



JBS News International

Rise for the Great Commission ————— June 2013 Vol.10

“By faith we have been made acceptable to God. And now, because of our Lord Jesus Christ, we live at peace with God. Christ has also introduced us to God’s undeserved kindness on which we take our stand. So we are happy, as we look forward to sharing in the glory of God. But that’s not all! We gladly suffer, because we know that suffering helps us to endure. And endurance builds character, which gives us hope that will never disappoint us. All of this happens because God has given us the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts with his love.” (Romans 5:1-5, CEV)

Dear Colleagues,

It is such a joy for us to bring you another edition of JBS News International. Even before Japan appears in any historical writings, our nation has always been a monolingual country. Most of our publications and reports are issued only in Japanese and therefore I hope this English newsletter will give the fellowship and partners around the world a glimpse of what Japan Bible Society does, and help bring mutual understanding on a global scale.

Paul says in Romans chapter 5 that we “gladly suffer” and continues on to teach us

that “suffering helps us to endure. And endurance builds character, which gives us hope that will never disappoint us. All of this happens because God has given us the Holy Spirit, who fills our hearts with his love.” We learn here that crises we encounter - economic sufferings, natural disasters, mission challenges, etc. - are the “hope” that leads us to see the glory of God. I pray that through our daily trials, as brothers and sisters united in the Bible Work, we can walk together as we pave the way for the new era.



Rev. Makoto Watabe
General Secretary

3.11—2 years from the Triple Disaster



Fukushima Messiah Concert



A massive earthquake hit eastern Japan at 2:46 pm on March 11, 2011. Throughout 2011 and 2012, JBS ran a fundraising campaign to support those who were affected by the triple disaster of earthquake, tsunami and nuclear radiation crisis. In fiscal year 2012, more than 6 million yen generously donated by overseas and local donors was used to distribute 13,680 copies of the Bible in northeastern Japan.

In an effort to provide spiritual assistance and comfort, “Iwate Charity Concert” was held on June 29 in Morioka, earthquake-stricken city, and “Fukushima Messiah Concert” on September 8 in Fukushima city where radiation is still a serious problem. 1,000-seat hall was filled with the voices of members of local churches and their neighbors, including people from Namie town, now a ghost town

due to radiation exposure where people were forced to either move out or live in temporary housings elsewhere.

Next on the agenda is the building of a “Christian Center.” There is a high demand for a distribution base in Tohoku district to cater to the residents. We thank you all for your continuous support and prayers.

Do we really know the Bible?

International Bible Forum 2012



Attendees counted over 2,000

The third International Bible Forum 2012 was held at the Hotel New Otani, Tokyo, on July 5 and 6. Five scholars from in and out of Japan were invited as guest speakers to lecture on their area of specialty. The attendees to the Forum counted over 2,000.

One of the lecturers, Dr. Werner H. Schmidt, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at Bonn University, stated, "The faith we read in the New Testament and the Old Testament shares not only the same ethics and belief in the Creator, but also a longing for the apocalyptic realization of a peaceful world." Prof. Schmidt pointed out that the faith the Bible teaches, continuously brings hope to overcome pain.

Dr. Lester L. Grabbe, Professor Emeritus of Old Testament at University of Hull, lectured on the Jewish documents and the religious

environment of the Second Temple period, and how they had a significant influence on the writing of the New Testament books.

Dr. Petra von Gemünden, Professor of Biblical Theology at University of Augsburg, presented an eye-opening viewpoint that "the letter to the Romans and the Gospel according to John could be read as a process of overcoming fear." She explained how the community experienced fear of persecution and how John himself experienced fear of death. This viewpoint is a great encouragement to us who carry anxiety or fear in our age.

Dr. Kenzo Tagawa, one of Japan's leading Bible scholars and a former professor of New Testament at University of Strasbourg, tried to persuade, outlining various examples, that the author of the Gospel according to John was a person fully

knowledgeable of the city of Jerusalem and his historical account is very particular about small details.

