

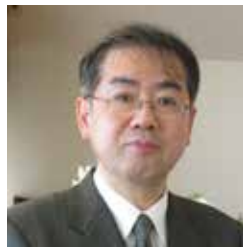
# Japan Update

Spring 2024 Number 86



*Tsutomu Matsui (see page 5) planting rice*

## Christians and creation care



**Norio Yamaguchi**  
*Lecturer,  
Tokyo Christian  
University*

Why should Christians be engaged in creation care? This is an important, though often neglected, question for all believers in the Lord Jesus. There are two reasons why all Christians should be engaged in creation care:

First, all humanity is created in the image of God. But what does it mean to be made in God's image? One way of explaining this difficult question is *imitatio Dei* (imitation of God). We, as beings created in God's image, are to imitate what God does in his creation. By imitating him, we are expected to reflect his good intentions and behavior in his created world.

What, then, is God doing in and for his creatures? He is taking care of all of his creation, as the Psalmist states: "These all look to you to give them their food in due season; when you give it to them, they gather it up; when you open your

hand, they are filled with good things" (Ps 104:27–28)\*. Since God is concerned about and responsible for the welfare of all his creation, we must share in these concerns and responsibilities.

Moreover, according to Genesis 1, we humans are commanded to have "dominion" over all creatures (Gen 1:26). We should, however, be careful not to misconstrue what "dominion" means. Dominion is not the equivalent of exploitation. Rather, in this context, it signifies an affectionate care that comes from God's love for his creatures. Hence, this famous commandment never gives humanity an endorsement to exploit the natural world as we want. On the contrary, since God loves all creatures and wishes their happiness, we, as his servants, should carefully comply with what our heavenly Master wishes us to do. Therefore, it is our vocation to take care of all creatures for their own sustenance and welfare.

Second, the fall of humanity coincided with the fall of all creation (Gen 3:17). Not only in the original Fall, but also throughout the history of humanity, the natural world has been suffering from

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## How can churches in Japan care for God's creation? An implication through a survey of environmental awareness

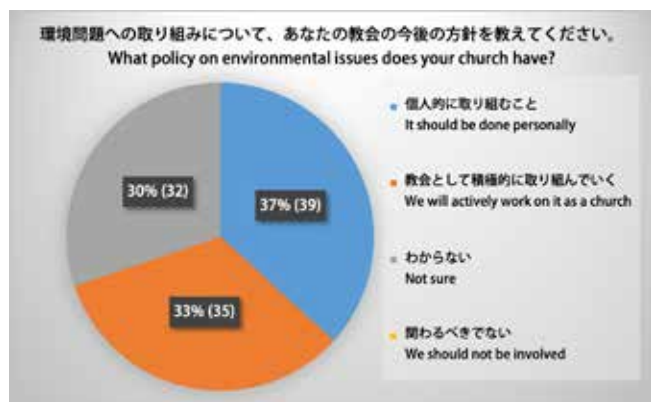
Kenji Ishihara

### How do churches in Japan view environmental issues?



Kenji Ishihara

I have been involved in the Biblical Environmental Consortium for several years. This is a Christian group driven mostly by pastors with a heart for God's creation. In this group, I had the opportunity to undertake an environmental awareness survey of churches and Christian organizations in Japan. The survey was conducted from 2020 to 2021 and 106 responses, primarily from pastors and leaders of Christian organizations, were collected with the cooperation of the Japan Evangelical Association (JEA). The full results of the survey were presented at the action group time of the 7th Japan Congress on Evangelism (JCE7) in September 2023. I would like to share from the results some of the interesting findings indicating the current ecological awareness of churches in Japan.



The pie chart presents an overview of attitudes toward ecological practices in churches. This is the result of the question, “What policy on environmental issues does your church have?” From the chart, we can see that about one-third of the respondents consider environmental issues to be something Christians should work on as individuals. In contrast, another one-third of the respondents are willing to take action on ecological concerns as churches. The rest were unsure. Comments submitted in the survey were also analyzed.

