

## History of the Japan Baptist Convention

In 1889, the Foreign Missions Board of the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) of the United States sent two missionaries, J.W. McCullom and J.A. Brunson, to Japan. They began their mission work in Kyushu, and in 1903 the West Japan Baptist Convention was formed. This association eventually joined with the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) and participated in the general war mobilization efforts of World War II.

In 1947, in response to calls by the missionary E.B. Dozier, the Japan Baptist Convention (JBC) was formed at the Seinan Gakuin Church. 16 churches comprised of some Kyodan churches who had separated from their denomination for reasons of evangelical policy, church politics, and liturgical understanding, participated in the formation of the new convention. The JBC adopted the slogan "The Light of Christ to all of Japan" and began by establishing churches in prefectural capital cities and from there spreading out to other cities.

Through the prayers and personal, material and economic support of its members of SBC, the JBC proceeded boldly with its church development program. Many SBC pastors and laypersons came to Japan as part of the "Preaching Missions" in which well-known preachers were invited on circuit preaching tours and, in 1963, as part of the "New Life Movement".

Along with its promoting of Home Missions, the JBC was also active in promoting Foreign Missions. In 1955, the JBC sent missionaries on a "foreign mission" to Okinawa which was at the time still under US occupation and in 1965 sent missionaries to Brazil. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the JBC continued to send missionaries to Indonesia, Thailand and Singapore.

The JBC, which had been generously supported by SBC offerings, decided in 1976 to become financially independent from the SBC. After having received such abundant support, independence was difficult and it was not until 1983 that the JBC was finally truly financially independent. Also, along with financial independence, the JBC took a more self-assertive stance in faith with its "Confession of Faith" in 1979, its "Statement of Faith concerning War Responsibility" in 1988, opposition to the imperial enthronement ceremony, and its "Peace Declaration" in 2002. Additionally, as concrete actions in support of its commitment to proclaim the gospel in "every corner of life," the JBC has been active through various special committees in the areas of the Yasukuni Shrine Problem, Japan-Korean Relations and the Problems of Korean Residents of Japan, Pollution Problem, Buraku (Discrimination) Problem, Handicapped and the Church, Homeless, and Sexual Discrimination Problem.

In 1987, the Convention instituted a retirement fund system for retired church workers, and in order to fulfill the Convention's goal of "500 Churches, 50,000 Members" sold the land (in the Shinjuku Ward of Tokyo) where the Convention's office then were and established a fund. Then, in the 1990s, the Convention was active Church Planting in nationwide and assisting churches in the purchase of real estate. In 1995, the Convention further increased its efforts in supporting churches by establishing the Research & Training Institute and by taking on responsibilities such as the publication of texts to help in church formation and the management of sales for the magazine "Bible Education" (Seisho kyouiku).

However, changes over time have compelled the Convention to change its activities from those planned in the original funding, and at the 50<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Convention in 2004, a reorganization was undertaken in which activities would be financed by cooperative missions tithing without depending on the fund. Further, at the 55<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Convention in 2009, it was decided to phase out the retirement system for retired church workers and instead seek the cooperation of individual churches in providing retirement plans on their own.

## The Future of the Convention's Cooperative Missions

### The 2011 Mid-Range Plan

The year 2007 saw the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the formation of the Japan Baptist Convention and the 120<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of the first Southern Baptist missionaries to Japan. Looking back on this history it is evident that we have received abundant blessings from the Lord, and we are reminded of the work that has been done by many dedicated people. In the drafting of the 2011 Mid-Range Plan, we have fundamentally reexamined the meaning of a convention dedicated to missions, and with the prayers and input of each and every member church have set upon a new course of action. In this world of ever-growing division and strife where it seems ever more and more difficult to see hope in the future, the gospel of reconciliation that God has granted us through Christ's suffering on the cross is our salvation, our hope and our light. Overseas as well as at home, the Convention is commissioned to such wonderful work still to be undertaken. Let us widen the circle of joy in the Convention's cooperative missions, ever mindful of the words "Independence and Cooperation" that have guided the Convention in respecting the subjectivity of its member churches.