At the reception held in the evening, we had the honor of having Dr. Takashi Onuki, Professor Emeritus of Tokyo University, as our guest speaker. His reflection on the 3.11 disaster was thought-provoking. "Before thousands of dead bodies washed up on the sea shore on March 11, I asked to myself, what Christianity can say and offer to people. If there is such a thing, all we can say is that we have the hope of resurrection, just as that of resurrection of Jesus. This is the core of Christian faith."

Although the Forum was an opportunity "to know the Bible," as the theme reminded us, lecturers not only presented profound knowledge, but also gave encouragement and hope to the attendees.



Dr. Werner H. Schmidt



Dr. Lester L. Grabbe



Dr. Petra von Gemünden



Dr. Kenzo Tagawa



Dr. Takashi Onuki



Music performance at the reception



With the lecturers

Renewing the Bond with the Chopstick countries

Once every two years, three Bible Societies from Taiwan, Korea and Japan, hold a joint staff meeting. This time the venue of the Northeast Asia Bible Societies "Chopstick" Meeting was Taiwan. During the 5-day meeting, 30 participants headed by the three General Secretaries of respective Bible Societies shared time and experiences together for the betterment of each other's work.

Since English was not everyone's mother tongue, one of the effective means of communication was body language which worked quite well.

Intensive five days passed quickly and the fatigue and muscle aches from the daily mandatory mountain climbing were cured perfectly by the heavenly Taiwanese foot massage on the final day.

Presentation and entertainment by KBS Staff



GS and staff from Taiwan, Korea, and Japan Bible Societies

UBS Roundtable 2012 in Nairobi, Kenya



UBS Roundtable in Nairobi

UBS Roundtable was held in Nairobi, Kenya from June 12 to 28. Over 200 people, representing 60 Bible Societies and ministry partners, took part in the meeting.

On the way to Nairobi, Rev. Watabe also visited the Bible Societies in Azerbaijan and Romania to discuss about supporting their ISP projects for the 2013 fiscal year. The commitments



Visiting Azerbaijan BS



With the staff of Romania BS

were made to support projects that would reach out to the migrants in Azerbaijan and the audio Bible production and distribution in Romania.

New Discovery: Reproduction of Cappella Sistina

The Cappella Sistina in Japan is the complete reproduction of the original Cappella Sistina in Vatican, identical in size and appearance to the original. The most famous masterpieces ever painted by Perugino, Botticelli, Ghirlandaio, and Michelangelo are faithfully photoprinted on ceramic boards and can be permanently preserved to maintain their color and shape for over 2000 years. (For more information, visit their website: <http://www.o-museum.or.jp/english/>)

Collaborating with Christian violinist, JBS held “Bible Meets Music” concert in the Sistina Hall at the museum on May 19, 2012. We took this opportunity to invite our supporters in the neighboring areas to introduce the activities of both UBS and JBS. The audience was fascinated by the long lasting echoes in the hall while the Christian violinist played Schubert’s “Ave Maria.”

“Sistine Hall” at Otsuka Museum of Art, Tokushima, Japan



Mrs. Chizuko Tauchi in Chimageogori dress

Japanese Mother raises Korean Children

To save Korean war orphans, a Japanese Christian woman began an orphanage after World War II in Mokpo city, South Korea. Mrs. Chizuko Tauchi, known as the “mother of Korean orphans,” faithfully gave her life to raise 3,000 children in the Mokpo Orphanage Garden until she was called to heaven at the age of 58.

She was awarded by the Korean government in 1965 for her efforts and dedication to save the orphans.

In celebration of Chizuko’s centenary, special events were held to promote the designation of “UN World Orphan’s Day.” The organizing committee plans to submit the request to the UN General Assembly.



Opening Ceremony, Oct. 29, 2012



Resolutions for “UN World Orphan’s Day, Oct. 31, 2012

Chapel Service with University Students

There are more than 400 Christian schools in Japan. One of which is Tohoku Gakuin, a private university in Miyagi Prefecture, where Rev. Watabe delivered a message at a worship service on October 3, 2012.

Founded in 1886 by a local Christian and an American missionary, Tohoku Gakuin offers education at all levels from kindergarten to post-graduate and carries a reputation of being one of the most influential Christian schools in Japan. More than 600 university students, including both Christians and non-believers, attend worship services held at three chapels on campus from Monday to Friday.



