

Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement and Healing in Japan's Religious Culture

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Japan is a land of many contrasts. It is modern yet rooted in tradition. In general, Japanese do not have much interest in religions, yet religions are overflowing in Japan. Christianity is a minority religion in Japan, and the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement started there in 1972. In this paper, the author examines the influence of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement on the Japanese, especially through its ministry of healing. Further, he examines the challenges to this work arising from various new religious movements, shamans, spiritual therapists, and sects that promise healing, wealth, and prosperity.

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Introduction

Christianity is a minority religion in Japan. Moreover, after the Aum Shinrikyo terrorist act, most Japanese developed an aversion toward all the religions.¹ The Japanese government also formulated strict regulations for all religious organizations.² However, there is a surprising increase in people seeking spiritual therapists to deal with the problems of their daily lives.³ The focus of many of these spiritual therapists, shamans, and founders of new religious movements and sects is healing. Healing is a commodity for them, and they do their best to market it. However, members of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement, known as charismatics, also pray for healing, so there is great potential for the prayer of healing by charismatics to be misunderstood as a form of spiritual therapy. Thus, charismatics have a great challenge and responsibility to use the charism of healing to educate the people about the Christian understanding of healing. In this paper, we examine the use of charisms among Catholic charismatics. We also examine the various challenges to charismatics that other spiritual therapists pose.

1. Mark R. Mullins, "The Legal and Political Fallout of the 'Aum Affair,'" *Religion and Social Crisis in Japan: Understanding Japanese Society through the Aum Affair*, ed. Robert J. Kisala and Mark R. Mullins (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 77–78. On March 20, 1995, members of a religious cult called Aum Shinrikyo planted lethal sarin nerve gas in various stations of Tokyo's underground railway. This incident led to the death of twelve people and thousands needed medical attention.

2. Ibid.

3. Ioannis Gaitanidis, "Spiritual Therapies in Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 39 (2012): 353–385. See also Yumiyama Tatsuya, "Varieties of Healing in Present-Day Japan," *Japanese Journal of Religious Studies* 22 (1995): 268–282.

Christianity and the Charismatic Renewal Movement in Japan

Christianity started in Japan with the arrival of St. Francis Xavier and his fellow missionaries in 1549.⁴ When Xavier left Japan in 1551, there were around two thousand Catholics in Japan. After his departure, some local rulers in the south of Japan favored Christianity, while their counterparts in the north opposed it.⁵ Christianity had steady growth until a prominent ruler, Toyotomi Hideyoshi (1536–1598), turned against the Christians and started persecuting them. He ordered the execution of twenty-six Christians at Nagasaki in 1597 to spread fear among the Christians.⁶ Tokugawa Ieyasu succeeded Hideyoshi in 1600 and initially tolerated the Christians. But later he changed his mind and banned the practice of Christianity in Japan.⁷ After his death in 1616, Ieyasu's son, Tokugawa Hidetada, became the ruler. He was far more brutal toward Christians than his father was.⁸ Later, in 1623, Hidetada appointed his son, Tokugawa Iemitsu, as ruler of Japan, and Iemitsu ruled until 1651. He tried to wipe out Christianity completely. He hunted Christians and forced them to renounce their faith.⁹

4. Samuel Hugh Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, vol. 2 (New York: Orbis Books, 2005), 81.

5. Arcadio Schwade, "Japan," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7 (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1967), 828.

6. Joseph Schütte, "Japan, Martyrs of," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 7, 838.

7. Joseph Jennes, *A History of the Catholic Church in Japan, From Its Beginnings to the Early Meiji Era (1549–1873)* (Tokyo: Oriens Institute for Religious Research, 1973), 88–89.

8. Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, 90. See also Schütte, "Japan, Martyrs of," 839.

