

# Japan Update

Autumn 2015 Number 70



*Church leaders gathered at the founding general assembly of the Japan Evangelical Association in 1968*

## A Review of the Origin of Evangelicals in Japan upon the 70th Anniversary of the End of World War II

Upon the occasion of the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II, I believe evangelicals in Japan face two challenges. On the one hand, evangelicals must establish how they view the Bible and how they understand the gospel. On the other hand, they must face the challenge to the sovereignty of Christ as the head of the Church. In response to the former challenge, evangelicals are endeavoring to assert their conviction in the canonicity of the divinely inspired Bible and fundamental doctrines. They are also in pursuit of holistic mission and the maturity of the church. In regard to the second challenge, in the face of emerging neo-nationalism and historical revisionism convenient to Japan, evangelicals must prove that they fear God and stand solely on the word of Christ.

On August 15, 1945, the leaders of the United Church of Christ in Japan (“Kyodan”) were gathered in the Kanda Nishiki-cho office in downtown Tokyo, which had survived the air raid. They listened to the Emperor’s radio address in which he announced his acceptance of the Potsdam Declaration, and then held a prayer meeting to respectfully submit themselves to the Emperor’s edict. Two days later, they



**Yoichi  
Yamaguchi**  
*JEA Theological  
Commission member*

*Professor,  
Tokyo Christian  
University*

agreed upon the establishment of Japanese religious studies as an academic discipline, and dedication to the evangelization of Japan. Theology had ceased to be the name of a discipline, but rather, “Japanese religious studies.” In 1942, the Kyodan had declared the Greater East Asian War a “holy war” in its “Guidelines for Wartime Evangelism” (“the Guidelines”). A passage in the Guidelines reads, “Considering the fact that the Kyodan was founded immediately prior to the outbreak of the current World War, we believe that the Kyodan has been called by our heavenly Father to support the Emperor’s dominion and to overcome the national emergency.” Item 3 of the Guidelines says, “Work toward the establishment of Japanese Christianity and to achieve the missions of the Kyodan.” Action item number 8 of the Guidelines urges Christians to “Explore deeply Japanese religious studies toward the establish-

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ment of Japanese Christianity.” This derived from Article 7 of the “Kyodan Code of Living,” stipulated in 1941. Article 7 reads, “Each and every person shall stand firm on their faith through submitting themselves to the way of the imperial nation, and shall do their best to support and protect the fortune of the imperial household.” As you see, during the years leading to the end of World War II, the canonicity of the Bible was compromised and there was a failure to explicitly profess the sovereignty of Christ.

The year 1947 saw 12 ministers who had left or would soon leave the Kyodan begin discussion of how to spread the gospel in postwar Japan. The 12 ministers included Tsugio Tsutada of the Immanuel General Mission, Rin-ichi Funaki of the Gospel Mission, Takaoki Tokiwa and Takeshi Matsuo of the Reformed Church, Masaichi Matsuda of the Japan Alliance Christ Church, Shigetoshi Taniguchi of the Brotherhood of Christ Church (later, of the Church of God Mission), Shintaro Hasegawa and Philip Foxwell of the Bible Presbyterian Church, and Seiki Kumano of the Baptist Church. Although the Reformed Church and the Baptist Church opted out, the others jointly founded the Japan Protestant Convention on May 12, 1948, in order to pursue partnerships among churches standing on biblical faith.

In 1959, evangelical groups participated together in the Japan Protestant Centennial, a biblical faith movement in celebration of the centennial of Protestant missions in Japan. This movement resulted in the establishment of a partnership, with a statement of faith to the effect that “We believe in the Bible, the fully inspired and inerrant word of God, our sole standard of faith and life.” The members of the central executive committee of the movement included Chairman W. McKillen of the Reformed Church, Vice Chairman Akiji Kurumada of the Holiness Church, and J. Schwab of TEAM. Let me highlight a passage from the Convention Statement of the Japan Protestant Centennial.

