

JBS NEWS INTERNATIONAL

Rise for the Great Commission

April 2019 Vol.16

God's Word - Living Hope for All

Greetings from Japan Bible Society

**"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives
and recovery of sight to the blind,
to set free the oppressed
and announce that the time has come
when the Lord will save his people."** Luke 4:18-19(GNT)



Rev. Makoto Watabe
JBS General Secretary

We thank God that we can deliver to you this annual newsletter. This is the only tool that introduces the works of Japan Bible Society to other countries in a language other than Japanese. We hope you enjoy reading and getting a glimpse of

what is happening in Japan. Last December, for the first time in 31 years, we published a new Japanese translation "Bible, Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version." After 8 years of preparation and 8 years of translation, 16 years in total, with the cooperation of 150 academics including Greek and Hebrew translators, experts in Japanese language, poets, editors and volunteer checkers, it was finally completed. The first Japanese translation in Japan was published in 1887. 5 translations were done in the past 130 years. The 4th and 5th are in cooperation with the Catholic and Protestant churches and as for the 4th, interconfessional

translation, 13 million copies were distributed since its publication.

The new translation is based on the Skopos theory adopted by the Netherlands Bible Society. We aimed to translate into more sophisticated Japanese, so that it would be better understood and sound beautiful and flow natural when it is read orally. We hope our new Bible will reach more Japanese people so that they will encounter the Word of God.

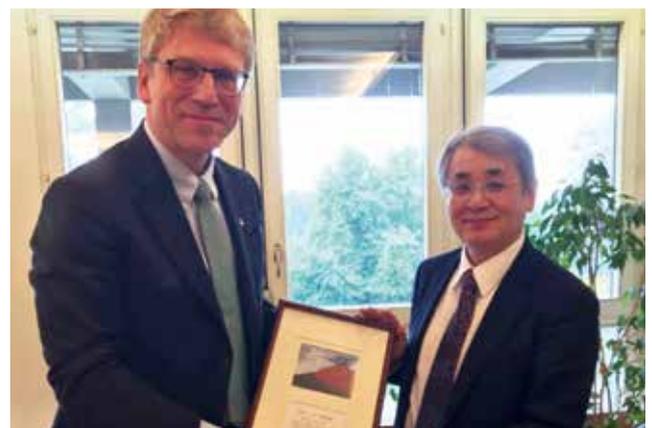
Lastly, I'm retiring from my current position as the GS and Rev. Gushiken is taking over my responsibilities and duties. I thank God that I was able to work with the colleagues of Bible Societies around the world. May the Lord continue to bless you.



Deputy General Secretary
Kiyoshi Gushiken

Courtesy Call to World Council of Churches (WCC)

General Secretary Watabe and Deputy General Secretary Gushiken visited the World Council of Churches (WCC) headquarter in Geneva in May 2018. GS Watabe was elected as Moderator of National Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ) in April 2018. They met with General Secretary Olav Fykse Tveit to discuss how they can further deepen their relationships. WCC and NCCJ both celebrated their 70th anniversary in 2018.



Shippo-Yaki (Japanese Cloisonné plate) with design of Mt. Fuji was presented to GS Olav Fykse Tveit

Current State of Digital Bible



Deputy General Secretary Kiyoshi Gushiken at DBL summit (right)



YouVersion – 10th Anniversary Celebration

Deputy General Secretary Gushiken attended the UBS Digital Academy held in Taiwan in April 2018. In September, the 4th UBS Digital Bible Library (DBL) summit took place at the Museum of the Bible in Washington DC, and General Secretary Watabe and Deputy GS Gushiken participated. More than 100 people were

there representing 10 Bible Societies and 29 mission organizations in the US. YouVersion, a free download Bible app, marked the 10th anniversary since its release, and a celebration dinner was held. YouVersion is now available in more than 1,000 languages, offering nearly 1,500 versions & translations, and recorded more than 25 million downloads so far.

Christian News Site “Christian Press” Launched

In June 2018, Japan Bible Society launched a new project “Christian Press” - a news website which distributes news on the churches and Christian communities.

More people have become dependent on receiving the information via internet rather than newspapers and TV. In modern society with the flood of information, we would like to deliver the most reliable news and bring

scint-of-Christ to people and hope to cast light on this era of uncertainty. Taking advantage of the worldwide platform, we would like to deliver the good news, good messages rapidly at low cost to not only Christians but also to non-Christians.



An agreement was signed with Christianity Today, US.



News site launched by JBS Christian Press

Japan Bible Society and Audio Visual Activities Commission (AVACO) Merged



A recording studio at AVACO



Audio Visual Activities Commission (AVACO) and Japan Bible Society were merged in January 2019. AVACO is a Christian organization mainly producing educational

materials for children. There are a recording studio and a motion picture studio as a related company. The acquisition will strengthen the development of educational materials for children.

The 3rd JBS Video Clip Competition Award 2018



Best Award: "I've asked Christians"

Video Clip Competition Award is a project which invites participants to submit original video films based on Biblical words or contents. In this competition, we received 48 entries from April to July 2018. Four judges evaluated each film and selected 20 films as prize winners. This award offered two categories; 1) 1-minute video clip for CM category and 2) 3-minute video clip for short film category. Awarding ceremony was held at United Cinemas Toyosu, Tokyo.



United Cinemas Toyosu was the venue for the award ceremony

“Bible, Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version” published

The 5th and the latest Japanese translation “Bible, Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version” was published in December 2018. It took us 8 years to complete the translation which started in 2010. We were able to complete it in such a

short period because of paratext, a translation support software, which helped translate the text efficiently. The dedication and the efforts of those involved in the project were indispensable.



