

**“The Lord is not willing
that any should perish.”**

2 Peter 3:9

**“So that by all possible
means we might save some.”**

1 Corinthians 9:22

JEMA Strategy Forum

STRATEGY FOR THE EVANGELIZATION OF JAPAN

February 22, 2010

Charter Statements (Final)

Vision

To produce an overall guiding strategy for seeing more rapid church growth across Japan. This strategy is for the missions community and for interested churches across Japan as an aid to their own strategic planning.

Mission

To offer an assessment of the state of evangelization of Japan, identifying strengths and barriers; to highlight areas for strategic attention, and to present an umbrella strategy for specific actions to see more rapid church growth across the whole of Japan.

Strategic Intent (End Goal)

What is the goal for the church in Japan in ~2030?

The more rapid expansion of God's Kingdom in Japan for His glory through growing healthy churches full of courageous, spirit-filled Japanese Christians – both professional and lay – who love and work with each other, non-Japanese Christians, other churches and the church globally to make a significant, noticeable impact on the nation through their Christ-like service and bold faith, resulting in transformed lives and communities.

Strategy Development Process

1. Bring in a Facilitator – Jonathan Kohl.
2. Prayer for wisdom – Men of Issachar (1 Chronicles 12:32).
3. State the objective.
4. Research projects – “Buy the truth and do not sell it.” (Prov 23:23)
 - a. The process by which God intends the church to grow.
 - b. Current state of church growth.
 - c. Barriers to growth.
 - d. Current missions’ practice.
5. Identify missing or under-represented elements.
6. Create Recommendation – the Strategy.
7. Begin encouraging engagement and response. **TODAY**
8. Measure and report progress.
9. Repeat the process.

Research Projects

“Buy the truth and do not sell it.” Proverbs 23:23

- I. God’s intended process for church growth.
- II. Growth statistics – size of the church, growth rate, growth pattern.
- III. Growth projections – the essential role of lay evangelism in Biblical growth.
- IV. Mission Leaders’ Survey 1 – Barriers to church growth and health.
- V. Mission Leaders’ Survey 2 – Barriers to growth and health, detailed follow-up.
- VI. NCD-Japan interview – strengths and weaknesses of the church in the NCD categories.
- VII. Mission Leaders’ Survey 3 – Current mission activities and resource deployment.

God's Intended Processes for Growth of the Church (I)

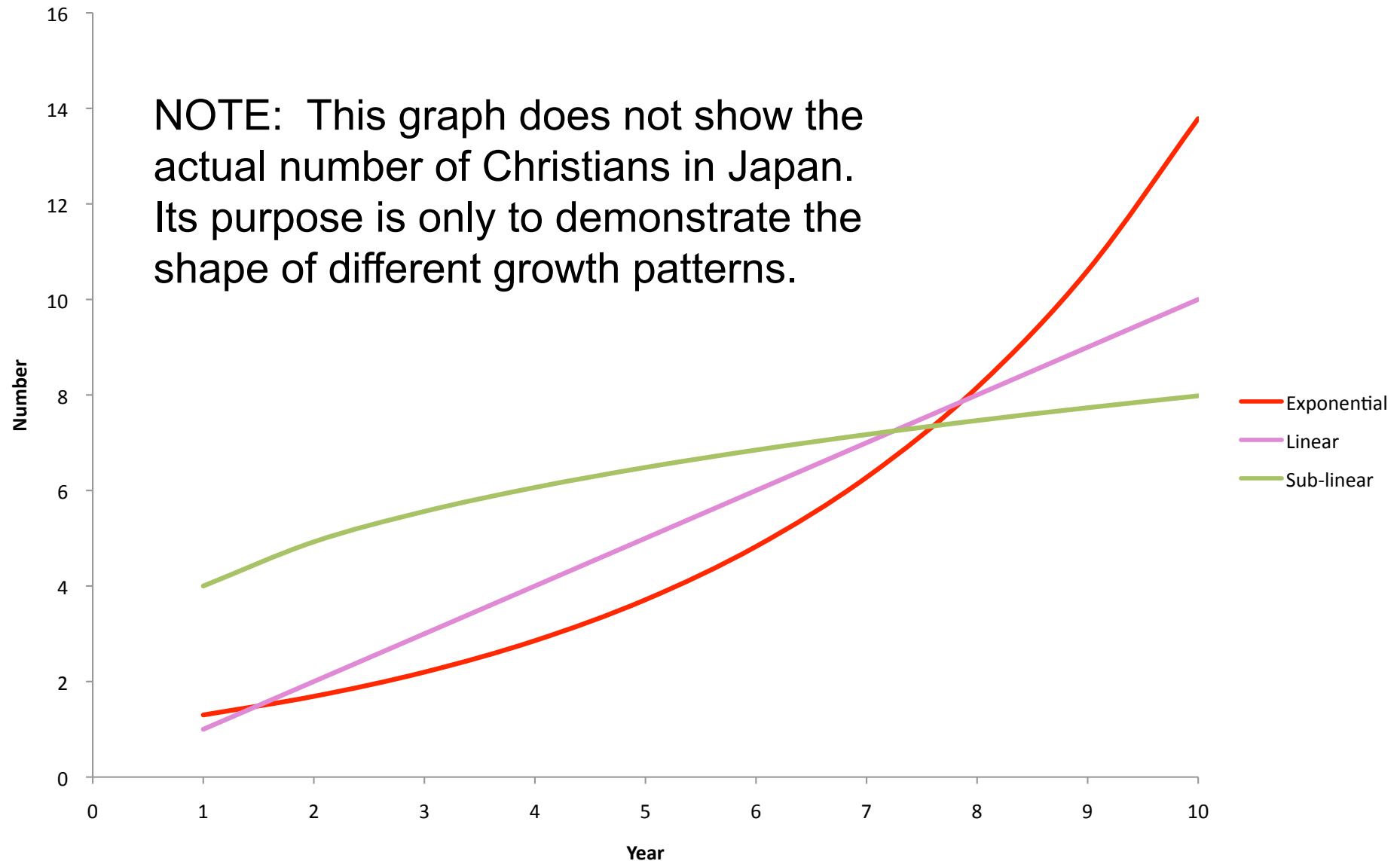
“Surely the Sovereign Lord does nothing without revealing his plan to his servants the prophets.” Amos 3:7

