. In addition, they tend to favor melodies that end on the tonic of the key in which it's performed. As for accompaniment, Japanese worship music tends to follow the similar chord patterns that American worship music does, particularly

resembling worship music from the late 90s and early 2000s. The primary difference comes in how those chords are performed, which made it relatively simple to compose.

After I finished the melody and accompaniment, I played it for my translator. There were only a couple of spots that needed to be fixed to match the language better and provide a bit of breathing space in the lyrics. It really would have been impossible to compose if I had not already developed an understanding of how the Japanese language works, not just its pronunciation. This process showed me the importance of studying the language of the culture in which I am working with, even if it seems unnecessary for the work I will do. I was not expecting to compose the melody myself before the workshops started, but my knowledge of Japanese became necessary when I suddenly was the one composing it. There are always unexpected changes in the plan, so it is good to be prepared for anything.

### **Evaluations**

#### *Group Discussion*

At the conclusion of the last workshop, I had a group discussion with the participants who were attended the last workshop. Unfortunately, only two of the participants were present. I asked them five questions to hear about their experience. The first question inquired about the difficulties they had to overcome as a group. One participant shared that they were not present in the beginning of the workshops, and the people who were there in the beginning were not there anymore. Since the original writers were not all there to discuss with, this participant did not want to change what the others had already written or what they were thinking for the lyrics. This made it difficult for the participant to insert their own thoughts and feelings into the song because that would mean changing what the original attendees wanted to do. The other participant who was present for the discussion shared that they did not always have a group with

the same people from week to week, since the participants could not make it every single week. This was a common hindrance to all the participants.

The second question in the discussion asked the participants how their group worked through any difficulties they came across in the composition process. The participants replied that they all worked together to get past it. They did not expand beyond that.

The third question asked the participants what their favorite part of the songwriting process was. One participant said “finishing it”, which caused everyone to laugh. They continued and shared that they liked writing down ideas and concepts and thinking about how to change lyrics around and make them better. This participant shared that they really enjoyed things like that, so it was fun. They later shared in relation to this question that it was fun to read what the others had already written and try to figure out where they were coming from. The second participant present said that they enjoyed sharing the ideas to make a song. They said that I gave them the idea to make a melody, which inspired them to try making a melody spontaneously. That practice was really enjoyable for them.

The fourth question asked the participants why locally written worship music is important to both the Japanese Church and the Japanese people who are unsaved. One participant answered that it was important because the Japanese culture and way of life would be the face of the song, so it would just make more sense to their people. The other participant present shared that those Japanese who are not in the Church really need to know the truth, indicating that locally written worship music is a way to share that truth with them. As a secondary question, I asked them why they thought it would be just as important, if not more important, to use a Japanese worship song instead of a translated one. One of the participants shared that translating songs from English to Japanese is difficult because they often have to use a lot of words in

Japanese to get the point across, causing the words to be rushed and difficult to sing. Therefore, Japanese-written songs are easier.

The fifth and final question in the group discussion asked the participants why locally written worship music is important to the global Church. One of the participants responded, referring to the session in the “Worship Is...” series that I had shared at the beginning of the final workshop. They said that I had talked earlier about how worship connects us across cultures, so it is important, stating that our job is to just spread the gospel around the world.

### *Questionnaires*

In addition to a group discussion, I gave each of the participants a questionnaire to fill out in order to give them a chance to assess the workshops in detail (see Appendix). These were turned in to me and translated. The questionnaires consisted of six questions that allowed the participants to share their personal experience in detail, share what they learned, and give constructive criticism about the workshops. One participant requested to fill out their questionnaire in English, which is why there is no original Japanese document for one of the questionnaires in the Appendix.

The first question listed on the questionnaire asked each participant to share what their expectations of the songwriting process were before the workshops and if their perspective had changed at all as a result of the workshops. Half of the participants answered that they thought the songwriting process would be much more technical and difficult. One participant thought it was necessary to have an education in music theory in order to write a song but found that the beginnings of the process were focused on sharing ideas and expressing what each person wanted to write about. They discovered that the group just needed to get started. Another participant shared their relief for the group setting. They originally thought each person would

have to write a song on their own. They thought it was a good idea to work as a group because that allowed them to have a variety of ideas. Another participant said that they learned we could share Jesus with others through songwriting in a way that those who do not know him will understand.

The second question asked the participants if they had learned anything about worship through the “Worship Is...” series. This was a bit difficult to fully judge since each participant was only present at one or two sessions within that series. However, each of them had a different perspective to offer. One participant shared that they already knew prior to the workshops that worship is something to offer or give, but they had never thought of humility as an aspect of worship. Another shared that they believed worship is an offering and that true worship is an action from the heart. Through the workshops, this participant learned that songwriting can also be an offering to the Lord, claiming that we need to pour out our own hearts to God. Two participants took particular notice of worship as warfare with slightly differing perspectives. One of these participants shared that they learned worship is a tool to express respect and rejoice from our hearts to God, also saying that worship can be a weapon to fight against Satan. The other participant who favored the “Worship Is Warfare” session in the series shared that they learned worship is how we commit our spiritual battles to God. Worship can also stand against sin, anxiety, depression, and more. It can also be used as a weapon of intercession for someone else. The last participant may not have completely understood the question, but they shared that the reviews were “good.”

The third question asked the participants what sort of difficulties they encountered while co-writing and how they worked past those issues. Three of the participants answered quite similarly, sharing that while writing in a group was good, it made it difficult to decide on what to

write about with so many ideas, passions, and feelings. They had many options and had to work together to compress those thoughts down to one cohesive direction for the song. One participant shared that they overcame this by thinking of writing lyrics as though they were writing a story. Another shared that this was overcome because there was something common among them that they could agree on. One participant had a unique experience because they came in halfway through the workshops. This participant's difficulty was sorting through what the other participants wanted to write about. The initial planning stage had already passed and the direction for the song had already been decided. Only one of the original participants from the first week was there the first week this participant attended, so they were unable to really discuss with everyone where they wanted to go with the song. Seeing this, they joined with a "heart of prayer." The last participant shared that the same people did not show up every week. No one could make it to all four workshops, and this made it difficult for the participants to continue writing the song in the same direction from week to week.