### Are environmental issues personal matters?

Surprisingly, the majority of respondents tended to view ecological practices as personal matters. For ex-

ample, a few respondents provided comments similar to those below:

- The Church is a group of individuals, so environmental initiatives should be pursued by individuals.
- We should inspire voluntary environmental activities by individuals rather than promote initiatives by the Church.

It was surprising to observe such individualistic views from the church leaders, who should have known that a church is a community of believers.

Other comments expressed concern about taking collective action as a church as well. One pastor referred to the difficulty of handling diverse views among congregation members, saying, “The differing views on environmental issues within the congregation could threaten to split a church.” Another pastor reported, “I think churches should do something, but I feel cautious about shifting too much in that direction and losing sight of the purpose of the Church. I think faith-based NPOs and NGOs should lead social initiatives.” Interestingly, this comment indicates a view that environmental issues are not the primary purpose of the Church.

Moreover, a few respondents emphasized that churches in Japan are very small:

“I believe there are many social issues churches should be involved in, but many churches are too small to do something for all the issues. Therefore, it is more realistic for churches to participate in interdenominational organizations, governments, non-profit organizations, and so on.”

This comment infers that churches in Japan are too small to work on such issues. However, some respondents expressed a desire for initiatives that could be taken up by small churches and those with limited resources.

### Actions and struggles

In contrast to the view that this should be an individual activity, one-third of the respondents expressed willingness to take action on ecological matters at their churches. Further analysis showed that some churches have already engaged in ecological practices, such as saving energy, picking up trash, growing green curtains [*using living plants to shade the rays of the sun—Ed.*], purchasing sustainable products, and reducing purchases and trash. Also, a few churches hold study sessions and refer to environmental issues in preaching. Some pastors

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## How can churches in Japan care for God's creation? (continued from page 2)

suggested that the church's proactive involvement in environmental issues could be social witness to the local community, which would hopefully result in evangelization.

On the other hand, despite their willingness to do something through the church, some respondents appeared to struggle with having concrete ideas to take action on ecological matters. For example, one pastor commented, "Although we think it is important, we have not yet initiated something concrete. I would appreciate it if you could offer some examples of what churches can do." Also, there was an expectation of action from larger church associations: "I think it would be effective if the JEA would set specific action goals and encourage each church to participate." If there were any helpful resources that churches could access as a guide, it could be valuable for churches to engage in ecological activities.

### Future prospects

To conclude, churches in Japan have gradually become aware of environmental issues that need to

be addressed. However, although some churches are willing to take action, they face difficulty in gaining practical ideas. It would be helpful if more pragmatic resources on creation care were accessible in Japanese Christian communities, providing input on why and how churches can take ecological actions.

It was a great encouragement that JCE7 ended with the Tokai Declaration, which referred to environmental issues in point 5:

"Use this 7th Japan Congress on Evangelism as an opportunity to pave the way for Church-wide efforts for environmental conservation to take shape."

—JCE7 Tokai Declaration: Our prayer "Beginning" from the "End"

We hope to start thinking about how we can develop "Church-wide efforts for environmental conservation" together as churches in Japan.

## Christians and creation care (continued from page 1)

ecological devastation caused by human greed. In fact, we in the twenty-first century are facing a serious environmental crisis. Many species are on the edge of extinction. As humanity needs God's redemption, so do all creatures. Hence, the redemption of humanity should also coincide with the redemption of all creation, or, as St. Paul states: "the creation itself will be set free from its bondage to decay and will obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God" (Rom 8:21).

While the redemption of all creation is ultimately the task of God, we should participate in this redemptive work. Since humanity is responsible for the ecological crisis, we are obliged to rescue other creatures from their predicaments.

There is an additional reason why we should be active regarding the redemption of other creatures. Reconciliation of human beings to God is a critical theme of the New Testament; but reconciliation of other creatures in addition to human beings is also an important theme, for as St. Paul says: "For in him [Christ] all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him God was pleased to reconcile to

himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace through the blood of his cross" (Col 1:19–20).

