

NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

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Opening Message by the Most Rev. Nathaniel Makoto Uematsu, Primate and Chairperson of the 59th Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK) General Synod, 2012

The 59th General Synod of Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK) was held from the 22nd to 24th May 2012 at St. Barnabas Church, Ushigome, in the Tokyo Diocese. In the opening address, I recollected several issues which the NSKK has confronted during the two-year period from the 58th to 59th the General Synod and I commented on our approaches and our standpoints.

Approaches on important issues:

(1) On 11th March 2011, a strong earthquake followed by a huge tsunami severely damaged a large area of Japan from the northern area of Tohoku, south to the Kanto area. Thousands of people were killed almost instantly and many people lost their livelihoods, their homes, jobs or property. Furthermore, the Tokyo Electric Power Company's Fukushima Daiichi (First) Nuclear Power Plant was out of control. A great explosion followed, which caused leakage and diffusion of radiation over a wide area.

Since then, great changes have occurred in our daily lives. There is no doubt that our conceptions, our views about the significance or the objectives of life have been greatly disturbed, for not only those who live in the disaster-stricken areas but also for all people in Japan and even world-wide. Furthermore, each of us, as a Christian, is asked to reconsider how we should keep our faith through such a disaster, while we all are well aware that we live in the love of God and under the protection of God, which allows us to live in hope. Nonetheless, each one of us as a Christian as well as a member of the NSKK is required to convey the words and deeds of God and to live in "the Words of God" to those who lost their dear ones through this disaster and to those who are in such a terrible situation.

In May 2011, the NSKK organized the "Let's Walk Together" project to aid and support those suffering after the earthquake and tsunami. I strongly believe that this project was established in response to the question of "How to maintain our Mission." Through this Project, we have been determined to sit close to and walk together with the sufferers, praying, or weeping alongside them.

The "Let's Walk Together Project" has been active for the past one year since its establishment. Although we have not always been satisfied with our progress, the project has been active albeit sometimes through trial and error. Sometimes the results have seemed to be incomplete or failures. However, the project has been warmly supported by a number of people, usually with encouragement, once in a while with severe criticism. I would like to express my sincere thanks for the strong support, which has shown their deep concern for the people affected by the huge earthquake as if it was their own suffering.

I must say that our power is limited, and we face an incredibly wide range of terrible damage. Nonetheless we will continuously offer our power, knowledge and time, as much as we can, since our Lord Jesus is always with us. We strongly trust that even if our offering is small, it will be fully blessed by God, and thus

we will be able to walk together to the place wherever we should be.

(2) When we turn our eyes to the Anglican Communion worldwide, I must say that disorder has further increased during the two-year period from the 58th to the 59th General Synod. It is well known that the Anglican Communion has claimed to stand for “unity in diversity” and the “bonds of love.” However, it has become apparent that considerably rapid changes have occurred in the Communion. In the past, when any issue or discordance was accepted with a spirit of forbearance, necessary changes were made in a gradual manner. For a long time the Church of England and the (American) Episcopal Church assumed the leadership role for the entire Anglican Communion as the Mother Church. However, their central power has weakened and the rapidly growing African and Asian provinces are making their voices heard. In this world where there are considerable differences in the social, economic or cultural backgrounds, with each area exerting its identity and basing its mission activities on its own tradition, there is no doubt that confusion such as that at present will occur. In these circumstances I think that it is understandable that the Anglican Communion, which covers a world-wide scale of churches, is encountering such tension, confusion and inconsistency.

At present, there is also a movement within the Anglican Communion, which claims the Archbishop of Canterbury should no longer be its spiritual leader being organized. In this situation the NSKK is required to show its own position and must decide how to exert its influence and decide on the role it should play in this new movement.

(3) The Mission Partnership between the Nippon Sei Ko Kai (NSKK) and the Anglican Church of Korea (ACK) has achieved remarkable mission work during the current two-year period. I would like to express my sincere thanks to the ACK for the number of ministers who have been dispatched to NSKK as collaborating missionaries, as well as for repeated donations and the volunteers sent to support the sufferers after the huge earthquake in the Tohoku Area.

Taking up on the leading role of the NSKK and ACK, the Second Worldwide Anglican Peace Conference will be held in Okinawa in April 2013. When the NSKK and ACK are walking together, aiming at the realization of peace in North-East Asia, I strongly believe the NSKK-ACK collaboration will definitely show a number of Anglican Churches, in places in the world where various conflicts continue, that the Church can definitely take a role in declaring the evidence of peace and reconciliation.

