

JBS News International

Greetings from **Japan Bible Society**

Vol.17
May 2020



Rev. Kiyoshi Gushiken
JBS General Secretary

A New Beginning for JBS

By the guidance of the Lord, I was appointed to be the 10th General Secretary of Japan Bible Society in December 2019. The year 2020 marks 145 years since the founding of JBS. I realize that I am sailing into to a world with many challenges and so I set three

**“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength;
they shall mount up with wings like eagles;
they shall run and not be weary;
they shall walk and not faint.”** (Isaiah 40:31 NKJV)

main targets for our ministry.

First is to streamline our operations. The world rapidly changes every day. We have to have the courage to keep what must not be changed and change what needs to be changed. To adapt to the IoT in the 5G era, we will tackle necessary renovations to improve our ministry.

Secondly, we will reformulate our mission statement. It is time to take another look at our *raison d'être* to see if it is truly in alignment with our ethos of “Bring God’s word to every person.” We will take a step forward from “publishing and distributing the Bible” to seek a new

ministry and business to further promote “Bible engagement.”

Last but not least, we want to renew the heart of worship. All of the Bible Societies’ work is initiated by God and therefore our purpose is to reveal His glory through our work. God, our Lord, gives us the strength to accomplish it. I sincerely hope that each staff member of Japan Bible Society, as well as the entire JBS community, will spread their wings like an eagle and soar on the wind of His blessings this year. Please pray for us as we start a new chapter in our ministry.

New General Secretary for JBS

The General Secretary Handover Ceremony was held at Ginza Church on 13 December 2019. Rev. Makoto Watabe, who served as the General Secretary for 21 years, handed over the task to Rev. Kiyoshi Gushiken, the 10th General Secretary of JBS. “One of the characteristics of Japan Bible Society is ecumenical Bible translation and distribution. When we see the Christian churches in Japan from a Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) point of view, perpetuity is a big issue. I believe JBS can make a contribution in this area. I want to set as future goals, the promotion of the solidarity of churches and the advancement of concrete cooperation with them. I am already in my mid-50s. I spent my early childhood in the midst of rapid economic growth in Japan and went into the real world during the “bubble economy years.” I feel that I need to renew my perspectives. I intend to devote myself to these tasks with the help of God’s words and wisdom. And I hope I can handover what is essential to the next generation,” said he in his speech at the ceremony.

Rev. Gushiken was born in Okinawa in 1965. He was



Japan Bible Society General Secretary Handover Ceremony

educated in Catholic educational institutions. Later he went to live in Canada and got Canadian citizenship. After being baptized, he studied at Northwest Baptist Theological College, Regent College, and Luther Rice Seminary and pastored in a Wesleyan Holiness Church in Japan. He served as General Secretary of Japan Evangelical Association (a member of WEA) from 2002 to 2011, after then he was called to pastor Makiki Christian Church (UCC) in Hawaii. He was appointed Deputy General Secretary of Japan Bible Society in 2017.

He enjoys reading and sports, especially tennis and golf. He goes to a gym regularly for fitness. Keeping his smile and enthusiasm at work is his motto.

Behind the Scene Efforts of the Sign Language Bible Production

Since 1996, Japan Bible Society has been supporting the production of the Japanese Sign Language (JSL) Bible, which the Japan Deaf Evangelical Mission in Japan (ViBi) has been working on. 2020 is the 27th commemorative year for ViBi since its establishment. According to their official website's current progress report about 75% of the New Testament, about 17% of the Old Testament, and as a total, about 32% of the entire Bible have been completed. We interviewed Rev. Eiji Matsumoto, ViBi's Director and his staff who are currently involved in the production.



▲ Eiji Matsumoto
◀ Video-filming the Book of Daniel

Q1 : Can you give us an example of a unique way of signing words that are specific to the Bible?

(E.M): The sign for “God” used in churches is different from the sign in JSL (god). “Spirit” means “ghost” in JSL, so churches use a different sign. Even though the same Japanese kanji (character) is used, if they represent different concepts, we use different signs.

Q2 : What were the difficulties so far in translating the book of Daniel?

(E.M) One of the difficulties in translating Daniel is that there are many visions. Some of the ambiguous expressions in the Bible can be difficult to portray in JSL if there are not enough resources. In Daniel chapter 7, there is an expression “ten horns.” There is no clear picture as to whether the 10 horns grow in one row, two rows, or randomly. Discussions need to be repeated while consulting several exegesis before deciding how to sign.

Q3 : In September 2018, you conducted a survey on the usage of JSL Bible. What did you think of the current situation revealed by the results?

(E.M) I felt a strong need to explain more in detail to individual Christians and the churches on how to use the JSL Bible. Feedbacks such as “I’m watching your Facebook’s ‘Let’s read one chapter a day’” or “I haven’t downloaded the app but I am watching your YouTube videos” were encouraging to read, more so because they came from non-Christians.