9. Ibid.

By 1715, the Tokugawas thought they had succeeded in getting rid of all Christians. However, history has proved them wrong.¹⁰ After two long centuries, Japan, under the reign of Emperor Meiji, who opened diplomatic relations with the Western world, indirectly allowed the entry of missionaries. In 1865, Father Bernard Petitjean discovered that in spite of the persecution, some Japanese in Nagasaki continued to be Christians. There were around thirty thousand of these so-called hidden Christians (*Kakure Kirishitan*).¹¹ Meiji's 1946 Constitution of Japan also guaranteed freedom of religion. Nevertheless, Christianity did not grow rapidly.¹² Statistics, gathered in 2014 by Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, show that only around 1.5 percent of the total Japanese population is Christian.¹³ According to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan, in 2014 only 0.34 percent out of its Christian population of 1.5 percent is Catholic.¹⁴ Yet, while Christianity is a minority religion in Japan, it has a considerable influence on Japanese society through the various schools, universities, hospitals, and other institutions run by Christian organizations.

The Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement (CCRM) started in the United States in 1967 and reached Japan in 1972, when Sr. John Marie Stewart and Sr. Stephanie, two nuns from the United States, came to promote the movement.¹⁵ Initially,

10. Ibid., 93–95.

11. Jennes, *A History of the Catholic Church in Japan*, 216–217. See also Stephen Turnbull, *The Kakure Kirishitan of Japan: A Study of Their Development, Beliefs and Rituals to the Present Day* (Surrey: Japan Library, 1998), 55–81.

12. Moffett, *A History of Christianity in Asia*, 518–519.

13. Available at <http://www.stat.go.jp/english/data/nenkan/1431-23.htm>.

14. <http://www.cbcj.catholic.jp/jpn/data/st14/statistics2014.pdf>.

15. John Marie Stewart, *Laying the Foundation: A History of the Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ* (Channing: Disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ, 2005), 38.

the nuns had to face many difficulties in establishing charismatic prayer meetings in Tokyo. Francis Mathy, a Jesuit priest who was teaching at Sophia University, helped the nuns find accommodations and do pastoral work on Sophia University's campus.¹⁶ The nuns spoke with university staff and students about their work of spiritual renewal. They also tried to arrange a prayer meeting at a church to spread awareness about Charismatic Renewal.¹⁷ Before the nuns left Japan in the last week of October 1972, they arranged a prayer meeting at a Franciscan chapel. Owing to their efforts, some priests, nuns, lay Catholics, and Protestant Pentecostal leaders participated in that meeting.¹⁸ After the nuns left Japan, the prayer group continued meeting, now at Hatsudai Catholic Church in Tokyo.¹⁹ Thereafter, the CCRM spread to different parts of Japan. Catholic charismatics promoted ecumenical dialogue by inviting Christians from other denominations to their meetings. Pentecostal pastors also helped the Catholic charismatics organize the prayer meetings, since they had better knowledge about leading Pentecostal-charismatic types of prayers in Japan.²⁰

David Barrett notes in his statistics on the CCRM in Japan that around 12 percent of Catholics are charismatics.²¹ He further

16. Reginald Alva, *Spiritual Renewal in Japan: The Journey of the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement* (New Delhi: Christian World Imprints, 2015), 40.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid., 41.

19. Ibid.

20. Ibid., 41–52.

21. David Barrett and Todd Johnson, "The Catholic Charismatic Renewal, 1959–2005," *Then Peter Stood Up* (Vatican: ICCRS, 2000), 117–120. See also David Barrett, George Kurian, and Todd Johnson, *World Christian Encyclopedia: A Comparative Survey of Churches and Religions in the Modern World*, vol. 1 (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 412.

notes that charismatic prayer groups operate in around 500 parishes in Japan.²² Japan has around 869 parishes, which means that 57 percent of Japanese parishes have CCRM prayer groups. On the other hand, this also shows that 43 percent of the Japanese parishes have no charismatic influence. There are no recent statistics available on the growth of the CCRM in Japan. Moreover, according to the research conducted by the Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move in 2005, only 44 percent of the Japanese Catholic Church is Japanese, the remaining 56 percent comprising immigrants from various countries.²³ Migrants from South America or the Philippines have a greater interest than the Japanese in charismatic spirituality. They form their own prayer groups to organize meetings in their local languages. Thus, it would be very difficult to measure the actual presence of charismatics among the Japanese in Japan today.