*“In accordance with the Holy Scripture, which we believe is the infallible Word of the only true God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Sovereign Ruler of Human history, we, meeting together, to celebrate the first century of Protestant missions in Japan make this resolution as our testimony for the coming second century of Protestant missions here.*

*1. During the past 100 years, we as Christians in many respects came short of the Scriptural command to put away all idolatry in our life as individuals and as a nation. As we reflect on this before God we deeply repent of our sin.*

*2. In accordance with the Holy Scripture, we acknowledge that the State and the Church are two different and legitimate orders, both under the sovereignty of God. We support the present national constitution, recognizing that it is in accord with Biblical principle in safeguarding our fundamental human rights of freedom of religion on the*

*principle of separation of religion and state.*

*3. In consideration of the past in our country when the principle of separation of religion and state was neglected and the freedom of religion was severely oppressed, we will endeavor with all our might to guard against the mistake of introducing any elements of pagan religion into any state-related affairs and seek to eliminate all such elements. Specifically, since the Ise Shrine is religious, two matters of great importance are: 1) That it should not receive any special treatment from the State on the ground or title of having an intimate relationship to the Imperial family, of being a ‘spiritual center’ for the Japanese people, or for the sake of the age-old ‘beautiful custom’ of ancestor worship; 2) That there shall be no compulsion upon the Japanese in connection with it.*

*For the sake of maintaining the true relationship between State and religion that is involved in the three articles above, we pledge to ‘fight this good fight of faith’ unitedly on the basis of our common belief in the Bible.”*

The Japan Protestant Centennial continued beyond the Convention, and served as a catalyst for the formation of



*Opening night of Tokyo JPC  
(from October 1959 issue of Japan Harvest)*

the Japan Protestant Conference (JPC) in 1960. The JPC instituted two task forces: the Bible Translation Committee and the Ise Jingu Management Committee. The former produced the Shinkaiyaku Bible in 1969, while the latter promoted protest against the state patronage of the Yasukuni Shrine.

When we review the history of postwar evangelicals in Japan, we see in their origin regret for their involvement in WWII and repentance of such involvement. Evangelicals embraced the value of the unity of churches, from the merger of a wide spectrum of churches from the Reformed to the Holiness churches under the Kyodan. In the postwar era, evangelical churches promoted interdenominational partnerships under the sovereignty of Christ. They worked to be a church obedient only to the word of Christ. Their ideals came to fruition in 1968 with the foundation of the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA).

# Living in the Shadow of Death after Exposure to Radiation: I Was Four Kilometers from Ground Zero in Hiroshima

Christian Shimbun article translated by *Tomoko Kato*

At the August 2015 *Kirisuto-sha Heiwa no Tsudoi* (Christians' Gathering for Peace) in Hiroshima, Kimiko Ono shared in detail about her experiences immediately after the atom bomb was dropped and the days following.

Ono and her family originally lived close to the center of Hiroshima in Teramachi, near the Aioi Bridge. Four months before the bombing, they were evacuated to a relative's house to avoid American air raids.

On August 6, 1945, she was in her school classroom (on a summer school day). It was there, at the *Kokumin Gakko* (National School for Children aged 6 to 14), located four kilometers from ground zero, that Ono was exposed to radiation.

She shared some of her memories: "Suddenly, we saw the glow from the flash, and heard the enormous sound of the explosion. All the windows were shattered. We were thrown into a panic. When the teachers tried to guide us to the air-raid shelter, I was upset because my shoes had disappeared from the shoebox. I also remember one of the teachers had a little red stain on her blouse, which kept spreading bigger and bigger."

At the school ground overlooking the city, people were looking up at the sky. "I looked up at the sky too, and saw that it was grey. Below the sky, reaching down to the town, I saw an orangish ball of fire, along with an ominous-looking cloud of red, black, and grey. We silently walked back home through the rice fields. It was dark, like night. I thought it was the end of the world. I was scared, as the piles of rice straw looked like badgers or foxes. Large raindrops fell and changed into ashes on our skin. After I parted from my friends and rushed alone down the hill to our house, I wailed. I never will forget how I felt at that time."