The fourth question inquired whether the participants would continue to write songs. One shared that they would like to keep writing their thoughts into lyrics like a journal but did not believe they would be able to make a melody. Another shared that they would like to try songwriting again, stating that they did not get to write a melody this time, but through the songwriting process, they are able to recognize their thoughts and feelings toward God and what they are thinking. Another participant honestly said that they were unsure whether they would continue or not because they are currently working. However, they shared that it was very enjoyable and they hoped they could do it again in the future. Another participant shared that they would like to continue writing lyrics because they believe that the worship of any people

from any nation is a connector between God and people. The last participant shared that they wanted to continue songwriting because it was fun for them.

The fifth question asked the participants what they liked about the songwriting workshops. Four out of five of the participants commented on how they enjoyed group writing, stating that they enjoyed hearing everyone's thoughts and feelings. One participant shared that the experience enlarged their point of view. Another said that it gave them and the group an opportunity to talk about God and share ideas. Another shared that they liked the group songwriting process because they believed they personally would not have had any ideas working by themselves. The fifth participant shared that they liked learning how to make a melody.

The sixth and final question asked the participants how the songwriting workshops could have improved. One participant shared that they did not know anything about music and were new to songwriting. They believed it would have been helpful to have a bit more instruction for complete beginners. Another shared that it would be good to advertise to young people more and share why songwriting is so interesting along with why it is necessary. The participant who came in halfway shared that they wished they had known more details about the workshop ahead of time. I think many believed that they would be expected to attend all four weeks and were unwilling to participate as a result. Regardless, the participant said that it was a great learning opportunity for them. Another participant did not have any improvements to share. The last participant gave valuable feedback on the issues of scheduling. Since the Japanese people are so busy, it was difficult to find a time that would work for most everyone. This participant suggested adjusting or changing the schedule to be three-hour workshops once a week for just two weeks. They shared it was difficult to make it to all four weeks due to other responsibilities.

An alternate suggestion this participant gave was to create two days and times out of the week that participants could sign up for, giving them options that would increase their chances of being able to come.

### **Lasting Effects**

One of the most important parts of this case study was to see if there were any positive changes or benefits to the church, community, or individual as a result of the workshops. Some of this can be inferred from the participants' answers on the questionnaire, but some are merely observable. In terms of research, I believe this gave more detail on what does and does not work for a workshop in a Japanese context, though this will vary by region. The participants gave good feedback on what were positives of the workshops and what needed improvement.

One of the participants has taken an interest in writing Scripture songs. This was a need for the children's ministry that the missionaries conveyed to me before I arrived. This participant was so excited about picking Scripture and coming up with their own melody to go with it. There are many children's songs written from Scripture in English, but there are virtually none in Japanese. Access to original Japanese Scripture songs for children may help children remember parts of the Bible to recall in times of need.

Both the participants and the congregants were thrilled to have a song that was produced by their own people. When I sang the new song to them for the first time, many around the room were emotional or in tears. The participants were so excited to hear their completed work and wanted to have their own copy of the song. One of them sent a link to a television station that is run by a Christian family, hoping that it might be aired.

My translator for the songwriting workshops also happens to be the worship leader of Living Way Church. She translated every session of the "Worship Is..." series, and sometimes

she used what I shared in the workshop on Sunday morning the next day. She shared that she was learning things too in the sessions. Because she is the worship leader, she is on a much greater platform to continue teaching the congregation about worship. I believe that if the most that series did was encourage the worship leader and share new perspectives on worship, then it was successful. Since she is leading long-term, she will be able to build on that every Sunday morning, hopefully leading the congregation toward the truth about worship.

However, one of the most remarkable effects of that song had a much more eternal impact. The day the participants' song was shared, Living Way Church had two guests. One was a man from America who was friends with the missionaries and had lost his wife about three months prior. The other was a Japanese woman who was the sister of a church member and had lost her husband only two weeks prior. Since this song's theme was death and pain contrasted with the life and hope we have in Christ, it was incredibly emotional for them. After the service, these two individuals met for the first time, and the man shared his story with her. He told her that he understood what she was going through and that he had received comfort from Jesus. He then asked if she wanted that comfort too, and she said yes. So they prayed together and she accepted Christ. This encounter could be rationalized as a coincidence that these two people would choose the one week this song was performed to visit the church for the first time. However, this was clearly orchestrated by the Lord, and He used their original song to accomplish this and invite that Japanese woman to Himself.

### **In Retrospect**

In retrospect, there are some things I would have done differently after hearing some of the feedback, particularly with scheduling. Rather than facilitate workshops that are once a week, I would plan for a weekend of compressed material, and the workshops would last longer

each day than the hour and a half I used for each of my workshops. In addition, I would like to advertise for it at least six weeks prior, if not two months, and it would be advertised as a seminar. People would have to sign up in order to come, this way there would be less confusion about the workshops and how they work. It would also be an attempt to curb the issues in attendance.

I hope that there are future missionaries or researchers in Japan who will take what is documented here and learn from both my successes and mistakes. I saw people grow so much, going from doubting they could write a song to being so excited about it that they wanted to keep writing after the workshops were over. The song they wrote touched so many people and was used to lead someone to Christ while I was there. One of the primary things I learned was that success may not look the way you envisioned. So much of what I had planned needed to be changed once I entered the field and gained some context. Once those things were changed, my measures for success changed as well. What I originally planned was to have many more participants and produce many more songs over four weeks than we actually did. However, what I got was something far more personal. I got to be more hands-on with the group, and I shared a lot about worship that I believed I needed to share, though I did not originally plan for it. That song still meant a great deal to everyone in the end, and the process inspired a desire to continue writing in most of the participants. I was honored to work with them.

## Chapter 5 – Summary

Japan is known for being a country that values efficiency and hard work. Creativity in Japan is a bit different from what someone in America might think. America highly values creativity and individualism. Those aspects are actively encouraged, and in many cases, they are praised. Japan, on the other hand, is more communally focused, and while they do not necessarily discourage creativity, they do not actively encourage it either. However, they do have a significant appreciation for the arts and enjoy listening and observing arts and music from other cultures. Since Japan is a community-based culture rather than individualistic, they typically aim for uniformity among their people, at times suggesting that certain aspects of uniqueness may be an inconvenience to others. They are a polite culture driven by responsibility to family and community.

I could plainly see these principles in the participants' songwriting process. Though they enjoyed putting their thoughts together into a cohesive idea and formatting their song how they wanted it to function, they had real difficulty in getting started on actual lyrics, and in the end, they did not even attempt to write a melody. Most of them did not believe they would do it "correctly" or were too nervous to share out loud what they were thinking in their head. Essentially, they loved working on the internal function of the song but had a hard time expressing it creatively. This perfectly captured the tendencies of Japanese society.

