

JBS NEWS INTERNATIONAL

Rise for the Great Commission

August 2014 Vol.11

Jesus answered: Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind.

(Matthew 22:37, CEV)

Challenges in the changes of the times

I am grateful to be able to send to you the JBS News International, which we issue once a year. Japan is entering into the "super-aging" period: one-fourth of the population in Japan is over 65 years old, counting 30 million people. Within the next 10 years, it is said that one-third of the population will be dominated by people over 65. My mother is 103 years old, and blessed with a good health. Currently, the world's oldest living man and woman are Japanese: they are 116 years old, and have their names in the Guinness Book of World Records.

The average age of JBS Board members is around 80 years old, and that of our staff members is 50. They are all well and working energetically. Here I see two challenges in this transitional period: the first is "how to spend enriched golden-years with the Bible," and the second is "how to give visions to the next generations." The changes of the times come silently in various forms.

Without the word of God, a meaningful and blessed life is not guaranteed to anyone. This is the common truth to all people around the world. Members of the United



Rev. Makoto Watabe,
JBS General Secretary

Bible Societies share the one and only mission. That is "to continue delivering the word of God" in the midst of changes of the times. No matter how our living environment be affected as the time changes, I believe that reading the words of God will lead to "love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind."

General Secretaries Consultation held in Asia: 2nd UBS-Asian Affinity Alliance Meeting in Tokyo



24 General Secretaries from Asia and Pacific regions gathered in Tokyo



JBS hosted the 2nd UBS-Asian Affinity Alliance (AAA) meeting held in Tokyo, in April 2014. The meeting is an annual General Secretaries Consultation in Asia with the goal to meet face-to-face to share our common challenges, to exchange ideas and most of all, to have mutual fellowship. AAA was originally founded to accelerate collaborative relationships among

the Bible Societies in Asia. Mike Perreau (Director General, UBS), Marco Herrera (Director of International Ministries, ABS), and 4 GSs from the Pacific region also joined as guests. The Ceylon Bible Society will be hosting the next meeting in 2015.

Pope Francis in favor of "Family and Bible" Plan

UBS representatives and Catholic Biblical Federation (CBF) met in Rome, to hold the first "UBS CBF Coordinating Committee" in October 2013. Since 1969, UBS and CBF have collaborated in the areas of translation, publication and distribution of the Inter-confessional Bible. This time, Pope Francis publicly announced his intention to be actively involved in the "Family and Bible" Plan.

In response to his statement, UBS and CBF passed a resolution to promote this plan cooperatively.



Representatives from UBS and CBF

Archbishop Vincenzo Paglia said, "Family unit is the only place left in modern society to pass on the faith in Christ to the next generation. It is essential to develop a practical way

to spread the word of God within the family."

Rev. Watabe took part in this conference as a member of the UBS Church Relations Committee.



Japanese Bible is presented to Pope Francis

Japanese Bible



Waiting to greet Pope Francis at Piazza San Pietro

The First UBS Global Council was held in UK



UBS Global Council members

Rev. Watabe attended the first UBS Global Council held in Swindon, UK, in October 2013. He was elected as the mission champion for Bible Advocacy and Engagement. The newly-elected Global Council members will hold office for the next 4 year to discuss UBS policies and its directions.



UBS Roundtable Exchange: Great opportunity for sharing and learning

UBS Roundtable Exchange was held in June 2014, and Rev. Watabe, and JBS staff, Jun Kajihama attended. 90 Bible Societies with more than 200 participants gathered in Egmond aan Zee, Netherlands. Roundtable

exchange is the place where participants present their projects for 2015, and give feedback and comments. It is a great occasion to collect wisdoms, ideas and talents within the UBS family. 265 projects were presented. With the support

from our donors, JBS was able to support 14 countries (Slovakia, Belarus, Portugal, Romania, Lithuania, Guatemala, Kyrgyzstan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Philippines, Ethiopia, Cameroon, Swaziland and Kenya) in 2014.