Healings in the Japanese Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement

The CCRM emphasizes people's spiritual renewal.²⁴ Charismatics refer to this phenomenon of deep spiritual experience as "baptism in the Holy Spirit," a term that Catholic charismatics have borrowed from Pentecostals.²⁵ However, there is a difference between

22. Ibid.

23. Catholic Commission of Japan for Migrants, Refugees and People on the Move, *Survey of the Number of Faith* (2005), 1–2. <http://www.jcarm.com/eng/survey/survey05.pdf>.

24. ICCRS Doctrinal Commission, *Baptism in the Holy Spirit* (Vatican: ICCRS, 2012), 12–15.

25. Catherine Albanese, *America: Religions and Religion* (Boston: Wadsworth, 2013), 79–80.

the Catholic charismatics' theological interpretation of this phenomenon and that of the Pentecostals.²⁶ Catholics disagree with the Pentecostal view that speaking in tongues is an absolute sign of receiving baptism in the Holy Spirit.²⁷ Further, Catholic charismatics do not consider baptism in the Holy Spirit to be a sacrament or super-sacrament that can substitute for the sacraments of initiation.²⁸ However, some Catholic charismatics do relate baptism in the Holy Spirit to the sacraments of initiation. They consider baptism in the Holy Spirit to activate or release the power of the sacraments of initiation.²⁹ Others consider baptism in the Holy Spirit to be a fresh outpouring of the Holy Spirit that empowers a person to do the work of the Lord.³⁰ Yet others consider baptism in the Holy Spirit to be a sign of eschatological fulfillment.³¹

Charismatics believe that the Holy Spirit freely gives people spiritual charisms for the common good. They further maintain that baptism in the Holy Spirit helps a person to become aware of his or her charisms. Charismatics usually focus on the spiritual charisms noted by St. Paul in his epistle to the Corinth community (1 Cor 12:8–10). However, they do acknowledge other

26. Wolfgang Vondey, ed. *Pentecostalism and Christian Unity: Continuing and Building Relationships*, vol. 2 (Eugene: Wipf and Stock, 2013), 205–210.

27. Robert Burns, *Catholic Spirituality and Prayer in the Secular City* (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008), 100–101.

28. *Ibid.*

29. Kilian McDonnell and George T. Montague, *Christian Initiation and Baptism in the Holy Spirit: Evidence from the First Eight Centuries* (Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1991), 33–37.

30. Francis Sullivan, "Baptism in the Holy Spirit: A Catholic Interpretation of the Pentecostal Experience," *Gregorianum* 55 (1974): 49.

31. Peter Hocken, "Baptized in the Spirit: An Eschatological Concept; A Response to Norbert Baumert and his Interlocutors," *Journal of Pentecostal Theology* 13 (2005): 257, 264.

charisms.³² Although there is no set rule, leaders of charismatic prayer groups and communities set apart time during the prayer meetings to exercise the various spiritual charisms, especially healing, prophecy, and tongues. In addition to participating in prayer meetings, charismatics pray over people who are suffering owing to illness or other problems.

In Japan, many people flock to charismatic prayer meetings and conventions in search of healing. Leaders of the CCRM invite international charismatic preachers to lead retreats and conventions. Prayer for healing is an important part of all the retreats and conventions. Besides praying for physical healing, charismatics also pray for inner healing (emotional healing, healing of memories). Japanese have very high stress levels, relative to other nations in the world, and this has led to an increase in the number of suicides.³³ The high level of stress also affects the emotional and social lives of Japanese people. Prayer for inner healing can help them focus their attention on the divine healer, Jesus, who can heal their emotional wounds from the past (see Heb 13:8).

While healing itself is significant, charismatic leaders also stress that repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation are important for receiving inner healing. During charismatic retreats, conventions, and workshops, leaders organize special talks on the importance of repentance, forgiveness, and reconciliation. They also encourage Catholics to find inner peace through the sacrament of reconciliation. Leaders of prayer groups encourage people to use their

32. Peter Hocken, *Pentecost and Parousia: Christian Renewal, Christian Unity and the Coming Glory* (Eugene: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2013), 5, 110–111.