### **Summary of Findings**

*What were the preconceptions and attitudes the participants had toward worship and songwriting prior to the workshops?* Most of the participants believed songwriting would be harder and more technical than it actually was. Some of their preconceptions or concerns before the workshops were uncertainty of what to expect and uneasiness with the potential of having to

write alone. They also thought it was a necessity to have training in music theory first before being able to write a song.

*Were there any changes in the participants' beliefs or attitudes about worship and songwriting during the workshops?* The participants shared that the process of songwriting was much simpler than they had expected. They were unsure what to expect prior to the workshops and thought they may have to write alone; however, they were relieved to write in a group. They learned that songwriting can also be an offering to the Lord. Among the participants on the topic of worship, they learned that humility is an aspect of worship, that worship is warfare, it is a tool to express respect and rejoice, it is how we commit our spiritual battles to God, it can be a weapon of intercession, and it can stand against sin, anxiety, depression, and more.

*Are there any lasting effects as a result of the workshops?* The song that the participants wrote is one that they continue to use on Sunday mornings during music and worship at Living Way Church. With the permission of the writers, it has also been brought to America and is currently performed by the East Asian Ensemble at the Liberty University School of Music. In addition, one of the participants really enjoyed taking excerpts from Scripture and creating a melody to sing it with. They are teaching the Scripture songs she has written to the children, providing them with an easier way to remember Scripture. This was an expressed need from one of the missionaries prior to my arrival on the field. While I helped teach them how to write, I did not emphasize children's songs. This participant developed an interest in writing Scripture songs all on their own as a way to practice composing a melody.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

One of the primary things I recommend going into a new culture for research is to enter with an open mind. Come with a plan of what you intend to do and how you want it to function,

but go in understanding that there are things that will likely change. I was able to research on Japan at large, but I could do little research on Shizuoka before coming given available sources, and I could not have a thorough understanding of Living Way Church or its congregants beforehand. Take the time to adjust and become familiar with the people. Obtain guidance from those who live there on how your project should function. Since I went in expecting aspects of my plan to change, I was not stubborn in adjusting my project to suit the needs of the church and not disappointed in having to change things. That mentality spared me a lot of frustration and made the transition much easier than it would have been otherwise.

Think carefully about what you intend to say. Speak simply and, if possible, go over what you want to say with your translator. I worked with an experienced translator, but sometimes the participants did not understand what was translated, and not at the fault of my translator. One word in particular that we repeatedly had issues with was the word “collaborate”. Even after it was translated, the participants did not seem to understand what we meant. Sometimes there is not an accurate word for word translation for what we say in English. Furthermore, a fairly common word in English, while it may have a Japanese equivalent, may not be so common and widely understood in the Japanese language.

I think there is a need for more songwriting workshops. There is undiscovered talent among the Japanese people and a real need for locally written worship music. It was such a difficult process for them, not because they were incapable, but because their culture is unforgiving should someone make a mistake. There is also a common perception that a person cannot do something unless they are particularly talented or a specialist in that area. There are a lot of cultural influences that I could see in their songwriting process. The need for songwriting goes much farther than just a need for new Japanese-produced songs for the church. Art is

widely appreciated by the Japanese people, regardless of what culture or religion is responsible for creating it. It is something that strongly captures the interest of the Japanese people. The song that the participants wrote was a powerful symbol for them as a church, but it also provided a means to connect with those outside the church. Because this was a locally written song, I had the opportunity to play their original song to my koto teacher, her daughter, and a newspaper reporter, none of whom were Christian. They were interested to hear what the local Japanese Christians had written and asked me if I would share it with them. Songwriting is so impactful on the church, but it is also impactful on the community. While culture definitely influences songwriting, I would suggest that songwriting is also able to influence culture.

It would be beneficial to hold more than one songwriting workshop in the same location, perhaps a year apart or less. This would give those who participated a second chance to write in a group and gain more experience. While many expressed an interest in continuing to write lyrics, the busy schedule of Japanese society rarely makes time for hobbies. It would be difficult to maintain and continue to write if one was not already passionate about songwriting. If they were given a chance to write again having already written once before, they may feel more comfortable with writing having already done it once before, resulting in a swifter songwriting process. The more experienced they become, the more they will be encouraged to continue writing on their own.

One topic that I believe is worth researching in the future is the deep appreciation the Japanese people have for observing the arts. My particular interest in this topic stems from a desire to use it in ministry. However, it would be fascinating to ask Japanese people from numerous prefectures about their own personal connections toward the arts and why they love it. In addition, the researcher could ask if certain kinds of art (music, theatre, dance, visual arts, etc.)

are more impactful for them and inquire as to why. This information could be incredibly beneficial to missionaries and evangelists in Japan, and it would give insight into the art preferences in modern Japan beyond their own Japanese arts.

The need for original worship music in the Japanese Church is still prevalent. Japan in particular has a certain appreciation for foreign arts, but there is something different when they encounter art that was created by their own people. Something about it makes them listen. I thoroughly believe that all art forms will play an integral role in reaching Japan for Christ. Therefore, I highly encourage the continuation of songwriting workshops in Japan. The music produced encourages the local church, and the experience equips them to keep writing music. I would also recommend teaching on the evangelical elements of songwriting if for no other reason but to prompt discussion and thought in the church on how to use music as outreach. Lastly, even if the study looks different from how it was imagined, do not be discouraged. Allow the locals to guide you through your project and make space for change. Sometimes what actually happens is much better than what was intended.

## Appendix

### Interview with Ricky, Sarah, and Ako

#### **Culture**

1. How would you describe the culture of Shizuoka? Is it fast-paced or relaxed? What might a typical day look like for someone who lives here?

*It is slower paced and relaxed. Not a lot of public transportation which would make things more crowded.*

2. What are some expectations that the culture of Shizuoka places on people, like with school, work, or public behavior?

*More traditions to live by in Shizuoka than Tokyo. Everything must be organized according to school policy. Very precise rules. Expect people to follow all laws including traffic laws. Show respect for the elderly, no pda, don't steal, don't hit a pedestrian.*

#### **Community**

1. How is Christianity perceived in the Shizuoka community? Do many people know about Christianity and the churches in this area?