### The Annual Activities of the Japan Baptist Convention

Mo	Activity	Department in	Notes
Apr	Anniversary of the Establishment of the JBC	Executive Secretary	April 3
May	Regional Association Liaison Meeting	Missions Dept.	
Jun	1st Meeting of the Trustees Baptist Hospital Day Seminary Week (8days beginning on the last Sunday)	Executive Secretary Executive Secretary NM Union	Second Sunday
Aug	National Baptist Boys and Girls Conference Or "Meet Our Neighbors" Travel Program National Youth Conference National Men's Convention	Missions Dept. Y.C. Committee Men's Union	Alternating Years
Sep	Church School Month 2nd Meeting of the Trustees Workshop for Newly Dedicated Church Workers	Missions Dept. Executive Secretary Missions Dept.	
Oct	Japan Baptist Women's Union General Meeting/ Layperson's Convention	Women's Union	Varies Annually
Nov	Baptist Welfare Day Annual General Meeting World Baptist Missions Prayer Week (Lottie Moon Christmas Offering)	Executive Secretary Executive Secretary Women's Union	Second Sunday 8 days beginning on the last Sunday
Dec	Regional Association Liaison Meeting	Missions Dept.	
Jan	Cooperative Missions Week	Executive Secretary	8 days beginning on the last Sunday
Feb	3rd Meeting of Trustees	Executive Secretary	
Mar	Workshop for Newly Graduated Pastors National Little Lambs Children's Camp Training for Newly Registered Theological Student	R&T.I.M Women's Union/ Missions Dept. M.D.&W.U.	

**[Training]** Sponsorship of workshops and theology seminars (R&T Institute for Missions)

**[Youth Travel Program]** Travel programs hold in various regions (Missions Dept.)

**[Workshops for Newly Dedicated Church Workers]** held annually (Missions Dept, Women's Union, with cooperation from the R & T Institute for Missions)

**[Church Education Workshops]** **[Music in Worship Workshops]** Held throughout the year (Missions Dept.)

**[Mission Study Tours]** **[World Congress by BWA]** Please contact us for future plans (Missions Dept.)

The Light of Christ to All of Japan

Since 1947



## The Japan Baptist Convention



**284 Churches 42 Missions**

Registered Members 34,827

Current Active Members 15,648

(as of May 2015)

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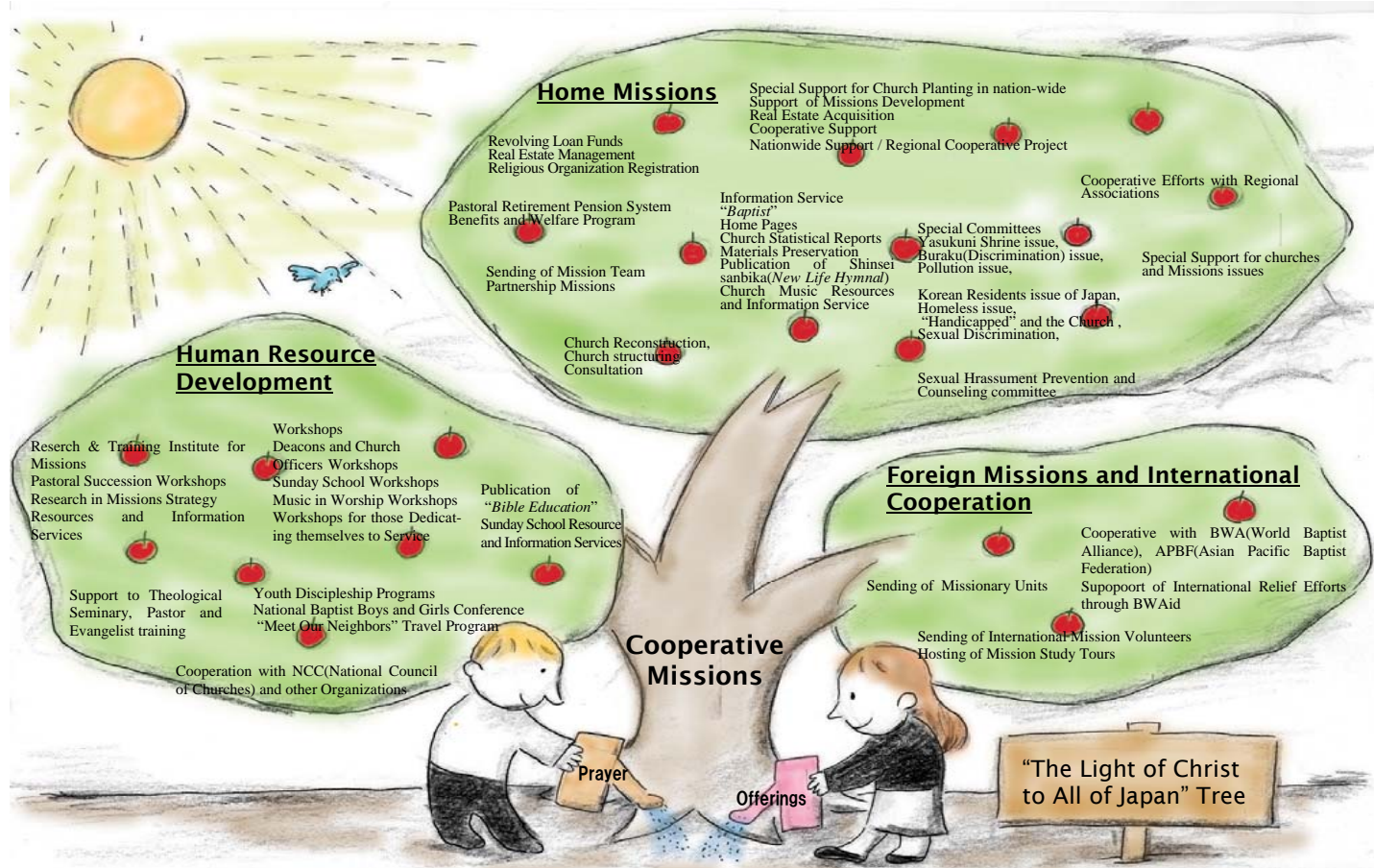
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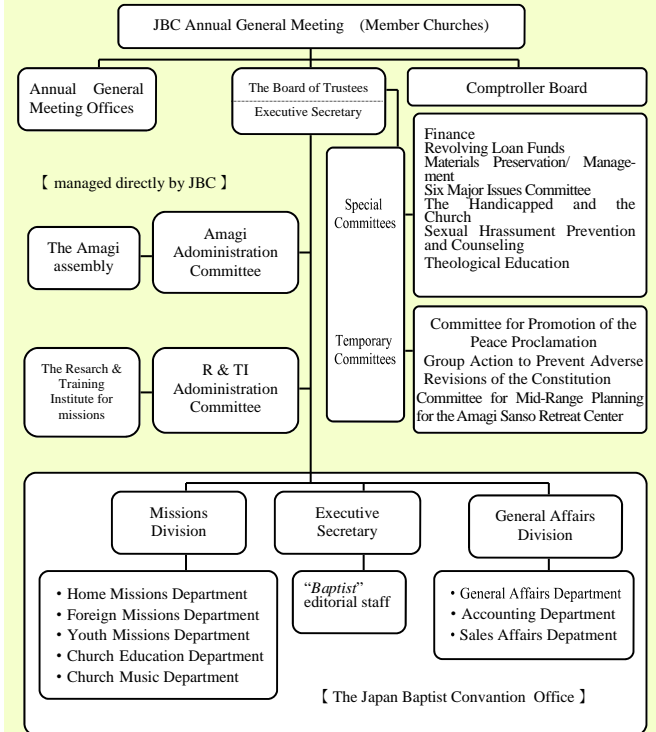
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**Organization of the Japan Baptist Convention**