Visit to Billy Graham Evangelical Association in the US

In May 2013, together with 10 Christian leaders from Japan, Rev. Watabe was invited by Billy Graham Evangelical Association (BGEA) to participate in a tour to Billy Graham Memorial Hall, their training facility and the Samaritan's Purse office in Charlotte, Asheville and Boone, North Carolina. They were welcomed by Billy Graham's son Franklin and his grandson Will. Since 2011,

BGEA has offered a long-term relief aid for the 3.11 Great East Japan Earthquake survivors. They are planning to have a Crusade in Japan for the next several years to evangelize Japan. Japan is known as one of the most difficult places in the world for missionaries, for its Christian population continues to stagnate at only 1% of the total population.



▲ Billy Graham's birthplace
▼ Rev. Will Graham



Cuba: Million Bible Mission

In June 2014, Rev. Watabe visited the Cuban Bible Commission (CBC) in Havana. Rev. Joel Dopico, President of Cuban Council of Churches, and Rev. Alain Hernandez, General Secretary, as well as the board members representing Greek Orthodox Church and Catholic were there to explain the present situation of the Bible distribution in Cuba. It is said that due to heat

and high humidity, the Bible deteriorates in about six months. In response to this, the project #74342, "Million Bible Mission" presented by CBC aims to distribute the high quality Bible to 1 million Cuban people through churches. Since 2012, 25% of total budget is covered by grants. JBS is running a nation-wide campaign to assist Cuba.



Rev. Joel Dopico, President of Cuban Council of Churches (front row, center), Rev. Alain Hernandez, GS (second row, right) and Rev. Makoto Watabe (front row, left)