1. Evangelism (proclamation) – Romans 10:14. People must hear of Christ!
2. Prayer
 - a. For workers -- Matthew 9:37-38
 - b. For bold and effective proclamation -- Ephesians 6:20
3. Love among Christians – John 13:34-35
4. Church planting – Matthew 28:19-20
5. The Holy Spirit – John 16:8
6. The laity builds up the church – Ephesians 4:11-12
7. Organic growth pattern (agricultural-like, exponential growth)

CONCLUSIONS 1 – State of the church in Japan: Size, growth rate, and growth pattern (II)

- Church is tiny – 0.5% of the population.
- Growth is slow – 0.61% per year.
 - After 100 years – 0.8% of the population.
 - 400 years to get to 5% of the population.
- Growth pattern is not Biblical (not exponential)
 - The growth rate is falling from year-to-year.
 - It is falling faster than if growth were linear.

Growth Patterns – Biblical and non-Biblical



CONCLUSIONS 2 – State of the Church in Japan: Barriers to growth

1. Little evangelism in general (IV; V-4,7; VI).
2. Little personal evangelism on the part of lay people (IV; V-4,7).
3. Pastor-centered leadership style, rather than an empowering one.
(IV, V-7; VI).
4. Little vision for impact and growth -- missional outlook missing.
(IV; VI).
5. Lay involvement in ministry is low (IV; V-7).
6. Little engagement with society (IV).

CONCLUSIONS 3 – State of the Church in Japan: Strengths of the church

1. Strong loving internal relationships (VI).
 - John 13:34-35
2. Dedication of pastors and lay-people to giving time (V-10).

The Eight Streams of the Strategy:

Goal for the Church in Japan in the Year ~2030

1. **Church Multiplication:** The church in Japan is growing in a Biblical pattern (exponential growth) in terms of the number of new believers and newly started congregations.
2. **Missional Worldview:** Churches are missional in their worldview and practice, having God's heart for the lost, and focussed on going out and penetrating existing non-Christian groups in more communities across Japan.
3. **Individuals Evangelizing:** All believers are so in love with God that they are personally engaged in evangelism with the goal of leading others to Christ in the context of relationships.
4. **Societal Transformation:** All believers and congregations are engaged in society, bringing about redemptive transformation within people, institutions or Japan as a whole.
5. **Relevant Church:** Churches are attractive and relevant to their community because they are connected to their local sub-culture, while maintaining a solid Biblical foundation.
6. **Serving Leaders:** Generations of joyful, capable, servant pastors and church leaders are equipping, empowering and releasing their congregations to grow in Christ and use their gifts.
7. **Collaborative Interdependency:** Pastors and churches regularly partner with other Christians who are not in their denomination for ministry and to demonstrate unity in the body of Christ.
8. **Spiritual Growth:** All believers – both clergy and lay – are growing continually in their faith by being involved in their church and experiencing an ongoing, transformational relationship with Christ.

Stream 1 -- Church Multiplication

The church in Japan is growing in a Biblical pattern (exponential growth) in terms of the number of new believers and newly started congregations.

- **Current State:**

- Slow growth (II)
- Non-Biblical growth pattern (II)

- **Current missions' efforts:**

- Only 30% of effort is working in church-planting partnerships with Japanese pastors and churches (VII-8).

- **Some possible action projects:**

- Collaborate with Japanese churches in church planting.
- Promote, encourage vision for growth in Japanese churches.

Stream 2 – Missional Worldview

Churches are missional in their worldview and practice, having God's heart for the lost, and focused on going out and penetrating existing non-Christian groups in more communities across Japan.

- **Current State:**
 - Few churches have this worldview (IV; V-7; VI).
- **Current missions' efforts:**
 - Only 13% of effort goes to leadership training and discipleship (VII-8).
- **Some possible action projects:**
 - Conduct seminars to encourage missional outlook in leaders and lay people.
 - Conduct theological teaching for Japanese leaders on God's missional purpose.
 - Witness widely and urgently to God's desire for the salvation of all people.

Stream 3 – Individuals Evangelizing

All believers are so in love with God that they are personally engaged in evangelism with the goal of leading others to Christ in the context of relationships.

- **Current State:**
 - Very little evangelism done by lay-Christians (IV; V-7; VI)
 - Lack of lay-evangelism is the primary cause of non-Biblical growth (III).
- **Current missions' efforts:**
 - Only 0.2% of effort is working on lay evangelism training (VII-8).
- **Some possible action projects:**
 - Develop and deliver training in personal evangelism.
 - Develop new, more culturally-appropriate evangelism approaches.
 - Develop and deliver training in making friends.
 - Encourage pastors to train and encourage lay people for outreach.

“Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.”

Matthew 9:38



Japanese Christians – approximately 560,000
(280 times the number of missionaries)



Japanese Pastors – approximately 8,000

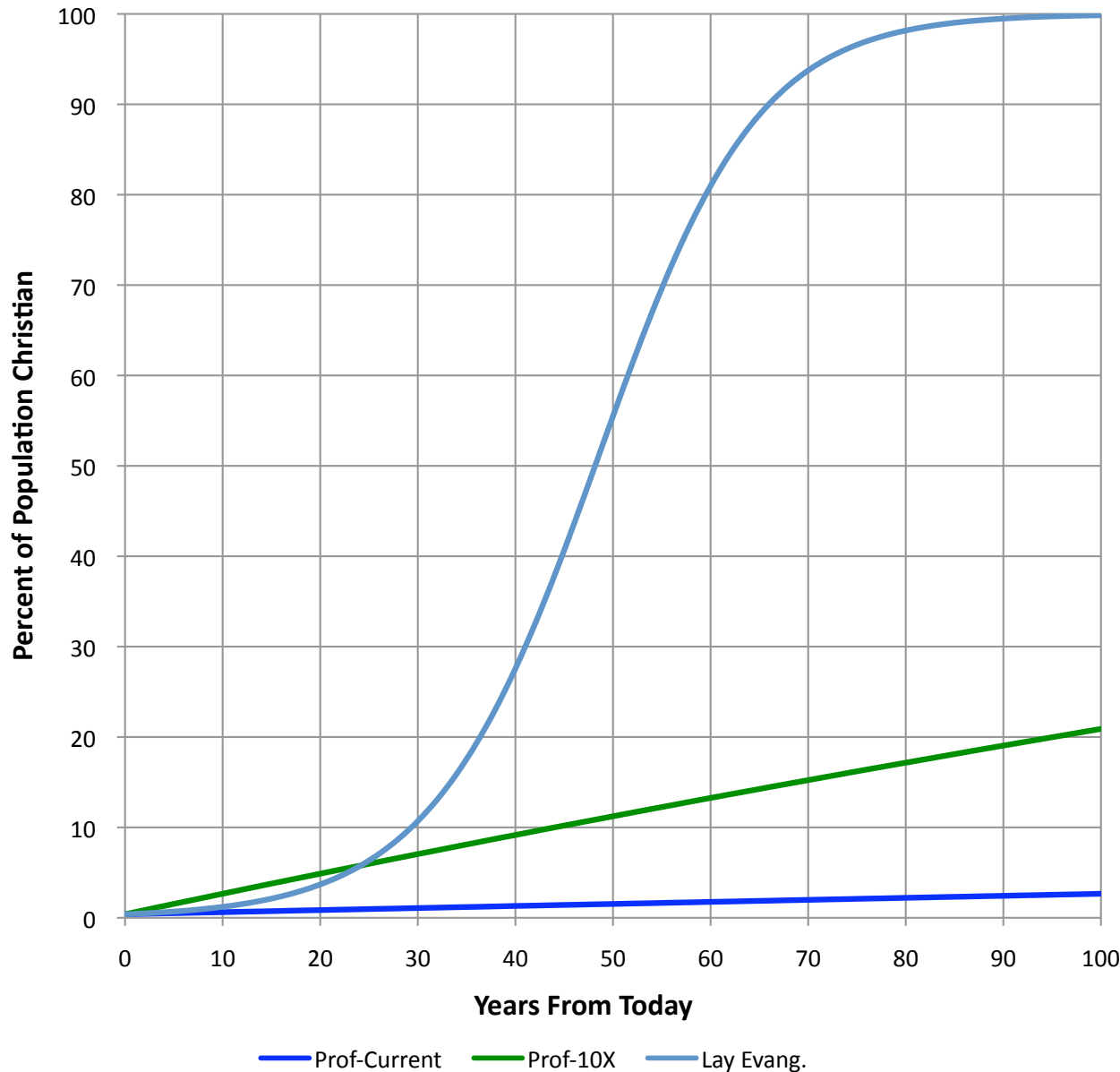


Missionaries – approximately 2,000

Non-Christians
126,500,000

***“And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?
And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Rom 10:14***

Projection of Population Percent Christian for the Next 100 Years



Assumptions and Definitions (III)

Response rate = 1 in 25.

Lay Evang. = each Christian witnesses to only 3 people each year, on the average.
Result = 1 convert every 8 years on average.

Prof-10X = 10 times increase in professional “productivity.”

Prof-Current = Number of professionals remains at current level (about 10,000).
“Productivity” remains at current level.

***BOTTOM LINE:
Lay Evangelism
is essential for
Biblical growth!***

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Stream 4 – Societal Transformation

All believers and congregations are engaged in society, bringing about redemptive transformation within people, institutions or Japan as a whole.

- **Current State:**
 - Very little interaction with society (IV; V-2).
- **Current missions' efforts:**
 - ?
- **Some possible action projects:**
 - Develop and suggest ways local churches can be involved in society.
 - Lead programs to engage in society.
 - Encourage prayer for national leadership.
 - Commission writing or translation of books for lay ministry (e.g. how to be a Christian in the business world, etc.)

