

NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

NIPPON SEI KO KAI Provincial Office

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Elected as the Primate of NSKK : The Rt. Rev. James Toru Uno

Dear Sisters and Brothers united in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord,

At the 53rd Regular General Synod of Nippon Sei Ko Kai, I was elected as the Primate. I honestly was and am still very much embarrassed by the result of the election. Even when I was elected as the Bishop of Northern Kanto Diocese of NSKK, I was quite puzzled and had a doubt about why such an incompetent like me should have been elected. And again, thinking of the heavy responsibility of the Primate, I recollected the same feeling as I had before.

But at the same time, it reminded me of the passages of the Calling to Moses from God related in Exodus. "Come, now; I will send you to Pharaoh and you shall bring my people Israel out of Egypt." God ordered Moses to rescue the Israelites who had been brutally treated by the Egyptians and had been crying out for help to be rescued. To this order of God, Moses answered Him, "But who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" Moses thought he had to rescue the Israelites on his own responsibility and he expressed himself as a powerless person and said, "Who am I?"

For his reply God spoke to Moses, "I am with you. This shall be proof that it is I who have sent you." Certainly, God tried to persuade Moses firmly to participate in His work.

Through the passages of the Calling from God to Moses, I noticed that the mission given to me as the Primate mean me to participate in God's work. I would like to listen humbly to God's will and words and to serve people. I believe God will guide me always and make me fulfill my responsibility as the Primate from now on. I sincerely would like to ask all the sisters and brothers in Christ in every diocese throughout Japan to support me in carrying out my work given by God.

J.T.U.

From new general secretary

Rev. Laurence Yutaka Minabe

When I was young, I had experience of the seafarers' mission and as a college chaplain, and I can say I was an active young priest. But in these past twenty years, forgetting English and not reading difficult theological books, I have been enjoying a nice and quiet parish work. Of course, there have been striking experiences of seeing God working in us. But taken as a whole, my life ranged within a rather limited number people and area. Having been appointed to the staff of the provincial office, for the first time in my life I bought a season ticket and started to travel by rail between home and the office. It is nice for me to ride on the train without buying a ticket! The train is full of passengers, each bearing a heavy life. Some may be thinking of the World Cup or baseball, but others may be thinking of their loving family or worried about them; others may be working hard and tired. Among them, there may be our parish treasurer who is donating his pocket money to cover the shortfall of the parish budget. Although their lives may not be glamorous, they are living with all their might. Work at the provincial office seems very busy and hard. We have many meetings. We have a lot of correspondence from overseas. When we think of the work of the Church, we have to be concerned about political and economical problems. I feel as if I have been thrown into the very wide world. I am recalling my experience working among seafarers. Discrimination, exploitation, danger, human relationships within the closed community on board ship, and life isolated from the family. We can find the same problems in every hidden corner of our society. The Church, all together, has to pray and work. I think that Provincial Office exists to serve this work of the Church. The work here is not only desk work. I am thinking of the sick, the aged, the children of the parish whom I left without a chance to say good-bye. I sincerely wish to represent their prayer and concerns. I am starting a completely new job now, and I have to learn many things from the very beginning. I hope and trust that you will help me in many ways, this simple parish priest.

Discussions and Resolutions at the 53rd General Synod of NSKK

The 53rd General Synod of NSKK was held at the NSKK Center (St. Barnabas' Church in Tokyo) for 3 days from 28th to 30th May 2002. The Regular General Synod is held every 2 years and is the highest legislative body of NSKK, consisting of 11 Bishops and 44 clergy and lay delegates from the 11 dioceses. The Synod was chaired by Bishop Jun'ichiro Furumoto, the Primate of NSKK, co-chaired by Bishop Mutsuji Muto, and, Rev. Nobuaki Suzuki (North Kanto Diocese) played the role of chief secretary.

In the Opening speech, Bishop Furumoto pointed out several important issues to be discussed during the Synod such as reform of NSKK's provincial structure, the trial version of the revised hymn book, the fund for development co-operation in heavily indebted countries, and the resolutions raised at the House of Bishops. At the same time

he expressed his appreciation to Rev. Isamu Koshiishi (North Kanto Diocese) who served in the NSKK Provincial Office for five years as General Secretary of NSKK.

The Synod received reports from the House of Bishops (reporter: The Rt. Rev. M. Uematsu, Secretary of the House of Bishops), the Executive Committee (reporter: Mr. M. Yamada, Secretary of the Executive Committee), General Secretary of NSKK (Rev. I. Koshiishi, General Secretary of the Provincial Office), the Ecumenism Committee (Bishop Jintaro Ueda), Central Committee on Theological Education (Bishop Shoji Tani), the Secretary of the Missionary Committee (Rev. Naoki Kimura and others), and the Study Group on problems concerning Human Rights. Following the reports, presentations were made by 14 committees on various problems involving review on the current Prayer Book, the system of document storage, the general audit, theology and doctrine, worship, laws and regulations of NSKK, pensions, the fund for construction loans, and ordination of female priests; action reports on the revision of hymns, the educational fund for children of deceased priests, the executive committee on the post-Hanshin Awaji earthquake reconstruction fund, profitable businesses, and the Bishop Williams Memorial Fund.

On the 2nd and 3rd days of the Synod, various proposals were deliberated. Among the 43 proposals, major topics were as follows: The common Anglican-Roman Catholic Lord's Prayer, which has already been given a trial, was confirmed; the Table of Daily Lessons according to the divisions by chapters and paragraphs of The Common Bible Translation was drafted and passed; and a proposal for collaborative work between Nihon Sei Ko Kai and the Japanese Lutheran Church was approved.