A number of people evacuated from the city center to the house where Ono was living. She continued: "Until midnight I heard the confused whispers and laments of the people who took refuge in our house. I had three thirteen-year-old cousins. All three were working on *tatemono-sokai* (building evacuation)<sup>1</sup> in the center of Hiroshima-city with the *gakuto-doin* (student mobilization)<sup>2</sup> and died as a result of the A-bomb. One of my cousins, Takako, fled home from the town, but died five days after the bomb was dropped. We didn't know anything about radiation then, so people said she had inhaled some kind of gas. Another cousin, Tomiko, was wounded and taken to Ninoshima. The third, Tetsuko was taken to Kanawajima, and then to Ninoshima. It seems that both Tomiko and Tetsuko died three days after the A-bombing. Some years later, their elder sister visited the families of the deceased of Yamanaka Koto Jogakkou (Yamanaka Girls' High School) and published a collection of the records and the memorial articles of the girls who lost their lives because of the A-Bomb."

When Ono's cousin was looking for Tomiko, he happened upon a soldier walking along the railway. He recog-

nized him as a friend and brought him home. Ono clearly remembers seeing this soldier, who was burned all over his body, lying on the *engawa* (a narrow wooden deck that faces a garden). The soldier's face was too swollen to talk. Ono recalled: "One day we saw him trying to stand up to go to the toilet. My mother may have thought he would not live long, so she got a peach from somewhere, and put a piece into his mouth. He nodded to show his appreciation." At that time, "Who died today?" was the daily conversation topic, as smoke and odors continuously floated over the hill from the temporary crematorium.



*Kimiko Ono*

Ono reflected on former classmates: "I lost many of my classmates who lived in the Teramachi area. Seventeen years later, when I went to a city hospital to give birth to my child, I met the mother of one of my classmates. She told me her daughter was hospitalized because of leukemia. Even after that long period, many people were still suffering as a result of the bomb. I was not able to go see her."

Toward the end of her talk, Ono extended an appeal: "In Peace Memorial Park, the cenotaph says 'Let all the souls here rest in peace. For we shall not repeat the evil.' How deeply do we understand this phrase? We have to get rid of these Satan-like atom bombs. Let's make peace together and walk with Jesus Christ!"

[notes]

1. *tatemono-sokai* (building evacuation)

The purpose of *tatemono-sokai* was to tear down buildings to make firebreaks and prevent fire from spreading to adjacent buildings. On August 6, 1945, there was an extensive *tatemono-sokai* going on in Hiroshima to make firebreaks, which would split the town between the north and the south. Mainly students aged 13 or 14 years old were engaged in this project and this resulted in their being sacrificed in the atom bomb explosion. Of the 7,200 students who were killed by the A-bomb, 82% were working in the *tatemono-sokai*.

2. *gakuto-doin* (student mobilization)

Toward the end of World War II (after 1943), in order to cover the serious labor shortage, junior high or high school students were mobilized to work on war industry product lines or other low-skilled labor jobs instead of studying at school.

## JEA Statement on the 70th Anniversary of the End of World War II

We, the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA), in the presence of the Lord God and of Christ Jesus who will judge the living and the dead, in view of his appearance and his kingdom, as we face the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II and as we testify of the Gospel to Japan and to the world, in order to become agents of peace, issue the following statement:

Following World War II, when we, evangelical churches in Japan, who believe the Holy Scripture to be the infallible Word of God, came together, we faced two axes of confrontation. First, a confrontation against liberal theology that denied the canonicity of the Bible and fundamental doctrines. Second, a confrontation against Japanese nationalism that espoused State Shinto emperor worship, and oppressed faith confessing only Christ as Lord.