The prophet Isaiah also envisages a glorious future reconciliation and harmony between human beings and other creatures, as it is stated: "The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp, and the weaned child shall put its hand on the adder's den" (Isa 11:8). This beautiful vision can be realized in the present (even if partially and imperfectly) when we pray and move into action.

In sum, there are two reasons why Christians should be engaged in creation care; first, humanity is created as God's image, so we are imitating what God is doing for the benefit of other creatures, and second, humanity is also called to participate in God's redemptive work for the entire world.

We should join this critical task here and now.

\*All scripture citations are taken from the New Revised Standard Version.

## Entrusted with a beautiful world

Natsuko Shimasaki



Natsuko Shimasaki

I was born in Tokyo in 1954. In the spring that I would turn 14 years old, my brother died of cancer. My father began to wonder what had eaten away at his son's life. In those days, Japan was just coming out of postwar poverty and entering a period of both mass production and mass consumption. The air was polluted. The Tama River,

on whose riverside I would play as a child, was bubbling with industrial wastewater and pH-neutral detergent dumped out of private households. At home, an invasion of chemical condiments and vegetables grown with agrichemicals became the food on the table. Nuclear power plant construction was being planned. Before we knew it, something frightening called carcinogenic agents had seeped into our daily lives. My brother's death triggered my father to quit his job to warn society about the ongoing trend he believed was endangering nature and people's health. He began by publishing a magazine and mobilizing an anti-pollution and anti-nuclear power plant movement in the 1970s.

### My conversion and the evangelical church

My brother's death led all of my family members to ponder how to live our lives. I became a Christian as a high school student in 1972. Later I went to a Bible school. In the dorm, I would question the use of pH-neutral detergents and chemical condiments, and I would try to engage other students in discussions about the topic. However, we would usually end up with the conclusion that it was all a matter of sin, and even more reason why we should evangelize people. But I thought if pollution was the result of our sins, we should change our way of life. I did not understand why people were uninterested in taking action. As a result, I would be labeled a socialist Christian, and our discussion would invariably leave us feeling we were unable to understand each other.

Meanwhile, the young people who came to work with my father were serious about transforming society and bringing about a lifestyle that would conserve humans and nature. Their sincere attitudes attracted me, and I would often contemplate abandoning my Christian faith. I was, however, led to look back on past history. During the Church's 2,000 years, it was never without error. And yet, there were always Christians who were like shining stars. I had heard the gospel because of such people. If so, regardless of what the Church was doing at the moment, what God was asking me to do was perhaps to

shine like a star. I chose to remain a believer. That was when I was age 20.

### Food issue

When I married a minister, my father's blessing was, "No matter what you do, don't become a missionary. Missionaries have destroyed the indigenous value system of Asians who have been living in harmony with nature. They implant materialism. They are vanguards of the West, which ravages the natural environment and is obsessed with profit." He also encouraged me to sow seeds wherever I go. After pastoring a church for a time, my husband and I became missionaries to the Philippines, contrary to my father's wishes. We also lived in the U.S. and the U.K., where my husband went to earn degrees. During those years, I asked myself what it would mean to live in Asia as a missionary. I did sow seeds wherever I was.

Japan's food self-sufficiency is 38% on a calorie basis. Therefore, imported foods regularly appear on household tables. We must note, however, many underlying issues. Fuel oil is consumed for transportation. Ocean transport requires safety on the sea lanes. People do not seem, however, to be sufficiently aware of the military expenses to keep it safe, or the danger of war on the sea lanes. The cost of imported food does not include the cost of maintaining the ports where goods enter Japan, or the maintenance cost of the domestic road network. In some countries of origin, children are forced to work under poor conditions for low wages. Some items of food, since they began to be exported, have grown so expensive in the country of origin as to endanger the food supply of the local people. There are also issues of deforestation to produce land for livestock grazing, and greenhouse gases discharged by cattle and swine. What we assume to be normal everyday life actually involves numerous underlying problems. God has given us abundant food and a beautiful planet. He invites us to share with our neighbors. Therefore, it is time for us to transform our value system and to make concrete changes in our lifestyle.

