

NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

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The Resolution of General Synod, 2014

– Issues Facing NSKK –

The Most Rev. Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu
Primate and Chairperson of the General Synod

The 61st (Regular) General Synod of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai(NSKK) was held from 27th to 29th May 2014 at Ushigome Sei Ko Kai, St. Barnabas' Church in the Tokyo Diocese. In the opening speech of the General Synod, I recollected the last two-year period of the General Synod, and took up some important points which the NSKK has confronted.

I have made a review of our current activities as well as our standpoints. In the following, I am going to mention several resolutions which were considered during the present General Synod.

- (1) Three years and two months have passed since the Great East Japan Earthquake. The NSKK's "Let's Walk Together!" project finished its original two-year working period last May (in August in the Kamaishi Area). This means that the original activities have been more or less completed.

The present General Synod was the first one held after completion of the project, at which many relevant reports were presented and the whole results were reassessed.

I must mention that during the period since the earthquake, the NSKK has "walked together" with the victims, praying, supporting or working in union with them. This is an event that deserves special mention in the history of the NSKK. This action was highly regarded in the General Synod, and the whole Synod expressed sincere gratitude to those who have participated in the Project.

However, it can hardly be said that reconstruction has progressed favorably.

Damage caused by the explosion of the Tokyo Electric Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant is still ongoing. No process to resolve the nuclear power accident has been undertaken. Such is the present state of the aftermath of the disaster.

Since May, 2014, the NSKK has continued its support, organizing a new project: “Let’s Walk Together, Part II”. In this regard, the NSKK has steadfastly maintained the “NSKK policy on electricity generated by nuclear power – Aiming at a world without nuclear power”, which was adopted by the last General Synod. In the present General Synod, we have reconfirmed our standpoint, that is, we should “walk together” with the victims.

- (2) In September 2012, the NSKK Mission Consultation was held by Hamanako Lake in Shizuoka Prefecture. On this occasion, a “Proposal of NSKK (ten-year Project on Mission and Pastoral Work)” was submitted. This proposal has been repeatedly discussed in the previous general meetings.

The present NSKK Mission Consultation was presented by a number of participants from all the dioceses in Japan. Now, one year and eight months have passed since then, and it is strictly required that every diocese and every church should earnestly take up and reconsider this Proposal.

- (3) The Anglican Prayer Book is a treasure of the NSKK, as part of the identity of the Anglican Church. Twenty three years have passed since the current Prayer Book was published. A newly revised Prayer Book is required as soon as possible but it will require a decade of work to make a full-scale revision. In the present General Synod, it was resolved that a Committee for preparation for the forthcoming revision of the Prayer Book should be established.
- (4) The “Eradication of Hate Crime (crimes of racial hatred)”; and the “Eradication of Hate Speech (expression of racial discrimination or expressions of anti-foreign feeling)” have been adopted unanimously. It can be said that this was one of the highlights of the present General Synod. We, who live in the Peace with Christ, must stand against those movements, that is, those which hurt human rights, threatening, negating or ignoring other people’s existence. The NSKK is required to take a role in establishing a society in which different races and cultures can live in harmony. We are required not only to firmly stand against these movements but also to actively participate in their eradication.

After the Synod, this statement was translated into Korean and English and sent to all the concerned and relevant organizations.

- (5) In the present Synod, there were a number of issues apart from the above, which were discussed and resolved. All these issues were as important as the above and none of them should be treated lightly. Due to limited space, it was not possible to write them all down. I am sure, however, that these issues will have a certain role in contributing to the NSKK’s progress

In the present General Synod, Rev. Shin-ichi Yahagi (Kyoto Diocese) was newly appointed as General Secretary of the NSKK Provincial Office.

Taking this opportunity, I would like to express my hearty thanks to the ex-General Secretary, Rev. Makito Aizawa (Yokohama Diocese) who served as General Secretary for three



Primate and Bishop of Hokkaido
NSKK Japan

periods to a total of six years. At the same time, I pray for the newly appointed General Secretary, Rev. Yahagi in his new duty. I also would like to pray that during the next General Synod, the NSKK will be led by the Holy Spirit in accomplishing the next step.

A MESSAGE FROM THE NEW GENERAL SECRETARY OF NSKK JAPAN

Rev. Jesse Shin-ichi Yahagi
General Secretary of NSKK
Provincial Office

Dear Members of the Anglican Communion

It is my honor to introduce myself. My name is Jesse Shin-ichi Yahagi. I was appointed as the General Secretary of NSKK Provincial Office at the 61st General Synod held in May 2014.

I graduated from Central Theological College (Tokyo) in 2002 after which I was received into Holy Orders and served as a minister to parish churches and as the director of nursery schools in the Kyoto Diocese. Concerning my Provincial work, I worked with the Youth Committee and served as Secretary in charge of Mission and Ministry for the Provincial Office. I am aware that I am a young priest, born in 1975, who lacks adequate experience. I was as perplexed as anyone when I was unexpectedly appointed to be the General Secretary. Now I believe it was an order from God so that I can acquire experience while serving - for we have fewer clergy to serve the number of churches here. I want to accomplish my job, though I will have less time for my favorite hobby- fishing. I need to resist the desire to go fishing and focus on my important work.