Q4 : Tell us about “eye training.”

(E.M) Sign language is a visual language. Inevitably, you need to use your eyes in sign language translation. At draft check, we make sure there is no grammatical omission such as facial expressions and eyebrow movements. At editing, we check the cut timing in each frame. At shooting, we compare the draft with the video being shot, and make sure not to overlook any details for the process is similar to “Spot the Difference.” Insight and agility are essential at this

workplace.

Q5 : Please give a few comments to the Bible Societies around the world that are currently engaged in the translation of the Sign Language Bible.

(E.M) I believe you all acknowledge that the purpose of the sign language translation is to bring the gospel to the Deaf community. Please hire as many Deaf people as possible on your translation team. Also, meet a lot of Deaf people in your country or region, build relationships and keep learning more about their culture and language. Sticking to those policies, ViBi has conducted Bible translations led by Deaf rather than by hearing (people), and we believe that because of such efforts, 27 years of progress have been achieved. I would also appreciate it if you could let your people know that Deaf community needs their own translation because the language is different, not from a welfare perspective. I pray that the sign language translation projects in your country or region will be blessed and that God’s Word will reach as many Deaf people as possible.

Meet ViBi staff!!

Currently, there are 9 staff members working at ViBi. We asked the following questions to a few of them : ① What is your responsibility within ViBi? ② What do you enjoy the most about your job? and ③ What are the challenges you are facing?

Staff 1:

① Project Manager/ Translator ② I feel a sense of accomplishment when a chapter comes out smoothly according to the translation plan. ③ There are very few translators * so most of the time it will not work as planned. How we engage our donors and raise more awareness of the challenges we face, which is unique in Sign Language Bible Translation, is the key. * In case of the written Bible, it is often difficult to see who the translator is and who is responsible, unless you want to find out. However, if you are a Deaf translator, your face is always disclosed. The Deaf community is so small that, for example, if something happens, people whose faces are shown can be blamed. In that sense, there are many people who do not want to be sign language translators and be exposed to the public.

Staff 2:

① Technical expert/ Editing ② We use ELAN software, which we use to add annotations to the recorded drafts in our translation process. By using code and programming knowledge, it is fun to contribute to reducing staffs' working hours. ③ Because it is a long desk work, patience and concentration are essential. In addition, the process of confirming if Japanese and JSL expressions correspond to each other is rather a steady work.

Staff 3:

① Exegete ② It is interesting to research and think about the best translation that is true to the original text. In the case of sign language translation, it is necessary to express specifically (not so abstract like in the written Bible), so more information is needed. In that respect, I find research rewarding and challenging. ③ The Sign Language Selection Committee decides the sign name of the characters in the Bible. Without this, it would be ambiguous, whether it is another person or the same person. (cf: In case of Mary, the mother of Jesus, and Mary Magdalene, they are signed differently.) In addition, we sometimes add animation and images along with the signing. This is because sign language is a visual language, and it helps Deaf understand the content immediately. For example, in Leviticus, we made a replica of the tabernacle so that the signers can see it visually to come up with the expressions, and we also added some images in the actual JSL Bible. This was an eye-opener for the hearing persons. As such, it is

necessary to work with translators and other team members to determine what is the best translation and expression for Deaf.

Staff 4:

① Accountant ② My heart is filled with gratitude each time we receive donations from our donors. One thing which I keep in my mind is that we are able to continue our translation project only by the support and prayers of the generous supporters. ③ As long as we are supported by contributions, keeping strong ties with our supporters is crucial. Therefore, we handle personal information and the accuracy of numbers with care.

Braille Bible of the new JBS Interconfessional Version to be Published by Spring 2020



► Skilled staff at hand-binding process



▲ In printing, a special braille paper is sandwiched and a roller is passed one by one on this Zinc plate

The first volume of the "Bible, Japan Bible Society Interconfessional" Braille Bible was published in May 2019. As of February, the Old Testament (26 volumes) and the New Testament (8 volumes) have been published. Production is underway for the other volumes and they will be completed by the spring of 2020, including the six volumes of Deuterocanon.

The Braille Bible has been produced in classical, colloquial, and interconfessional versions in cooperation with the Tokyo Braille Publishing, a social welfare corporation in Tokyo. It costs about 10 million JPY to make 100 copies. To distribute them at an affordable price of 100 JPY per volume, we depend on the donation of our supporters. We would like to ask for your prayer for the sustainable production of Japanese Braille Bible.