### What shall we do?

One thing I try to do as much as possible is sow seeds and grow vegetables. I make it a point to lead a simple lifestyle and to be content with what I have. I value what has been given to me and am willing to share what I have. In my daily life, I endeavor to shift to a sustainable use of energy.

I believe our consumption behaviors drive economic systems, and thus can make the greatest impact on society. If we stop blindly accepting everything

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## Farming with God

*Tsutomu Matsui, a Christian farmer*



Tsutomu Matsui

I was born in a frontier community at the foot of Mt. Akagi in Gunma Prefecture, the son of a couple who had returned from one of Japan's former colonies. My father soon quit farming to take a job away from home, so I grew up with a strong attachment to my mother. I inherited the frontier spirit of my

grandfather, so currently I am involved in nature farming in a village forest in the Bessho Onsen area of Nagano Prefecture, tending rice fields and vegetable gardens.

When my younger sister was going to Sunday School, my mother felt a sense of spiritual need and was baptized. But I kept at a distance from the church, having studied social science in the department of law. I continued to resist Christian faith until I finally became a believer while teaching at a Christian school, where I worked at the grassroots level as an educator of children with intellectual disabilities.

Some years before my retirement, I began farming. I took up organic farming and began to learn about bacteria, the simplest of all living things. After eight years, I transitioned to nature farming. A simple distinction between organic farming and nature farming is whether it uses organic fertilizers. Nature farming uses no fertilizers. It is farming while coexisting with weeds and bugs. It embraces living organisms such as soil bacteria and soil microbes. The ideal model of nature farming is the natural environment and soil of mountainous areas. Human beings are created to live in harmony with soil bacteria, microbes, and all other living organisms, just like we are meant to live with God. God's divine presence, though not visible, fills the earth, and in a way, so do bacteria.

Since I became a farmer, I have been led to a deeper understanding of the Bible. I believe agricultural production is one facet of God's creative work, and a means to receive divine blessings by executing his command to be fruitful, multiply, and fill the earth. As I studied soil bacteria and microbes, I found that bacteria sustain our life. Farming requires soil improvement, through which we learn about bacteria and the work of God.

Our ancestors held a keen sensitivity to perceive an invisible divine presence. They developed different belief systems, such as Shintoism, Buddhism, and Islam. Each system is different. Bessho Onsen is a community near the foot of a mountain range, with a history going back

1,300 years. A Buddhist temple was built early in the history of the community, at a corner overlooking the foot of the mountain. From my ancestors, I have inherited the mountain and farmland to tend. Nature farming depends on the environment. In addition to cultivating rice and vegetables, I also work on the maintenance of the streets, the retaining walls of the rice fields, and the riverbanks. I grow enough rice for my household through nature farming in my rice fields. I also borrow and cultivate other rice fields and share their harvest with others.

I grow soybeans and grain in some of the fields, but when deer damaged various of them, I switched to growing scallions, onions, and garlic. I dry the harvested green vegetables for use later and share any surplus harvest with others. I gather mountain vegetables such as Japanese parsley and Manchurian wild rice, which are gifts from nature. I harvest plums and dry them or make juice. I harvest bitter persimmons and dry them or make vinegar. Nothing harvested in the mountain village is wasted.

I have resumed making my own miso paste and soy sauce. I prepare homemade Japanese pickles, and the more I understand the fermentation process, the better they taste. In 2023 I doubled the amount of soy sauce I made, and I sold half of it. I ship our dried vegetables to people in cities on a trial basis.

By growing plants and vegetables and sharing these living organisms as food, I can take part in the cycle of divine blessings. Through cultivating the soil, I nurture soil bacteria and microbes. God gives me the strength to work each day.