Now Japan faces many tasks. The task of nuclear energy, compliance with Japan's Peace Constitution, the situation in Okinawa and other places where military bases are located and the discrimination against foreigners in Japan. In the midst of these tasks, I think we should maintain the traditions that NSKK has established while simultaneously having the courage to make bold changes should circumstances change.

In keeping with our trusted position in society, we must, as an Anglican Communion province, endeavor to maintain and honor the great trust that has been placed in us.

Progress of our churches might be 5 to 10 years behind society in general, but I want to respond to problems and diverse needs appropriately and serve them with prayers.

The decrease of clergy and laypersons in Japan coupled with financial tightness are serious issues to address. Grappling with various social problems, and the reorganization of various committees of the Provincial Office are also necessary.

One of the most significant of our church missions is the dialogue between denominations; mutual understanding and communication between each parish church and the diocese are also valued. While we focus on improving the organization of the parishes and dioceses, we must remember to especially value each person. Each life should be our highest priority and should be shown sincere love and respect.

This year we celebrated the 30th anniversary of the mission partnership between the Anglican Church of Korea and the Anglican Church in Japan. As NSKK, we have the mission to promote justice, peace and life. We should work together with our Korean Anglican neighbors to send the message of peace to other countries in Asia and all over the world. By doing so, we will deepen our connections and learn from one another's diversities.

Using the partnership of churches within nations, we would be able to send the message of Peace to peoples and governments who are trapped in rightleaning politics and selfcentered mentalities.

I am just a novice and I am eager to hear your advice as I move forward. I learn more from experience than from sitting behind a desk. I am conscious that my role as the General Secretary of NSKK is not one of power. My desire is to serve all of you with humility and I look forward to learning from you as we serve together.



General Secretary of NSKK Japan

Major News of Nippon Sei Ko Kai

From 2013 to 2014

- March 11, 2013 The 2nd anniversary commemorative Holy Communion of the Great East Japan Earthquake was celebrated.
- March 21, 2013 The primate of NSKK attended the enthronement ceremony of the Archbishop of Canterbury.
- April 6, 2013 The Rt. Rev. Luke Ken-ichiro Muto (consecrated December 1st 2012) was installed as the 9th Bishop of Kyushu Diocese.
- April 16-22, 2013 The 2nd Worldwide Anglican Peace Conference was held in Okinawa.
- April 2013 “Special Project on the Issue of Nuclear Plants and Radiation” (NSKK No-Nuke Project) was launched.
- May 2013 The support project for the Great East Japan Earthquake, “Let’s Walk Together!” project was completed and transitioned to “Let’s Walk Together Part II” and “Daijini Tohoku” (literally, “Take care, Tohoku”) projects.
- October 28-30, 2013 The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Rev. Justin Welby, visited Japan.
- October 30-November 8, 2013 The Rev. Francis of Assisi Renta Nishihara attended the 10th Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC) in Busan, Korea.
- January 17, 2014 The 19th anniversary commemoration prayer for the Great Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake was observed.
- March 11, 2014 The 3rd anniversary commemoration prayer for the Great East Japan Earthquake was observed.
- May 27-29, 2014 The 61st (Regular) General Synod of the NSKK took place.
- May 29, 2014 The Rev. Jesse Shin-ichi Yahagi was appointed as General Secretary of the NSKK Provincial Office.
- September 7, 2014 The Rt. Rev. David Eisho Uehara was consecrated as the 4th bishop of Okinawa Diocese.
- September 15, 2014 The Rev. Andrew Haruhisa Iso was elected as the 8th bishop of Osaka Diocese. The consecration will be held on April 18th, 2015.
- October 20-23, 2014 The memorial conference of the 30th Anniversary of the mission partnership between the Anglican Church of Korea and the Anglican Church in Japan was held at Cheju-Do, Korea.
- November 30, 2014 A joint worship service of three churches (Nippon Sei Ko Kai /Roman Catholic Church / Nippon Evangelical Lutheran Church) was held to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the Decree on Ecumenism.

(Selected by Mr. Egidio Hajime Suzuki, Secretary in charge of Communication, NSKK Provincial Office)

COMMUNIQUE OF THE 2ND WORLDWIDE ANGLICAN PEACE CONFERENCE

God, teach us to “seek peace and pursue it” (Psalm 34.14b)
“God shall judge between the nations, and shall decide for many people;
and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruning hooks;
nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:4)

THE TEXT

“Toward peace and reconciliation in East Asia” is the prayer and vision that brought into fellowship around 80 delegates from the Anglican/Episcopal Churches in Korea, Japan, the Philippines, Australia, Canada, the United States, the United Kingdom and Ireland for the 2nd Worldwide Anglican Peace Conference in Okinawa, Japan, from April 16-22 2013. This vision is based on the communique of the 1st Worldwide Anglican Peace Conference (TOPIK). It is also rooted in the Gospel of the Risen Christ when He appeared to His apostles and said “Peace be with you” (Jn. 20.19ff), sending them forth to follow His example and preach peace to those who are far off and to those who are near (Eph. 2:17). We have been inspired to live out our calling to “protect the life and dignity of all human beings” and of the Five Marks of Mission, especially our Christian task to “transform unjust structures of society” and to strive to preserve the “integrity of creation”.

