

For a World Without Nuclear Power Plants

-The Anglican/Episcopal Church in Japan Opposed to Nuclear Power Generation –

The accident brought about in 2011 by the East Japan Great Earthquake and Tsunami at Tokyo Electric Power's 1st Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant has posed a threat to people's lives by disseminating radioactive substances not only in the immediate vicinity but in a much wider area, thus revealing that nuclear power generation is extremely dangerous in itself. It is not too much to say this is a warning from God to each of us who, having suffered from nuclear bombings, have failed to acquire sufficient knowledge about nuclear power and exposure to radiation.

There is no denying that, even without accidents, nuclear power is a real threat to people's lives in that it imposes sacrifices on socially weakened people throughout the process, from the mining of uranium to the disposal of radioactive waste. It also runs counter to the teachings of Jesus Christ as it cannot be sustained without people's sacrifices.

Nevertheless, as the House of Bishops stated in its message on March 11, 2012: "We have enjoyed materially comfortable life by allowing nuclear power plants to be built in various parts of the country to make it possible to consume more electricity. The Great Earthquake has shattered the safety myth of nuclear power under the guise of peaceful utilization of nuclear energy. We call for the conversion of Japan's energy policy, which currently depends on nuclear energy. We also strongly call on all of us to change our own lifestyle."

On the basis of our own sincere reflection, the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (Anglican Church in Japan) considers that the nuclear power generation is fraught with the following serious problems.

Nuclear Power Endangers the Life Created by God

The nuclear crisis in Fukushima threatens the life of all creatures. It endangers the physical condition of future generations through the exposure of children to radiation. A large quantity of radioactive waste, without any appropriate disposal technology, will continue to endanger people's lives for a long period of time. Besides, no one can deny that the existence of nuclear power plants in a country like Japan, which is subject to frequent earthquakes, is very likely to be the cause of serious crises in the future.

In addition, indigenous peoples are exposed to radiation in the process of the mining and enrichment of uranium abroad, while the lives of workers engaged in the maintenance of nuclear power plants at home are also threatened. Moreover, the peaceful utilization of nuclear energy is inseparable from military aims, in the sense that a large amount of plutonium created in the plants can be immediately converted into material for nuclear weapons. The nuclear power plants are also vulnerable to possible attack in case of a war or a conflict.

Nuclear Power Destroys the Nature Created by God

God created the universe and finally man, to whom He committed the safeguarding of the integrity of creation (Genesis 1). Nuclear power destroys nature beyond the limits determined by God. The technology of nuclear power tries to mine radioactive substances which have been stabilized over a long period of time and to enrich uranium 235, which is rare in nature, in order to bring about

nuclear fission, thus causing serious consequences capable of destroying whole ecosystems.

It has been said that nuclear power is a clean source of energy. In fact, however, it also uses a large quantity of fossil fuels in the enrichment of uranium and the maintenance of power plants, thus emitting abundant carbon dioxide and a large quantity of heat in the environment through heated secondary cooling water.

Besides, an abundance of radioactive waste will be bequeathed as is to future generations, as such waste cannot be disposed of nor stored safely. We are responsible for such nuclear waste.

Each one of us must turn back to God, who saw that all He created was good.

Nuclear Power Deprives People of the Peaceful Life Given by God

Nuclear power plants have been imposed on impoverished areas in Japan under the pretext of their being “absolutely safe.” Though the plants have been said to create jobs and bring about prosperity, actually, they have further increased regional disparities. The nuclear crisis has caused people affected areas to lose their homes and jobs. In the absence of other major industries—such as farming and fishing—upon which to base their livelihood, they cannot afford to help their children evacuate the polluted hometown. More people are compelled to live an unstable life due to the threat of radioactive contamination and, with increased mental stress, some families are faced with disruption and collapse. We must take seriously the situation of such people.

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Based on this reflection, we Anglicans in Japan believe that, first and foremost, we must pray for those people threatened by the nuclear accident as well as the whole of life on earth. And, as Christians following Jesus Christ, we must speak publicly against nuclear power.

First of all, we demand that the Japanese government be responsible for, and put an end to, the devastating consequences of this nuclear accident and we also share the responsibility. As Jesus taught us, “Whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them” (Matthew 7:12). It is not permissible for us to impose the danger and exposure to radiation on sparsely populated areas as well as to create new dangers in foreign countries to which Japan is planning to export nuclear power plants.

In solidarity with other denominations and faiths, we call for an immediate abolition of nuclear power plants and a conversion of Japan’s energy policy toward the development of alternative sources of energy. We are determined to change our own lifestyle from the old one in which we have pursued only convenience and comfort. We will share pains and difficulties with those who suffer and pray for a world where we learn from, love and support one another.

May God bless this land and restore peace on earth!

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The 59th General Synod of NSKK (Anglican Church in Japan)