33. Olpin Hesson, *Stress Management for Life: A Research-Based Experiential Approach* (Boston: Cengage Learning, 2013), 55.

charisms for the good of the community. Their holistic approach to healing embraces all dimensions of Christian living.

However, people who have showy charisms, like healing or prophecy, may believe that they are among the spiritual elite. This can lead to divisions in the group or community. Those who consider themselves spiritually elite may try to dictate terms to the whole group or community. Aware of this danger, the leaders of charismatic prayer groups and communities caution people using charisms about the danger of spiritual elitism.³⁴ Further, they ask people to avoid theatrics and sensationalism during healing services.

Cappellen and Rime also note in their study that religious experience enhances positive emotions.³⁵ Positive emotions help a person to cope with the problems of life. Thus, emotions have a significant role in a believer's life. However, when a person becomes over-emotional, others may become skeptical about that person's genuineness. Matsumoto notes in his study of Japanese culture that Japanese society has strict unwritten rules regarding the display of emotions.³⁶ Japanese usually do not display their subjective emotions in public. The CCRM, which has its origin in Western society, is more emotionally expressive. However, charismatics in Japan need to strike the right balance when expressing their emotions during the charismatic prayer meetings. Thus,

34. Francis Mathy, "Rei no Shikibetsu no Sho Mondai" [Problems in Discernment of the Spirits], in *Shu no Ibuki: Bassui Ban* [Breath of the Lord: Excerpts], vol. 2 (Tokyo: Catholic Charismatic Renewal of Japan, 1993), 66.

35. Patty Van Cappellen and Bernard Rime, "Positive Emotions and Self-Transcendence," in *Religion, Personality and Social Behavior*, ed. Vassilis Saroglou, 139–140 (New York: Psychology Press, 2014).

36. David Matsumoto, *Unmasking Japan: Myths and Realities about the Emotions of the Japanese* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1996), 63–64.

leaders of the CCRM need to reformulate the prayer meeting in light of local cultural norms and customs.

The discernment of spirits is also important in ascertaining the genuineness of the charisms. The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church, *Lumen Gentium* (LG), notes the need for discernment of charisms. In the paragraph about charisms, LG cites Paul's advice to the Thessalonians: "Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good" (1 Thes 5:19–21). The Conciliar document exhorts the faithful to use the spiritual charisms prudently:

Extraordinary gifts are not to be sought after, nor are the fruits of apostolic labor to be presumptuously expected from their use; but judgment as to their genuineness and proper use belongs to those who are appointed leaders in the Church, to whose special competence it belongs, not indeed to extinguish the Spirit, but to test all things and hold fast to that which is good.³⁷

Aware of the need for proper discernment regarding the use of spiritual charisms, prominent leaders of the CCRM in Japan recommend discernment of spiritual charisms in their respective groups and communities.³⁸ However, owing to a lack of trained leaders, sometimes prayer groups and communities lack proper discernment.

37. Conciliar document *Lumen Gentium*, no. 12. Available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

38. Martin Lafont, "Yogen ni Tsuite" [About Prophecy], in *Shu no Ibuki: Bassui Ban* [Breath of the Lord: Excerpts], vol. 2, 68–70.

Japanese Testimonies of Healing

The official newsletter of the CCRM in Japan, *Ikeru Mizu (Living Waters)*, has published testimonies of people who claim to have been healed. Masatoshi Tsuchida testified that he had a polyp in his throat. He prayed for healing so that he could sing praise to God during the CCRM convention. He claims that God healed him:

I was not able to sing for [the] last ten years. If I would try to sing, then my throat would hurt me. . . . People told me that it might be because of the polyp in the throat. However, I did not care about it and finally, I could not sing at all. . . . I wanted to go [to] the hospital before participating in the Hokkaido CCRM convention. . . . I prayed for healing so that I could raise my voice to praise God. . . . The next day I did not sense any symptoms of the polyp in my throat. I went to the hospital for medical examination. The doctors told me that I had no polyp in my throat. . . . I participated in [the] Hokkaido region CCRM convention and sang without any problems.³⁹

Yukiko Ishikawa testified that God consoled her grief about her son, who had a brain tumor. She further testified that God healed her of a lung tumor during the CCRM convention:

