

ESAKIS IN OSAKA

April 16-17 Coach Training



Above is the cover of the 60-page coach's manual that I am translating. **Praise** God that eight have agreed to come to the two-day training. **Pray** that the time would be encouraging and fruitful.

January 1st Earthquake

We felt the earthquake: 15,000 people were evacuated and 250 have been killed or missing. It happened at 4:10 PM. Prior to that, most of the nation prayed at Shinto shrines for "good health" and "prosperity." As one woman put it, "I don't understand why we had a disaster on that day."

Even in tragedy, we can ask, "If prayer is to gods, who are physical forces and part of the natural world, as Japanese believe, but not greater than those things, can prayer prevent an earthquake?" Isn't that belief inconsistent? "The Biblical view is that God is both in the world—we cannot escape his care and love—and transcendent—outside of our universe and experience. We cannot approach him; only through Christ." *Biblical Critical Theory*, by Christopher Watkin



New Years in Japan

Our daughters, Hana (36) and Mae (33) visited Japan for the first time in four years with Hana's husband Sam, and oldest grandchild, Eisuke (4 1/2). We praise God that it was such a wonderful time, and that we were able to meet with, Asako, 93, in her Gifu nursing home.



Above is a photo of Asako, from 2017. She is in the middle of Midori, right, and her daughter, Sachi. We aren't sure how we first met these women but we invited them to a Bible study at our home. They came for two years, were baptized and joined a church. They moved back to Tokyo in the pandemic and we lost touch. New Years greeting cards are sent annually, but by custom, we send a different card if someone has died. This year we sent a card about Hiroshi's death. Midori wrote back to us: "Thank you for news of your brother's passing to heaven. We are grateful that we could meet you and Marcia in Osaka and that we could be led to heaven and God." Her note reminded us that even short and seemingly chance encounters are part of God's bigger story.