Stream 5 – Relevant Church

Churches are attractive and relevant to their community because they are connected to their local sub-culture, while maintaining a solid Biblical foundation.

- **Current State:**
 - Churches are often viewed as non-relevant and unattractive (IV; V-2).
- **Current missions' efforts:**
 - ?
- **Some possible action projects:**
 - Create a forum for “relevant church” discussion.
 - Widely broadcast examples of relevant churches.
 - Encourage churches with examples of relevant involvement.
 - Provide practical help to churches for specific involvement actions.

Stream 6 – Serving Leaders

Generations of joyful, capable, servant pastors and church leaders are equipping, empowering and releasing their congregations to grow in Christ and use their gifts.

- **Current State:**
 - Pastor-centric leadership style is the norm (IV; V-7; VI).
- **Current missions' efforts:**
 - Only 8% of effort is on leadership training (professional and lay) (VII-8).
- **Some possible action projects:**
 - Conduct leadership training for pastors.
 - Create practical leadership training courses for the seminaries.
 - Individual missionaries befriend and encourage individual pastors.
 - Model servant-leadership by giving practical service to Japanese pastors .
 - Train missionaries in how to be change agents for Japanese pastors.

Stream 7 – Collaborative Interdependency

Pastors and churches regularly partner with other Christians who are not in their denomination for ministry and to demonstrate unity in the body of Christ.

- **Current State:**
 - Little cross-denominational cooperation (IV).
- **Current missions' efforts:**
 - ?
- **Some possible action projects:**
 - Model cooperation
 - Invite Japanese pastors from other denominations to speak at your church.
 - Seek joint projects with Japanese churches from other denominations.
 - Hold interdenominational prayer meetings.
 - Strengthen cooperation among JEMA member missions.
 - Teach cooperation

Stream 8 – Spiritual Growth

All believers – both clergy and lay – are growing continually in their faith by being involved in their church and experiencing an ongoing, transformational relationship with Christ.

- **Current State:**
 - Little apparent growth (IV; V-3, 4).
- **Current missions' efforts:**
 - Only 4.8% of current mission effort goes to discipleship training.
- **Some possible action projects:**
 - Develop discipleship materials to encourage daily spiritual growth.
 - Partner with Japanese leaders to teach and encourage growth.
 - Encourage Japanese to develop new discipleship materials and approaches.
 - Exhort the church to grow in discipleship.
 - Figure out how to track spiritual growth and then use the tracking.

General Principles - 1

1.Focus: promote renewal within the Japanese church.

- a. “It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” Ephesians 4:11-12.

2.Form JEMA committees to continue developing action programs in each of the eight streams.

3.Raise cooperation among missions to a new level.

- a. “May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me.” John 17:23
- b. Ray Leaf’s observation about the impact of JEMA in modeling unity.

4.Biblical growth pattern and growth ABSOLUTELY REQUIRE lay people involved in evangelism (III; IV; V-4,7).

General Principles - 2

5. Establish leadership.

- a. Get Japanese involved in providing solutions.
- b. Serve them in carrying out the solutions.
- c. Work together to identify and solve problems.
 - 1. Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds.”

6. Seek relationships to influence Japanese leaders.

- a. Work through existing partnerships.
- b. Deliberately form new ones: the ratio is roughly one missionary to four Japanese leaders.
- c. Train ourselves to become influencers.

7. Reprioritize work – more teaching, exhorting, encouraging and modeling vision for church growth.

- a. Teach vision for each of the areas.

Group Working Session 1

- **Main question:**

- What is your mission currently doing to advance these 8 streams in the Japanese church?
- What percent of your mission's effort is devoted to helping transform the Japanese church in these streams?

- **Secondary questions:**

- What tools and resources are you finding most helpful to this work?

Group Working Session 2

- **Main question:**

- What new things could the missions community do to encourage transformation of the Japanese church in these 8 streams?

- **Secondary questions:**

- What could your mission do to contribute to that?
- What new or expanded resources and tools would help you?
- What could missions do together to affect the church?