My son is twenty-six years old. When my son was fourteen years old, he got a brain tumor. We did not know that he had a brain tumor until he collapsed. As the tumor had

39. Masatoshi Tsuchida, “*Anata wo Shounin ni Suru*” [I Will Make You My Witness], *Ikeru Mizu*, 49 (1998): 4. (Author’s translation) See also Alva, *Spiritual Renewal in Japan*, 141.

spread in the brain, so all his vital parameters were affected, and he became terminally ill. My son was not a Catholic. However, a priest visited him and tied a religious medal around his neck. After around two months, doctors discharged my son. They did not operate on him but only gave him radiation treatments. I continued praying for him. God returned my son back to me. . . . Later when I went for a medical check-up, doctors found that I had a tumor in my lungs. . . . However, I decided to attend the CCRM convention. On the first day of the convention, Fr. Tom DiLorenzo called us forward for prayers. I went forward and surrendered my illness to the Lord. . . . At that moment, Fr. Tom gave a message that someone’s lungs are healed. Tears started rolling down my cheeks. . . . After returning from the convention, I went to the hospital on February 26, 2000, for a test. The test revealed that the tumor in my lungs had completely disappeared. . . . Praise God.⁴⁰

Youko Ishibashi narrated her life story in her testimony. The Life in Spirit seminar organized by the CCRM helped her to grow in the spiritual life. In addition, her son was able to overcome his depression, and other students at school stopped bullying him. She also regained her confidence and was able to start her job afresh:

I was a mediocre Christian who tried to solve life’s problem[s] with my own ability. I started facing many problems last year (2004). I gradually started losing interest

40. Yukiko Ishikawa, “*Sono Hi Iyasareta HaiShuyou*” [Lung Tumor was Healed That Day] in *Jesus 2000: Shu no Eiko be no Maneki* [Jesus 2000: Invited to Partake in the Glory of the Lord], 40. (Author’s translation)

in my job. At the same time, my youngest son's classmates were bullying him at school. He wanted to commit suicide. I was thinking about quitting my job to take care of my son. I knew I could no longer solve the problems of my life on my own. In such difficult times, I heard from Fr. Iino, the parish priest of Tsuchizaki Church about the Life in Spirit seminar. . . . I decided to participate in this seminar. . . . After receiving baptism in the Holy Spirit, my prayer life grew dramatically and I could relish the Word of God. . . . After attending the third week seminar, I sat down to write a formal complaint to the principal of my youngest son's school. Initially I wanted to complain about the students. However, as I started praying I realized that those students, who were bullying my son, have deep-seated wounds in their spirit. Therefore, I forgave those students and prayed for them. Later I wrote in the letter to the principal, "Please do take care of those students." When the principal read my letter, he contacted me and assured me that he will do all that is necessary to take care of the emotional wounds of the students who were bullying my son. The school's teachers also cooperated with the principal to take care of the students' problems, and as a result within half a year all bullying completely stopped in the school. My son, who wanted to commit suicide, regained his confidence and started attending his classes without any problems. All my work stress also disappeared. I could freely pray and spend time in serving others. Praise God.⁴¹

Nobuko Oouchi claims that her eye was healed during a CCRM convention:

In May 2005, I participated in the Ozaki CCRM convention. On the second day of the convention my eyesight dramatically improved. . . . Fifteen years ago, doctors operated [on] my left eye as I had retinal detachment. However, after five years I again had retinal detachment in my left eye. . . . My eyesight was deteriorating. . . . I thank God for healing my eyesight. . . . My son was having kidney stones. . . . He too was healed. . . . Praise God.⁴²

Mayumi Tominaga testified that God healed her emotionally and she was able to reconcile with her mother:

After hearing the talk by Fr. Rufus I was able to focus on the root cause of my problems. I was always a closed person who did not like to mingle with others. This retreat gave me an opportunity to discover that the root cause of my closed personality . . . was . . . the bad relationship with my mother. When I was young, my mother was indifferent to me. As a child, I did not understand the reason behind it. My mother was very sad because my younger brother died just one year after his birth. During this retreat, I realized the importance of knowing the deep problems of a person before making any judgments. Further, I experienced peace after receiving the sacrament of reconciliation. . . . My mother, who was at