*They probably know about the churches, but not personal knowledge. Perceived as a foreign religion. Christians are thought of to be holy and good people that are too good to be around. People have asked for permission to come to church "even though they aren't in the club".*

2. What kind of concerns do the Christians seem to have when interacting with non-Christian peers?

*Concern that they won't be accepted. They don't want to be thought of as strange or different.*

3. Do Christians seem to see themselves as less Japanese because they are Christian? Does the general public see Christians as less Japanese?

*Some people have said that people can't be both Japanese and Christian. Traditions and Ceremonies separate Christians from normal Japanese culture since many of these are in accordance to Japanese religions, rituals that Christians shouldn't follow.*

4. What factors may hinder someone's decision to give their life to Christ in this culture? Please give specific examples if you can.

*They don't want to be separated from their family in eternity. A lot of religion woven into work and school life.*

## Church

1. What are the greatest needs for Living Way Church?

*We need people to have a deep understanding of what it is to be Christian. They need to understand commitment to God. They tend to see it as a club, so that makes going to church seem optional. We have a problem getting people to serve. Even after they become a Christian, they still feel a strong pull toward family. We support family, but there are few families in the church because most of them are the one and only Christian in the family. Many young girls have left the church because they married a non-Christian man. Deliverance from fear. People are really afraid to be seen as different from other people and their own families.*

2. Are you in the process of trying to lead the church in a specific direction (other than simply toward Christ)?

*We've had a lot of new people. We've realized we need to go back and do a lot of the basics again, like giving and serving. We've had a lot of transitions lately because people having to leave Shizuoka or people graduating and having to leave to find a job. We are starting over in some ways. Trying to worship the Lord freely. Encouraging participation during worship.*

3. What are some difficulties that come with running church events here in Shizuoka?

*Scheduling. Finding a time when you can get any group of people together.*

4. Worship music in Japan sounds very Western already, so why did you see a need for worship music written by Japanese people?

*Imported thoughts and feelings are fine, but I think the native people needed to stand up and express their thoughts to the Lord. Old hymns have such rich doctrine in English, but it gets lost in translation. Not everyone can grasp all the English.*

5. Now that the workshops are over, what are you hoping will result from them?

*I hope it demonstrated that normal people can write a song. People tend to think you have to be a talented person or a specialist in order to do things.*

6. Why did your church begin singing a specific song after every baptism? Will you sing it for me so I can record it?

*Because the pastor liked it. Jesus Took the Victory Over Sin. Iesu wa Shouri wo Torareta*



# 4週間 作詞作曲 ワークショップ<sup>°</sup>

## FOUR-WEEK SONGWRITING WORKSHOPS

### 内容:

バージニア州リンチバーグにあるリバティ大学の大学院生であるケイティ・アン・マクヴィリアムズは、日本の教会で作詞作曲を研究するために来日しました。あなたも他のクリスチヤンと協力して新しい日本の礼拝音楽を作詞作曲するために、この4回のワークショップに参加しませんか！

### What to Expect:

Katie Ann McWilliams, a graduate student at Liberty University in Lynchburg, Virginia, is coming to study songwriting in the Japanese Church. You are invited to attend four songwriting workshops in which you will get to collaborate with other

4週コース作詞作曲  
ワークショップ<sup>°</sup>  
Four-Week Songwriting  
Workshops

兄弟姉妹と協力して  
日本の教会のための  
新しい音楽を作りましょう  
Work with your brothers and  
sisters to create new music for  
the Japanese Church

音楽理論や作詞作曲の経験不要!  
No Songwriting Experience  
Required!

会場: リビングウェイクリスチヤン教会  
VENUE: LIVING WAY CHRISTIAN  
CHURCH

住所: 静岡市葵区川合 3-13-14  
Address: Shizuoka-Ken Shizuoka-Shi  
Aoi-Ku Kawai 3-13-14

Tel: 054-247-9411

毎週土曜日 Saturday

日時 3月 30 日、4月 6 日、13 日、20 日  
March 30, April 6, 13, and 20

10:30 A.M. - 12:00 P.M.

## Session 1 – Introduction

Welcome (10:30)

Overview of how workshops will work.

- I will divide you into groups each week.
- For the first two weeks, your group will work on completing a song.
- I will walk around and try to help each group get past the initial thoughts of “What do we write about?” and “How do we get started?”
- At the end of every session, we will come together for a quick debrief.
- Next week after your group has completed a song, each group will present their song.
- If you’re not a singer or instrumentalist, don’t worry. Plenty of songwriters are strongest in writing lyrics.
- We will also have a group discussion at the end of the second week to share your group’s experience.
- On the third week, you will be divided into new groups and do it all over again.
- And on the fourth week, your group will present your new song.
- If you can’t make it to every workshop, don’t worry about it. You will still get credit for any song you contribute to.
- When the workshops are completed, you will receive sheet music to the songs your groups wrote and an audio recording of each. I will also try to send notes from each week so that you can use them for future reference.

Worship is...

- At the beginning of every workshop, I will speak for about ten minutes.
- I am doing a brief series on worship, simply entitled “Worship is...”
- I see this as extremely important because worship is referenced a lot but is rarely explained.
- New songs for the church are great, but they mean nothing if we don’t understand worship. “Worship” and “songs about God” are not the same thing. That tends to be a subconscious belief of many in the American church, and I’ve witnessed it among other cultures as well. It is so important that we see worship as more than songs.

So why are we doing this? Why is songwriting important?

- There are actually several references to the value of new songs throughout Scripture.
  - “Sing to the Lord a new song; sing to the Lord all the earth.” *Psalm 96:1*
  - “Speak to one another with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your hearts to the Lord.” *Ephesians 5:19*
  - “He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God. Many will see and fear, and put their trust in the Lord.” *Psalm 40:3* (Here we see that God inspires new music in His people specifically so that others may come to know Him as the one true God through songs.)
- There are plenty of other Scriptures about new music. (Rev. 5:9; Psalm 33:3; Psalm 98:1)
- I encourage you to explore Scripture further on your own.