Selected Research Results

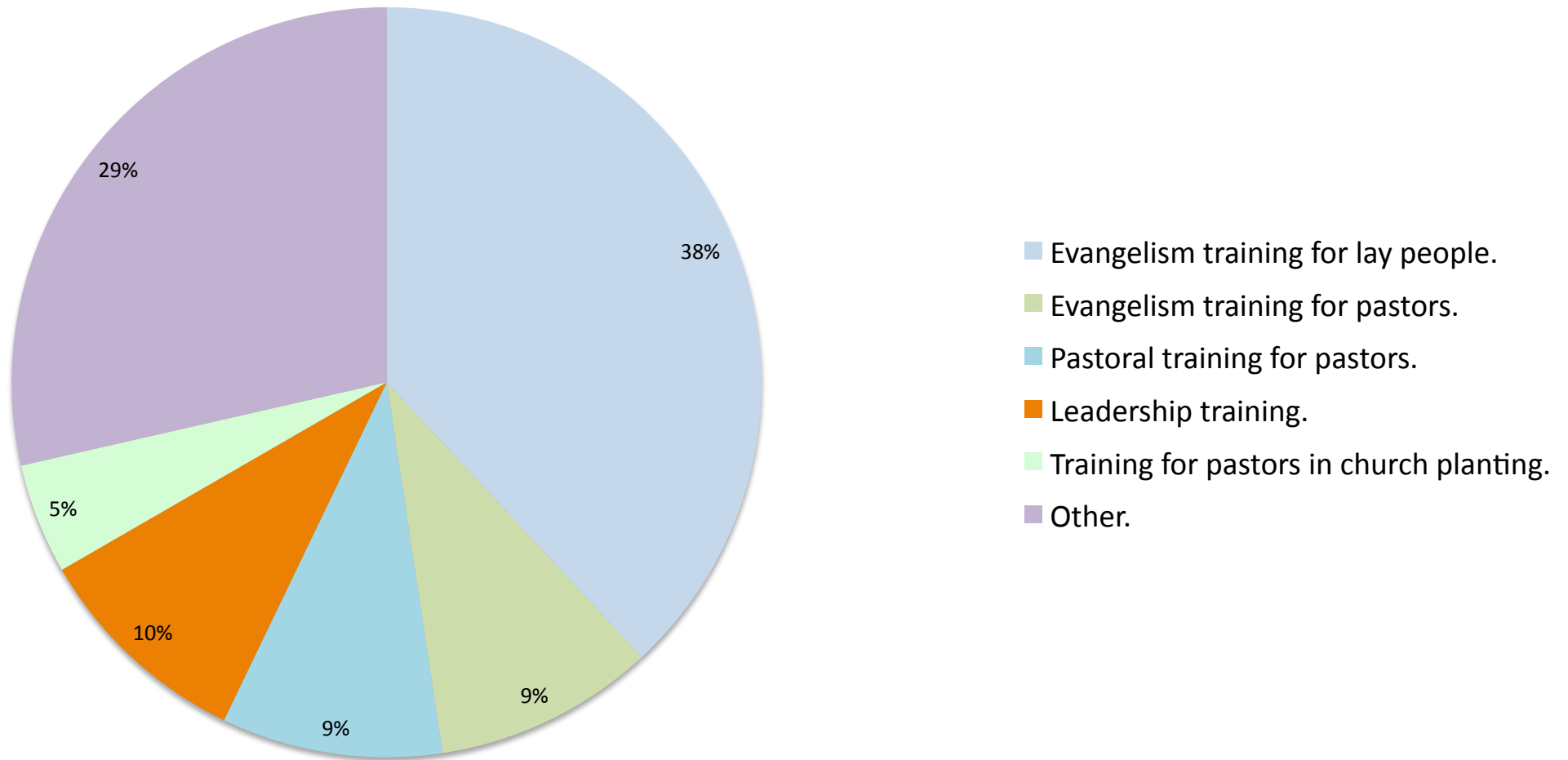
On this and the following slides are the research results which are most frequently mentioned in the presentation. They are extracted from the full research document posted on the JEMA web site in the Strategy Forum section.

IV. Mission Leaders' Survey No. 1 –Barriers to Growth.

Barrier	No. of mentions	% of respondents
Little personal evangelism being done	15	38%
Pastor-centered leadership style	13	33%
Cultural issues, miscellaneous	11	28%
Lack of vision	10	25%
Inward-focused church	8	20%
Little true transformation of people	8	20%
Tradition	8	20%
Society's attitude towards Christianity	8	20%
Lack of evangelism & outreach	6	15%
People too busy	6	15%

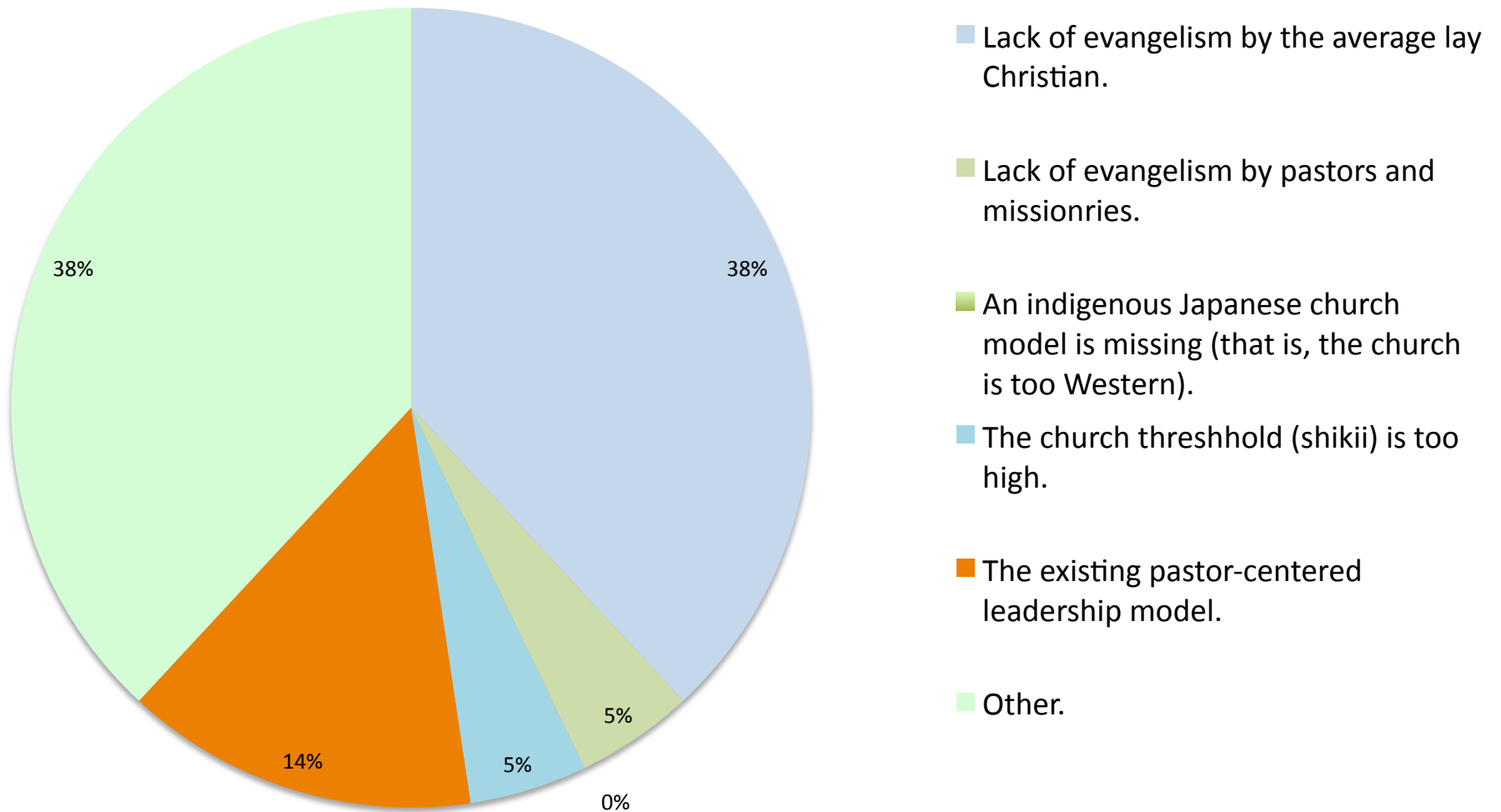
V. Mission Leaders' Survey No. 2.

