

NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

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The Most Revd James Toru Uno
Primate Nippon Sei Ko Kai

August 15 Message of Peace

As Japan observe the 60th anniversary of its defeat and the end of the Second World War, the NSKK sent a "Vow of Peace" to the churches of the world.

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

The Peace of our Lord be with you all. This year marks the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II. In this important year, we wish to express our concerns about the recent situation in Japan, and also to express our determined desire for world peace.

On this day, sixty years ago, Japan accepted defeat in a war of aggression it had begun against other nations of the world. This defeat signaled the end of the path of imperialism and militarism which Japan had followed since the start of the Meiji Restoration in 1868. Throughout the unfolding history of modern Japan, we in the NSKK failed to stand up for the gospel of the boundless love of God for every human life as revealed in our Lord Jesus Christ, and lacked the courage to stand up in opposition to the war. Furthermore, we were not able to prevent the many forms of victimization nor the taking of life, either abroad or at home. A decade ago, both at the 1995 NSKK Mission Consultation and at the 49th General Synod the following year, we adopted a Statement on War Responsibility of Nippon Sei Ko Kai, in which we confessed these failures to God and to our neighbors. We in the NSKK resolved to be mindful of our call, as the people of God, to do justice, and to turn our ears, as an instrument of Christ's peace, to the pain of division and the cries of suffering of the world.

From this standpoint, as we survey the current situation in Japan, we find cause for great concern. Since the end of the Cold War, and especially since the 1991 Gulf War, a series of bills relating to Japan's defense policy have passed in parliament despite doubts about

their constitutionality. It is our sense that powerful forces are at work to change Japan from a country with a “Peace Constitution” into a nation which is once again capable of waging war. In fact, under the rubric of so-called “recovery support,” Japan’s Self-Defense Forces have been deployed to Iraq. Even the revision of the country’s “Peace Constitution” is on the agenda of some politicians.

Such shifts in Japan are taking place against the background of economic globalization being driven by the United States and other developed nations. Such globalization forces countries and individuals to make a stark choice between being strong and being weak. Nationalistic movements are gaining momentum in many countries under pressure to establish a place among the “strong” nations. This causes the further deepening of conflicts between nations. Moreover, within many societies, an aggressively competitive spirit is taking root which leads to a sharp distinction between “winners” and “losers” in those societies, and gives rise to various social ills. We are especially concerned about the profound effect of such trends on the spiritual and mental development of young people.

In Japan, we have come to understand the horror of war and immeasurable value of peace through the horrible experience of ground warfare in Okinawa and the continual hardship caused by the location of large American military bases there. We are also learning a great deal from our neighbor churches, with whom we share faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. In particular, we have strengthened ties with the churches in Asia. Fellowship with these churches enables us to more clearly perceive our past errors in Japan, and motivates us to discover ways of living together in Christ. With Christ, we seek to form relationships with the weak and marginalized in society, and through such relationships to build a society in which all people can live together and share one another’s joys and trials.

The 55th General Synod of the NSKK in 2004 resolved to oppose the revision of Article 9 of the Constitution, in which Japan renounces war and the use of military force. We wish all our fellow Christians to know that we are steadfast in our resistance to such revision of our “Peace Constitution.” Article 9 conforms with the mind of our Lord Jesus Christ, who said, “Put your sword back into its place; for all who take the sword will perish by the sword” (Matthew 26:52). All of us who belong to NSKK will join in prayer that we may all be made into peacemakers and receive the promised joy of our Lord.

NSKK Kobe Diocese held General Service on 9th August 2005 in the atomic-bombed city Hiroshima 60 years after the World War II

Chairman of the Executive Committee for Kobe Diocesan Service
Rev. Naoaki Kobayashi, Hiroshima Fukkatsu (Resurrection) Church

Seven years have passed since I have worked for a church in Hiroshima. Since then, I have been caught by a word “World Peace” deep in my mind. As I was urged to ponder over “world peace”, I organized the present diocesan service. Why do we have to conduct this service? As a chairman of the Executive Committee, I proposed the following three

objectives:

What had happened in Hiroshima 60 years ago?

What does the "Peace in Christ" mean for all the Christians at present ?

Remember all the victims of the atomic bombing, and say in our prayers that we would be able to become a "vessel of Peace of our Lord"

In order to achieve the above objectives, we proposed the following programs:

1. As an option, a study tour to Hiroshima Peace Park guided by volunteers from the Hiroshima Peace Group was planned. Also, two members of the Hiroshima Fukkatsu (Resurrection) Church who are the victims of the atomic bomb were invited to attest their experiences.

2. We invited Mr. Shin-ichiro Kurose, the ex-director of Hiroshima Junior and Senior Girls School, who is a leader of a Civic Movement for World Peace, and have studied about the civic movement for peace from him.