### Tips on how to get started

- Content
  - Use Scripture (I would encourage you not to use the Scripture exactly as written, but use it as a starting point for what to write about) Normally, you could do that, but this workshop is meant to help teach you how to write lyrics as well as music.
  - What needs do you see in your community or in Japan as a whole?
  - What has God done in you personally?
- Music
  - Think through the rhythm of the words. (Lord you are good and your mercy endureth forever)
  - Add a melody
  - Remember it doesn't have to be perfect the first time. Work with it until you get what you want.
  - For those of you who can play instruments, when you want to add accompaniment, you can follow the melody. Pick chords that match the tune of the melody and get creative with how you play them.
- You can begin songwriting with any of these three: lyrics, melody, or accompaniment, whichever works best for your group. As long as you use these three elements, your group can successfully write a song.

Divide Groups (10:45)

Begin walking around to groups (11:00)

Remind everyone to record what they already have on their phones before wrapping up (11:45)

Call everyone back for debrief (11:50)

## Session 2 – Worship is Humility and Sacrifice

Welcome (10:30)

### Worship is Humility

- Worship is not just religious rituals and habits that we have designated for that purpose. One reason why the old covenant was considered incomplete was that it did not account for the state of people's hearts in addition to their outward obedience.
- The people of the Old Testament followed the procedures for worship that God had laid out for them; however, they were only following the traditions handed down to them, not out of obedience or love for God, but out of habit.
- *"Then the Lord said, 'This people draw near with their words And honor Me with their lip service, But they remove their hearts far from Me, And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote."* **Isaiah 29:13**
  - In order to truly understand how valuable Jesus is and how much we need Him, we must first understand how hopeless and unclean we are without Him. It's easy to think you're a good person when you don't do the REALLY bad stuff. It's also easy to think you're good when you're looking around at everyone else who seems to be worse than you.
  - I was a very obedient kid. I always wanted to do the right thing, even as I got older. Around my friends in high school, I certainly did look like a good person. I followed a much stricter moral code than my friends did, and I took pride in that. However, during my first year of college, God changed my life and showed me what life was like with Him. I knew a lot about God having grown up in the church, but I had not experienced Him personally.
  - Within the first few days of my new life in Christ, God opened my eyes and showed me through His Word that I had a very prideful heart. All the good I was doing had nothing to do with God. It had to do with how I wanted people to see me. I wanted them to see me as the moral goal to look up to and strive for.
  - There were a number of other things that God revealed to me about myself, things that were not at all honoring to Him. Be careful how much value you place on outward behavior. You may find that your heart and mind aren't as innocent as they may appear from the outside.
- *"Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: 'God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.' But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me, the sinner!'* I tell you, this man went to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but he who humbles himself will be exalted." **Luke 18:10-14**
  - I am not telling you all of this so that you feel terrible about yourself. I say this because we all have to make a daily decision to humble ourselves before God and before others. God loves us so much, not just as His Church, but as individuals. Because He loves us, He corrects our ways. He knows that the ways of the world will condemn us and forever separate us from Himself.

- Humility in our worship is about surrendering our lives to God and His purposes. Humility is about serving and loving others, even if we do not agree with them or get along with them. Humility is about following Christ's example of servanthood. Humility comes in understanding the depths of God's grace and mercy, because we know how much we need it.
- *"Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. Being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross." Philippians 2:5-8*

### Worship is Sacrifice

- Many religions worship their gods either to appease their wrath or to receive blessings and fortune.
- However, Christianity does not function this way. We are not to worship God for what we can get out of Him. We are also not meant to worship Him to avoid His anger. His blessings and mercy are part of who He is, and we can worship Him for those, but those are not WHY we worship Him. Because of this fundamental difference, our worship is different as well.
- *"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:23-24*
  - The context of this Scripture comes from the story of the Samaritan woman at the well. In her conversation with Jesus, she told him how her people worship in the mountains, while the Jews claim that Jerusalem is the place they ought to worship.
  - When Jesus responded and said that true worshippers will worship in spirit and truth, he was clarifying that worship was no longer confined to a single location as it was in the Old Testament. With the coming of Jesus and the new covenant, worship became a matter of the heart, not external actions. It was also now to be guided by truth, not tradition.
- *"Therefore I urge you, brothers, on account of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to discern what is the good, pleasing, and perfect will of God." Romans 12:1-2*
  - God wants your hearts. He wants you to know Him personally. When you gave yourself to God, He wanted all of you, the good and the bad. But we all have things we have difficulty sacrificing in order to draw nearer to Him. That could be our finances, our families, our friends, our futures, our reputations, the things we spend the most time thinking about. It could even be sin buried deep in our heart that we have trouble handing over to Him.
  - God sees it all, and He wants us to be willing to sacrifice what we want for what He has for us. He is for us and not against us.

Time of Worship with "All of Me" followed by prayer (11:00)

Prayer: God, please open my eyes. Please expose areas of my life that I have not given to You. Humble me, Father, so that I can see the beauty of Your grace and learn how to show others that grace too. Show me how You want me to serve Your Church and those who don't know you yet. Please teach me how to surrender all of me to Your good and perfect will. Continue to show me more of who You are and draw me closer to You, Father. I want to know You more. Thank you, Lord, that You love me enough to correct me. Thank You for always guiding me in mercy and grace, instead of condemning me in anger and disappointment. You are a good and faithful God. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Divide Groups (11:10)

Debrief (12:15)

### Session 3 – Worship is Warfare

Welcome (10:45)

#### Worship is Warfare

- “*For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the powers, against the world forces of this darkness, against the spiritual forces of wickedness in the heavenly places.*” **Ephesians 6:12**
- Story of Gideon
  - The Israelites were about to go into battle with the camp of Midian. In preparation for their attack, God asked Gideon to take fewer men into battle with him. This was so that no one would believe it was by their own strength. In the end, Gideon had 300 men. Rather than going in with swords as their weapon, the men were given trumpets and empty pitchers.
  - After they surrounded the Midian camp, they broke their pitchers and blew their trumpets.
  - “*When they blew 300 trumpets, the Lord set the sword of one against another even throughout the whole army; and the army fled...*” **Judges 7:22a**
- I have also had my own experiences with worship as warfare.
  - One night when I was in college, all the other girls in my apartment announced they were going to bed. Instantly, I felt anxious like something was about to happen. I felt like Satan was watching me. So I went to my room and crawled into the top bunk bed to work on a paper I had due. I turned on some worship music and Christmas lights and got to work. Shortly after, however, I saw a shadow fall over the perimeter of the room. I looked up and saw these bat-like demons surrounding the room and staring at me. Somehow, my first reaction was to turn my worship music louder and sing along. After worshipping for awhile, I looked up and they were gone.
  - It can be easy to be afraid of what the devil and his demons are capable of. But his power pale's in comparison to the power of the God we worship. And because we belong to God, we get to share in His victories.
  - “*You are from God, little children, and have overcome them; because greater is He who is in you than he who is in the world.*” **1 John 4:4**
  - Worship is kind of like setting our eyes completely on God and giving the battle to Him rather than trying to fight it by ourselves. Worship IS one of our weapons. It can battle depression, anxiety, and sin itself. It can even intercede for someone else's spiritual battles. It is immensely powerful.
  - “*For though we live in the world, we do not wage war as the world does. The weapons we fight with are not the weapons of the world. On the contrary, they have divine power to demolish strongholds. We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we take captive every thought to make it obedient to Christ.*” **2 Corinthians 10:3-5**