Q4. The most significant missing, inadequate or under-represented training program.



V. Mission Leaders' Survey No. 2.

Q7. The most significant problem in the existing church.



VI. NCD-Japan Experience regarding strengths and weaknesses of the church.

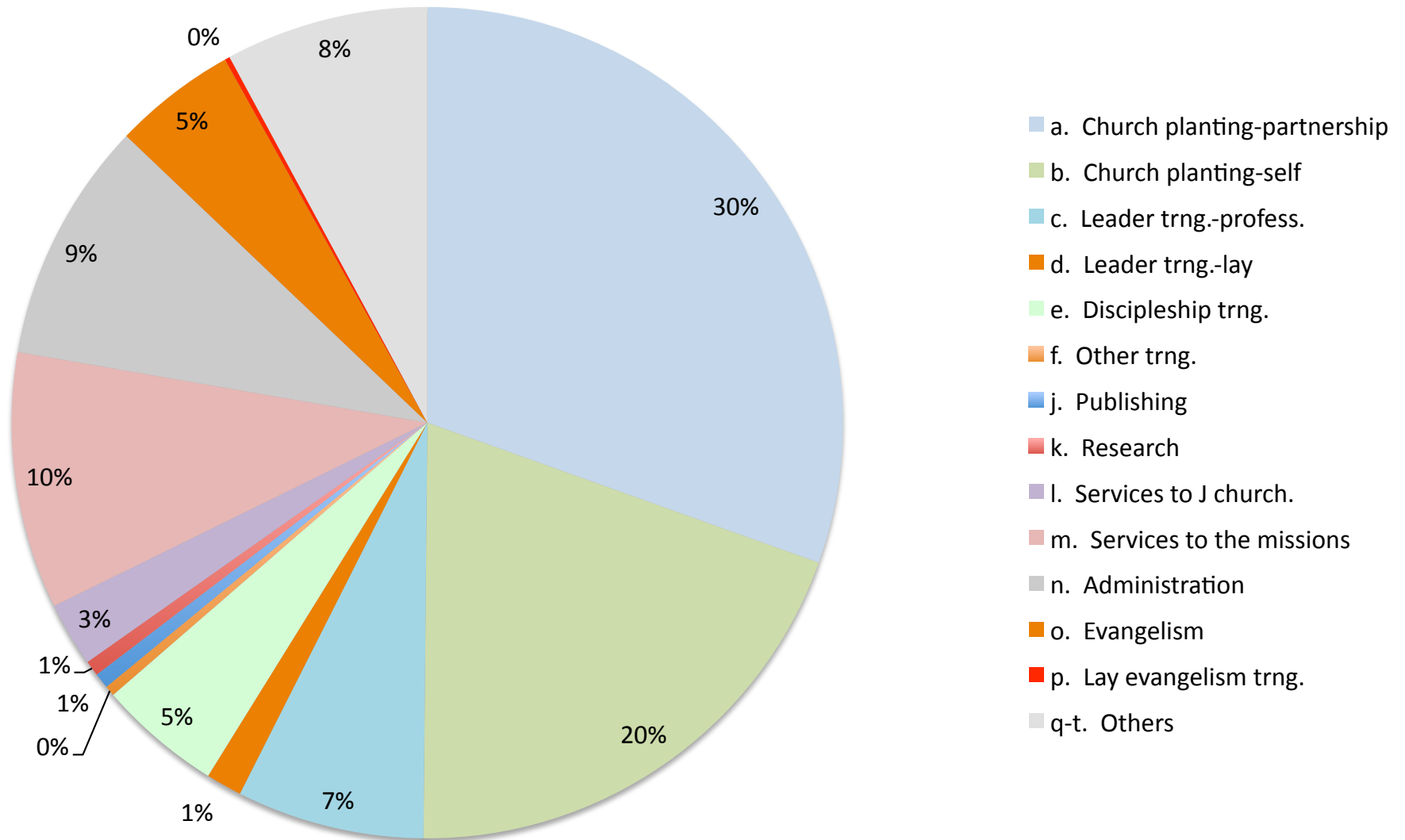
NCD-Japan has worked with about 130 churches to date.