REPORT SI Bible seminar 2019 in Osaka, Tokyo, Kanazawa, Sendai, and Nagoya

Since 2016, Japan Bible Society has been holding seminars on “Bible, Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version (SI Bible)” in various cities throughout the country aiming to promote a better understanding of SI Bible. In 2019, JBS organized the seminars in five cities: Osaka, Tokyo, Kanazawa, Sendai, and Nagoya. Some of the members of the editorial committee who are also translators spoke on themes such as “SI Bible - fascination of poetry”, “The features of SI Bible”, and “The righteousness of God and the faithfulness of Jesus Christ”. In the seminars, they compared the “Bible, The New Interconfessional Translation (NI Bible)” and SI Bible and showed the audience some examples of verses translated differently, as well as some characteristics of SI Bible. The series on

this topic is quite popular and attracts about 100 attendees each time.

Here are some of the feedbacks from them. “It was interesting to know about the relationship between the Old Testament and the European culture.” “My heart was touched to understand the weight each word and translation of the Bible carries. It was good to know the details about the canonical books of both Catholic and Protestant.” “I realized the importance of Ecumenism once again.” “I hope that I could become more familiar with the Bible in my everyday life. It was a good opportunity to realize that we have to avoid reading the Bible arbitrarily.”



Standard Version of SI Bible

Standard version of the “Bible, Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version” is now available

Japan Bible Society added in our line-up the A6 size Bible, which is a standard size for textbooks used in Christian schools in Japan. We also published the B6 size hardcover Bible, which is suitable to be stocked in churches for lending. Both were released in autumn 2019. Some schools already adopted A6 size Bible standard version (without quotation or annotation) and more schools are thinking to do so.

Traditional yet challenging – SIO43 wins a prize in Japan Book Design Award 2019

“Bible, Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version” with quotation and annotation, B4 size version (SIO43) won the Chair person’s award (in specialized book category) in Japan Book Design Award 2019 sponsored by Japan Book Publishers Association and Japan Federation of Printing Industries.

The stained-glass image of the cover was designed by a Christian designer Mr. Yoshiya Miwa. Sanseido-Printing Co.'s leading-edge printing technology made it possible to express the cross shining in the darkness, and the emission of light through the colorful windows which represent the creation of God. We used custom-ordered paper to print the text block. As a result, it reduced the thickness and weight to 70 to 80% (compared with the conventional JBS products). The paper has a slight color to provide high opacity. It adopted the universal



▲ SIO43 Bible



▲ SIO43 Bible Production Team

design font for the letters and newly-developed easy-to-read font for ruby, which are kana letters printed alongside the Chinese characters.

These various ingenuities resulted in receiving the high acclaim of “Traditional yet challenging.” The prize-winning Bible was displayed at several locations in Japan and at the Frankfurter Buchmesse in Germany. People enjoyed the touch of the Bible different from that of a smartphone screen.



Prefer a tablet or a smartphone? – Web Bible launched in January 2020

Where is that verse in the Bible? How is it translated in English? I wish I had a Bible I could use in those situations...

Japan Bible Society launched a service of Web Bible that can run on smartphones, tablets and PCs. We offer two subscription plans: the premium version contains “Japan Bible Society Interconfessional Version (SI Bible)”, “The New Interconfessional Translation (NI Bible)”, “Colloquial Japanese”, “English Standard Version”, and “Study Bible with marginal notes” and the annual price is 2,000 JPY. The basic version contains SI Bible for 500 JPY per year. The Web Bible is being promoted as a product for the 5G era and wish to win a wide popularity. Internet connection and Google Chrome are needed to use the Web Bible.



2019 UBS ISP Projects: JBS Continues Financial Support to 9 Countries, Totaling 14.5 Million JPY

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Japan Bible Society provided a grant of approximately 14.5 million JPY to nine countries through UBS as part of the 2019 ISP contribution. The countries are Armenia, Indonesia, Guatemala, Ecuador, Paraguay, Bolivia, Croatia, Serbia, and Portugal. These countries are carrying out projects such as free Bible distribution, educational projects based on the Bible and projects targeting mainly the youth who will be responsible for the next generation. JBS places a higher priority on such projects and supports them continuously.



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The Power of The Word: The 4th JBS Video Clip Competition Award 2019



The theme for the 4th competition was “Unchanging Word for a changing world.” The highest award winner was Mr. Megumi Fujiyama who created a video entitled “The power of the Word.” He received inspirations from Proverbs 15:4. “I wanted to say through the Words of the Bible that words have significant power. And also I wanted to stop the bullying we see around us. That's why I created the video,” he said. More than 70 original Bible-based videos were entered in this competition. 14 videos in the 3-minutes category and 5 videos in the 1-minute category won prizes. The quality is improving every year. You can watch all the entries from the QR code above.



Award ceremony Award winner Mr. Megumi Fujiyama

Pope Francis tours Tokyo, Nagasaki, and Hiroshima, first Papal visit in 38 years

Pope Francis visited Japan from November 23 to 26, 2019. It has been 38 years since the 264th Pope John Paul II visited Japan in 1981 and is the second time for a Pope to visit the nation.