## Session 4 – Worship is Transcultural

Welcome

### Worship is Transcultural

- There is a common saying that claims music is a universal language. Some things can be communicated through music that may be difficult to convey in words. However, to claim music is a universal language is to assume that everyone can understand it. Have you ever heard a style of music that you didn't like and thought "how does anyone like this kind of music?" Or "Does this even qualify as music?" That's how my parents and relatives feel about heavy metal music. That alone is proof that music is not universal. But just because it is a music you don't prefer, that doesn't mean it isn't music.
- The same is true of worship. In different cultures, we see a number of various expressions of worship. We see this even between churches within the same culture. Some churches dance and sing loudly, while others don't dance at all and sing without much expression. Some may read written prayers while others prefer spontaneous prayer. Some may sing mostly hymns while others prefer modern worship songs. There are all kinds of worship expressions in this world, but none of them could be considered universal.
- These different expressions have unfortunately been the cause of arguments in the church. Some people suggest dancing in church is disrespectful. More charismatic groups may question the passion or salvation of those who seem outwardly inexpressive. Many churches have separated from their brothers and sisters in Christ over silly arguments that have no Biblical support. There are Biblical guidelines for worship, but God left quite a bit of artistic freedom for His people to express their worship in a number of ways. Ways that express both their personal and cultural identity. God's heart is for all nations and languages.
- The cool thing about worship though is that we are united under one God. No matter how differently we express our praise, we are connected beyond our culture and beyond language barriers. In other words, worship is transcultural.
- *"After this I looked, and behold, a great multitude that no one could number, from every nation, from all tribes and peoples and languages, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes, with palm branches in their hands, and crying out with a loud voice, 'Salvation belongs to our God who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb!'"*  
**Revelation 7:9-10**
- It can always be difficult to get along with people with a different background or cultural experience. But when it comes to God's Church, let's allow our different expressions of worship to build each other up. Let us be encouraged that we are not alone in the world, that God is being honored among people who aren't like us. Because as we read in Revelation, heaven is going to be filled with all of God's people from every nation. If you look even further in Scripture, we see that God's kingdom will be diverse. So let's learn from each other and worship our God together as ONE body and ONE mind in Christ.

- “*I appeal to you, brothers, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree, and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be united in the same mind and the same judgment.*” **1 Corinthians 1:10**
- “*I therefore, a prisoner for the Lord, urge you to walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, eager to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*” **Ephesians 4:1-6**

### Questions for Group Discussion

1. What difficulties did you have to overcome as a group while collaborating?

*Participant 1: Since I wasn't here from the beginning and the people who were here in the beginning aren't here now, I didn't want to change what they wrote, what they were thinking about the lyrics. I didn't want to change that, so that made it a bit hard for me. I did not want my feelings or ideas to change what they wanted to do for the song.*

*Me: Most collaborations don't have people intermittently coming and going. Everybody comes and sits down and works together, so it's not two people here and two people there.*

*Participant 2: We were not getting together as a group with the same people.*

2. How did your team find a way to work through the problems that you had?

*Participant 1: We were all helping.*

*Me: So you worked together to overcome it.*

3. What did you enjoy the most about the songwriting process?

*Participant 1: I guess just finishing it. (Everyone laughs) I like writing things and thinking about how to change it around and make it better. I like doing things like that, so that's pretty fun.*

*Participant 2: Sharing the idea to make a song. And then you gave me idea to make a melody. I know that I am going to join, but I tried to make a melody after my work, so my own melody to write a song. That's what I enjoyed.*

*Me: So you enjoyed working on a melody and trying to think of one? That's great, kudos to you, cuz I think that was assumed to be one of the hardest parts for everybody was coming up with a melody.*

*Participant 2: I really wanted to focus on that Scripture, but the people shared a different thought, so...??? Sakai-san. She did a very good job to work on it because she didn't come to the first and second session. She has many experience in reading the book and her thoughts. She's very good.*

*Participant 1: Just reading what they had already written and trying to figure out where they were coming from, that was fun.*

4. Why do you think that locally written worship music is important to the Japanese Church? What about the Japanese people who are not in the church?

*Participant 1: Because the Japanese culture and Japanese ways would be the face of the song. So it would just make more sense.*

*Me: What about the Japanese people who are not in the church?*

*Participant 2: I think that they really need to know the truth.*

*Me: Why do you think it would be just as important, if not more important, for it to be Japanese worship song instead of a translated song? Do you think that would make a difference?*

*Participant 1: Translating songs from English to Japanese, we often have to use a lot of words in Japanese to get the point across, so Japanese-written song is easier.*

## 5. Why is it important to the Global Church?

*Participant 1: You talked earlier about how worship connects us across cultures. So it's important...So our job is to just spread the gospel around the world.*

## Questionnaire One (Japanese)

アンケート

1. ワーク ショップの前に作詞作曲のプロセスについてあなたはどのようなことをイメージしていましたか？ グループでの作詞作曲活動によって、そのあなたの見方はどのように変わりましたか？

作詞や作曲の具体的な方法。音楽的には浮いてたくさんあると思っていましたが、グループでは、みんなの考えや表現したことを見ながら、考え方理解するところからスタートしてやめてみんなが「や」と思っていました。

2. ワークショップのはじめに礼拝についての短い講義がありました。それによつて礼拝についてのあなたの理解は何か変わりましたか？（新たな理解は得られましたか？）もしそうならば、それはどのように変わったのですか？

礼拝はすべてのいい意識はありますし、謙遜についてはあり意識していかなければいけない。それで見ていく。

3. グループで曲を創作する中であなたが体験した難しさは何でしたか？それを乗り越えるためにどうしましたか？

個人でも作詞作曲に挑戦してみたかったり、私はグループで活動できて良かったと思いました。でもグループ全員の思いを作品作りで全て表現できなかつたので、みんなの思いをひとつにまとめる方向性を教えてもらったり難しかったです。

4. 今後も作詞作曲を続けてみようと思いますか、または思いませんか？それはどうしてですか？

自己のより、自分の思いを詞にしていくことは、少しやってみたいと思うのですが、よく歌って聞くことが多いです。

5. 作詞作曲ワークショップについて好きだった点は何でしたか?