The Resolution of the Japan Protestant Centennial in 1959 stated:

*“In accordance with the Holy Scripture, which we believe is the infallible Word of the only true God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth and the Sovereign Ruler of Human history, we ... make this resolution as our testimony...”*

*1. During the past 100 years, we as Christians in many respects came short of the Scriptural command to put away all idolatry in our life as individuals and as a nation. As we reflect on this before God we deeply repent of our sin.*

*2. In accordance with the Holy Scripture, we acknowledge that the State and the Church are two different and legitimate orders, both under the sovereignty of God. We support the present national constitution, recognizing that it is in accord with Biblical principle in safeguarding our fundamental human rights of freedom of religion on the principle of separation of religion and state.*

*3. In consideration of the past in our country when the principle of separation of religion and state was neglected and the freedom of religion was severely oppressed, we will endeavor with all our might to guard against the mistake of introducing any elements of pagan religion into any state-related affairs and seek to eliminate all such elements...*

*For the sake of maintaining the true relationship between State and religion that is involved in the three articles above, we pledge to ‘fight this good fight of faith’ unitedly on the basis of our common belief in the Bible.”*

The Japan Protestant Conference (JPC), which came out of this movement and would become one of the three founding organizations of JEA, was established in 1960 and instituted two task forces: the Bible Translation Committee and the Ise Shrine Management Committee. The former committee gave birth in 1961 to the New Japanese Bible Publishing Association, resulting in the publication of the New Japanese Bible (*Shinkaiyaku Seisho*) in 1970. The latter gave rise in 1967 to protests against state patronage of Yasukuni Shrine, which continue today. Proceeding from these, the JEA was founded in 1968 under the common belief that “the Holy Scripture is the infallible Word of God in its entirety and only authoritative standard for our faith and life.” (JEA Bylaws, Chapter 3, Article 1.)

In 1995, we, the members of the JEA, issued “The JEA Statement on the 50th Anniversary of the End of World War II” and expressed our repentance and apology for the sins/crimes of the church: that we gave in to nationalism based on emperor-centered historiography and committed the sin of

idolatry—at the same time participating in invasions and the infliction of suffering upon Asian countries while pursuing emperor-centered nationalism. In 2005, in “The JEA Statement on the 60th Anniversary of the End of the World War II,” we quoted from the 2000 “Okinawa Declaration” of the 4th Japan Congress on Evangelism and expressed our resolve to profess the Gospel and become peacemakers wherever we are as messengers of the Gospel of reconciliation. Although we have undertaken various endeavors in each of our circumstances in the past ten years, we must confess that we have come up short as we examine the fruit that has resulted from putting these statements into practice. We openly admit our inadequate response and reaffirm our repentance and commitment to these statements.

As we face this 70th anniversary, it is increasingly more difficult to hear firsthand testimony describing Japan’s war-time activities. As a result, historical revisionism sympathetic to Japan is experiencing an increase in popularity, while ethnic discrimination such as hate speech, is expressed openly toward people of other Asian countries. There are alarming signs of threats to freedom of religion and thought, as well as incidents that pave the way toward a revival of State Shinto emperor worship, such as constraints related to the national flag and anthem, as well as the habitual Shinto shrine worship of some cabinet members. Following events such as the railroading into law of the Act on the Protection of Specially Designated Secrets (SDS), issues related to U.S. military bases in Okinawa, the lifting of the ban on the exercise of the right to collective defense (solely by Cabinet decision), and national security related bills being deliberated in the National Diet, once again within the Christian community in Japan there are movements resembling the prewar era that advocate a form of “Japanese Christianity” that goes along with nationalism based on emperor-centered historiography.