3. Kobe Diocesan Service and Eucharist were held presided by the Bishop of Kobe Diocese. In the service, we prayed for the souls of the victims of the atomic bombs, and also for those who are still suffering from the bombs in Hiroshima as well as in Nagasaki.

The Bishop of Kobe Diocese addressed the following message for peace, that is

"First of all prayers for building up true peace in Christ is what we all Christians should do. However, it is not appropriate to just say "May peace be realized" or "wars must be ultimately ended". As sinful human being, we must sincerely regret our sins; all the sins including insolence, prejudices, discrimination, jealousy, hatred, etc. have caused various conflicts, at the same time, these have injured ourselves as well as the others' feelings. This is the first step towards the true world peace. We know that each one of us has different view of life, different view of value or patriotic sentiment. Nevertheless, we will be able to be united in Christ. We all Christians are ordained to become a vessel which could produce Peace in Christ."

Holy Eucharist was shared by Bishop Uno of Osaka Diocese, Bishop Tani of Okinawa Diocese, Bishop Igarashi of Kyushu Diocese and Bishop Kouchi of Kyoto Diocese. After the service, I received an e-mail from a church member, which read as follows "I believe that those who attended the present service and events were awakened to a new significance of the fear of atomic bomb, and turned their steps homeward having kept the true value of peace in mind. I highly and respectfully appreciated it that the present Diocesan Service and events were well organized and conducted."

Attended by 220 members of the Kobe Diocese and other Dioceses, the offering of ¥181,488 was contributed to "The Aid for the Atomic Bomb Korean Victims in Hiroshima and in the North and South Korea".

After finishing all the schedules, I am convinced that the three objectives which were planned by the Executive Committee have fully accomplished. Whenever we say or hear the word "Peace of Lord", should the "Peace of Lord in this world be realized on the premise that there would be no war at all, it can only be accomplished by the facts that "Our Father's Will would have been done" (Matthew 18:14), and "The Kingdom of Heaven would have been realized" (Matthew 20:1~). Keeping these in my minds, I strongly feel that I must continuously consider what I can do in Hiroshima, while I say

the Lord I s Prayer day in and day out.

What I learned from [The Memorial service for those who suffered from The Atomic Bomb at Nagasaki]

Makie Hamao
Layperson of Fukuoka Church
Diocese of Kyushu

An atomic bomb was dropped on Japan during World War II. Nagasaki was annihilated by the atomic bomb on August 9, 1945. 60 years have passed since then.

The Memorial Service for Atomic Bomb Victims was held at Nagasaki Holy Trinity Church this year , as it has been done every year. About 40 people gathered. They were from the congregation of Holy Trinity and from 5 churches in our Diocese. I also joined this service.

A silence prayer was offered shortly before 11:02, the time the bomb was dropped. I closed my eyes and the sound of vehicles, the voices of people I s conversation and the chirring of cicadas in chorus all reached my ears. I felt that 60 years ago the people that had lived here also had heard all these sounds. Then, I heard an explosion over my head, as if the atomic bomb had exploded. It was the sound of a city siren ringing out to tell the time that the atomic bomb had dropped. The atomic bomb had dropped over everyone who lived here.

During the service, each name of a Christian atomic bomb victim was read. While I listened as these names were read one by one, I again felt deeply that there were daily lives of people under the atomic bomb.

After the service, we had a sharing time at the church hall. During the conversation, I looked upon the blue sky and imagined that the outside would be very hot compared to the comfortably air-conditioned room. This feeling between reality and imagination created a gap in my mind. I know there are many problems in Iraq or Palestine and more problems over the world, besides a large numbers of problems in Japan now. But how much do I know the reality. There is a great gap between my knowledge and reality. I took these problems seriously but I could not actually feel somebody else I s problem. I was irritated because of a great gap between my understanding and reality.

Attending the Service fo Atomic Bomb Victims in Nagasaki on August 9 gave me an opportunity to bring this gap into reality in my heart. I had driven all these problems away from my daily life.

The first step toward Peace is standing on another side and thinking about it. This ordinary action is exceedingly difficult. I should learn the strength that the congregation

of Nagasaki has. They have kept the Service every year for atomic victims and they have never forgotten the victims. [Never kill anyone] I was taught these words when I was a child. I want to be such a pure hearted adult and to keep saying these words forever.

The Sermon of the Presiding Bishop of ECUSA at Hiroshima

The Most Revd Frank T. Griswold, Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church of the United States (ECUSA), preached a sermon on peace and reconciliation during Sunday Eucharist on October 23 2005, as part of his visit to Hiroshima.

