

Shirakawa-Go
UNESCO World Heritage Site



JBS NEWS INTERNATIONAL

vol. 3
Oct. 2007

© <http://k-kabegami.com/>

Nor do you pour new wine into used wineskins, because the new wine will burst the skins, the wine will pour out, and the skins will be ruined. Instead, new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins!

Luke 5:37-38 (TEV ed.2)

Warm Greetings from Japan Bible Society!

We thank God for being able to deliver to you the third issue of our JBS news. As the Word which says, Instead, new wine must be poured into fresh wineskins! (Luke 5:38), Japan Bible Society has been searching for new ways to distribute the Bible in this new era. We wish from our heart that by sharing some highlights with those who pray for us all around the

world, our work would be blessed by the Lord. May God's grace be with you all.

Sincerely in Christ,

Makoto Watabe
General Secretary



Rev. Watabe, GS

Ms. Sayuri Kume as Goodwill Ambassador of JBS



Ms. Sayuri Kume, Goodwill Ambassador of JBS

Ms. Sayuri Kume, a church musician, has been appointed as goodwill ambassador of JBS in June 2007. Saki Kubota, her former screen-name maybe more famous, as one of her songs called, Ihojin (Stranger in English in meaning) was a major hit in the late 70's and the early 80's. Ms. Kume is a graduate of Tokyo Baptist Seminary, where she studied theology, and now is active mainly in churches and in Christian schools, performing various kinds of concerts, as well as organizing Bible Caf  to study the Word.

I always bring a small Bible when I travel. I tend to read something on the trains and planes so it is a good size for me to bring: a Japanese lunch box, a Japanese tea and the Bible. Is it surprising? It's a great companion for a trip.

International Bible Forum 2007

International Bible Forum 2007 was held on 27th and 28th of June at Tokyo International Forum. Five speakers from abroad (photos below) each gave a lecture and some four hundred people attended each lecture. "Canon and Apocrypha" was one of the themes of the forum, and recent discoveries, not only the Gospel of Judas but also very rare stories of the apostles, were explained to the general audience. The Forum had other topics such as women in the Israelite society and contemporary reading of the book of Isaiah. Although the Forum 2007 was much smaller in scale than the Forum 2006, its topics were more focused and the audience showed keen interests in each lecture (total attendance : ca. 2,000).



A view of the Lecture Hall



Dr. Richard Bauckham
The Canonicity of the Four Gospels
Professor of New Testament, University of St. Andrews



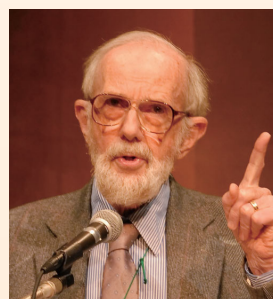
Dr. Fran ois Bovon
Memories of the Apostles: Their Roles and Teachings in the Apocrypha
Professor of the History of Religion, Harvard Divinity School



Dr. Carol L. Meyers
What the Bible Does, and Doesn't, Tell Us about the Lives of Israelite Women
Professor of the Department of Religion, Duke University



Dr. Marvin Meyer
Doubting Thomas, Mary Magdalene and Judas Iscariot: The Rehabilitation of Marginalized Disciples in Early Christian Literature
Professor of Bible and Christian Studies, Chapman University



Dr. William L. Holladay
How God Speaks to Christians Through Isaiah
Former Professor of the Andover Newton Theological School

Tokyo International Bookfair 2007



From 4th to 7th July 2007, JBS made a presentation at Tokyo International Bookfair 2007. It was our first attempt to present ourselves there and about 1,000 people came to our booth in four days. More than 7,200 companies were represented and over 63,000 people came to participate in this event. Our latest Bibles were presented which were favourably taken. We plan to participate in 2008 also so that more people will know of our activities here in Japan.

Japan Bible Society Booth at Tokyo International Bookfair 2007

APAB (Asia Pacific Area Board) Meeting

In April 2007, Asia Pacific Area Board meeting was held in Tokyo more than 10 years since it was last held in Japan. There are 23 Bible Societies in Asia Pacific region, which includes Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim countries that are quite different in culture and languages from Christian countries. In Japan, more than 80% of people belong to either Buddhism or Shintoism, or both. The Catholic Church started their ministry 400 years ago, but soon after, Christianity was banned for 200 years. With the arrival of Protestant Churches, their work resumed. Yet the Christian population in Japan is 1%. The history of Japan Bible Society dates back to 1875 and we distribute about one million Bibles every year locally.

APAB meeting



A Toyota Car at Toyota Factory, Nagoya



China Christian Council

In April 2007, 10 delegates from CCC and TSPM visited Japan for the third time. Japanese churches and Chinese churches have been promoting interactions since 1985 when the two countries diplomatic relationship was restored. Presbyter Ji, the chairperson of TSPM as its leader, the delegation of pastors between ages 40 to 50 years old came from various provinces of China. They visited Japanese churches and also Japan Bible Society, and discussions were held regarding exchange training programs as well as other issues. Our General Secretary, Rev. Watabe also holds the post as the chairperson of the China Church Relations Committee of NCC (National Christian Council) and therefore, was able to deepen mutual relationship.



