

Vol.XV #2

June, 2001

NSKK NEWSLETTER

NIPPON SEI KO KAI Provincial Office

65 Yarai-cho, Shinjuku-ku,

Tokyo 162-0805 JAPAN Fax +81-3-5228-3175

Editor : E. Hajime Suzuki

Tel. +81-3-5228-3171

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

For over a decade, our society of Japan has been suffering from a number of difficulties, such as economic depression, lack of political ingenuity, destruction of social order, increasing unemployment due to the restructuring of enterprises, and the decline of educational functions in both school and family. The new millennium has started in such an atmosphere that hardly anyone could have bright prospects in the future. As is said in an old Japanese saying, "Where honor ceases, knowledge decreases". Economic destruction may cause devastation of the spirit.

Though we have been spending our days with such a gloomy feeling, I did come across a remarkable book that seemed to me to be greatly encouraging for us. The book, "The Work of a Counselor", written by Dr. Laura-Lynn McBain, a member of Anglican Diocese of New Westminster, British Columbia, Canada, was published on 16 February 2001 by the Bishop Williams Memorial Fund.

Bishop Williams Memorial Fund was set up by Anglican-related schools, including Rikkyo School (St. Paul's University and its attached schools), in collaboration with NSKK, commemorating the founder of NSKK and Rikkyo School, The Rt. Rev. Channing Moore Williams. That Fund has invited several prominent academics throughout the Anglican Communion as lecturers of its Memorial Lectureship since 1979. The main objective of the Lectureship is to give Japanese people opportunities to think about and discuss various contemporary issues which have to do with the relationship between society and the church.

Dr. Laura-Lynne McBain (Education in Counselling Psychology) was invited as the 10th Bishop Williams Memorial Lecturer. She spoke on the following three themes at various times and places in Japan as well as in Anglican-related institutions and schools:

1. “Psychosocial Support for People In Psychological Distress”
2. “Violence Against Women: Acknowledging and Caring for Survivors of Domestic Violence”
3. “Why I Chose to be a Counsellor – The History of My Self-Formation as a Counsellor.”

Dr. McBain explained that people living in the present time are vulnerable to a number of stresses (for example, addiction, conflicts in the family, unemployment, domestic violence, financial difficulty, etc.), and highlighted supporting programs, showing us concrete examples of how schools, neighbourhoods, workplaces, and church communities can be sources of community support to recover from mental disorders. Her lecture was very impressive to all the audiences. She addressed her own experiences as a counsellor; how she managed the severe spiritual trauma caused by the rapid globalization that emerged in 1990's and the subsequent restructuring of enterprises in the United States and Canadian society.

Today, we are facing the same kind of problems, and Dr. McBain has suggested a possible way to reduce spiritual trauma through her work as a counsellor. I am very grateful for her lecture, which I hope will continue to encourage us.

E. Hajime Suzuki

What NSKK (Nippon Sei Ko Kai) needs to achieve to reform its organization

At the 52nd General (Regular) Synod which met in May 2000, NSKK approved a resolution to reform its Provincial structure, and it asked six committees mainly relating to Social Justice issues to review their own present state and to submit new structures to serve NSKK from the aspect of social justice.

The six Committees - Student & Youth Movement, Emperor & Yasukuni Shrine, Discrimination against Buraku(a minority similar to an outcaste group), Justice and Peace, Japan-South Korea, and Continuing Education - have met frequently with the General Secretary and the Mission Secretary of the Provincial Office to implement the task given by the General Synod. Those six Committees were established at the previous General Synod mainly to meet challenges given by society from time to time, by representing them and providing feedback to NSKK. At a certain point, each of these committees began to obtain a common understanding on the responsibilities which they hold and on the future mission work of NSKK, through occasional common actions of these committees within and outside of our Church.

As a result of this common understanding, the six committees facilitated the Mission Consultation in 1995 which produced the declaration of war responsibility of NSKK and the apology to all of the war victims of WWII. The declaration included NSKK's decision to participate in the mission of God (Missio Dei) from now on as the Church in metanoia (repentance). It is our common understanding that NSKK should be transformed according to the spirit of metanoia advocated in the declaration. Based on the Declaration in the 1995 Mission Conference, the following five points were approved as the new orientation of the mission of NSKK.

- (a) To share the good news of Christ with those who suffer from discrimination and oppression in the world.
- (b) To baptize those who believe in the good news of Christ and grow together as part of the mission of God (Missio Dei).
- (c) To respond to the needs of those who suffer from discrimination or oppression in the world.
- (d) To transform unjust social structures and pursue justice and peace.
- (e) To be responsible for the preservation of all creatures and to support all life on the earth.

This statement as a part of Declaration of 1995 Mission Consultation shares the same features as the current mission statement of the Anglican Communion.

Following the direction of this widely acknowledged mission statement, the team

assigned the task to transform the structure has been working very hard. I do believe that the new structure will be achieved and NSKK will carry out its mission extremely vividly as the channel of God's Work and His Peace.

Please pray for our ministry to find the relevant structure.

The Rev. Naoki Kimura
Secretary, Mission and Ministry

“We will have to go to the well, otherwise.....”

–Towards the unity of the Korean Peninsular –

I used to engage in missionary work in Songsan Church in Kangwha Island located in the north-western end of the Korean Peninsula. This area is under military control, and not only the inhabitants but also anyone who enters or goes out from this area must pass through a check-point. If any spy activity is revealed, precautions become more stringent than ever, and the voice of the broadcasting from North Korea to the South can be heard coming on the wind. Half a century has elapsed since the War, but the deep war-scar has still remained on this area, which sharply reminds us of the real nature of the separation.