Readings: Exodus 22:21-27
I Thessalonians 2:1-8
Matthew 22:34-46

Brothers and sisters in Christ: On behalf of my wife Phoebe and my fellow travelers from the Episcopal Church in the United States, I greet you. I am deeply grateful to be with your primate and your bishop, and with all of you on this 23rd Sunday of Pentecost. This morning, I have been deeply touched by the experience of our visit to the Peace Park. Words are inadequate to express the depth of remorse and sadness, even desolation, I experience in seeing the devastation caused by this horrific event. Surely, the message must be that such a human disaster must never happen again.

With this message on my heart, I am comforted and challenged by the Gospel reading this morning. Jesus makes clear that the core of our faith lived out in the world is our call to love both our creator and our neighbor. The bombing of Hiroshima does a terrible dishonor to both. I am deeply grateful that you have maintained this perpetual reminder of what happened here and in Nagasaki. The memorial invites us never to forget. And as we in the Christian community are reminded of Christ's commandment of love, we are called to proclaim to the world there is another way.

In August I received a statement made by my brother primate, Bishop Uno, This was issued as a Message of Peace on August 15 as we observed the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II and the bombing of these two cities. I knew then that I must come to this place and be with you today so that we might join hands as two peoples, but of one faith and community, to proclaim that war and violence keep us from carrying out the great commandment to love one another. I am so grateful that you would have us here today, and that your bishop and primate would be with us also. I reach out and embrace you with the joy that comes from knowing we are sisters and brothers of one family in Christ.

Our two churches, here in Japan and the United States, are on a journey of reconciliation. In 1994, on the eve of the 50th anniversary of the end of the war our General Convention which is the legislative body of the Episcopal Church, USA called for "liturgical expressions of sorrow and repentance for the suffering inflicted upon innocent people as a

result of the bombings of the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.”

There were many commemorations around the United States in 1995. Bishop Joseph Iida of the Nippon Sei Ko Kai preached in Grace Cathedral in San Francisco, an event that symbolized healing and reconciliation. In that same year, the Nippon Sei Ko Kai held a mission consultation at Kiyosato. An historic document adopted the following year by your 49th General Synod has been very positively received. In that statement, the Nippon Sei Ko Kai said it “admits its responsibility and confesses its sin for having supported and allowed, before and during the war, the colonial rule and the war of aggression by the State of Japan.” This was an act of great courage and deep humility.

In 1997, Bishops Iida and Nakamura visited our General Convention and received from my church a formal resolution which expressed “profound sorrow to the Japanese people for the agony caused by the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945.”

These are the kinds of actions God requires of a faithful people to spread the word of his love and to make possible reconciliation between us. Sisters and brothers, in this moment here with you, and in the context of my visit this morning, I express my own profound sorrow, regret and repentance for the suffering the citizens of this city bore on August 6, 1945, and those in Nagasaki on August 9th. I further issue a call to continuing mutual repentance and reconciliation for what our two peoples inflicted on one another.

I am also aware of the terrible suffering inflicted elsewhere in your country during that war. The island of Okinawa bears the scars of a battle that claimed so many lives. The presence there of U.S. military bases that affect the daily lives of the Okinawan people is continuing difficulty that has yet to be resolved. Jesus' 1st commandment to love one another applied to this situation has practical and political implications.

Perhaps the single most disappointing moment for me as primate of the American Church is the decision by my government to wage war against Iraq. I opposed that war before it began and wrote to President Bush in September of 2002 in which I said in part: “Unilateral military action would surely inflame the passions of millions, particularly in the Arab world, setting in motion cycles of violence and retaliation. Such action would undermine our firm national intent to eradicate global terrorism. As well, it would further strain tenuous relationships that exist between the United States and other nations /

“A super power, especially one that declares itself to be “under God,” must exercise the role of super servant. Our nation has an opportunity to reflect the values and ideals that we espouse by focusing upon issues of poverty, disease and despair, not only within our own nation but throughout the global community of which we are a part.” I continue to stand by these words.

In his statement of August 15, Bishop Uno pointed out that U.S. policy in the world today is pushing Japan towards a more militaristic posture, even to being encouraged by my government to move from being a country under a “Peace Constitution” “into a nation once again capable of making war.” I commend Bishop Uno for his prophetic warnings.

And I join him by once again reminding my own government that the United States must exercise leadership that heals and reconciles, and avoid policies that foment violence and revenge.

The Lambeth Conference, that worldwide body of Anglican bishops, declared in 1930 and again in 1968 that “war as a method of settling international disputes is incompatible with the teaching and example of our Lord Jesus Christ who commands us to love God and one another in today’s Gospel. The incompatibility of war with this commandment convicts us of our collective failure to live by the great commandment.

Jesus’s words are not only a summons and challenge for the Christian community. They were intended for the world. On this day, in this place, let us proclaim these words for the present generation.

Members of the English Version of NSKK Newsletter, Winter 2005 are: as follows:
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