Under these circumstances, we, the JEA, will pass on to the next generation the history of sins/crimes during World War II and the repentance of the Japanese church. Engraving upon our hearts the origin of evangelical churches coming together in postwar Japan, we will resist all the forces that threaten the dignity and life of human beings who are created in God’s image and that invoke hostility and conflict. We will strive to tell and live out the love of God manifested in the cross of Jesus Christ so that peace and reconciliation through that divine love will be realized in our family, local community, and society. We will profess the canonicity of the Bible and sovereignty of Christ to State and society and defend freedom of religion and thought. We will point to the true relationship between State and church by practicing our faith to follow the lordship of Jesus Christ alone. We express our commitment to stand together with those who are oppressed, socially vulnerable, and marginalized, and to promote peace through living out the Gospel of reconciliation in addressing issues that hinder reconciliation with neighboring countries, as well as to work together in solidarity with Asian and Global Bible-believing churches to fill the world with the Gospel.

“See, a king will reign in righteousness / and rulers will rule with justice.” Isaiah 32:1

June 3rd, 2015

The 30th General Assembly of the JEA

JEA Chairman: Takao Nakadai

Moderator of the General Assembly: Toshie Umeda

## Restoring the Evangelical DNA of Confronting Nationalism

*Kenichi Shinagawa, JEA General Secretary*

On October 17th, 1940, 20,000 Christians gathered at Aoyama Gakuin University to commemorate the 2,600th Imperial year of the Emperor's reign and to celebrate the unification of Christian denominations under the *Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan*. The gathering issued a statement that declared loyalty to the Emperor and a willingness to take part in the nationalistic agenda to rule over neighboring Asian countries.

My grandfather served on the committee for this event as a young pastor in his thirties. From an insider document I inherited, I can sense the enthusiasm that under this surge in nationalism, Christianity was finally being accepted by Japanese society. This sentiment paved the way for churches in Japan to commit the idolatry of worshiping the emperor and to participate in invasion and the infliction of suffering upon neighboring countries during World War II. The rhetoric was that worshiping the emperor was not idolatry, because “Shinto is a tradition and not a religion.” Many church leaders who compromised their

faith and gave in to emperor-worshiping nationalism were quite evangelical in their ministry. Yet the force of social conformity and the deep-rooted DNA of nationalism within them won them over.

Our evangelical forefathers of the postwar era saw the danger of this deep-rooted DNA of emperor-worshiping nationalism in churches in Japan and clearly stated, “For the sake of maintaining the true relationship between State and religion ... we pledge to ‘fight this good fight of faith’ unitedly on the basis of our common belief in the Bible.”

After 70 years, we now see another uprising within the Christian community in Japan of emperor-centered nationalism accompanied with an aspiration for “Japanese Christianity” similar to the prewar era. The JEA Statement on the 70th Anniversary of WWII aims to restore back to our evangelical community the DNA of confronting Japanese nationalism so that we evangelicals in Japan will not compromise our faith, but act as catalysts for true peace and reconciliation in the coming years.

## Toward JCE6: Diaspora Ministry

*Toshio Nagai, JCE6 Programing Committee, J. Clay Mission Network*

The term “diaspora ministry” first appeared at the Fourth Japan Congress on Evangelism (JCE4) held in Okinawa in 2000. I still remember the session entitled, “The Era of Diaspora.” Japanese churches became aware of diaspora ministry at this time.

The word “diaspora” was originally used to describe scattered Jewish people, but gradually it has become a more familiar word with a broader meaning among Japanese Christians. Globally, this word is now understood as “people on the move.” In Japan, it has two major meanings. The first is “returnees to Japan” and the second is “people from other countries.”

It is said that those who have gone overseas and become Jesus followers (or seekers) have difficulty adjusting to churches in Japan. Sadly, some local churches still tend to think of returnees as “people from a different world,” lacking in common Japanese sense and proper Christian training. On the other hand, returnees feel they are not welcomed by Christians in local Japanese churches. This becomes a vicious circle, as both sides feel hurt and misunderstood. However, now is the time for returnees to bring more awareness about the amazing things God is doing all over the world.