グループで話し合ったり、他の人の考え方や機会とか、  
良かったり悪かったりなど、自分自身で作詞作曲などをあり得る  
感じという意識を新たに持つことができて良かったです。  
視野が広がりました。

6. どうすればこのワークショップはもっと改善すると思いますか?

私の場合、本当に何でも音楽的知識で作詞作曲を試した  
ことはなかったです。本当に下手人はどうすればいいのかなど  
点を何分教えて貰うといいかも知れません。

ご参加いただきありがとうございました!

## Questionnaire One (Translation)

### Questionnaire

1. What were your expectations about songwriting prior to the workshops? How has your perspective changed through group songwriting?

*“Before, I thought there would be a lot of detailed methods of writing lyrics or writing melody. I thought we may need to learn a lot of theory first, but instead of music theory, we shared our ideas and what we wanted to express. I found out we just needed to get started.”*

2. Did our series on worship at the beginning of each workshop change your understanding of worship? If so, how has it changed?

*“Before, I was aware that worship is something to offer or give, but I didn’t think about humility, so that was what I learned.”*

3. What were some of the difficulties you encountered while writing as a group? How did you work past these difficulties?

*“I never tried songwriting before, so it was good for me to do it in a group. However, it’s not like everyone’s thoughts and feelings can be used in the song, so it was a challenge to put all of our ideas into one direction for the song.”*

4. Do you think you will continue to write songs in the future? Why or why not?

*“I thought maybe I can try to put my thoughts into the lyrics like a journal, but I don’t think I could come up with a melody.”*

5. What did you like about the songwriting workshops?

*“This was a chance to find out other people’s thoughts by talking in the group. It is good for me to have new thoughts that I am able to write a song. It really enlarged my point of view.”*

6. How could they have improved?

*“In my case, I did not have any knowledge about music and had never tried songwriting. So it would have been helpful to have a bit more instruction for beginners.”*

***Thank you so much for participating!***

## Questionnaire Two (Japanese)

アンケート

1. ワーク ショップの前に作詞作曲のプロセスについてあなたはどのようなことをイメージしていましたか？ グループでの作詞作曲活動によって、そのあなたの見方はどのように変わりましたか？

作詞は一人で行うものと見えていました。  
グループで行うところが幅が広がり、色々なアイデアを出してまとめて書く感じ。

2. ワークショップのはじめに礼拝についての短い講義がありました。それによって礼拝についてのあなたの理解は何か変わりましたか？（新たな理解は得られましたか？）もしそうならば、それはどのように変わったのですか？

礼拝とはそこで、自分が行動が真、礼拝 いいうことか  
おさげました。  
ヨハニスの作詞、作曲もそこで、自分の心と神様との接い  
達出来るのはいい感じになりました。

3. グループで曲を創作する中であなたが体験した難しさは何でしたか？それを乗り越えるためにどうしましたか？

色々なアイデアがあり、幅が広い分、それぞれのが難しかった  
方が、作詞をストーリー化する、テーマを決めてまとめる  
ことで、問題を解決しました。

4. 今後も作詞作曲を続けてみようと思いますか、または思いませんか？それはどうしてですか？

もちろん続けてます。作曲には神様へ向かって、作詞を通して、自分が  
今までの経験や感情を表現する事が好きです。

## 5. 作詞作曲ワークショップについて好きだった点は何でしたか?

ブルーノーが、みんなで、色々人の歌を、アドバイスをもらえた  
 事が。  
 一人一人が全然アイデアが湧いてる感じが良くて。

## 6. どうすればこのワークショップはもっと改善すると思いますか?

日程が~~結構~~長い。出来事も1日の7-7時半でも3時半  
 くらい一気に進みかけたりの回数もかなり多い。  
 全部出来事も長いのは予想もありました。  
 また、毎日、時間帯を変えてリエーションをいくつか開催してほしい  
 事が、ありました。

1日しか参加できませんでしたが、とても楽しく過ごしました。  
 ありがとうございました。

ご参加いただきありがとうございました!

## Questionnaire Two (Translation)

### **Questionnaire**

1. What were your expectations about songwriting prior to the workshops? How has your perspective changed through group songwriting?

*“Before, I thought the lyrics were going to be written by one person, but it was a good idea to work as a group because there is a variety of ideas can be contributed.”*

2. Did our series on worship at the beginning of each workshop change your understanding of worship? If so, how has it changed?

*“Before, I understood that worship is an offering and true worship is an action from our hearts. Through learning, my perspective has changed that songwriting can also be an offering to the Lord, and we need to pour out our own hearts to God.”*

3. What were some of the difficulties you encountered while writing as a group? How did you work past these difficulties?

*“It was hard to put various ideas and variety into one song. That problem was resolved by thinking writing the lyrics is just like writing a story. We could decide on a theme and put it together.”*

4. Do you think you will continue to write songs in the future? Why or why not?

*“I would like to try again. This time, we didn’t get to make a melody, but I can recognize my thoughts and feelings toward God and what I’m thinking right now through the songwriting process.”*

5. What did you like about the songwriting workshops?

*“To get to know other people’s thoughts and ideas by working as a group. I don’t think I would have had any idea working by myself.”*

6. How could they have improved?

*“Adjusting or changing the schedule. If possible, one workshop could be a three hour workshop for two weeks and it would be helpful for me to find time in my schedule. It was very difficult for me to make it four weeks. And you could have more variation for time and day of the week. Even though I was only able to come one day out of four, it was still very fruitful and a great opportunity for me. Thank you.”*

***Thank you so much for participating!***

## Questionnaire Three (Japanese)

アンケート

1. ワーク ショップの前に作詞作曲のプロセスについてあなたはどのようなことをイメージしていましたか？ グループでの作詞作曲活動によって、そのあなたの見方はどのように変わりましたか？