The Bible used now in Cuba

©UBS

Havana

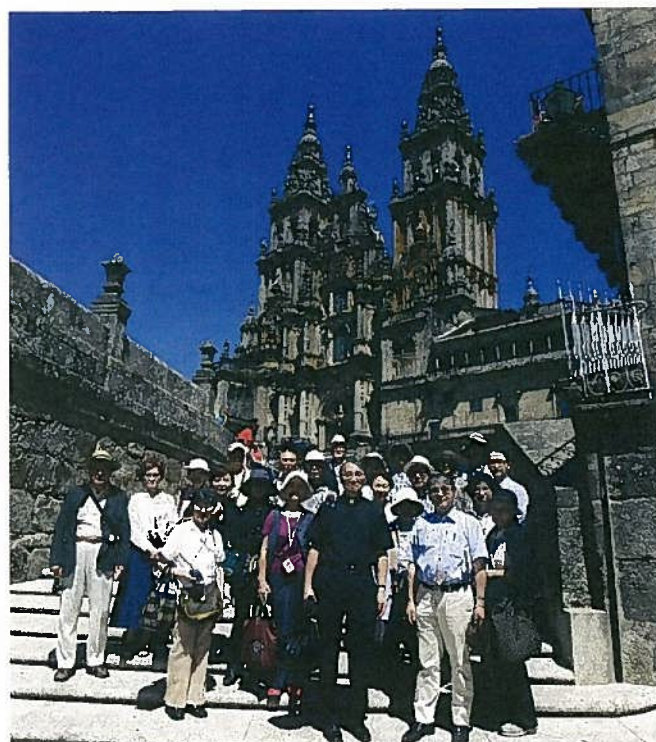


Republic of Cuba

The Road to Santiago de Compostela: Pilgrimage Tour to Spain and Portugal

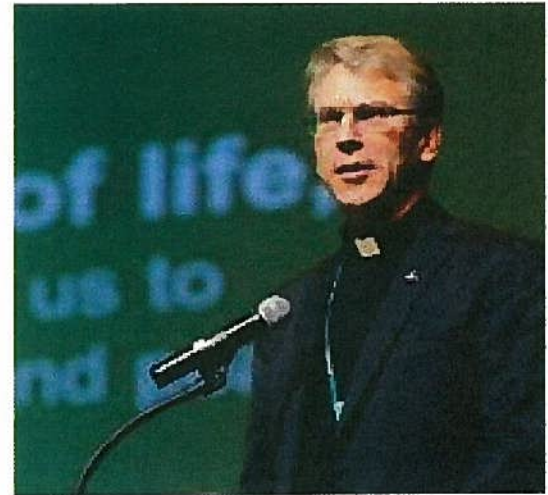
JBS hosted a 10-day pilgrimage tour to Spain and Portugal in August 2013. Most Rev. Leo Jun Ikenaga, S.J., Archbishop of Osaka, accompanied the tour. The group visited cities of Santiago de Compostela and Fátima, and masses were conducted every morning wherever they visited. The trip was a good opportunity for Catholic and Protestant participants to develop deeper relationships. They also enjoyed good wine, paella, and delectable sweets such as Pastel de Nata.

Santiago de Compostela



“God of Life, Lead us to Justice and Peace” : The WCC 10th Assembly in Busan, Korea

The World Council of Churches (WCC) 10th Assembly was held in Busan, South Korea, in November 2013. Rev. Hiroshi Omiya (JBS Board Chair) and Rev. Watabe who serves also as vice-moderator of the NCC in Japan, participated in the assembly. Nearly 4,000 people from around the world gathered in Busan.



Rev. Dr. Olav Fykse Tveit, WCC General Secretary © WCC



© WCC



Digital Publishing Workshop in Manila, Philippines

The need for the bible movement to strategically embrace digital publishing in keeping up with the global trends and demands led Digital Publishing Workshop to be held and hosted by the Philippine Bible Society in September 2013. 19 people participated from 9 national Bible Societies in Asia. Two staff from JBS, Taro Kato and Koichi Hakuta, also participated in the workshop. The objectives of this workshop were (1) to introduce the

available resources and expertise within the UBS family and beyond for digital publishing, (2) to offer assistance and facilitate initiatives in digital publishing, and (3) to provide a platform for collaborations and partnerships in digital publishing. They discussed future opportunities of the e-book market, marketing and digital publishing strategy, copyright management, and research for the international e-book distributor.



The attendees of the meeting

“Chopstick” Meeting held at the halfway point: Korea, Taiwan and Japan

Northeast Asian Bible Societies Staff Meeting was held in the southernmost island of Japan, Okinawa, in June 2014. Korea, Taiwan and Japan gather once every two years and take turns to host this meeting. NABS meeting started 25 years ago to introduce activities, to share the challenges and most of all to know each other through fellowship. Because these three countries share the same culture of using chopsticks and the Chinese characters, it has been called the “chopstick meeting.” Although we had heavy rain most of the days, 16 participants enjoyed the beautiful scenery and were greeted by the world’s biggest whale shark.



Busena Terrace, Okinawa



Shurei-mon gate, built in 1527 during the time of Ryukyu Kingdom, what is now Okinawa



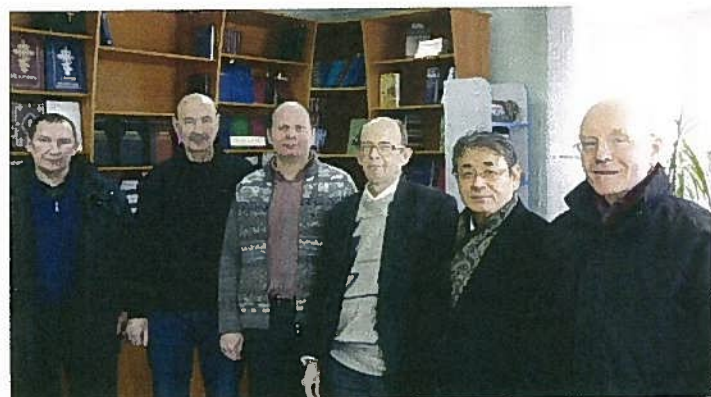
Conference room used for the G8 Summit in 2000

