

# MLP Japan News



## Greetings Not Alone

On New Year's Day 2024, a severe earthquake struck the Noto Peninsula in Japan, prompting a call for compassionate assistance to the affected areas. As Christians, what role can we play as God's saints? **Our primary goal should be to remind the victims that they are not alone and that they are loved.**

By sharing the love and forgiveness of Jesus Christ in various ways, we have the opportunity to touch the lives of those in distress. Let's each find our unique way to provide support that reflects God's love.

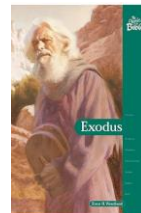
Kaori Egawa

MLP Japan Media Consultant/Editor

## Evangelism Appreciation

In the 'Exodus' volume of the People's Bible, you can explore the commentary on God's miraculous rescue of the Israelites, who endured hundreds of years of slavery in Egypt. **This book provides insights into the history of God's covenant with the Israelites, detailing how He guided and protected His people with His almighty hand, while consistently focusing on Jesus Christ.**

We extend our gratitude to the volunteers who have assisted with the proof-reading of the translated text.



## Pre-evangelism Report OJC Theme for 2024

Next month, OJC (Oyako Joy Club) will celebrate its 2nd anniversary. Continuing to refine our approach, we remain committed to our storytelling activities for children aged 0-3, focusing primarily on the Higashikurume area. For the New Year, we have chosen the following scripture as our theme: **"Those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint."** (Isaiah 40:31).

Our upcoming volunteer sessions at the Higashikurume Central Library's "Hiyoko-kai" will be January 22nd (Mon) starting at 11:00a.m.



## SCRIPTURE OF THE MONTH

The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory,

John 1:14

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## Christian Magazine Summery-*Forward in Christ*

### Practicing Christian Freedom

In the 'Free in Christ' series, which will be featured in FIC's magazine starting in 2024, we will introduce various Bible outreach efforts by WELS congregations. **This series focuses on how individuals practice their faith and does not intend to make comparisons or judgments.** The freedom of Christian believers based on the New Testament differs from the regulated life of the Israelites in the Old Testament era, as it allows for diversity.



To practice Christian freedom, consideration for others and a selfless heart are necessary. Over the past few months, I have experienced this freedom in various congregations as a guest preacher and learned the importance of adapting to differences in dress customs. For example, at one venue, wearing a pastor's gown was required, while at another, a suit and tie were expected. This demonstrates the diversity in outreach activities and approaches to studying the Bible, with each congregation having its unique characteristics. **The message of the Bible cannot be conveyed through a single method; diversity is essential.** In the "Freedom in Christ" series, we will showcase the various efforts of churches and congregations, allowing readers to understand how Christian freedom can be practiced in different contexts.

James Pope | FIC Editor

Summary of *Forward In Christ (FIC)* article of January 2024 issue

### Never Take It for Granted

Religious freedom, a cornerstone of democratic nations, is a vital right we must uphold. This includes the freedom to preach and teach God's Word. This freedom is never something that we can take for granted.

In Finland, what began as a case of alleged ethnic agitation in 2021 transformed into a dispute over religious freedom. Finnish authorities accused Lutheran Pastor, Rev. Juhana Pohjola and Dr. Paivi Rasanen, a former member of the Finnish Parliament, of preaching the biblical teachings on marriage and sexuality. They were accused of inciting hatred towards the homosexual community through their teachings. In response, Lutheran church leaders submitted formal protests to the authorities. All charges were ultimately dismissed in 2023, though the threat of an appeal to the Supreme Court in 2024 remains.

Indeed, similar legal challenges against Christian pastors are unfolding not just in Finland but across various countries, including the UK and Canada. Additionally, some states in the United States have adopted "hate speech prevention laws," suggesting the potential for similar issues to arise. We need to adopt a mindset that upholds the freedom of religion, compelling us to speak Biblical truths, as stated in Acts 4:20, **"As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."**

Mark G. Schroeder | WELS President

Summary of *Forward Forward In Christ (FIC)* article of January 2024 issue

### Hymn of the Season

#### *Jesus! Name of Wondrous Love - CW 76 (CW 496 in 2021version)*

- |   |  |  |
|---|--|--|
| 1 Jesus! Name of wondrous love,<br>Name all other names above,<br>Unto which must ev'ry knee<br>Bow in deep humility. | 3 Jesus! Name of priceless worth<br>To the fallen here on earth<br>For the promise that it gave,<br>"Jesus shall his people save."   | 5 Jesus! Name of wondrous<br>love,<br>Human name of God above;<br>Pleading only this, we too,<br>Flee, O God, in faith to you. |
| 2 Jesus! Name decreed of old,<br>To the maiden mother told,<br>Kneeling in her lowly cell,<br>By the angel Gabriel.   | 4 Jesus! Only name that's giv'n<br>Under all the mighty heav'n<br>Whereby all, to sin enslaved<br>Burst their fetters and are saved. |  |