He appealed in Nagasaki for the abolition of nuclear arms. In Hiroshima, he stated that using nuclear power in wars is a crime.

At the gathering with the victims of the Great East Japan Earthquake, the Pope encouraged them and prayed for the area's recovery. He also expressed concerns about the serious impact that nuclear power plants make on the environment. At "Meeting with Young People," he discussed with participants about bullying and discrimination. The Mass at Tokyo Dome, where 50,000



The Pope at Tokyo Dome

people were gathered, was filled with excitement.

The Pope's official twitter account has 18 million followers. Upon leaving Japan, he tweeted blessings in Japanese. His visit gave great encouragement to Christian churches in Japan.

girl "my throat is scratchy"
/ boy "my nose tickles" /
hack-hack /Achoo!
Turn into a ninja when you
cough! / Catch a cough inside
your arms!



Prayer Request

COVID-19 Outbreak Labelled as Pandemic

The World Health Organization declared on March 12, Wednesday, that the global coronavirus crisis is now a pandemic. While churches in Japan have been forced to make a tough decision to stop Sunday worship and close their doors, some churches went on to live-stream worship/mass through YouTube. The outbreak has been affecting people's lives in various ways. Meanwhile, a cartoonist, Yuu Aoshika's illustration on how to teach "cough etiquette" to toddlers went viral on the internet. She drew illustrations of Ninja to teach her 2-year-old daughter who cannot use masks and handkerchiefs effectively to learn the manners in a way that is fun and easy-to-understand. Now, this poster is in high demand by pediatrics clinics and daycares.

At the request of the government to prevent the spread of infection, schools nationwide have been temporarily closed from March 2 and children and parents are forced to remain patient. Let us hope and pray for a quick end to the pandemic.

TOPICS

Brave Blossoms Made History in RWC2019

The Rugby World Cup 2019 was held at 12 venues nationwide from September to November. As the typhoon Hagibis hit the archipelago, Japan won the qualifying pool for four consecutive matches and made it to the quarter-final for the first time in Japan rugby history. Under the captainship of Michael Leitch, 31 team players including 15 foreign players from 7 countries became one team, and the excitement swept up the whole nation. The slogan "ONE TEAM" put up by the head coach, Jamie Joseph, was selected by publishers as the 2019 buzzword and became a word widely recognized by the society.

During the RWC2019, a Jesus follower and a former New Zealand national rugby team ("All Blacks") player, Timo Tagaloa, was at Kumagaya City, Saitama Prefecture - city known as "rugby town." Together with former Olympic medalist and rugby players from Fiji, they were welcomed as guests at a sports festival co-organized by Kumagaya Gospel Christ Church and the local authority. Tagaloa and 250 children performed Haka, a ceremonial dance or challenge in Maori culture which the All Blacks perform before every international match. Naruo Watanabe, a father of 3 children, and a member of the planning committee said with a big smile, "I think that for the first time we were able to co-host a sports festival with the local government and take the first step as "a church rooted in the community." A total cumulative audience of 1,704,443 were fascinated by the exciting matches played throughout the RWC2019. The flag was handed over to France, the host country for the world cup in 2023.



▲ Timo Tagaloa performing Haka with Kumagaya kids



▲ Once in a life time event! Excited fan before Ireland-Japan game

A Basic Guide to Paralympics 2021 TOPICS

"JUDO" and "KEIRIN" are now official sports of the Olympic Games and are globally known as sports originated in Japan. Does the term "Paralympic" have its origin in Japan too?!

Q: When was the term "Paralympic" used for the first time?

A: The International Stoke Mandeville Games, held in 1948 with the goal of treating and reintegrating soldiers wounded in World War II, was later held in Rome in 1960 as the first Paralympic Games along with the 17th Olympic Games (400 participants from 23 countries took part in the Games, which already included athletes other than soldiers). The term "Paralympic" has been used from the second Tokyo Games in 1964. The term was first coined combining the words paraplegia and Olympics. However, the meaning became obsolete as the Games began to include other disability groups. Moreover, the concept of "International Stoke Mandeville Games which took place in the same year and venue as the Olympic Games" transformed

its interpretation to include the Greek prefix Para (along, parallel) + Olympic to attract more diversified physically-challenged participants. The 16th Summer Paralympics will be held in Tokyo from August 24 to September 5, 2021.

Q: What does the emblem mean?

A: This emblem is called "Three Agitos." "Agito" means "I move" in Latin, and it depicts the Paralympians who continue to push their limits without giving up despite challenges. The three colors red, blue, and green were chosen because they are the colors most commonly used in national flags. (Ref: Japan Paralympic Committee website)