Although, they are not included in the official organization of the Japan Baptist Convention, several groups such as the Japan Baptist Women's Union and the Baptist Men's Union use space at the Japan Baptist Convention headquarters.



**Annual General Meeting**  
Member churches meet annually in November at Amagi Sanso to discuss and make decisions concerning the Convention's missions activities.



**Foreign Missions**  
The Convention is supporting Kazuyuki Sasaki's work as a mission volunteer in Rwanda, and sending Yorie Ito as an Asia missions coordinator to Singapore. (Photo: Mission Study Tours at work in Rwanda)



**Nationwide Support / Regional Cooperative Project**  
The Convention has been involved in multi-church cooperative projects such as church growth and church regeneration.



**Church Education**  
The Convention conducts workshops and invites teachers to help Sunday schools become places where people can discover the joy and importance of reading the Bible and take part together in learning.



**Youth Missions**  
Through its nation-wide youth camp and domestic and international travel/study program, which take place on an alternating biennial basis, the Convention supports the education of youth within a firm historical context.



**Support**  
The Convention extends support to member churches in their missions activities and in church starting through its missions program, acquisition of real estate and the dispatching of pastors.



**The Research & Training Institute for Missions**  
How should pastors and churches make their way? The Convention, through its Missions Institute, conducts workshops for active church leaders, including pastors, new pastors and church staff, missions studies, and training in means of missions communications.



**Church Music**  
Church music workshop participants gain knowledge and skills in three ways, fundamental study of worship, practical training, and valuable worship experiences. The Conventions through its Church Music department also offers information via the internet and the "New Life Hymnal Newsletter."



**Publications**  
The Convention publishes the magazine "Baptist" and "Bible Education" on a regular basis. The Convention also publishes texts that can be used in workshops as well as various tracts.

**Affiliated Baptist Entities**

The following are entities affiliated with the Japan Baptist Convention under the banner of "Baptist Principles and Ideals":

- \* Seinan Gakuin University, Fukuoka City
- \* Seinan Jogakuin (Women's) University, Kita-Kyushu City
- \* The Japan Baptist Medical Foundation, Kyoto City
- The Japan Baptist Hospital
- The Japan Baptist Nursing School
- \* The Amagi Assembly, Shizuoka Prefecture (managed directly by the JBC)

**The Three Pillars of Cooperative Missions**

1. Cooperative Missions Offerings
2. Attendance at Annual General Meetings
3. Reading the Baptist magazine