(4) At the 57th General Synod held in 2008, it was resolved that the current 11 dioceses would be reorganized into several collaborative mission blocks. It was intended that there would be further discussion on the reformation and reorganization of the present organization of dioceses. During the present General Synod, however, only two dioceses have inquired about the matter. We should consider reflecting on this more seriously

(5) In September 2012, the NSKK Mission Consultation¹ will be held in Hamanako, Shizuoka Prefecture. It is apparent that society itself is being rapidly secularized day by day, and the effects of this can be seen even within the church. The number of Christians is decreasing; there is a shortage of clergy, and a reduction in offerings. Under these circumstances, all Christians, including clergy and laity, are eagerly seeking ways to make our mission work effectively. In this situation, everyone in the NSKK is greatly looking forward to the forthcoming NSKK Mission Consultation of this coming autumn. Although we are facing a number of difficulties at present, we heartily hope to make use of this opportunity to produce fruitful results. Our next question will be what should we do to achieve satisfactory results? I must say that we should not only

¹ An article on this meeting follows later in this Newsletter

reproach others about these issues and simply complain. Nor should we say that the present issues are not necessarily a matter of great concern. We Christians must realize that we are in the hands of Jesus Christ who promises us the eternal life and keeps us in the Word of God. Being a Christian, each one of us should accept difficulties and try to resolve those problems as each one of us is a little cog in a big wheel.

Results and Issues in the Present General Synod

Now, I would like to comment on some of the resolutions obtained at the present General Synod:

(1) There have been certain differences in salaries among the ministers in different dioceses. A proposal for correcting the differences was submitted and approved. It was agreed that the lowest two dioceses, in which the clergy salary-base was considerably low compared to others, will have their base raised to the same level as the third lowest diocese-base salary. In order to deliver this amendemnt each diocese will have to raise their contribution to the province by 5%. The salary issue has been pending for a long time, due to the difficult financial status of each diocese. I should say this resolution is an epoch-making one in that all the dioceses have shown a deep interest in this matter.

(2) The statement, “Seeking a World without Nuclear Power” has been adopted. The accident occurring at the Tokyo Electric Company’s Fukushima Daiichi (number 1) Nuclear Power Plant caused by the huge earthquake in Tohoku has made us aware of the dangers of nuclear power plants. Multiple nuclear power plants have been built throughout Japan. Although the possible dangers have long been pointed out, most of us were indifferent or ignorant about the dangers until we encountered this terrible accident. God created nature and life, but the accident in the nuclear power plant has threatened God’s creation. For a long time we have fully relied on nuclear power in our daily life. We should reflect on our ignorance and reconsider how we can completely change our daily lifestyles. Our challenges regarding the nuclear power issue have just started with the above statement and we have to make further steps towards a world withoutnuclear power.

(3) Lastly, in the present General Synod, the election of a new bishop for the Okinawa Diocese should have taken place. However, no candidate was nominated and the election could not be held. No such situation has ever occurred in the past, nor is there any mention in the NSKK Laws and Regulations regarding such a situation. I presume that each one of the members and representatives who attended the Synod must have his or her own thoughts on the matter. I must take this matter seriously and this case will be reconsidered by the House of Bishops.

A World without Nuclear Power Plants

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

The accident brought about in 2011 by the East Japan Great Earthquake and Tsunami at Tokyo Electric Power's Fukushima Daiichi (first) 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 human sacrifice.

Nevertheless, as the House of Bishops stated in its message on March 11, 2012: “We have enjoyed a 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. This 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 considers that the nuclear power generation is fraught with the following serious problems.

▪ **Nuclear Power threatens 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 in Japan 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 into the environment via the heated secondary cooling water.

Besides, an abundance of radioactive waste will be bequeathed as is to future generations; because 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 them being “absolutely safe.” Though the plants have been said to create jobs and bring about prosperity they actually have further increased regional disparities. The nuclear crisis has caused people in the 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.

▪ **A World Without Nuclear Power Plants**

Based on this reflection, we Anglicans in Japan believe that, first and foremost, we must pray for those

people affected 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!

May 23, 2012

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

NSKK’s Mission Consultation

The Consultative Meeting of the NSKK Missions Council was held at CURREAC, a training Facility in Hamamatsu, Shizuoka Prefecture from September 14th to 17th, 2012.

The Theme was [Life] ---Ultimate Dignity---Searching for the mission of what our communion should be.

In the tragic state and damages caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake along with the explosion of Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant and we affirmed the tasks and roles which our churches should bear as our burden. We discussed very seriously about how we should tackle these tasks and activate them. Participants of this meeting were Bishops from 11 Dioceses, clergy, lay members and Committee members of the Provincial Office, totaling 140 people. Three ministers from Anglican Church in Korea also participated and enjoyed discussing enthusiastically with the Japanese participants. .