More than two million foreign people live in Japan. Some churches welcome Christian foreigners as members of the body of Christ, but most churches have very limited experience with Christians from other countries. On the other hand, people in churches in Japan that worship in languages other than Japanese have a hard time in various areas, such as passing their Christian faith on to children who have been born in Japan and speak fluent Japanese.

Some mission organizations, as well as individual Chris-

tians who have a heart for the diaspora in Japan, have focused on reaching out to returnees. Also, various gatherings on this topic have been held during the past few years. Some issues related to this area were presented and discussed in sessions at the Missions Forum led by the JEA Missions Committee. Since JCE4, there have been several conferences focusing on the diaspora, including three All Nations Returnees Conferences (ANRC 2009, 2010, and 2012) and a Global Returnees Conference (2015). Also, in recent years topics such as international marriages, business as mission, and overseas Japanese churches are often mentioned by Christian media and at mission conferences.

JCE6 has a heart for the diaspora community. The planning committee has already started inviting ministers who serve Japanese churches overseas and will invite such ministers and leaders as participants to all sessions. Also, following the conference, on September 30 and October 1, 2016, a gathering will be held for these Japanese ministers. God is providing this opportunity for pastors in Japan to listen to their fellow ministers who are preaching the good news to Japanese people overseas. I hope this will be a new beginning of our journey together as the global body of Christ.

The steering committee has also started having open gatherings for foreign ministers serving in Japan. We need to have a better understanding of their ministries and acknowledge them as coworkers in Christ. I hope and pray that the coming JCE6 will serve as the opportunity God has given to churches to start walking in a spirit of unity—as a team working with diaspora people both domestically and internationally. People are moving all around this globe. Shall we also be moved by God’s heart of mission?

## Evangelical Perspective on Nuclear Weapons – WEA Leaders Visit Hiroshima & Nagasaki

In early August, newly appointed WEA (World Evangelical Alliance) general secretary Efraim Tendero and WEA Nuclear Weapon Task Force leader Tyler Stevenson visited Hiroshima and Nagasaki along with general secretary Kenichi Shinagawa of JEA. They attended numerous 70th memorial events, visited museums/historical sites and met with atomic bomb survivors.



Bishop Efraim Tendero (left) and Tyler Stevenson

Secretary Tendero commented, “It was significant for me to actually see where atomic bomb blasted and feel the reality of people’s suffering. Now I

understand how inhumane nuclear weapons are and I feel we evangelicals need to address this issue.” Stevenson added, “WEA hasn’t clearly stated a position on nuclear weapons yet. This visit is a good starting point to engage in this pressing issue with an evangelical perspective.”

“While salvation of souls, of course, is at the center of Christ’s Gospel, it also includes how we live out that Gospel. As salt of the earth and light of the world, we evangelicals have the responsibility to promote peace and contribute to the quality of life of people.” said Secretary Tendero who had led holistic ministries in the Philippines. One unique evangelical perspective is the understanding of nuclear weapon issue as an idolatry, since people prostrate before man-made weapons. “We can not overlook the fact that people believe in nuclear deterrence rather than God for keeping peace in this world. The transforming power of the cross of Jesus Christ is needed to change this paradigm of terror,” said Stevenson.

## Youth Gathering 50+20 – Japanese Churches 70 years after the World War II

On September 19, 2015, the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA) held a gathering named, “50 + 20: What Happened 70 Years Ago? What Did We Confess 50 Years Later? What Has Been Happening Around Us for These Past 20 Years?” at Ochanomizu Christian Center, Tokyo. Coincidentally, despite fierce opposition, early in the morning of the same day the recent controversial security bills were steamrolled through the House of Councillors.



Hi-b.a. worship team

“Faith during the War was serious and pure but distorted in the opposite direction of God’s will,” said Professor Yoichi Yamaguchi of Tokyo Christian University after his morning speech in which he read the will of a Christian student who died as *kamikaze* pilot.