CCC and TSPM members at JBS reception

JBS Board Chairperson Rev. Omiya presenting the Panoramic Bible to Presbyter Ji Jianhong



The 39th National Prayer Breakfast in Korea



The 39th National Prayer Breakfast

Board Chairperson Rev. Omiya and Rev. Watabe, GS



Both the board chairperson Rev. Omiya and General Secretary Rev. Watabe have been invited to our neighbouring country, Korea's prayer breakfast meeting held in May 2007. Korea and Japan have been collaborating to work together for the ministry in recent years, and even within Japan, we have Korean pastors evangelizing. About 2,000 people from within and outside of Korea are invited every year for this breakfast prayer meeting, and prayers for the country and for the peace of the world are offered.

A Visit to Bulgaria

On July 26th and 27th, Rev. Watabe along with our Fundraising Manager, Ms. Shoko Takahashi, and Ms. Emi Bland, PA to the General Secretary/Manager of Foreign Affairs visited Sofia, Bulgaria. Japan Bible Society's faithful donor organization, World Mission Project Japan, had donated to JBS the sum of ¥600,000 to be used specifically for the Bible Work in Bulgaria. The GS and the 2 staff members visited Bulgarian Bible Society to learn about their work and also visited 2 foster homes located about 90km away from Sofia to distribute Bible story picture books to the children. One foster home was for the mentally and physically impaired (from the age of 0 to 20 and some above 20) which was inhabited by around 70 such children varying in degrees of impairments. The other foster home was home to 90 children from the age of 6 to 18. We distributed the Bible to the children with the staff of Bulgarian Bible Society. The donation will be used to print more children's Bible for the foster children.

JBS Fundraising Manager, Ms. Takahashi presenting the Bible in the institution for the handicapped



Rev. Watabe, GS presenting the donation from WMPJ to Bulgarian BS

A Visit to Bermuda / Bible Talk Presentation

Since the development of Bible Talk in 2004, Japan Society has been producing it in various kinds of languages: Japanese, English, Spanish, and Arabic. Currently we are developing one for Tagalog. How the word of mouth spreads is indeed very interesting and is a work of God.

The first word people associate with Bermuda is probably the word triangle. It was indeed a triangular connection that brought the Word of God to the visually-impaired in a beautiful little island off the coast of South Carolina.

Concerned for the needs of Bermuda's V-I's, the Bible Society in Bermuda, through activities such as Bikes/Walks for Bibles, had been raising funds for the past 2 years with the purpose of providing them with a Bible. Rev. Duncan Jeffrey, the General Secretary of the Bible Society in Bermuda, came across our product Bible Talk in Canada. It so happened that in the previous year, Rev. Paul Brown from Canadian Bible Society visited Japan and had taken a sample unit home. So when Rev. Jeffrey was looking for contacts, Rev. Brown kindly directed him to Japan Bible Society.

So the story goes that on Sunday, July 29th, 2007, a special dedication service was held at St. Andrew's Church followed by an official handover of 200 units of Bible Talk to the Society of the Blind in Bermuda on Monday with the attendance of Rev. Watabe and Ms. Emi Bland of JBS. Bible Talk was very popular with its usefulness to the visually-impaired persons.



Rev. Watabe, GS presenting the Bible Talk to visually-impaired persons



Rev. Watabe, GS at St Andrew's Church

Providing 200 Bible Talk to the Visually-Impaired Persons in Japan



Presenting the Bible Talk to the MODEN

In January 2007, Japan Bible Society presented 200 units of Bible Talk to the Japan Christian Council of Evangelism among the Blind (MODEN). For the presentation ceremony, Chairman Mr. Hidaka and Secretary Mr. Asa attended, as well as Rev. Watabe GS and fundraising department staffs of JBS.

There is said to be about three hundred thousands of people who are visually-impaired in Japan. Therefore, it is very much appreciated to have the audio Bible of this kind. Chairman Mr. Hidaka says. At MODEN, they are lending the 200 units of Bible Talk out for free for those who are interested in hearing the Word.



Bible Talk

Mini info. on Japan

Kumamoto Castle



Kumamoto

Tokyo

Country : Japan
Capital : Tokyo
Official Language : Japanese
Location : Eastern Asia, island chain between the North Pacific Ocean and the Sea of Japan, east of the Korean Peninsula
Population : 127,433,494 (July 2007 est.)
Area : 377,835km² (total)
GDP (per capita: PPP) : \$33,110 (2006 est.)
Religion : Observing both Shinto, Buddhist (84%), and others (16%)
Government : Constitutional Monarchy with a parliamentary government
Ref. : CIA the World Factbook