Various problems surrounding our churches are as follows;

*The continuous radioactive contamination caused by the nuclear power accident

*Hardship of life and poverty due to the economic recession.

*Unemployment and the increasing social disparity within society.

*The aging of the congregations and decreasing number of children.

To grapple with these problems we affirmed to build the system for the whole NSKK and move forward in order to improve.

We closed the four day council and participants returned to their dioceses.



The Rev. Luke Kenichi Muto, Diocese of Yokohama, Bishop Incumbent of the Diocese of Kyushu

The NSKK Diocese of Kyushu held an election for the incoming Bishop of their Diocese of Kyushu on July 16, 2012 due to the retirement of The Rt. Rev. Gabriel Shoji Igarashi. They elected the Rev. Luke Kenichi Muto (Rector of Numazu's St. John's Church in the Yokohama Diocese) as the coadjutor bishop.

The Ordination the Bishop The Rev. Luke Kenichi Muto will be implemented at The Cathedral of Kyushu Diocese (Fukuoka St. Paul's Church) on December 1st 2012.



**Contemplation:
“A Trip for Reconciliation and Peace”
in the 100th year Anniversary of the
Annexation of Korea”**

The Rev. Paul Jun Nakamura

The “Trip” took place from November 12th to 15th in 2010. First of all I thank God with all my heart. I also thank all the members who joined the trip, all the members of the Anglican Church of Korea who accepted us all and all the people from both countries who supported our trip. The participants of our trip exceeded 40 people. In addition to our original members of 39 people, made up of 33 people aged from their early twenties to early eighties with 6 staff members headed by Bishop Tani, we were also joined by 3 more participants who were staff members to the 3rd Anniversary of TOPIK (Towards Peace in Korea) Symposium which was held during the same period.

In order to look back over the history and to have our eyes on the present situation once more, we

visited the Memorial Museum of Independence and Ganghwa Historical Center on Ganghwa-do², and saw the “Bell” and the “Handrail” in the Saints Peter and Paul's Church in Ganghwa-up. Furthermore, in order to recognize the strong bond between the Anglican Church of Korea and Nihon Sei Ko Kai we visited The Cathedral Church of St. Mary and St. Nicholas in Seoul and attended the 110th anniversary memorial service of Saints Peter and Paul's Church in Ganghwa-up. We also visited St. Andrew's Church in Onsu-ri³ and URIMAUL, a center of activities for adults with the intellectual disabilities sponsored by the Seoul diocese.

I believe I reaffirmed the significance of our trip to South Korea. One hundred years have passed since the forced annexation of the Korean peninsula was executed by the Japanese government. On one hand, in the process of these long years, the Anglican Church of Korea and Nippon Sei Ko Kai have cultivated a good relationship with each other due to constant efforts by many senior leaders in two churches, which has been said to be very unique among other Episcopal churches around the world. But on the other hand, the colonizer-colonized, offender-victim relationship which once existed between Japan and Korea has been gradually fading away from the memory of Japanese people, especially in so many turbulent international frictions among South-East Asian countries in these days. The mission of our trip was to carry out the tasks to advance the good relationship between two Anglican communions and to save the past from

2 Ganghwa Island is located about an hour's drive north-west of Seoul, and was the site of the first Anglican mission on the Korean peninsula. The two Anglican churches on the island are built in “Hanok” (traditional Korean style) and combine elements of Korean and Western architecture. The island remains significant as you look from its coast towards North Korea.

It is significant in Japan/Korea history as the island was the site of an armed encounter in 1875 between Japan and the Joseon Dynasty that resulted in the Ganghwa Treaty being signed which opened the Korean peninsula to Japanese and foreign trade.

3 Also on Ganghwa Island

oblivion as possible as we could.

As it was Saturday when we visited the Independence Memorial Museum and the weather was fine, it was crowded with lots of men and women, both old and young. There were primary school children led by their teachers, the aged people pleased at the sight of small children accompanied by their parents and young couples. I was standing next to a father who was explaining to his young child something and I felt my heart begin to pound. I also noticed the displays were a little bit changed compared with six years ago when I first visited. The Japanese explanations seemed to be arranged better and written more in detail. I felt the request for the Japanese to come and see the museum.

