



# Apostolic Notes

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## Do People Look At You Strange?



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When I minister in other countries, there is this barely perceptible, but yet real emotional maybe psychological thing that happens when I return home. It seems that when I arrive back at the first major U.S. airport, there is this sigh and relaxation that passes through me. As I am making my way to immigrations, there is always a little charge when I see the sign that signifies the line for US passport holder or citizens.

After much thought, I have come to the conclusion that this experience is not just because I am coming home, but it is because I have arrived back in the U.S. Now why is this significant? It is because this is where my citizenship is; this is where I have certain freedoms and rights. While in other countries, I am not always sure of all the laws and rights or freedoms people have. I have to remember; I am a visitor in those countries and act accordingly.

In Japanese they have a word, ***gaijin*** which means "foreigner," "outsider," or "non-Japanese". It is composed of *gai* (outside) and *jin* (person), so the word could be translated literally as "outside person." It is a word used to designate those individuals who are not part of the Japanese culture or nation; these individuals are distinctly different.

When I have ministered in Okinawa, I have met Americans who have lived there for years. Much of their life is immersed in the culture of Okinawa: some of them have married Okinawans and live among them. Yet, they are *gaijin*, non-Japanese, they are still American and many of the Okinawans view them as outsiders. In short – they are different!

Paul tells us that our "citizenship...is in heaven" (Ph 3:20 ISV). Now he is not telling us that we are a citizen of some fare off, never, never land; but we are citizens of a spiritual kingdom. As a citizen of the Kingdom of Heaven, we are to remember that in this world we are an emissary or ambassador of our King: to this world I should always appear as "gaijin" or "outside person."

I enjoy learning the cultures of other lands. When I am in other countries, I constantly ask "Why?" "What does that

mean?" Yet, I know that in many of those situations, I will never fully comprehend the significance of the action, compared to those who are born and raised there. There is always this awareness that I am not of that culture: I am a visitor and I do not completely fit in. If my citizenship is of another kingdom, where should I find I feel the most at home?

It is in His kingdom, demonstrating a culture of spiritual dominion, where I should feel the most comfortable. While I must live in the midst of this world, I must remember, I am a *gaijin*, a foreigner, outsider; I am not of this place. My conduct should be such that I reflect the beliefs and values of my King and then manifest them by my actions. Paul further tells us "Only be sure as citizens so to conduct yourselves [that] your manner of life [will be] worthy of the good news (the Gospel) of Christ," (Phil 1:27 AMP). My life should be such that to this world I am always known as "gaijin."

Food for thought – Does this world look at you as a Gaijin? When do you feel the most at home: When immersed in the culture of the world, or in the culture of the kingdom?

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