41. Youko Ishibashi, "Tsuchisaki Kyokai de no Semina ni Sankashite: Junbisareteita Michi" [Participating in the Seminar at Tsuchisaki Church: The Way Prepared], *Ikeru Mizu* 75 (2005): 7. (Author's translation)

42. Nobuko Oouchi, "Taikai Jimukyoku ni Yoserareta Akashi no Naka Kara" [Testimonies Sent to Convention Office], *Ikeru Mizu* 82 (2006): 5. (Author's translation)

home during the retreat, had a mysterious experience. God was healing both mother and daughter at the same time. I thank God for this healing.⁴³

In each of these cases, people testified that God healed them. For some the healing was physical, while for others it was emotional. Some people claimed healing of relationships. Thus, prayer for healing is an important feature of the charismatic prayer groups in Japan.

Challenges to Healing Ministry in Japan's Religious Culture

Japan is a highly industrialized and economically developed nation. According to the World Health Statistics report published by the World Health Organization (WHO), Japan has very high life expectancy (eighty-seven for women and eighty for men).⁴⁴ Japan also has a universal health-insurance system that guarantees every person high-quality medical attention. The Japanese government allocates large budgets for research in medicine and medical technology. In spite of these advancements, the Japanese, like any other people, continue to face problems in their daily lives. Even though most Japanese are not interested in organized religions, they do search for quick-fix solutions to their problems. The economic recession, the increase in the graying population, moral decline, and cultural pressure toward perfectionism add stress to their lives. For this reason, some new religious movements, sects,

43. Mayumi Tominaga, "Reiteki Iyashi ni Kansha" [Thanks for the Spiritual Healing], *Ikeru Mizu* 94 (2009): 2. (Author's translation)

44. World Health Organization, *World Health Statistics*. Available at <http://www.who.int/mediacentre/news/releases/2014/world-health-statistics-2014/en/>.

shamans, and spiritual therapists in Japan focus on healings and material prosperity.⁴⁵

Some founders of new religious movements or sects claim to possess the supernatural power to heal and alleviate suffering.⁴⁶ Some also claim to be an incarnation of a god or a mediator for the divine.⁴⁷ Another feature of some new religious movements and sects in Japan is syncretism. The history of religions in Japan shows that the Japanese have blended their traditional religion, Shintō, with the imported religions, namely, Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism.⁴⁸ Mark Mullins notes in *Christianity Made in Japan* that some new religious movements and sects have blended Christian elements with their Asian-based philosophies.⁴⁹ Apart from the various new religious movements and sects, shamans and spiritual therapists also claim to do healings.⁵⁰ Given these aspects of modern Japanese religious culture, some people misunderstand charismatics as performing just another type of religious healing. According to Govorounova, the practice of healing services in charismatic-Pentecostal prayer groups and communities resembles

45. Horace Neill McFarland, *The Rush Hour of the Gods: A Study of the New Religious Movements in Japan* (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 79–81.

46. One needs to distinguish between new religious movements within accepted religious traditions that seek to make those traditions relevant to the Japanese people's daily life, and the kind of movements that simply focus on healing. Some of the former kinds of movements contribute to a more enriching religious life, the common good, and world peace. With such movements the Catholic Church in Japan has positive relations.

47. McFarland, *The Rush Hour of the Gods*, 71–74.

48. *Ibid.*, 92–96.

49. Mark Mullins, *Christianity Made in Japan: A Study of Indigenous Movements* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998), 25–30.

50. Christina Pratt, *An Encyclopedia of Shamanism*, vol. 1 (New York: Rosen Publishing Group, 2007), 240–244.

the rituals of Japanese shamans.⁵¹ Thus, charismatic-Pentecostals need to be very careful to present their practices of healing in ways that distinguish them from what is going on in other kinds of Japanese healing movements and traditions.