イスラムのことをストリートに伝えようとしてます。  
確かに、積極的にかみいこして形で表わせます。  
イスラムを知らない人にわかりやすく伝えようとします。

2. ワークショップのはじめに礼拝についての短い講義がありましたが、それによつて礼拝についてのあなたの理解は何か変わりましたか？（新たな理解は得られましたか？）もしそうならば、それはどのように変わったのですか？

神主をニコニコ敬うため、善いため表れやすかった。  
それは、サタンへの武器にもなります。

3. グループで曲を創作する中であなたが体験した難しさは何でしたか？  
それを乗り越えるためにどうしましたか？

人々がいろいろな表現があり、意見がけます。  
歌詞を一つにいくつある。しかし、同じ違う二つで  
共通点がある見つけたり、一致見つけたり。

4. 今後も作詞作曲を続けてみようと思いますか、または思いませんか？  
それはどうしてですか？

結婚でいくかはわからない。今は仕事があります。  
しかし、楽しかったのでまたしたいと思う。

5. 作詞作曲ワークショップについて好きだった点は何でしたか?

グループ一箇所で作り上げていく作業。

6. どうすればこのワークショップはもっと改善すると思いますか?

若い人に宣伝。力を伝えろ。  
必要性を伝えろ。

ご参加いただきありがとうございました!

Questionnaire Three (Translation)

**Questionnaire**

1. What were your expectations about songwriting prior to the workshops? How has your perspective changed through group songwriting?

*"We can tell about Jesus directly and in various ways. We can tell about Jesus in a way that people who don't know Jesus can understand."*

2. Did our series on worship at the beginning of each workshop change your understanding of worship? If so, how has it changed?

*"Worship is a tool to express our respect and rejoice from our hearts to God. And worship can be a weapon to fight against Satan."*

3. What were some of the difficulties you encountered while writing as a group? How did you work past these difficulties?

*"Each person has a different expression and passion for different things, so it was difficult to put it together into one thing. However, while talking together we had something common among each other and found something we could agree with."*

4. Do you think you will continue to write songs in the future? Why or why not?

*"I'm not sure whether I will continue or not, because I am currently working. However, it was very enjoyable, so I hope I can in the future."*

5. What did you like about the songwriting workshops?

*"The process of making one song together as a group."*

6. How could they have improved?

*"Advertising to the young people more and telling people why songwriting is so interesting along with its necessity."*

***Thank you so much for participating!***

## Questionnaire Four (Japanese)

アンケート

1. ワーク ショップの前に作詞作曲のプロセスについてあなたはどのようなことをイメージしていましたか? グループでの作詞作曲活動によって、そのあなたの見方はどのように変わりましたか?

ワークショップは参加するまでは、作詞作曲はとても難しい。

イメージしていました。

後半で参加して、グループで活動することで楽しかった

感じました。

2. ワークショップのはじめに礼拝についての短い講義がありましたが、それによって礼拝についてのあなたの理解は何か変わりましたか? (新たな理解は得られましたか?) もしそうならば、それはどのように変わったのですか?

礼拝、靈的の尊厳と神に向むけること。

靈的配、うつ等に対する抗こさむ 他のとの尊厳と武威とをもつこと

3. グループで曲を創作する中であなたが体験した難しさは何でしたか?  
それを乗り越えるためにどうしましたか?

途中から参加した感じで、何を一番伝えたいか皆で

何を目的として進めていくか分かりにくかった。

話し合う時間があまりない感じで手作りながら進めた感じ。

4. 今後も作詞作曲を続けてみようと思いますか、または思いませんか?  
それはどうしてですか?

作詞は続けてみたいと思は。

人々(民族)の礼拝も神に対して神山にはと思う。

5. 作詞作曲ワークショップについて好きだった点は何でしたか?

皆の考え方、感じている事を分かり合えたところは良いと思った。  
普段、神さまについて言いたい限り、ひとつ目の目的を成し遂げた  
行程がうれしかった。

6. どうすればこのワークショップはもっと改善すると思いますか?

全日程を出席できなかったので、~~他の~~ 事前アケチス会  
内容の詳細がもう少し分かればと感じました。

とても勉強になりました。ありがとうございました。

ご参加いただきありがとうございました!

### Questionnaire Four (Translation)

#### Questionnaire

1. What were your expectations about songwriting prior to the workshops? How has your perspective changed through group songwriting?

*"Before I was attending the workshop, my image of songwriting was that it was difficult. But I attended the last two times of the workshop, and I enjoyed working as a group."*

2. Did our series on worship at the beginning of each workshop change your understanding of worship? If so, how has it changed?

*"Worship is how we commit our spiritual battle to God. I also learned that worship can stand against sin, anxiety, depression, etc. It can also be a weapon in battle for others (intercession)."*

3. What were some of the difficulties you encountered while writing as a group? How did you work past these difficulties?

*"Because I came in the middle, at first I did not really understand what message the group wanted to convey or the purpose of the song. I didn't have time to talk to them, so I just joined with a heart of prayer."*

4. Do you think you will continue to write songs in the future? Why or why not?

*"I would like to continue writing lyrics, because I think that the worship of any people from any nation is a connector between God and people."*

5. What did you like about the songwriting workshops?

*"It was very good to share everyone's thoughts and feelings. The process of group songwriting gave me and the group an opportunity to talk about God and share ideas."*

6. How could they have improved?

*"Because I was not able to attend all four workshops, and I wished I would have known a bit more detail about them ahead of time. It was a good learning opportunity for me. Thank you very much."*

***Thank you so much for participating!***

## Questionnaire Five

Questionnaire

1. What were your expectations about songwriting prior to the workshops? How has your perspective changed through group songwriting?

o It ~~is~~ about making a song with a melody!  
o My perspective haven't changed through group songwriting!

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2. Did our series on worship at the beginning of each workshop change your understanding of worship? If so, how has it changed?

o They were very good reviews!

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3. What were some of the difficulties you encountered while writing as a group? How did you work past these difficulties?

o Same people didn't show up to work on the songwriting for the each session of the workshops!

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4. Do you think you will continue to write songs in the future? Why or why not?

o Yes, I do think so!  
o The reason I continue to do songwriting is fun for me.

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4/30/2019

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5. What did you like about the songwriting workshops?

I liked that I learned to make my own melody!

6. How could they have improved?

I think they did a good job!

Thank you so much for participating!

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