Yamaguchi continued: “Japanese churches accepted idolatry as national ritual, called World War II a “Holy War,” and actively cooperated in supporting the War. Fifty years later, we confessed our sins. But since then, historical revisionism has spread. Now Japan has shifted its stance by adopting a new law which allows the use of force to settle international disputes, even though it is against our Constitution.” Yamaguchi quoted Matthew 26:52: “Live by the sword, die by the sword” and encouraged the audience by saying: “Jesus submitted himself to the cross for reconciliation. Let’s get the unconstitutional laws invalidated and make peace on the earth.”

Masaru Asaoka (Pastor of Tokumaru Christ Church, Japan Alliance Christ Church) shared Psalm 19:2 in his evening message: “Day after day they pour forth speech, and night after night they display knowledge.” He said, “At the 50 year memorial, everyone suddenly began apologizing and repenting, which was not convincing to me. We must express what we really repent of with our own words. I am against the security bills as they do not take lives seriously. Christians cannot be silent, as Jesus died on the cross and now we have learned how important lives are.” Asaoka ended by saying, “As churches, we must decide that we will never take part in wars. Today, we are sheep for the slaughter. However, this is a start for us to walk with Jesus.”



Rev. Asaoka

Six group discussions were held between the messages, and two gospel singers and one band led worship concerts. More than 300 people—the majority of them youth—gathered and shared God’s blessings.

## Symposium on Partnership Between Churches and Christian Schools

The last of the six symposium series on the “Holistic Mission in Japan,” hosted by the Japan Lausanne Committee, was held on November 7, 2015 at Ochanomizu Christian Center in Tokyo. The topic of “Partnership Between Christian Schools and Local Churches” was explored, with reference to Part IIF of the Cape Town Commitment “Partnering in the body of Christ for unity in mission.”

Local churches suffer from the scarce presence of children and youth, while Christian schools account for over 10% of private schools in Japan. Four speakers discussed how local churches can effectively partner with Christian schools.

In his keynote speech, Paul Tsuchido Shew, Aoyama Gakuin University, deplored how some of his students

were met, when they built up their courage to go to church, a totally irrelevant and highly traditional culture. He challenged the church to become adaptive to the needs and culture of young people, through modifying the format of the worship service if necessary, and by creating a culture of joy and hope. Shew also called for partnership in which churches will encourage their members to work and study in Christian schools.

Hiroshi Mizuguchi, Tamagawa Seigakuin (Tamasei), looked at history since the Meiji era. He expressed regret that a number of Christian schools lost their identity after WWII, and how local churches simply let them become schools of Christian principles with very few Christians. He stressed the importance of school-church collaboration at a time when nationalist ideas are on the rise in educational policies. He also suggested that Christian schools make more use of resources of the church, so students will be able to turn their knowledge into personal experience and wisdom.

As an assistant pastor of Tamagawa Christ-Centered Church near Tamasei, Sakiko Honma shared testimonies of partnership, including a local public school inviting a Tamasei teacher to speak about childrearing issues.

Taku Noda, with Student Christian Fellowship (SCF) of the United Church of Christ in Japan (*Kyodan*), noted that what matters to the church is making meaningful connections with young people, instead of merely changing styles of worship. He urged the church to engage in serious prayer and support for the young, as well as Christian schools and youth organizations.

### The Book that Changed My Life: Testimony of Taichi Maruyama

Maruyama was a successful programmer. He enjoyed his job a lot, so working 300 hours a month (75 hours a week) or working on weekends was not a problem for him. By the age of 24, he was being paid nearly double that of the average person his age. This made him very proud. He felt as if he could do anything.

However, in 1998, just a year after joining the company, Maruyama started suffering panic attacks. "I was unable to maintain myself or work properly. I was anxious. I had to take medication as I continued working for the company. Up until that time, I thought I could do anything, but then I realized I couldn't control my own body or mind."

What made things worse was that the company he worked for suffered the collapse of the Internet bubble economy and business went downhill. Maruyama got a



From left: Paul Tsuchido Shew, Sakiko Honma, Hiroshi Mizuguchi, Taku Noda

pay cut and the company had to reduce personnel.

