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## Japanese Returnee Ministries



# YOU ARE IN GOD'S FIELD

***USING THE AGRICULTURAL  
METAPHOR TO DEVELOP  
AN EFFECTIVE APPROACH  
TO EVANGELISM***

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*Cecil & Debbie O'Dell – Japanese Returnee Ministries  
Taken from the ACTS principles © 4-15-01, Dave Guiles*



# **BRAKING MY ON PRINCIPLE**

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***Don't just  
dump information...***



© 2003 GBIM

***...plant seed truths***

# THANK GOD FOR THE ON GOING WORK OF THE GOSPEL!

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*“All over the world the gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God’s grace in all its truth.”*

Colossians 1:6

# YOU ARE IN GOD'S FIELD

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When analyzed together and reduced to their simplest form, these New Testament Passages focus attention on four basic areas:

YOU ARE IN GOD'S FIELD - THE SEED



***The Seed***

# YOU ARE IN GOD'S FIELD - THE SOIL



***The Soil***

**YOU ARE IN GOD'S FIELD – THE GROWTH PROCESS**

## ***The Growth Process***



# YOU ARE IN GOD'S FIELD - THE LABORERS



***The Laborers***

# EVANGELISM IS A PROCESS

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- ✓ We must begin where fallen man is found, and lead him into a personal relationship with God through Jesus Christ.
- ✓ Everyone lacks adequate information or believes mistaken information about God, man, sin and Jesus Christ, and must be exposed to Biblical revelation concerning these doctrines.

# EVANGELISM IS A PROCESS

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- ✓ In societies with little or no Bible tradition, this may require that we establish the Bible Story Line beginning with Creation.
- ✓ In societies with a distorted view of Christianity, we must take adequate measures to correct misconceptions and errors.
- ✓ Oftentimes this requires that we lead non-believers through a process of redefining their concepts of God, man, sin, grace, etc., according to Biblical truth.

# EVANGELISM IS A PROCESS

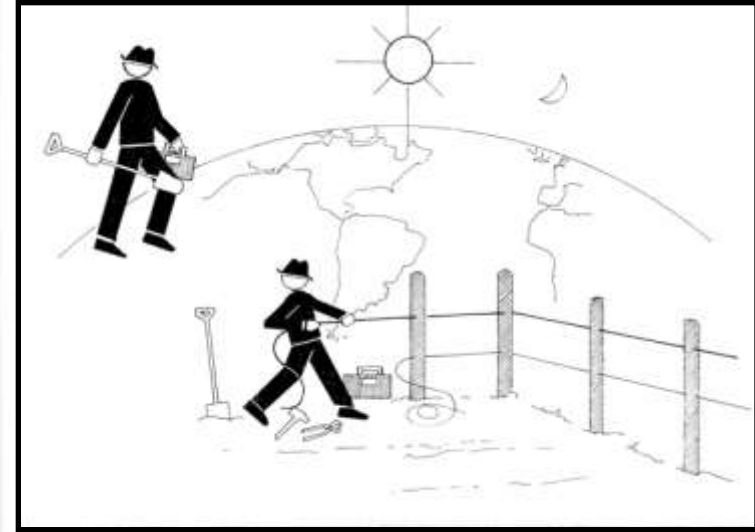
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- ✓ Never assume that others share your definitions of these key truths!
- ✓ Regeneration is a act!
- ✓ While remaining sensitive to the process of evangelism, we must not neglect the fact that there is a moment of choice in which we repent and believe (see Acts 2:37-41; 4:4; 16:30-35; John 5:24, etc.).
- ✓ The external, visible testimony and evidence of that decision is expressed in identifying with the Father, Son & Holy Spirit in the form of water baptism and a process of spiritual growth.

# PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

## Principle # 1

**Discover the field that  
God has assigned you!**



(“The field is the world”) - Matthew 13:38

(“We will confine our boasting to the field God Has assigned to us, a field that reaches even to you.”)

2 Corinthians 10:13

# PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

## Principle #2

**Determine and fulfill the task that God has assigned you!**



*“... as the Lord has assigned to each his task. I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”*

*1 Corinthians 3:5~6*

*“Thus the saying ‘one sows and another reaps’ is true. I sent you to reap what you have not worked for. Others have done the hard work, and you have reaped the benefit of their labor.”*

*John 4:37~38*

# PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

## Principle #3

### **Sow true seed, The Word & Yourself**



*“The farmer sows the word.”* Mark 4:14

*“Humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you”* James 1:21b; 1 Peter 1:23.

*“The good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom.”* Matthew 13:38

*“Unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.”* John 12:24  
(Compare with 1 Corinthians 15:36)

# KEY CONCEPT: JESUS IS SOWING US INTO THE WORLD

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*“The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man.  
The field is the world ...” 37-38*

**APPLICATION: How do you determine where you should labor?**

For most Christians, this means the world into which they have been placed – they are being sown, whether they chose to accept it or not.