Tohoku Gakuin

Celebrating 100 Million Copies: Nanjing Amity Printing Company

Bible Societies of the world gathered together and celebrated the completion of 100 million copies of the Bible that rolled off the belt at Amity Printing Co. on Thursday November 8, 2012 in Nanjing, China.

The company was established in 1988 with an ongoing mission and priority to serve the Christian church in China. Since then, in 30 years, 60 million Bibles have been printed and bound for local distribution and 40 million Bibles for overseas. In the meantime, Chinese Christian population increased from 1 million to 60 million. It is definitely one of the most successful Bible projects in the recent years endeavored by the fellowship. UBS is still subsidizing the paper cost. The Amity Printing Co. has the capacity to print and bind 18 million copies of the Bible annually and it continues to supply the ever-increasing Christian population in China.

Report
from
Rev. Watabe



Church in Fuzhou

I was invited to a church in Fuzhou, China, to preach at the services held on Saturday and Sunday. After the preaching, 20 people came forward to give their lives to Christ and it was truly a time of blessing. I was also invited to another church located on Pingtan island in Fujian province, connected to the mainland with a 5km bridge, very close to Taiwan. The island is quickly developing as a site of tourism and to attract foreign investment to spur economic growth.

There are 30,000 Christians living in Pingtan and a plan to build a new church with a capacity of 10,000 seats is underway. After the Cultural Revolution, second and third generation Christians, now in their 40's, who are economically successful have donated a large sum for the construction of the new church. When I visited the seminary in Fujian, I was amazed by the size of the building and land.

Rev. Dr. Robert Cunville Mark Ecumenical Event in Tokyo

JBS welcomed Rev. Dr. Robert Cunville, the President of the UBS. We hosted the Ecumenical Banquet on February 22 at the Palace Hotel Tokyo in honor of his visit to Japan. He was also invited as a guest speaker to the Keswick Convention 2013 in Hakone, Japan.

Rev. Dr. Cunville met leaders from the Catholic Church, the National

Christian Council in Japan (NCCJ), the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA), and the Japan Pentecostal Network (JPN). Such a gathering of all denominational leaders is unprecedented and more than 50 participants profited from this opportunity to build stronger ties as coworkers working in the same field for God's glory.



Rev. Dr. Robert Cunville



From left : Cunville, Omiya, Watabe

Events in the US

JBS Board Chair, Rev. Hiroshi Omiya and Rev. Watabe attended the 61st National Prayer Breakfast held in Washington, D.C. from February 5 to 7, 2013 along with the members of the US Congress and dignitaries from around the world. Various events are held around this interfaith Breakfast but the main event, the Thursday morning Breakfast, traditionally has two speakers: the President of the United States and a specially invited keynote speaker.

This year, President Obama's speech was centered on humility. He said that "in the midst of all these debates, we must keep that same humility that Dr. [Martin Luther] King and Lincoln and Washington and all our great leaders understood is at the core of true leadership ... And so my hope is that humility, that that carries over every day, every moment." He continued on to say that "our task ... is to spend our days with open hearts and open minds; to seek out the truth that exists in an opposing view and to find the common ground that allows for us ... to take real



Japanese delegates with the Ambassador of Japan

and meaningful action."

He also touched on the termination of office of the young pastor who served as the head of his Faith-Based office. This seems to be due to the differences in opinion among Christian groups on the issue of abortion in order not to reflect the view of a specific denomination on his policy, to keep the separation of State and religion clear. Obama concluded by saying that the Bible is the solid foundation of our faith.

Mr. Kenichiro Sasae was inaugurated as the ambassador of Japan to the US in 2012. His spouse, Nobuko is a member of the church where our Chair, Rev. Omiya, serves. For the first time, Ambassador and Mrs. Sasae were invited to the 61st National Prayer Breakfast in Washington, D.C. Ambassador later invited the participants from Japan to his official residence and kindly hosted a dinner party. It is much expected that Christian diplomats would play an active role in strengthening the

Japan-U.S. relationship in the future.