Visit to Colombia, Belarus and UAE

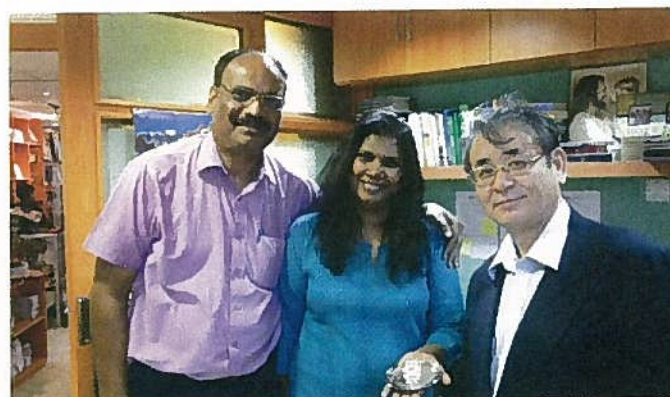
Rev. Watabe and Jun Kajihama visited Bible Societies in Columbia, Belarus, and UAE in February 2014. JBS promised to support their ISP projects for the next year.



Antonio Lara, General Secretary of the Colombian Bible Society (right)



Igor Mikhailov, Executive Director of the Bible Society of the Republic of Belarus (right)



Babu Ganta, Senior Communication Officer of the Bible Society in the Gulf (left)

"I will read the Bible more!"

Bible Quiz Championship participants promised revenge

For the first time, JBS held Bible Quiz Championship in Tokyo on July 21, 2014. The aim was to advocate daily Bible reading habit especially among young people in an enjoyable way. One team was composed of 3 members (mixed members of teachers, theological school students, family, or friends) and a total of 11 teams participated. "I will give my best performance with the Biblical knowledge studied in school," one student said. "I love quizzes. I have always wanted to participate in such an event. My dream came true." The audience also enjoyed the individual match

and received a prize. During the intermission, a gospel music performance by Migiwa helped cool down the heated atmosphere. At the final stage, 3 teams that made it through the preliminaries competed in fastest finger first quiz. The Team Tokyo Theological College had correct answers for ten questions, and became the first "Bible Quiz Champion." The winners received a certificate and a 3-day tour to Nagasaki as an extra prize. The first Bible Quiz Championship ended with a great success, and we will continue to hold it nationwide.



The winners received a 3-day pilgrimage trip to Nagasaki, where Francis Xavier arrived in Japan for the first time to build a church in 1549



True or False?

Celebrating 10 years of blessings: Christian Center Kobe Bible House

A ceremony to commemorate the 10th anniversary of Kobe Bible House was held in April 2013. The idea of establishing the House originated after the Great Hanshin - Awaji Earthquake of January 1995. When the earthquake hit Kobe at 5:56am, the city collapsed, and six thousand people lost their lives. Churches from various denominations in Kobe gathered together to help restore the city and rebuild the churches in Kobe. In 2001, they cooperated together with JBS to hold "Kobe Bible Exhibition" and it was then that a vision was given to build an ecumenical Christian center called Kobe Bible House (KBH). Ever since, JBS continues to support its operation financially. KBH plans and organizes Bible exhibitions, seminars, various events, overseas ecumenical tours, Bible read-a-thon, and bazaars targeting people living in Western Japan.