“Bible, Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version” unveiled!



Group photo after the dedication ceremony

Press Conference on the Publication of “Bible, Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version”

The press conference was held at Ginza Church on 3rd December 2018. General Secretary Watabe explained that this accomplishment was especially significant because it is the fruit of the Catholic and Protestant churches’ cooperative work. He also mentioned that only 8 years were spent to

complete it. With the implementation of IT, the translators and poets worked as a team to make more sophisticated Japanese text. Mr. Shimasaki, the translation coordinator and manager, showed some examples of the words that were cautiously treated.



GS Watabe (right) and Dr. Shimasaki (left) at the press conference



Newly translated Bible

Commemorative Lecture for Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version Publication and Dedication Ceremony

A commemorative lecture and a dedication ceremony for the new Bible translation took place at Ginza Church on 22nd February 2019. 200 people gathered and celebrated the publication. This translation project adopted the Skopos theory and aimed to produce a more sophisticated text suitable for oral reading at church. Professor Dr. Lourens de Vries, Free Univ. Amsterdam, Netherlands, who advocates the Skopos theory, gave a lecture saying that using this theory, the Netherlands Bible Society was able to translate the Bible successfully. He commented that Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version was the younger sister of the Dutch Bible and congratulated the completion of the translation.



Rev. Hiroshi Omiya, Chair of JBS board, delivered a word at the ceremony



GS Watabe



Public Lecture: The Word of God and Us who Live Today: Why keep translating the Bible?

A commemorative lecture for the new translation was held at Sophia University on 23rd February 2019 and 500 people attended. The main lecturer Prof. Dr. Lourens de Vries gave a lecture titled “The Word of God and Us who Live Today: Why keep translating the Bible?” Professor

Akio Tsukimoto, emeritus prof. of Rikkyo University/ special-appointment prof. of Theology at Sophia University gave a speech titled “Bible translations and modern times: to Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version” in which he referred to the relevance of the Bible and ecumenism.



Dr. Lourens De Vries lecturing at Sophia University



Armenian Apostolic Church, Orthodox Church and UBS joint meeting

An “Armenian Apostolic Church, Orthodox Church and UBS joint meeting” was held in Yerevan, Republic of Armenia, hosted by UBS Church Relations Committee. Being on the committee, General Secretary Watabe attended also.

In the joint statement, they announced the building of stronger cooperative structures in the areas of Bible translation and distribution. The 20 participants were from the neighbouring countries including Russia, Kazakhstan, and Slovakia.



Eastern Orthodox Church, Oriental Orthodox Church, Catholic Church, and UBS joint meeting



Bible competition for middle school students

Visit to the Bolivian Bible Society

On February 2nd, 2019, General Secretary Rev. Watabe and Emi Beland, Financial Manager, visited the Bolivian Bible Society. 36 native tribes' languages are spoken in Bolivia. For the purpose of improving the literacy of Aymara people, Japan Bible Society decided to support the distribution of Biblical education materials for Aymara children. JBS's focus on the minority tribe and the marginalized group, especially children, is because we hope that they will grow up in the Grace of God and receive blessings as they encounter life's challenges as adults.



Bolivian Bible Society bookstore



Bible delivery truck



With Bolivian Bible Society staff

Global Caribbean Summit and Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) Annual Meeting

General Secretary Watabe participated in the Global Caribbean Summit held in November 2018. 600 people gathered including church leaders working in 31 Caribbean countries.



Global Caribbean Summit in Trinidad and Tobago

In the same month, the Annual Meeting of Society of Biblical Literature (SBL) was held in Denver. GS Watabe attended several sessions and workshops organized by German Bible Society and American Bible Society.



Colorado Convention Center in Denver

Visit to the China Christian Council

UBS Church Relations Committee organized a visit to Chinese churches and General Secretary Watabe took part as a committee member.

They had a meeting with China's National Religious Affairs Administration (NRAA) in Beijing, theological seminaries, and church-related people. Joseph Ma Yinglin, President of Bishops Conference of Catholic

Church in China and Deputy General Secretary of Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, explained the current situation of Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association and Chinazation of Christianity. He emphasized that churches in China have focused on the massive change after Chinese economic reform and have been contributing to social welfare and education.



Church of the Savior, Beijing ©Michele Lee



People praying in the church

topics

National Bible Quiz Grand Championship in Tokyo

The Bible Quiz Championship, a project aiming for familiarizing more people with the Bible through biblical quizzes, took place across several cities around Japan, starting in Tokyo in 2014. And in August 2018, National Bible Quiz Grand Championship was held in Tokyo to decide on who would be the grand champion among the winners from the regional competitions. Eleven teams fought in a tournament, and it became a very tough match. The grand champion was a 16-year old high school student's team, the winner of the 8th regional championship in Kobe. He participated in the International Bible Championship Jerusalem in Prague in May 2018.



Grand champion Terima Kasih Yesus and Rev. Hiroshi Omiya, Chair of the board



Participants responding to the questions

topics

Rugby World Cup 2019



The 9th Rugby World Cup 2019 will take place in Japan for the first time. The opening match will be held in Tokyo on September 20th and the final match will be played in Yokohama on November 2nd. The previous World Cup, held in England in 2015, Japan had a remarkable victory against South Africa, who was ranked 3rd in the world and had won twice at the World Cup.

It is considered as a run-up to the Tokyo 2020 Summer Olympics. Will they achieve good results? Japanese people are looking forward to its opening.



Ad for the 2019 Rugby World Cup seen in Ginza