THE CONTEXT

This Conference was convened jointly by the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK) and the Anglican Church of Korea. In his sermon at the opening service, The Most Rev. Nathaniel Uematsu, Primate of the NSKK, reminded us that to sow the seeds of peace involves the painstaking effort of letting go of “our own rights ... and try[ing] to protect the rights of others, or those who lack even basic rights”. We were also encouraged by The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori, Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church, who concluded her keynote address with the rallying words: “Peace and harmony in every part of the world depend on discovering our common humanity, our shared yearning for a meaningful place in this life, the hopes we have for our children and the world around us.” We were inspired as well by the message of The Most Rev. and Rt. Hon. Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, who underscored the urgency of peace in the Korean peninsula saying, “this Conference has come at the most needful time... May the initiatives you pursue contribute to the breaking down of enmities and to the establishment of a permanent peace on the Korean Peninsula.” He also conveyed solidarity with the NSKK as “you face the continuing anxiety of nuclear fallout and address the issues of nuclear power policies as well as questions around the military industry”.

We shared our stories. We heard the stories of the people of Okinawa and of the humanitarian assistance of TOPIK for the people of North Korea. We listened to the erudite thoughts of our resource speakers. What we heard and saw speaks of East Asia “groaning in travail” (Rom 8:22) hounded by the alarming threat of military escalation, the proliferation of destructive nuclear weapons, and the deadly effects of nuclear power generation. We noted the dangerous signs of our governments moving toward a war footing. We fear that a possible revision of Japan’s Peace Constitution would undermine stability in the region. We need only imagine the suffering of millions of people and the destruction of mother earth to declare our unequivocal opposition to war as a means of resolving disputes. Never again to war! We are

“not contending against flesh and blood, but against the principalities, powers, the world rulers of this present darkness, against the spiritual hosts of wickedness in the heavenly places” (Eph. 6:12).

At the same time, we also heard stories of, and saw vibrant hopes for, peace and reconciliation in the region. We commend the Anglican Church of Korea and its ministry for the peaceful reunification of the Korean peninsula and humanitarian assistance to North Koreans in need. We commend the response of the NSKK to the needs of those suffering in the areas devastated by the great earthquake and tsunami. We highly value the joint witness of the two Anglican Churches in this ministry. We recognize the unwavering faith and unbending spirit of the people of Okinawa as they long for a just and lasting peace. We celebrate the solidarity of the provinces of the Anglican Communion and their partnerships in supporting those who suffer.

OUR CALL TO ACTION

In Okinawa, our varied language and thought patterns only made us appreciate more profoundly our diversity in the Body of Christ and the gift of unity such diversity can bring. Thus, united in the name of Christ Our Peace, we urge the Anglican Communion:

1. To create an East-Asia Peace Network and strengthen the existing networks in the Communion to promote the sharing of stories of peace-making, information, and other resources for peace and reconciliation as we too hope to share the fuller details of this conference in the near future;
2. To continue support for, and to join in with, the initiative of the Anglican Church of Korea, “Towards Peace in Korea” (TOPIK), which is striving to promote dialogue with, and humanitarian assistance to, North Koreans;
3. To pray for, and walk in solidarity with, those whose voices are not heard due to structural marginalization and the “colonial” situation, especially the Okinawans, the people affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake and the meltdown of the nuclear power plants, the indigenous peoples of the Philippines and other countries;
4. To join our voices with the people of Okinawa in opposing the observance of April 28 (the day when Okinawa was formally cut off from the rest of Japan by the San Francisco Peace Treaty) as the day of “Japan’s Independence”, and in their quest for relief from the “inordinate burden” of the military bases on their island;
5. To continue holding conferences like this in the spirit of “bearing one another’s burdens” (Gal. 6:2) and to ensure the participation of young people and women so that their voices can also be heard;
6. To engage in common action to oppose military expansion, stop the further development of nuclear weapons, prevent the heightening of tensions among states and promote the spirit of Article 9 of the Japanese Constitution, which denies the right of belligerency of the state; and,
7. To pray for all victims of wars, and to find ways to “turn swords into plowshares and spears into pruning hooks” in East Asia, elsewhere in the region, and the world.

The Most Revd. Paul Keun Sang Kim, Presiding Bishop of the Anglican Church of Korea, preached in the closing Eucharist, “A hard journey toward peace lies before us. Today, as we face this long and hard journey, Jesus is telling us, ‘It is time to go.’ Now we must respond.” Bound by our common affection to one another, let us persevere in building communities of peace and justice and may the God of Peace grant us the grace to accomplish them. Amen.

Okinawa, Japan, April 22, 2013
Signed on behalf of the participants:

The 2nd Worldwide Anglican Peace Conference in Okinawa, 16 April 2013



Cathedral Of St. Peter and St. Paul, Mihara The Diocese of Okinawa, NSKK

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