General opinion of the strengths and weaknesses of the Japanese church on the 8 NCD Quality Characteristics:

Quality Characteristic	Strong or Weak
1. Empowering Leadership	Weak
2. Gift-oriented Ministry	
3. Passionate Spirituality	
4. Functional Structures	
5. Inspiring Worship Services	
6. Holistic Small Groups	Weak
7. Evangelism	Weak
8. Loving Relationships	Strong

VII. Mission Leaders' Survey No. 3.

Q8. Mission Activities – Percent of effort devoted to each.



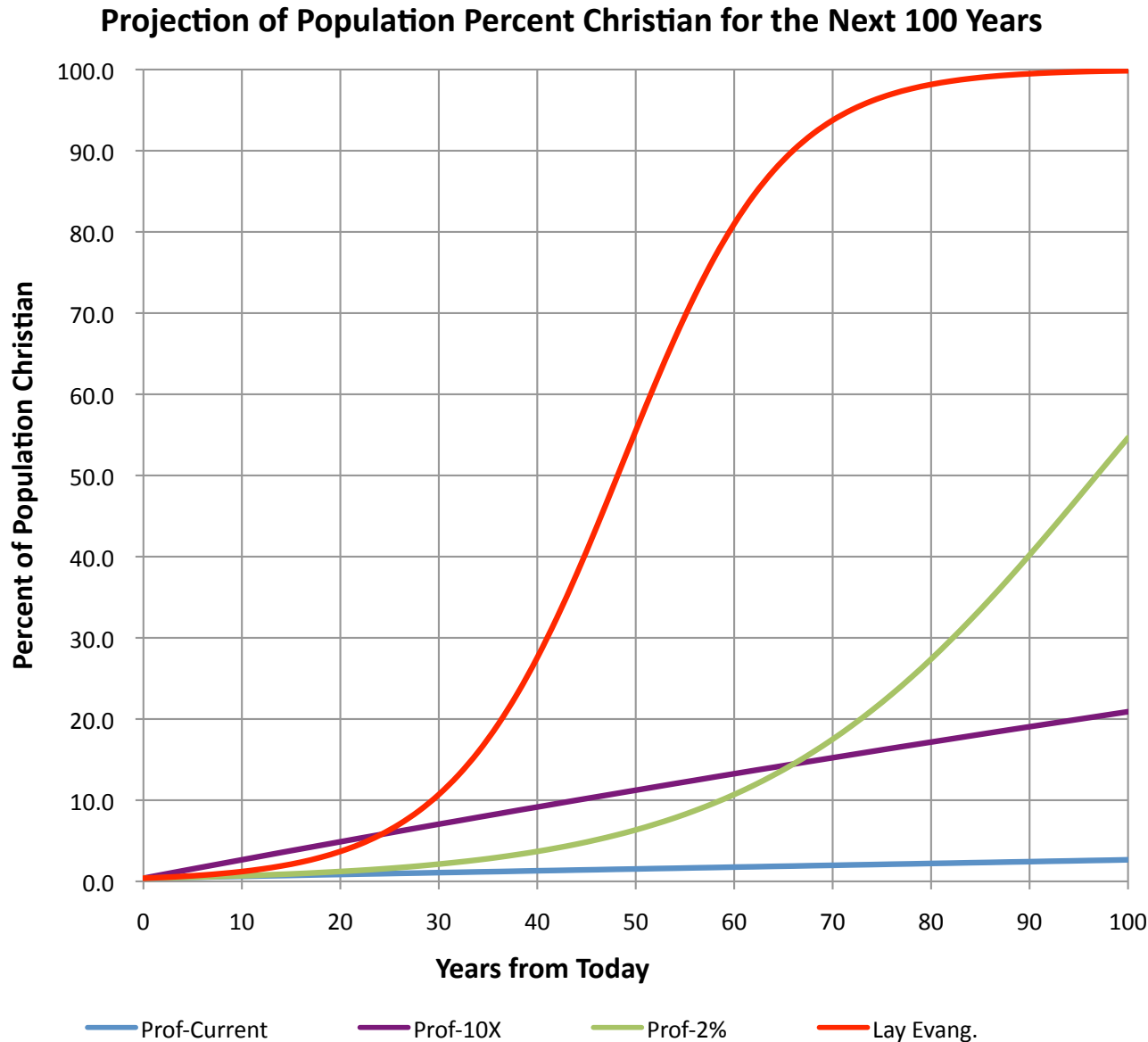
VII. Mission Leaders' Survey No. 3.

Q8. Mission Activities – Percent of effort devoted to each.