With the proposed reorganization of the current NSKK structure, several committees were carefully deliberated as to whether they should be maintained, revised or abolished. As a result of the deliberation, it was decided that some committees were to be abolished and some were considered for revision. A new conception was the agreement to establish a Justice and Peace Committee and a Youth Committee.

“Partial change in the election procedure for the delegates of NSKK General Synod for the period of 4 years only” (Resolution No.13) was rejected. The objective of this resolution was to change the current voting procedure for delegates in order to include one each of male and female lay delegates for the General Synod so that more female delegates will be able to participate in the General Synod. However, a motion relating to this resolution, “Female participation in the decision-making body is to be deliberated and every effort should be made to attain this objective” was proposed and approved. This resolution recommends that each diocese of NSKK consider appropriate measures to include more women as members of vestry committees, lay delegates for each diocese, Executive Committee members, and lay delegates for the General Synod, and accordingly put these measures into practice. Each diocese should report the outcome of their effort at the next General Synod.

Other resolutions which have passed the Synod were: the resolution to oppose the Emergency and Contingency Registration bill, and the resolution to protest the visit to the Yasukuni Shrine for worship officially made by the Japanese Prime Minister Koizumi.

In the present General Synod, The Rt. Rev. Toru Uno, Bishop of North Kanto Diocese, was elected and installed as Primate of NSKK and Rev. Yutaka Minabe, (Yokohama Diocese) was appointed as General Secretary. In addition, the Rt. Rev. Jintaro Ueda (Bishop of Tokyo Diocese), the Rt. Rev. Toshiaki Mori (Bishop of Chubu Diocese), Rev. Masakatsu Seki (Tokyo Diocese), Rev. Masayuki Ohtomo (Hokkaido Diocese), Rev. Koichi Uraji (Kyoto Diocese), Mr. Masuo Yamada (Tokyo Diocese), Mr. Kei Ikezumi (Chubu Diocese), and Mr. Noboru Kuraishi (Yokohama Diocese) were appointed as members of the Executive Committee. The next General synod will be held in 2004.

Hajime Suzuki, Editor-in-Chief

Anglican Women Breaking the Silence in South Africa

Attending the Anglican Women's Conference of South Africa

The general secretary of NSKK received a letter dated Feb 7th 2002, from the Most Rev. N.W.H. Ndungane of Cape Town, requesting financial support to hold the above conference. Accepting the request, NSKK sent ¥1,000,000 from the fund for heavy debtor nations. In addition to the financial support, Ms. Etsuko Maruyama, the liaison director of NSKK and myself were sent to the conference to deepen inter-personnel exchange. For me it was a timely opportunity to learn a lot, for I have been assigned as a member of the Justice and Peace Committee of NSKK since this year to cope with gender issues, which is a new subject for our church.

The women's conference was held after three years preparation as the first step in building a supporting network among the women in the Church of the Province of Southern Africa (CPSA). It is also called the "Archbishop's Baby" because in 1997, it started from the fact that the Archbishop of CPSA invited the leaders of women's groups for discussion, to look into the possibility of holding the conference.

African women are really vulnerable in circumstances where their dignity can easily be harmed because of poverty. Half of the church members are women, who are at the same time often victims of rape, domestic violence, and discrimination at the work place. CPSA, as a church in pilgrimage seeking unity, had recognized that women should make a chance to break their silence, and thus the conference was being held. They thought that the most productive and efficient measure was to listen to the voices of women and encourage their full growth for the reformation of the church and society. Along with the conference, the tenth anniversary service for the ordination of women to

the priesthood. was celebrated The preparation and administration for the conference was carried out by the executive committee consisting of many women clergy and laity. The aims of the conference were:

- 1) To share women's experience: experiences of limited possibility and spirituality.
- 2) To clarify women's identity.
- 3) To cultivate the power to understand social problems and issues, so that women could cope with them.
- 4) To celebrate the tenth anniversary of ordination of women to the priesthood in CPSA.

The conference took place at a Lutheran institution, Kempton Park Center, close to Johannesburg International Airport, from May 12th to 16th. 140 participants came from 7 nations out of 19 provinces of CPSA, consisting of black, white and so called 'colored' people. English was the basic language but 14 languages were used and participants' ages ranged from the twenties to the eighties. The conference had abundant diversity. The delegates of the province were basically 6 women, elected from the Mother's Union, the African Women's Federation, women clergy, women students, young women's groups, and community leaders. They were encouraged to respect the differences of each other's culture, situation, language, and opinion. The worship and discussion were carefully devised and some women priests worked as counselors during the conference.

All sorts of programs were carried out under the theme of "Making progress to empower women in CPSA and build solidarity, changing society and the church to realize equality between men and women". At night we enjoyed songs, dances and dramas that each province provided with pride. It was a joyous occasion for fellowship.

In South Africa, rape against women and children has been increasing drastically in recent years which has caused serious problems of HIV/AIDS (an estimated 8% of the population are infected). That was why the participants argued so earnestly for breaking their silence and raising their voices as women in church, so as to change the situation. It was resolved that each diocese set up a gender desk to involve with the issues positively and continuously in closer co-operation in the province. On the 16th, the tenth anniversary service for the ordination of women to the priesthood was celebrated.

This conference was brought about by the advice and endorsement of a male clergyman, the Archbishop. It was a form of support for women that was done by the church with a precise vision. I would very much expect this kind of thing to happen in NSKK. The gender issue is a subject concerning men and women, and I believe men's understanding and support for women is essential. In the future, considering women's situation in Japanese society and the church, I would like to have a women's conference in NSKK, and build a network to empower women.

Mei Miki, Justice and Peace Committee member