Those fulfilling an apostolic role of beginning new ministries seek to determine the “field” where Jesus is sending them – 2 Cor 10:12-18.

## KEY CONCEPT: TO BE SOWN, SEED MUST COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE SOIL

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**Jesus is the supreme example of identifying with the soil.**

**Phil 2:5-8**

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death — even death on a cross!*

**Jn 1:14**

*“The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us.”*

KEY CONCEPT: TO BE SOWN, SEED MUST COME INTO CONTACT WITH THE SOIL

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## Paul followed the pattern set by Jesus

*“I have become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some.” 1Cor 9:19-23*

*“We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well.” 1 Thess 2:8*

**APPLICATION: What will it mean for you to identify with those you are called to reach?**

## KEY CONCEPT: TO BEAR FRUIT, SEED MUST “DIE”

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*“Unless a kernel of grain falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.” John 12:24*

*“This is my gospel, for which I am suffering even to the point of being chained like a criminal. But God’s word is not chained. Therefore I endure everything for the sake of the elect, that they too may obtain the salvation that is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.” 2 Tim 2:9-10*

**APPLICATION: What are practical ways in which you can “die” that might result in life for others?**

# KEY CONCEPT: *THE WORD OF GOD AS SEED*

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## Illustrated by the parable of the sower

Mt 13:3-23; Mark 4:3-25; Luke 8:5-18

*“The farmer sows the word.”* Mark 4:14

*“The seed is the word of God.”* Luke 8:11

*“... humbly accept the word planted in you, which can save you.”* James 1:21b

## KEY CONCEPT: THE WORD OF GOD MUST BE SOWN IN HEARTS

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### How did early believers sow the Word of God?

Some observations on the content of the message of the early church:

#### 1. The message flowed from Scripture

*“But I have had God's help to this very day, and so I stand here and testify to small and great alike. I am saying nothing beyond what the prophets and Moses said would happen -- that the Christ would suffer and, as the first to rise from the dead, would proclaim light to his own people and to the Gentiles.” Acts 26:22-23*

Peter describes it in this way – *“For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.” 1 Pet 1:23.*

What might be examples of *perishable seed* that can enter into our evangelistic efforts?

## KEY CONCEPT: THE WORD OF GOD MUST BE SOWN IN HEARTS

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### 2. The message always sought to present the authentic person and work of Christ.

*“For I resolved to know nothing while I was with you except Jesus Christ and him crucified.” 1 Cor 2:2*

*“Now, brothers, I want to remind you of the gospel I preached to you ... By this gospel you are saved,... For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Peter, and then to the Twelve.” 1 Cor 15:1-5*

How might preconceived ideas about Christ affect the way in which we seek to present him?

# WORLD VIEWS AND THE GOSPEL – WHERE DO YOU START?

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## 3. The message was adapted to the needs and worldview of the audience

The crowds in Jerusalem on Pentecost – Acts 2:14-41

The Ethiopian official – Acts 8:26-35

The people of Lystra – Acts 14:8-18

The people of Athens – Acts 17: 16-34

The Jews in Rome – Acts 28:17-31

The People of Japan - The People of Norwalk?

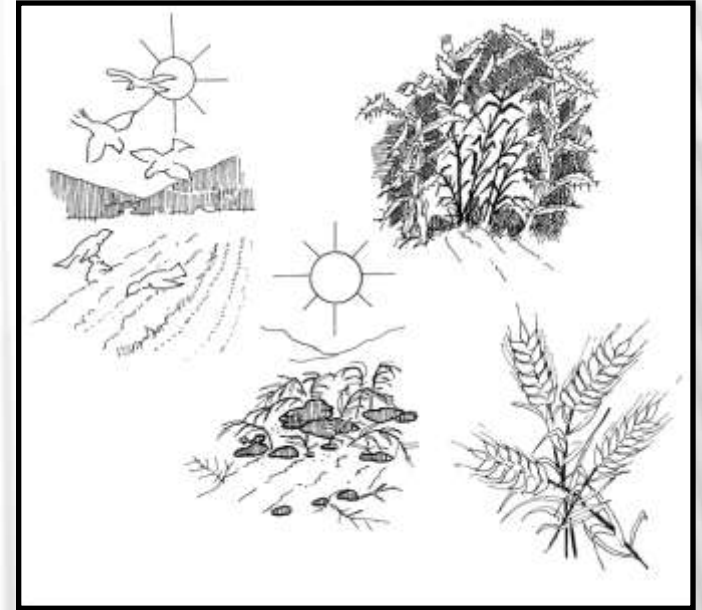
Describe the World View of the people you are trying to reach.  
How does the Gospel message need to be adapted so as to make sense to them?

# PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

## Principle #4

Understand how

**Different soils produce  
different results**



*“And as he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path,  
...some fell on rocky places, ... other seed fell among thorns, ...  
still other seed fell on good soil ...” Matthew 13:1-23*

# THE SOIL

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*“As he was scattering the seed, some fell along the path, ... some fell on rocky places, ... other seed fell among thorns, ... still other seed fell on good soil ...” Mt 13:4-8*

## What makes spiritual soil productive?

*The three characteristics of the good soil are:*

In Matthew - *hear, understand and produce*

In Mark - *hear, accept and produce*

In Luke - *“But the seed on good soil stands for those with a noble and good heart, who hear the word, retain it, and by persevering produce a crop” (Luke 8:15).*

# PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

## Principle #5

### Respect the natural growth processes



*“I planted the seed, Apollos watered it, but God made it grow.”*

1 Corinthians 3:6

*“This is what the kingdom of God is like. A man scatters seed on the ground. Night and day, whether he sleeps or gets up, the seed sprouts and grows, though he does not know how. All by itself the soil produces grain – first the stalk, then the head, then the full kernel in the head. As soon as the grain is ripe, he puts the sickle to it, because the harvest has come.” Mark 4:26-29*

# PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

## Principle #6

**When the crop is ready,  
harvest with urgency!**



*“I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest... (and) many of the Samaritans of that town believed in him...”* John 4:35 and 39

*“The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, to send out workers into his harvest field. Go! I am sending you ...”* Luke 10:2-3, with Matt. 9:37-38

# PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

## Principle #7

**All laborers will receive their reward and rejoice together in the harvest!**



*“The man who plants and the man who waters have one purpose, and each will be rewarded according to his own labor.”*

1 Corinthians 3:8

*“Even now the reaper draws his wages, even now he harvests the crop for eternal life, so that the sower and the reaper may be glad together...”* John 4:36

# PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

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## *Additional Principles*

The Bible frequently uses principles from agriculture to illustrate other truths. While these passages may not specifically refer to evangelism, they do reveal universal principles that can help us understand the evangelism process.

# ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

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## Additional Principle #1

**Just do it!**

*“Whoever watches the wind will not plant; whoever looks at the clouds will not reap.” Ecclesiastes 11:4*

# ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

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## Additional Principle #2

**Work hard and be creative!**

*“Sow your seed in the morning, and at the evening let not your hands be idle, for you do not know which will succeed, whether this or that, or whether both will do equally well.”*

Ecclesiastes 11:6

# ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

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## Additional Principle #3

**Joy comes at harvest time!**

*“Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy, carrying sheaves with him.” Psalm 126:5-6*

# ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

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## Additional Principle #4

**Mature leaders may lay aside their “rights” so as to promote a greater Harvest!**

*“The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops.” 2 Timothy 2:6*

*“Yes, this was written for us, because when the plowman plows and the thresher threshes, they ought to do so in the hope of sharing in the harvest. If we have sown spiritual seed among you, is it too much if we reap a material harvest from you? ... But we did not use this right. On the contrary, we put up with anything rather than hinder the gospel of Christ.” 1 Corinthians 9:10-12*

# ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

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## Additional Principle #5

### **Sow abundantly!**

*“Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.” 2 Corinthians 9:6*

# ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

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## Additional Principle #6

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*“A man reaps what he sows.”* Galatians 6:7

# ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

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## Additional Principle #7

**Be patient!**

*“Be patient then, brothers, until the Lord’s coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains.” James 5:7*

# ADDITIONAL PRINCIPLES FOR WORKING GOD'S FIELDS

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## Additional Principle #8

**The enemy is also working the fields!**

*“The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil.” Matthew 13:24-30; 36-43*

*“Every plant that my heavenly Father has not planted will  
be pulled up by the roots.”  
Matthew 15:13*

# APPLYING THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL EVANGELISM

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## 1. How do you answer the questions, “who are you,” and “who do you represent?”

- ✓ We must establish our identity as God’s Messengers with those we are seeking to reach.

# APPLYING THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL EVANGELISM

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- 1. We must identify the people group/s in our field.**
  - ✓ List thirty or more characteristics of your people group.
  - ✓ What are good sources of information to learn more about this group?
  - ✓ What habits can you form that will transform you into a lifelong learner of this group?

# APPLYING THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL EVANGELISM

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## 3. We must learn the conversion factors of the people we are trying to reach.

- ✓ What are “felt needs” that might serve to push non-believers toward Christ?
- ✓ What kinds of relationships might serve to pull non-believers toward Christ?

# APPLYING THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL EVANGELISM



## 4. We must build relational bridges.

- ✓ What are specific ways in which you can build individual relational bridges that will establish your credibility with non-believers?
- ✓ What are ways you can build corporate relational bridges where non-believers can have contact with believers and the Word in a non-threatening way?

# **APPLYING THE FIVE PRINCIPLES OF RELATIONAL EVANGELISM**



## **5. We must determine effective ways of presenting the gospel.**

- ✓ Taking into account your answers to the above questions, what method of evangelism do you feel will be most effective in making the Gospel understandable to your target group?