While praying for healing is part of the Catholic Church's tradition,⁵² charismatics in Japan need to show that their practices of healing differ from other practices. Healings in the Catholic Church's tradition are holistic. The church encourages people to pray not only for physical healing but also for the whole person (body, mind, and soul). Christian healing is multilayered; it is spiritual, emotional, relational, physical, and social.⁵³ Theologically, according to the Catholic tradition, genuine healing comes from God in the person of Jesus. The Holy Spirit is the giver of all spiritual charisms (1 Cor 12:7). This is the fundamental difference between the healing practices found among the charismatics and those of other religious groups in Japan. In many of these groups, the healer claims to have a divine power to heal.⁵⁴ This

51. Alena Govorounova, "Pentecostalism and Shamanism in Asia and Beyond: An Inter-disciplinary Analysis," *Pentecostalism and Shamanism in Asia*, ed. Paul Swanson, 58–59 (Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2013).

52. Joseph Ratzinger, "Instruction on Prayers for Healing," in *Prayer for Healing: International Colloquium: Rome, 10–13 November, 2001* (Vatican: International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, 2003), 313–314. See also International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, *Guidelines on Prayers for Healing* (Vatican: International Catholic Charismatic Renewal Services, 2007), 9, 18.

53. Jacqueline Ryle, "Laying Our Sins and Sorrows on the Altar," in *Practicing the Faith: The Ritual Life of Pentecostal-Charismatic Christians*, ed. Martin Lindhart, 68–94 (New York: Berghahn Books, 2011).

54. Watanabe Masako and Igeta Midori, "Healing in the New Religions: Charisma and Holy Water," *New Religions: Contemporary Papers on Japanese Religions*, ed. Inoue Nobutaka, trans. Norman Havens (Tokyo: Institute for Japanese Culture and Classics, Kokugakuin University, 1991). Available at <http://www2.kokugakuin.ac.jp/ijcc/wp/cpjr/newreligions/igeta.html>.

power gives the healer a kind of divine status and authority.⁵⁵ Unlike leaders in these traditions, charismatics in Japan need to stress that it is the power of God that heals. Moreover, people exercising the charisms of healing in charismatic prayer groups need to avoid any sort of spiritual elitism and if there is to be any healing in the group, they must give glory to God.

In some cases, non-Christians who perform rituals of healing or exorcism consider it a form of magic and reduce it to a matter of technique.⁵⁶ However, in the Catholic tradition, no one can perform healing by using a technique. All healing takes place in accordance with God's will and in God's own time and way. Faith, reconciliation, repentance, and forgiveness are essential factors for experiencing healing.⁵⁷ Charismatics need to stress these factors when they pray for healing. Also, in some religious groups, healing is like a commodity that a person can buy. There is neither any reference to faith in God nor any need for repentance or forgiveness. It is self-centered. Charismatics must educate people that healing is not a self-centered act but a God-centered action of grace. People seeking healing must focus their attention on God.

Some shamans, religious groups, and sects that practice healing use elements like oil, salt, water, fire, and so on as means for bringing forth healing. They attach supernatural power to these elements.⁵⁸ Some also use music, dance, exercises, and other practices as means for healing. In the Catholic tradition, some

55. *Ibid.*

56. John Bowen, *Religions in Practice: An Approach to the Anthropology of Religion* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2014), 73–77.

57. Francis MacNutt, *Healing* (Notre Dame: Ave Maria Press, 1974), 169–177.

58. Rajendra Tomar, "Shamanism in Shintō and Hinduism," in *Japanese Studies: Changing Global Profile*, ed. P. A. George (New Delhi: Northern Book Centre, 2010), 349–350.

charismatics use sacramentals like holy water and oil while praying for healing. However, the Catholic Church considers these objects as means through which God works.⁵⁹ These objects do not have any magical power in themselves. Charismatics need to explain the meaning and significance of these sacramental objects to avoid misapprehensions about their use during prayer sessions.

In Japan, shamans and some leaders of new religious movements and sects consider healing to be a business. To attract people they advertise their supernatural powers.⁶⁰ Because they consider people seeking healing to be their clients, their service is business oriented. They offer a number of products like *omamori* (lucky charms), talismans, lucky stones, and so on to bring good fortune and healing.⁶¹ People attending healing services in charismatic prayer groups may look upon the charismatics as simply spiritual therapists selling objects of healing to clients. Therefore, charismatics need to be very cautious in collecting donations. They need to stress that healing is a gift from God that money cannot buy. They must emphasize that the religious articles they sell, like crosses, relics, and rosaries, have no magical power in themselves; rather, they aid in our development of faith in God.