In summer 1997, commemorating the “Korean War Memorial Day” in this situation, the Anglican priests taking the lead, “Kangwha Religious Conference” was organized and celebrated the “June 25 Korean War Memorial Service”. At the same time, “Save the North Korean Hungry Children Fund” was collected. It must be mentioned that although it was called a religious conference, not all the religious figures could attend, mainly due to the time limitation and probably also due to the political situation which may have distracted the mind of concerned people. Nevertheless, going out to the street or visiting the shopping district, those who actively participated in the events tried hard to raise a campaign for funds to save those starved children. There were pros and cons concerning their action: some people encouraged and supported them, and some ignored or disapproved of their conduct. Some disapproved because of their beliefs, but above all things, the opponents claimed that even if they had collected money and sent it to the

authorities, the money would probably be used for military affairs. Among the Anglicans, there were some who could not participate in the event because they are in government service or because of a certain political atmosphere in their district. But we were grateful that many Anglicans followed us, saying that an event conducted by Christian priests could be relied on. Although the event was not large scale, it has provided us with a lot of things to learn.

What we have to overcome in the first place is “the consciousness of separation” between South and North Korea, which is firmly retained in the inner mind of people in both countries. For example, we can see the situation in which a humane approach to seriously starved children is blocked. Under these circumstances, the first thing we have to do is to ease the military tension; what we have to change is the South to North relationship and the current political situation in which military expenditure cannot be reduced even if the authorities are well aware of the starvation of the general public. After the Eastern European countries and USSR were in upheaval, while North Korea seemingly has undertaken open diplomatic intercourse, they have reinforced armaments. This suggests that North Korea seems to take preventive measures against diplomatic isolation. The important thing is to change the base of their policy. Sightseeing tours to Kumgang-san (Diamond Mountain) have started; reunion of separated families has been achieved several times. However, it is absolutely necessary to perform a radical turnabout from military rivalry and a hostile relationship to mutual recognition and peaceful coexistence, and the establishment of a good-will relationship between the South and North countries so that they will be able to exchange visits more freely. In order to accomplish this goal, it is necessary to develop multiform and active exchanges using not only the political base but also the civil base, and the religious leaders should take the central role to achieve this goal.

Recently, a film, “Shuri”, successfully achieved a record audience of over one million in Japan and was awarded the title of best film of the year, while in Korea “The Titanic” obtained the highest record in Korean film history. However, I really think that the Production Prize should have been given to “The Reality of the Separation of South-North Korea”; also there is a film, “Joint Security Area”, which drew the audience’s attention and also involved the theme of South-North separation. Thus there

are films on the subject of South-North separation which have achieved success in the realm of public entertainment, and this may be the result of a commercially studied effect. I am sure, however, that this is a phenomenon which shows the changing Korean society and expresses the public desire to overcome the wall of the South-North divide, using the media of films.

The change must be started from South Korea to make the door of North Korea open. Æsop's fable about a traveller tells us that the tightly closed door could be opened not by the cold strong wind but by the warm, sweet-scented wind. The current Korean government is dealing with the South-North relationship based on Æsop's way. Militant missionary theories that Christ's teaching must be propagated to North Korea where the Word of God has yet to be extended cannot be applied to realise the complete unity of South and North Korea. On the contrary, missionary theories can be utilized as an extended illustration of the process of the recovery of lost territory or of unity by amalgamation. It was Jesus who met a Samaritan woman by the well and asked for a drink of water. Likewise, we will have to go and stand by the well.

Rev. Stephen Sikyung-Yoo

(Anglican Church of Korea)

Chaplain, All Saints' Chapel, Rikkyo Gakuin, Tokyo

Ecumenical corroboration to facilitate an International Tribunal

As many of you may remember, the 49th NSKK general synod (1996) resolved the Declaration of Responsibility for World War II: we confessed and apologized for our sin during and after the war to all the war victims and survivors. We determined that NSKK should be an instrument of peace. Since then, our church has been challenged in various aspects of society.

The Women's International War Crimes Tribunal on Japan's Military Sexual Slavery held in Tokyo in Dec. 2000 was one of the greatest concerns of conscientious Christians, and many of them, especially the ecumenical women, were involved with the whole process. The late emperor was judged guilty and the Japanese Government was also concluded to

be legally responsible. The formal decision is still in process. Although the tribunal was broadly known and highly evaluated in the international world, yet the Japanese government and the most of the media ignored it. The tribunal was meant to be a starting point for genuine reconciliation.

Our present crucial issue is about junior high school textbooks on history and social studies. On April 4th, the Ministry of Education, Science, and Technology approved the controversial textbooks produced by The Society for History Textbook Reform, an institution, as we understand it, which distorts the historical facts. On April 11th, a member of Korean Diet, Mr. Kim Yon Jun started a six-day hunger strike in front of the Diet Building of Japan. Since then, strong objection was has been voiced and protest actions were taken against the government by citizens including many Christians. The general secretary and the director of mission of NSKK sent a letter to all churches to support the movement in affirming the Declaration of Responsibility of War.

National Christian Council (NCCJ) is calling “The International Asian Solidarity Conference on Textbook Issues in Japan & Prohibit the Use of Distorted History Textbooks!” in early June. We ask all the friends of the Anglican Community to pray for us, who are challenged to work towards the implementation of our resolution.

Junko Matsuura