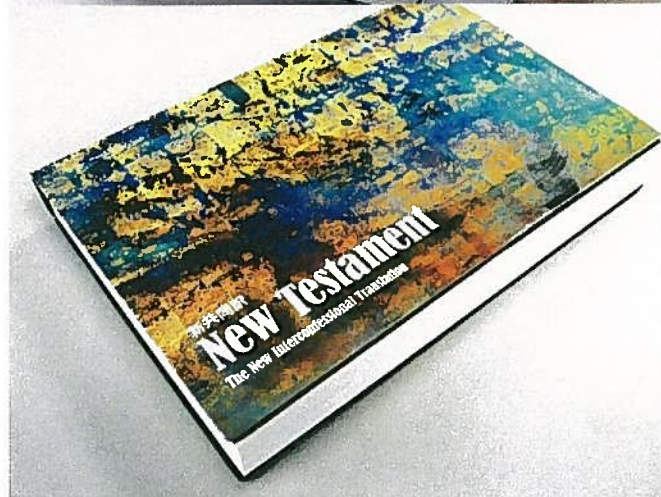
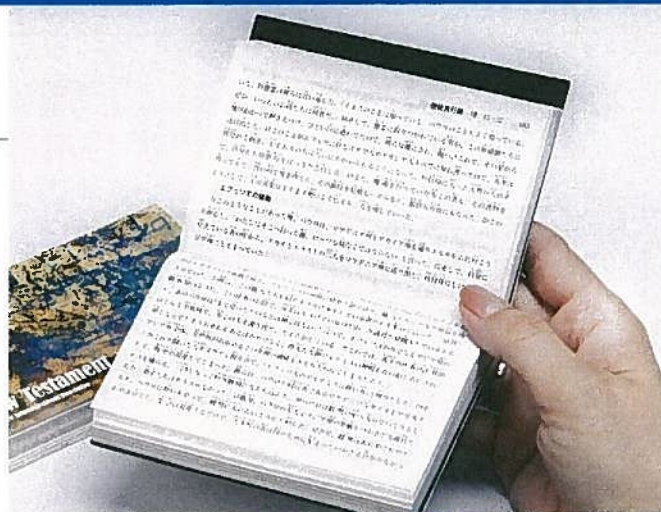
Rev. Hiroshi Omiya (JBS Board Chair, front row, left), and Rev. Watabe (next to Rev. Omiya)

New Publication

Compact and Portable: Flip-back NT Bible is now on Sale!

Flip-back NT Bible was released in August 2014. This Bible uniquely adopted a horizontal typesetting style which opens upwards with one hand.

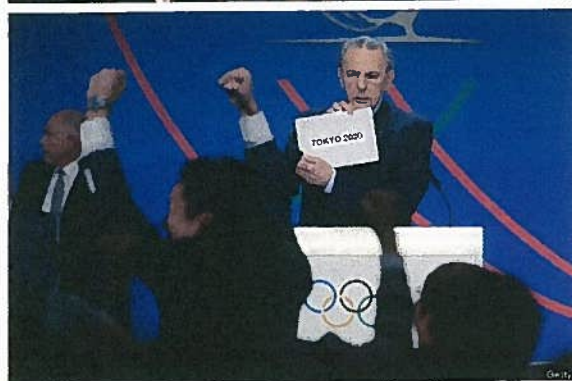
A book which opens 360 degrees sits nicely in your hand for your reading comfort. The words are printed on 22gsm paper, the world's thinnest. It is a collaboration with Royal Jongbloed. The cover is a masterpiece "Golden Sea" by Makoto Fujimura, a well-known Christian painter based in New York. It is the first time, that a modern abstract painting decorates the cover of a Japanese Bible.



Cover design: "Golden Sea"

topics

Omotenashi spirit brings 2020 Summer Olympics to Tokyo



Omotenashi," the essence of Japanese hospitality, was explained at the final presentation and Tokyo was chosen by the International Olympic Committee to host the 2020 Summer Games and Paralympics, beating Istanbul and Madrid. Having also hosted the 1964 Games, Tokyo will be the first Asian city to host the Summer Olympics twice. Japan will be hosting its fourth Olympics: Sapporo and Nagano hosted the 1972 and 1998 Winter Games, respectively. Tohoku region might be set for the torch relay run route, where 300,000 people are still forced to live in temporary houses after the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011.



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