

Easter Day, 2015.

## **A Message from the NSKK House of Bishops Concerning the 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the End of the Pacific War**

“I will give you as a light to the nations, that my salvation  
may reach to the end of the earth.” (Isaiah 49:6)

### **Introduction**

We send all our family members in the Nippon Sei Ko Kai and throughout the world the blessings of Easter and the peace of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The year 2015 marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the Second World War. While the war ended with the defeat of Japan, about 20 million people in several Asian/Pacific countries including Japan were victims. Pain and suffering brought by sacrifices and damage of this war have not yet healed even after 70 years. We especially bear in mind that our country has not been able to make reconciliation and peace with the countries we invaded.

In this year of the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war, we pray for those who were victims of this war and who are still feeling the effects of pain, suffering, and sorrow, and we reaffirm our commitment to the future peace of the world.

### **War Responsibility of Nippon Sei Ko Kai**

We now recall the NSKK Mission Consultation held in 1995. Under the theme of "Responsibility for History and Prospects for the 21st Century", we admitted our war responsibility; based on repentance and looking toward the 21st century, we determined to walk with those who were historically persecuted and victimized during the war and are still discriminated against, namely, Asian minorities including Koreans in Japan, Okinawan people, Ainu people, *Burakumin* (indigenous outcastes), handicapped people, and women.

Furthermore, at the NSKK 49th Regular General Synod held in the following year, 1996, we adopted the "Nippon Sei Ko Kai's Statement on War Responsibility" and all churches agreed to collectively share Nippon Sei Ko Kai's war responsibility, convey an apology in the name of Nippon Sei Ko Kai to the churches in the countries which Japan had invaded, and to start and continue a program in each diocese and parish to review the historical facts and to deepen our understanding of the Gospel.

We have strived to establish collaborative relationships with Asian churches, especially the Anglican Church of Korea and the Episcopal Church in the Philippines, and have committed to support the Okinawan struggle for peace and human rights. We reaffirm that peace and reconciliation in the entire East Asian area, including a peaceful reunion of North and South Korea and the establishment of a more peaceful Okinawa will continuously be important issues in the missionary work of Nippon Sei Ko Kai, and will continue our efforts to achieve these goals.

### **The Great East Japan Earthquake and the Mission Consultation 2012**

The Great Northeast Japan Earthquake of March 11<sup>th</sup>, 2011 and the disaster caused by the meltdown of Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear

Power Plant wreaked catastrophic damage on all who lived in the area. This event has also opened upon us serious questions about how we should live and how the church needs to stand. In September 2012, all these things led us to the NSKK Mission Consultation, under the theme of “Life: Unlimited Dignity -- Seeking a New Communal Way to Proclaim the Gospel”. There “the NSKK Proposal of Mission and Pastoral Care Over the Next 10 Years” was established.

This NSKK resolution states that “we will listen to the faint voices of the people who are depressed; we will speak out on behalf of those people who are not allowed to voice their fears in this broken world. We will continue revealing the blessings of God, that is, “delight in creation” to these people who are overwhelmingly deprived of hope. Even if we have weakened voices or offer only small prayers, we will still keep speaking”. We manifest and remember these things and will go forward.

### **Nippon Sei Ko Kai -- Our Way into the Future**

The Japanese political situation in recent years shows acceleration towards remilitarization, by means of passing the New State Secrecy Law, approving the use of the right of collective self-defense, and attempting to revise the Constitution, especially altering Article 9, which eternally renounces war. Such moves are exacerbating the problematic situation of maintaining U.S. military bases in Okinawa, the deterioration of Japan/Korea/China relations, and many other peace-threatening unbalanced situations.

Domestically, radioactive contamination is still a grave problem even though four years have passed since the explosion of the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant. Concomitantly, due to widening economic disparity, there are more and more people who struggle to cling even to the lowest living standards. Hate speech is also spreading so that the human rights of the victimized are violated more and more.

Internationally, civil wars and conflicts don't seem to reach an end.

Surrounded by these problems, we mark the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of World War II with our hearts and minds renewed by learning from the history and the Gospel of our Lord Jesus. We will let His Life shine in us, help break down dividing walls wherever we can, gather the separated into one, and walk as instruments of His Peace.

### **As a Symbol of Peace and an Instrument of Reconciliation**

Before His death on the cross, our Lord Christ prayed: “that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me and I in You; that they also may be one in Us”(John17:21). And after the Resurrection, He appeared in front of the disciples, sent the Holy Spirit, and ordered them to go forth to do the work of reconciliation, saying, “As the Father has sent me, so I send you”. (John 20: 21)

We are a small group within the whole of Japanese society. But we are one in the Lord Christ; we can all be “Symbols of Peace” as the community of respecting and blessing Life in our own areas by worshipping, serving and walking together.

As this year marks the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of the war, we remember that being one in Christ leads us to become “Symbols of Peace”. We will sincerely put into practice the things we discussed in the "NSKK Statement on War Responsibility" and “the NSKK Proposal of Mission and Pastoral Care for the Next 10 years”, and will declare to the people the reconciliation and peace given freely to us by our Lord Jesus Christ's death on the cross and His glorious resurrection.