Human beings are a creation of God. We are distinguished from other animals in that we have developed languages and can tell good from bad. We are created in the image of God. It is, however, a long time before the kingdom of God will come. God has assigned humans a special role as stewards of creation.

Even so, humans in general have been farming in such a way as to harm and exploit nature. As sinners, for the most part humans have failed to respond to Noah, Moses, and other prophets to stop sinning. People are so deep in sin that they cannot understand the intervening message of the prophets. When Jesus Christ, the last prophet, laid down his life to communicate that God is love, humans got the chance to return to God. In my understanding, by laying down his life, Jesus Christ communicated to humans that God exists among humans as love incarnated.

Human beings receive blessings through caring for creation. One of the greatest sins of people today is having

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**The Tokai Declaration —  
Our prayer “Beginning” from the “End”**



At the JCE 7 meeting

*The following material is based upon an interview conducted right before the 7th Japan Congress on Evangelism (JCE7), held in September 2023.*

The Tokai Declaration, Our prayer “Beginning” from the “End”, consists of six sections, each being a prayer on a selected topic. The Declaration begins with an opening prayer, “To be able to look towards the ‘End’” and closes with “To be able to ‘Begin’ from the ‘End’”. Sections two through five all begin with the phrase, “To be able to ‘Begin’ mission cooperation beyond” followed by, “our positions”, “our denominations”, “regions”, and “culture” respectively.

The Declaration Drafting Committee consisted of eleven members, each from a different denomination and age group. Chairperson Izumi Akasaka and three other members were in charge of the main drafting process, and the draft was revised with the rest of the committee. One member’s comment, “This is a prayer,” inspired the declaration to be written as a prayer that can be shared among churches.

Aiming to write up the Declaration as a collaboration work of the churches, the first draft of the declaration was released on the JCE7 webpage and shared at local gatherings before the Congress. An example of the collaborative process can be seen with a phrase in the third section, “In the past, most churches in Japan, in cooperation beyond denominations, have sinned and are guilty of participating in the war, practicing idolatry with the emperor as a god, and supporting the government to force people in Asian countries to bow down at shrines.” This phrase was edited from the first draft based on some of the feedback the committee received and is believed to be an important element in the reason for the existence of the Japan Evangelical Association.

Akasaka said, “I hope this Declaration will serve as an aid to mission work to those with various international backgrounds working in Japan too.” The Declaration is published online on the JCE7 homepage along with an English version. Tentative translations in 15 languages are also available, but the commentary is only ready in Japanese.

Several other committee members commented on the Declaration as follows:

Yoshiya Kondo, Pastor of Morioka Bible Baptist Church, said “Each of us stands in a different place, fac-

ing different things. I want us to go beyond our churches and our denominations and cooperate from our hearts.”

Yoshinori Aoki, pastor of Izumi Gospel Church, said “This declaration is not a prayer limited to the time of the JCE7 gathering but is just a beginning. I hope we will someday witness the fruit of this prayer throughout the world.”

Yoshiki Tsukamoto, Associate General Secretary of Kirisutosha Gakusei Kai (KGK), said “We tried to be creative so the phrases would be acceptable to everyone attending JCE7, and tried to be explicit about this generation’s crisis and hope. “

Yoshiyuki Nishioka, Professor at Tokyo Biblical Seminary said “Different people with different perspectives worked on the same problem from various angles. This sincere process of seeking the truth was verbalized in a prayer.”

*Christian Shimbun*, November 17, 2023

Translated by Hiromi Terukina

**Japanese society turned a blind eye to the  
Johnny Kitagawa scandal —  
Neglect and indifference in society and the  
responsibility of the Church**

In 1999, the weekly tabloid *Shūkan Bunshun* covered the sexual abuse case of Johnny Kitagawa over the course of 14 weeks. In 2006, the truth of the articles was certified by a civil court trial. However, there was very little exposure of the matter in newspapers and none on television.

In March 2023, the BBC broadcast a long documentary, “Predator: The Secret Scandal of J-Pop”. Hundreds of young boys are said to have fallen victim to Kitagawa over the course of half a century.