The main objectives of the “Trip” were to attend a worship service at Saints Peter and Paul’s Church in Ganghwa-up, to attend the 110th Anniversary Memorial Service and the restoration ceremony of the handrails on staircase, and to donate the expense for the restoration of the handrails. There, we completed our mission successfully. Saints Peter and Paul’s Church in Ganghwa-up is not very large so was filled to capacity with our 40 tour members, church members, local administrators and councilors, and both the Korean press and Japanese reporters. The Right Rev. Paul Kim, Bishop of Seoul said in his sermon that it was really ‘a historical day’. In exchanging the greeting of the Peace all were deeply moved. Then Rev. Tani greeted us as follows. “At this moment the members of every church of Nippon Sei-Ko-Kai are praying for this service, the service which thanks God for restoration of the handrails in Saints Peter and Paul’s Church in Ganghwa-up as a small but sure sign of reconciliation”.

I am sure Reconciliation was realised at that moment. I cannot but think it is because our thoughts, apology, confession, hatred, and forgiveness for injustice were elevated into appreciation there, and each of those appreciations might be connected by the power of God. I cannot but feel that each thought was emancipated before God, who took it and connected us to each other. It might be this feeling that moved many participants to tears. I believe most people felt that God was there with us.

I cannot help expressing our sincere gratitude to our seniors in both Anglican communions who through spending a long time broke the road to reconciliation. After the trip had ended the remaining staff members of our group, joined a dinner with the Rev. John J. Lee. He served as a clergyman for Saints Peter and Paul’s Church in Ganghwa-up for more than 30 years ago and he had conveyed the history of the handrails of the staircase in the church to the visitors from Japan during that time. He was deeply impressed that the handrails were finally restored by the donations from Japan more than 30 years later.

We cannot yet say yet that the reconciliation between the Anglican Church of Korea and Nippon Sei Ko Kai or between South Korea and Japan has been achieved. It is still on its way. We are walking on the way to the reconciliation. The “Trip” was given to us just as milestone on the way to the goal. Before we carried forward the project of the ‘Trip’ we still had some worries such as whether the word “reconciliation” should be used from the offender’s side, or if we could secure the necessary 40 participants for the project. But such anxieties were completely dispelled. I was convinced that when we came to accept the facts, came to understand the “people” who felt pains, and expressed our profound repent with heartfelt sympathy for the people, God bound the people both in Korea and Japan together and led us to the reconciliation. This time, most participants of the trip were senior people having various thoughts and emotions. We are sure the younger participants, who did not have the same thoughts as the older members, could stand on the same point of view after they witnessed the historical spots, met a lot of people, and learned from the posture of their seniors. The Trip of Reconciliation is not completed yet. The “Trip” remains to urge us to follow the road to the reconciliation step by step by meeting many people in South Korea and on the Korean Peninsula.

Reflection by a YASC participant

About YASC

YASC (Young Adult Service Corps) is a program run by TEC (The Episcopal Church⁴) to send young adult missionaries to various parts of the world to serve a particular location and to learn and grow. Details are available at www.episcopalchurch.org/yasc

NSKK has been receiving one or two participants each year for last 5 years. Below is a report of an experience.

My experience in Diocese of Chubu: Katie Young

From September 2011 to August 2012 I worked at the Nagoya Youth Center and ELCC (the Ecumenical Learning Center for Children) in the Diocese of Chubu. I was serving as a missionary from the Young Adult Service Corp of the Episcopal Church. During my time in Nagoya I taught English, Art, and PE; helped with a pre-school class; volunteered once a week at Taki Dashi, a homeless organization. This experience has taught me so much, some of which I want to share with you.

One of my favorite lessons was from a Buddhist story. The story was about the selfless rabbit who threw himself into the fire when he didn't know what he could offer the beggar. The moral I gathered from it was that when you think that you have nothing to give, give yourself. That is what I saw of the people I had the great pleasure to work with. They gave generously of themselves. They were constantly working to better the world around them. Sometimes that goal seemed impossible but that never stopped them. They taught me what it means to serve.

The kids taught me to be patient. One day I was teaching English at ELCC to a group of 4 years old Filipino children who already speak Tagalog and Japanese. During class I read a book about giving thanks. I had a hard time keeping their attention during the story. So I stopped reading and explained to them that "Thank you" is "Arigatou Gozaimusu" in English. One of the little girls then informed me that "Salamatpo" is how you say it in Tagalog. In that moment I realized all that these kids already know and are continuing to learn. It was a beautiful moment of us sharing our knowledge with one another. They taught me to be patient in learning, in teaching, and in life.

During Long Day Camp Fr. Nomura gave a talk. At the end of it he explained that the kanji for "peace" literally means "to eat together in equality." That there is no head of the table; everyone is on equal ground; everyone sharing what they know with each other; everyone doing their part to spread God's love in the world. This was what the center and my work was about: living into God's peace.

4 The Episcopal Church is the Anglican Church in the United States of America.

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