Due to growing economic and social problems, a substantial number of Japanese people face stress and turmoil in their lives. They are searching for freedom from suffering. Some leaders of new religious movements and sects are offering a variety of services to free people from their suffering and bring healing. However, suffering is part of any person's life. It is part of the human

59. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 1667. Henceforth CCC. Available at http://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/___P58.HTM.

60. Gaitanidis, 353–385.

61. Ibid.

condition. The idea of having a suffering-free world is unrealistic. Charismatics too need to be cautious about not creating a false image of God as a spiritual power that heals all the people and frees us from suffering. Jesus said, “With God all things are possible” (Mt 19:26). However, all things are possible in God's time and will. Human beings cannot force their time and will on God. Moreover, through his cross, death, and resurrection Jesus taught humanity the importance of redemptive suffering. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* notes, “By his passion and death on the cross, Christ has given a new meaning to suffering: it can henceforth configure us to him and unite us with his redemptive Passion.”⁶² Christians can find meaning in the suffering that befalls them through no fault of their own. Charismatics in Japan need to emphasize the importance of redemptive suffering. While they need to encourage people to pray for healing, they need to prepare people to accept God's will in their lives. Murray notes the danger of the contemporary world's overemphasis on health:

What we are witnessing here is nothing less than the emergence of a remarkable new cult of health, a near-obsessive concern, among our contemporaries, with both physical and spiritual well-being. But, while there is a generous focus on personal self-development and life satisfaction, there is little or no concern shown, by this movement, for the wider issues of health in our society today, no notable response, for example, to the sickness and disease endured by countless thousands of people as a result of poverty and poor living standards. The truth is that if we insist on placing at the very

62. CCC, no. 1505.

centre of our spirituality the pursuit of personal health, if we equate being in a state of health with being human, then we will be inclined to recoil at once from those people whom we know to be sick.⁶³

Murray also quotes Jürgen Moltmann, who notes that the modern health cult has produced precisely the fear of being ill that it wants to overcome.⁶⁴ Charismatics in Japan need to educate people to focus not on their own healing alone but on Christian charity by reaching out to care for the sick, the aged, the disabled, and the weak. Thus, charismatics can show that there is a big difference between the Christian understanding of healing and the healing rituals of shamans, certain leaders of new religious movements and sects, and spiritual therapists.

Conclusion

Most people in Japan have a negative view of religions. However, the rise in the number of spiritual therapists shows that the Japanese are searching for quick-fix solutions to their problems. A majority of the shamans, spiritual therapists, and leaders of new religious movement and sects advertise their power to heal. Charismatics also pray for healing. There is a danger, then, that people attending charismatic prayer meetings may consider the charismatics to be like any other spiritual therapists. Thus, charismatics are challenged to not only pray for healing but also educate people about the differences between the healing in prayer meetings

and the healing done by spiritual therapists. Charismatics need to proclaim the message of Christ and teach people that genuine healing comes from God alone. They need to emphasize that humans cannot manipulate the will of God. Further, healing is not a commodity for sale, but a gift from God. Thus, in Japan the charismatics have the difficult task of being both the “the salt of the earth” and the “light of the world” (Mt 5:13–14). In spite of these challenges, charismatics are working to spread the Kingdom of God. They organize retreats and conventions to pray over people and spread the message of the gospel. Their efforts are gradually bearing fruit, and some people have experienced the healing love of Christ in their lives. Thus, the Catholic Charismatic Renewal Movement has a great potential to bring genuine transformation to people’s lives in Japan.

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63. Paul Murray, “Bad Health . . . Good News?” *Priests and People* 15 (2001): 87–92.

64. Ibid. Original quote from Jürgen Moltmann, *Ethics of Hope*, trans. Margaret Kohl (London: SCM Press, 2012), 93. See also Mihaly Szentmartoni, “Healings: Risks, Abuses and Deviations,” in *Prayer for Healing*, 191.