After the release of the documentary, the scandal became a worldwide topic and was investigated by the UNHRC. A live press conference of Johnny & Associated, Inc. (J&A) was broadcast, and the agency faced multiple tough questions by the media. The UN offered criticism that “the media took part in covering up the scandal for decades”.

Screenwriter Sō Kuramoto mentions how the agency would blatantly put him under pressure if he dared do anything to their disadvantage. Other people affiliated with tabloids mentioned similar experiences. Mass media has often confronted the government and large companies but was unable to confront the giant talent agency.

What could have been done to prevent this incident? According to a team of specialists, Kitagawa was

known to have paraphilia tendencies. To prevent similar incidents, we must remember that anyone can become a perpetrator regardless of their status or competence.

Furthermore, the indifference of the society and the negligence of those surrounding Kitagawa added to the problem. One victim says he was scolded by his older sister when he opened up about the abuse. After that, he kept silent for decades.

This scandal has relevance to the church. Both Catholic and evangelical churches have been guilty of similar scandals over the years.

Most people would rather not think about these issues. But when we ignore them, we are inevitably defending the perpetrator, criticizing the victim, and turning a blind eye. The church ends up neglecting victims as it avoids discussing these matters to “keep a peaceful atmosphere”.

Bringing up such matters in the church is not easy. Educating children about them is also complicated. But “playing it safe” is the same as covering up sexual abuse. We must remember victims who are suffering. Some have been courageous enough to open up to those around them, but have been met with cold reactions.

In the Kitagawa case, big companies have cancelled contracts with J&A. If we are not conscious of human rights, companies and churches will lose the trust of society.

*Christian Shimbun* May 24, 2023

(Original article written by Mafumi Usui, Psychologist, Professor at the Graduate School of Niigata Seiryō University)

Translated and summarized by Grace Koshino

### Residing in Japan not just to live, but also for the gospel

Just before 5:00 in the evening, many young people cheerfully gather in the church hall of Tokyo Nippori International Church in Arakawa-ku, a primarily Chinese congregation. Tokyo Agape Christ Church (TACC) has rented the hall to hold its once-a-month Vietnamese worship service. About 60 people ranging in age from 18 to 35, some from Ibaraki and Gunma prefectures, are in attendance at this November gathering.

Rev. Nghi Tran, a Vietnamese missionary sent to Japan from America, has come from Ishinomaki, Miyagi Prefecture, to lead the worship service. He preaches from chapter seven of the Book of Judges. “There are not many Vietnamese churches, but you must belong to a Christian community. If you are alone, there is no one to admonish you and you can easily fall,” he says.

The number of Vietnamese living in Japan has



Vietnamese congregation in Tokyo

increased eightfold during the past 10 years to nearly 490,000. This is the second largest foreign group in Japan, following the Chinese. In Vietnam, 10% of the population is said to be Christian (2% of them Protestant), but worship in Vietnamese is rarely seen in Japan.

During the period of this rapid increase of Vietnamese people in Japan, a Japanese Christian living in Vietnam realized Vietnamese Christians in Japan were struggling with the Japanese language and attending church services. He consulted with a Japanese evangelist. They decided to establish a group to deliver Vietnamese Bibles to churches (Vietnamese Bibles To Japan: VBTJ). They also decided to explore the possibility of starting Vietnamese language worship services in Japan.

Rev. Tran has been encouraging Vietnamese believers in a life of faith, saying, “Vietnamese Christians are in Japan not just to live, but for the gospel. Japanese people tend to think Christianity belongs to Westerners, but through this they will see that many Southeast Asians believe in God.” Even though his words are gentle, his passion for Japan is evident as he says, “It will take time, but I will preach the gospel to the Vietnamese here, and they will pass it on to the Japanese.”