It was during that time that Maruyama's mother handed him a book by Ayako Miura entitled *Yu Ari Asa Ari (After Sunset Comes Sunrise)*. This book is the story of Kenji Igarashi, who established Hakuyosha, the largest dry cleaning business in Japan.

"My mother borrowed five books from the library and handed me one saying, 'Read this.' I was still going through a rebellious phase, but I was interested in business at the time, so I did as she suggested. I read the book on my commute home, and for the first time I read about the Christian faith. This prompted me to read other books by Ayako Miura such as *Shiokari Toge (Shiokari Pass)* and *Hyoten (Freezing Point)*, which got me interested in Christianity."

Up until then, Maruyama's values were "to have lots of money and to succeed in life. Have a successful career and do good for the world and leave a mark." These values were what kept him motivated in his job.

However, Igarashi's values were different. Igarashi, who came from a poor background, put his heart and soul into his work because he wanted to earn money to provide his mother a better life. But he eventually found that lifestyle meaningless, and when he met a missionary, his life values changed from "earning lots of money and leaving one's mark" to "putting God first and living faithfully."

"This shift of values affected me," said Maruyama. A desire to go to a church caused him to search the Internet. "I felt resistant going to church at first. I



Taichi Maruyama of BREADFISH

I don't think many churches had websites back then, but I carefully checked the ones that did, and decided to go to the one I thought had the best atmosphere." He went to Nagoya Dendo Fukuin Church situated in Central Nagoya. "I was already determined to become a Christian on my first visit," says Maruyama. After attending for a year, Maruyama got baptized in December of 2002.

Maruyama reflects back upon his life. "I was bullied throughout junior high school and high school, and therefore didn't believe in myself. In my 20s, I wanted to prove to the world that I could make it. However, in my late 20s, business wasn't going well and I suffered from panic attacks. It was then that I came across the book, *Yu Ari Asa Ari*. I believe this was God's plan and not because of my own will."

In 2010, Taichi Maruyama established BREADFISH, a website design company for churches. The name BREADFISH comes from the Bible story about the five loaves of bread and the two fish.

## Please Pray for Japan

1. That the JEA Statement on the 70th anniversary of the End of World War II will help restore the evangelical DNA of confronting Japanese nationalism and encourage evangelicals to be catalysts for true peace and reconciliation.
2. That God will use the Sixth Japan Congress on Evangelism (JCE6), Sept. 27–30 in Kobe, to advance the Kingdom of God in Japan and pave the way for a greater sense of unity in mission and creative collaboration among churches and mission organizations in Japan.
3. That through the preparations for JCE6, younger leaders will be connected, encouraged, and equipped to reach out to the next generation.

## JEA Related Schedule

<u>DATE</u>	<u>EVENT</u>	<u>PLACE</u>
Feb. 20	JEA Mission Symposium	Tokyo
Feb. 29-Mar. 1	4th Theological Symposium on Great East Japan Earthquake	Tokyo
Feb. 29-Mar. 5	WEA Leadership Forum	Seoul
April 24	Disaster Preparedness Festa	Tokyo

## Editorial

As we prepared for the JEA Statement at the 70th Anniversary of the End of WW II, we went through many documents and books of the past. It was like a time slip to those days when our forefathers in the faith struggled and fought the fight of faith in their own circumstances. I believe they were sincere and passionate. I truly respect them. Yet there are many mistakes that we need to learn from and not repeat again.

Nationalism is a difficult subject. In Japan, nationalism is always connected to emperor worship and Shinto. In other countries nationalism may be connected to Christianity. But as evangelicals our true nationality lies in Jesus Christ who laid down His life for us. May we rest upon our true nationality in Heaven and overcome our tendencies toward earthly nationalism.

Kenichi Shinagawa, Editor in Chief



<http://jeanet.org/>

# Japan Update

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