This is a list of the activities from the pie chart on the previous page. The ones highlighted in red are especially noteworthy. Even though they are strongly related to the barriers to growth in the existing church, a fairly small percent of effort is dedicated to them.

a. Church planting-in partnership with Japanese	30.5%
b. Church planting-by self	19.7%
c. Leader training for professionals	7.3%
d. Leader training for lay people	1.4%
e. Discipleship training	4.8%
f. Other training	0.4%
j. Publishing	0.6%
k. Research	0.6%
l. Services to Japanese church	2.5%
m. Services to the missions	10.0%
n. Administration	9.4%
o. Evangelism	4.8%
p. Lay evangelism training	0.2%
q-t. Others	7.9%
TOTAL	100.1%

***“And how can they believe in the one of whom they have not heard?
And how can they hear without someone preaching to them?” Rom 10:14***



Assumptions and Definitions (III)

Response rate = 1 in 25.

Lay Evang. = each Christian witnesses to only 3 people each year, on the average.
Result = 1 convert every 8 years on average.

Prof-2% = Number of professionals grows as the church does, and remains at 2% of the number of Christians. “Productivity” of each profession remains the same as now.

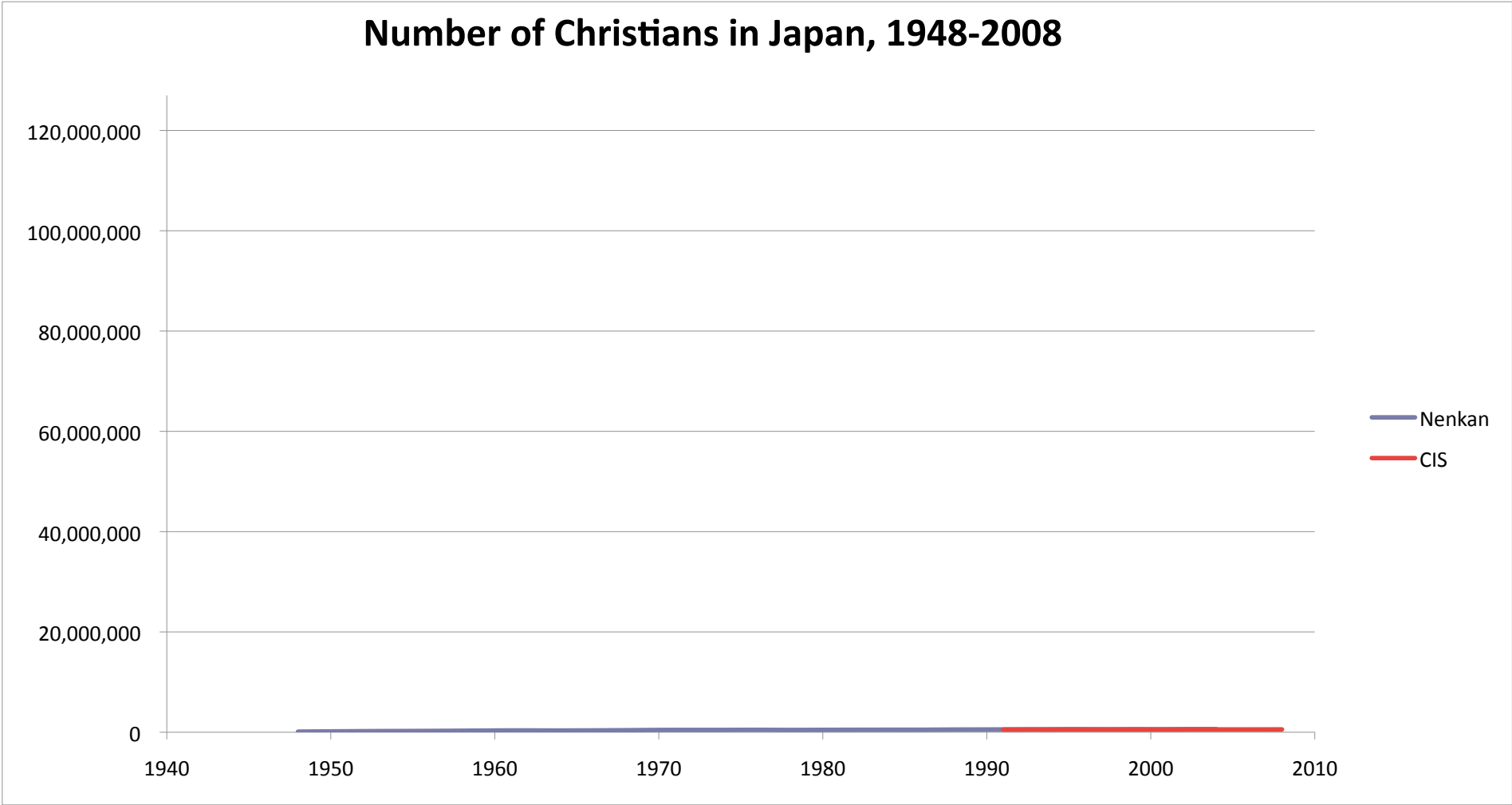
Prof-10X = 10 times increase in professional “productivity.”

Prof-Current = Number of professionals remains at current level (about 10,000).
“Productivity” remains at current level.

***BOTTOM LINE:
Lay Evangelism
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Current Church Growth Statistics

Data Source	Average Annual Growth Rate	Population % after 100 years	Years to 5% of Population
Nenkan	0.39%	0.7%	599
CIS	0.61%	0.8%	398



Current Church Growth Statistics

**Number of Christians in Japan, 1948-2008 –
*Non-Biblical Growth Pattern***