Five leaders, elected from among the young church members, are in charge of the TACC worship service and meetings afterward. A lot of prayer and study is involved in this work. The worship services are only monthly, but Rev. Tran leads a weekly online Bible study class from Ishinomaki. In a separate meeting, twenty people have been undergoing online leadership training through a course provided in Vietnamese by Rev. Tran’s father, who teaches at a seminary in the U.S.

Three couples in the church currently have children who were born in Japan. It is easy to imagine more church members finding partners, settling down in Japan, and becoming good workers who will carry on the mission of Tokyo Agape Christ Church:

“In love, spreading the gospel *and* love.”

*Christian Shimbun*, December 10, 2023

Translated by Tomoko Kato

## Entrusted with a beautiful world (continued from page 4)



Shimasaki's garden

advertisements say, the world will change. Even if we cannot change society, I believe we must live life as conscientious consumers. A renowned leader is believed to have said, “You keep doing something, not so that you change the world, but so that the world will not change you.” If I ever stop thinking about how I live my daily life, I will be certainly

swallowed up in the rage of global capitalism that focuses on consumption—procuring as many things as possible, as quickly and as cheaply as possible, from all around the world.

### What about the Church?

When the Lausanne Covenant was released in 1974 and noted Christians' social responsibilities, I hoped the Church would change. I did not see, however, any noticeable change in churches in Japan. More recently, the Sustainability Center of the World Evangelical Alliance released *The Bible and SDGs* ([wea-sc.org/en/biblesdgs](http://wea-sc.org/en/biblesdgs)), which has been translated into Japanese and available in print. I also see some signs among Christian leaders of a shift toward a more holistic understanding of the gospel, advocating work in creation care and justice. Will these developments grow into something beyond transient trends? Are they going to radically change each and every Christian's values and lifestyle? I don't know. Whatever happens, I will continue, as I have done during the past 50 years (though in a very small way) to lead a lifestyle as a conscientious believer, walking in the presence of the Lord, while appreciating joy and beauty day by day.

## Farming with God (continued from page 5)

forgotten God, the source of all blessings. Deforestation and large-scale agriculture with the use of chemical fertilizers are but two examples of exploitation as a result of forgetting to be thankful to God. Dairies, chicken farms, and fisheries are mere theft if done without thanks to God and compassion for life. Money, goods, and wealth drive people's minds today. When people are oblivious to life's origin, they are more easily divided. Conflicts and wars seem to be driving humans to total ruin.

I believe industries related to agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are a divinely appointed inheritance. God has entrusted to us the stewardship of his creation. It is our duty to take care of living things. We are told to sow seeds, grow plants, and receive the blessings of harvest.

Throughout history, humans have shared their harvest with thanks. Bessho Onsen has a very long history and some of its Shinto shrines and Buddhist temples go back to the Kamakura era (1180–1336). During the Take no Nobori rain festival, local people climb Ogamidake, a mountain where a dragon deity with nine heads is enshrined, and dedicate strips of fabric to that deity in prayer for rain.

As a Christian farmer, I must be always thankful to the Creator God, and humble myself as I tend to what God entrusts to me. I pray that the kingdom of God will come to this community and that it will become affluent and respected.

## Editorial

The theme of this issue is “creation care.” Even though creation care is one of the important biblical and theological issues, evangelical churches in Japan have not paid much attention. I believe it is time for Japanese churches to start thinking about the creation care which God has entrusted to us as caretakers of this world.



Takahito Iwagami

# Japan Update

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Chairman : Isao Mizuguchi  
General Secretary : Takahito Iwagami

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### Japan Update Staff

Editor in Chief	Takahito Iwagami
Asst. Editor	Atsuko Tateishi
Translation Editor	Gary Bauman
Translation Staff	Tomoko Kato Grace Koshino Hiromi Terukina

### Editorial Office:

c/o JEA, OCC Building 501  
2-1 Kanda Surugadai  
Chiyoda-ku, Tokyo 101-0062, Japan

telephone 03-3295-1765  
fax 03-3295-1933  
email [admin@jeanet.org](mailto:admin@jeanet.org)  
website <https://jeanet.org/>

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