American Bible Society hosted a Prayer Breakfast of their own in Washington, D.C. on February 8. The guests welcomed the new president and CEO of ABS, Rev. Dr. Douglas Birdsall, who assumed office in March 2013. Rev. Dr. Birdsall and his wife Jeanie, served as missionaries in Japan with Asian Access, and he was the Chair of the Third Lausanne Congress on World Evangelization in Cape Town, South Africa. Rev. Watabe has known him for a while and JBS, with much expectation and prayer, wishes to extend God's blessings on him as he plays a leadership role not only at ABS but for the whole UBS fellowship.



With Rev. Dr. Douglas Birdsall



61ST National Prayer Breakfast

Japan-Germany NCC Meeting Held in Hamburg



Rev. Sabine Kluger now serves in Japan



Participants from Germany and Japan

Rev. Watabe (in his role as the vice-moderator of the National Christian Council in Japan) attended Japan-Germany Church Christian Council held in Hamburg, Germany, from February 11 to 15, 2013. Nine presentations from both sides covered issues such as nuclear power plant, aging society, tsunami damage, minority human rights, and church integration followed by productive

discussions.

One of the participants and a pastor from Geislingen, Rev. Sabine Kluger will be assigned to Japan as a short-term missionary and ecumenical coworker. As part of the NCCJ program, Rev. Kluger will be working at JBS for a year starting April. Rev. Kluger will mainly be engaged in supporting the survivors of the Great East Japan Earthquake.



Missionsakademie an der Universitaet Hamburg

The 13th National Prayer Meeting

Hosted by Christian Business Men's Committee in Japan (Connecting Business & Marketplaces to Christ), the 13th National Prayer Meeting was held in Keio Plaza Hotel, Tokyo, on March 22, 2013. As a keynote speaker, Rev. Watabe delivered a message entitled "Waiting for the Rain from Heaven."

Inspired by the message from I Kings 17:1, 400 participants prayed together for the revival of Japan.

Rev. Watabe delivering his message



Thinnest and Lightest Bible, now on sale!

Japanese writing system consists of Kanji (Chinese characters), and two syllabic scripts, hiragana, and katakana. The text of the Japanese Bible has hiragana reading on top of difficult Chinese characters or Biblical terms unfamiliar to first time readers. For this reason, Japanese Bible has more letters and number of pages compared with other languages.

Since the New Interconfessional Translation Bible was published in 1987, JBS has been struggling with the issue of page numbers and how we can reduce the size without reducing the font size. This April, thanks to the technology of Jongbloed BV, Netherlands to print on 22gsm

ultra-light Bible paper, JBS launched a new Bible (until now, 35gsm paper was used for Bibles over size B6, and 30gsm paper was used for Bibles of size A6 and smaller).

The “Half Volume Bible” (B6 size)’s thickness is reduced almost 50% and weighs 40% less compared to our standard B6 products. This is revolutionary for our Japanese market. Using the same 22gsm paper, we also published the smallest Bible (size

A7) in our history of Bible production which weighs only 200g (equal to 2 chocolate bars) – portable enough to fit in your pocket.



New Bible Talk

You can make your life much richer if you are able to listen and read the Bible wherever you are. The digital audio player, New Bible Talk, is the perfect solution that meets your needs.

This palm-sized device that contains the New Interconfessional Translation (Japanese) with Apocrypha, is highly

welcomed by students and commuters who spend much time in the train every day. It enables all users from young to old to select each book, chapter and verse from the Bible with one single touch of a button, and listen to the Bible using earphones or even connected to a home or car speaker.



New Bible Talk

Topics

Abenomics

Japan experienced a collapse of the bubble economy in 1990, and the following 20 years were spent to clear non-performing loans in the midst of a downward spiral of prices which led to an unprecedented deflationary recession. In addition, strong yen due to a collapse of the economy in European countries and the US in 2008 brought serious consequences to small and medium-sized companies in Japan.

As Prime Minister Shinzo Abe made his second debut at the end of 2012, monetary-easing policy of a similar scale to that of the US and Britain, was implemented to encourage economic growth. The improvement policy known as “Abenomics” is helping gradual recovery. “Abenomics”-new word, but old concept, massive government spending on public works-is attracting attention as the key factor of Japan’s economic recovery.

