

The Sixth Japan Congress on Evangelism

Re-VISION 2016 in KOBE

【OVERVIEW】

Dates: September 27 (Tue.) - 30 (Fri.), 2016

Place: Kobe Convention Center (Kobe City, Hyogo Prefecture)

Host: Executive Committee, the Sixth Japan Congress on Evangelism (JCE6)

Main Speaker: Dr. Christopher Wright

【THEME】


Re-VISION Toward Regeneration
～ The Gospel, the World, and Opportunities ～


As redeemed people of our Lord Jesus Christ, we serve each other and share the gospel with joy. The Lord forgives us, revives us, and uses us as his vessels.

We are about to remember a few significant anniversaries in Japan: the 20th anniversary of the Great Kansai Earthquake on January 17, 2015, and the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II follows in late summer. On March 11, 2016, we will celebrate the fifth anniversary of the Great East Japan Earthquake, and in the same year, the 170th anniversary of Protestant missions in Japan¹. In 2017, the Lutheran Reformation will mark its 500th year. At this historic juncture, let us gather together as a people rooted in faith through the Holy Scriptures to take a fresh look at the magnificence of the gospel, to reexamine who we are in historical and global context, and to examine the opportunities ahead.

¹ Regarding 2016 as the 170th year of the Protestant missions in Japan, please see p. 32 of *The Sapporo Declaration: Challenges Facing the Church in the 21st Century* (札幌宣言-21世紀における教会のチャレンジ).

As messenger of the gospel of reconciliation, the Church endeavors to develop wider and deeper mission cooperation in an age of crisis. Sometimes we get tired and discouraged. We may feel troubled and uncertain. To evaluate our missional efforts to date, we need to look at the realities with honesty and patience. Let us also perform a thorough review of all the good things God has generously given us, i.e., our talents, ministry opportunities, cooperative relationships, and varied missional visions.

As we gather in Kobe to focus on the mid- to long-range outlook of Japan, Asia, and the world, let us apply a brush to the canvas of our missional dreams and launch out toward JCE7 in 2023.

Re-VISION 2016 in KOBE will be an opportunity for us to be renewed in the Lord and to engage in renewed mission with renewed partnerships. Let us gather together, share our stories, and go forth together with the Lord! We hear the sound of marching footsteps. We invite you to join the journey and the conversation.

Then Elisha prayed, and said, “O LORD, I pray thee, open his eyes that he may see.” So the LORD opened the eyes of the young man, and he saw; and behold, the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha. 2 Kings 6:17 RSV

【BASIC CONCEPTS】

The Sixth Japan Congress on Evangelism (JCE6) will convene in Kobe in September 2016, the 170th anniversary of Protestant missions in Japan. Early in the history of the JCE, belief in the Bible was reaffirmed as one of the foundational distinctives of evangelical Christians. The theme of JCE4 was *The Gospel of Reconciliation*, and the Church was identified as the messenger of reconciliation. JCE5 explored wider and deeper *Mission Cooperation*. JCE6 will review past accomplishments and present efforts in mission cooperation, facilitating more concrete collaboration and partnerships as it looks ahead to JCE7 in 2023.

Why Kobe and Why Now?

Standing on our belief in the Bible and the catholicity of the Church, we will gather to prepare better systems and environments for mission cooperation among local churches, denominations, and mission organizations. We will also aim to facilitate fellowship and networks that work effectively, in order for collaborative mission efforts to yield a great harvest.

- Following the Great East Japan Earthquake on March 11, 2011, the Church in Japan has been working to reconfirm the core message of the gospel and to revise mission strategies. Among local churches, new initiatives of cooperation are being developed. JCE6 will affirm our mission of sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ—who is our hope in an age of crisis—and will work to ensure that our mission is embraced by the congress participants.

- JCE6 will offer opportunities to get to know current ministries, share ministry information and challenges, and to interact with each other. It is our hope that JCE6 participants will find new areas of cooperation and will build stronger partnerships.
- JCE6 will serve mission laborers through encouragement, in helping to deepen mutual fellowship in Christ, and in activating networks. In doing so, we hope to pass on a legacy of missional vision and ministry expertise to the next generation.
- The city of Kobe is one of the great contributors to the early history of the Japanese Church. Ever since the Great Hanshin Earthquake of 1995, the city has been on a journey of restoration. As we gather and remember the unique history of this international city, JCE6 will offer prayers of blessing for mission endeavors in this metropolis, as well as each region of Japan and the world.

What Do We Hope to Achieve?

In order to achieve the above objectives, we invite participants to gather together to hear from God's Word, to pray, to listen to each other's respective stories, and to take time to bear each other's burdens. Furthermore, we will encourage participants to develop fresh cooperative initiatives with concrete goals, and then send them back to their respective fields with shared ownership of milestones to reach by JCE7.

- Each participant will be assigned to a table group for the duration of JCE6, so that they will be engaged in the congress with a sense of ownership, and will have opportunities for enjoying fellowship and developing new friendships.
- Keeping in mind the purpose of holding JCE every seven years, JCE6 will ensure that goals toward JCE7 will be set, and that expectations for JCE7 will be embraced by all participants. From initiatives of mission cooperation, to local mission projects, to efforts at the local church level, denominational level, mission organization level, and each Christian's personal life, JCE6 will honor and appreciate past endeavors. JCE6 will provide participants with opportunities to share the specifics of their future plans and current engagements.
- Throughout the course of JCE6, we will value people's growth, the passing of leadership batons to the next generation, the talents of youth, women, and lay people, and the nurturing of closer relationships.
- JCE6 will pray for, study about, and work with local churches in Kobe, the host city, so that JCE6 will leave behind concrete blessings for the city of Kobe and its churches.