

JAPANESE THINKING THAT MUST BE CORRECTED IF WE ARE TO PRODUCE STRONG CHRISTIANS

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CONCERNING GOD

I. Atheistic.

A. Japanese Thinking:

There really is no God. We just need something to lean on so whatever religion meets that psychological need for you is right.

B. How Expressed:

Expressed through statements like the following:

1. It is good to have faith.
2. Only weak people need religion.
3. If you are strong, you don't need God.
4. I don't have any *nayami* (worry).
5. What was your motive in becoming a Christian?

C. How to Counteract:

1. Present evidence for a creator God.
2. Show the psychological crutches, if false, ultimately injure.
3. Only false Gods are invented by man. Man and all of creation were made by the creator God.
4. True motive for belief is to discover and follow truth. So help believers to learn to follow God regardless of circumstances, because *He is* and the Bible is His revelation.

II. Pantheistic.

A. Japanese Thinking:

The only real God is just the life principle in nature or the total "force" in the universe.

B. How Expressed:

1. God is in everything.
2. I am God.
3. Be thankful.

C. How to Counteract:

1. Teach the transcendency of God. Emphasize the separateness of God from his creation through many illustrations of the maker and the systems that he developed.
2. The universe is an effect, therefore, it must have a cause that is separate from it.
3. The universe is a *SYSTEM* and every system must have a
 - a. Living,
 - b. Intelligent,
 - c. Powerful being as its cause.
 - d. Chance (evolution) cannot explain a system.
4. The maker is always separate from his work.

III. Animistic.

A. Japanese Thinking:

Many gods exist, indwell, and are behind different things and phenomena. They can bless or curse; so they must be worshiped and appeased.

Note: Shintoism is basically primitive animism that has been developed into a modern religion and tied into emperor and ancestor worship through Buddhism and Shintoism.

B. How Expressed:

1. The local guardian deities enshrined in every village shrine (*ujigami*).
2. Home guardian God shelf (*Kami dana*).
3. Buddhist altar for ancestor worship (*Butsudan*).
4. Ancestor worship carried on in many locations (Now basically Buddhist in function).

5. Worship of pets that have died.
6. *Obon* (Annual festival for departed spirits held in August).
7. Various Shinto festivals for the spirits of broken needles, etc.
8. Various good luck charms possessed by all Japanese (*Omamori*) that are blessed by various shrines connected to deities that are efficacious for every need imaginable.

C. How to Counteract:

1. Teach that there is only *one* true God who is the creator.
2. All creation can be scientifically traced back to a single beginning (Big Bang Theory).
3. Teach the existence of Satan and demons and their function.
4. War between God and his angels and Satan and his demons. (We all belong to one kingdom or the other)
5. Destruction of all *kami dana*, *butsudan*, and *omamori* at baptism.
6. Teach that the souls of everyone depart this world at death.
7. Teach that animals and things do not have souls.

RELIGION

A. Japanese Thinking:

1. All religions are the same but just expressed through different terminology.
2. No one can really know the truth in the religious realm about God or life after death, etc.

3. It doesn't really matter what you believe *just so it meets your need*. (This is one reason why it is so difficult for Japanese to understand why we can think only Christianity is right.)

B. How Expressed:

1. Directly and clearly stated time and again by almost every Japanese that you meet.
2. Inability of Japanese to distinguish any difference between Christianity and their religions.
3. The thinking of Japanese and even some Christians that Jesus is somehow less than God, the Father.

C. How to Counteract:

1. Teach the basic difference between Christianity and the religions of the world. (Objectivity)
2. Teach the vast difference between the evidence that supports Christianity, revelation, the Bible, and the evidence that supports

other religion's revelations—Book of Mormon, Koran, etc.

3. Truth in *every field* of learning is only one, not contradictory and always universal.
4. The only approach to fact is through reason and evidence. And if consistently followed it will enable us to separate fact from error.
5. If we apply the same basic principles to religions that apply in science, then only Christianity will remain as believable.

CHRIST

A. Japanese Thinking:

Christ was a great religious leader, the same as Buddha, Mohammed, Confucius, etc.

B. How Expressed:

1. Directly and clearly stated time and again by almost every Japanese person that you meet.
2. A complete aligning of Christ along with other religious leaders in their thinking.

C. How to Counteract:

1. Emphasize the creator God who came in history as Christ.
2. Only one God, not three gods.
3. Pre-existence, eternity and deity of Christ should be emphasized.
4. Christ himself indwells us as Christ the Spirit.
5. Evidence that Christ is God. Resurrection and other New Testament evidence.
6. Jehovah-God's New Testament name is Jesus.
7. Teach scripture that states Christ is God.
8. Illustrations to explain trinity: water, man (body, soul, spirit), etc.
9. Explain carefully scriptures that would *seem* to indicate that Christ was inferior to God.
10. Help them to memorize Philippians 2:6-11.
11. The claims of Christ himself and the claims of other religious leaders.