



JAPAN CHRISTIAN ACTIVITY NEWS

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“Jesus Christ, Our Hope - God, Our Guide in History”



This is our three-year theme for NCCJ which is appropriate for the ecumenical movement. It has been 150 years since Protestant mission came to Japan and 163 years since Protestant mission work has come to Okinawa. June 2010 is also when we celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Edinburgh Mission Conference which is seen as the formal beginning of the Protestant ecumenical movement. It has been 100 years since Korea was forcibly colonized under Japanese rule as part of Japan's imperialistic expansion and 115 years since Japanese colonization and claim to sovereignty over Taiwan.

The tasks for NCCJ for the next three years will be to work internationally and locally for peace, spread the gospel, work with other churches for new directions in the ecumenical movement, promote “Life Ethics” which includes abolition of the death penalty, and to have a series of activities for ministry to youth and young adults. We recall the words taken from Romans 16:1, “I am not ashamed of the gospel, because it is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes.”

Let us go forth this New Year in 2010 spreading the gospel, working for human rights, and promoting peace, and reconciliation.

Blessings from all of us at NCCJ.

— Rev. Makoto Iijima, NCCJ General Secretary

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NCCJ was started in 1922 and has been doing ecumenical ministry in Japan for 87 years. NCCJ is badly in need of funds to continue ministry here in Japan. Please consider making a donation to NCCJ. *Email the general secretary or NCCJ staff at:*
general@ncc-j.org

Kyodan (UCCJ) Events to Commemorate 150 Years of Protestant Evangelism in Japan

(Below are excerpts from an article in the April 2009 Kyodan Missionary Newsletter, written by Rev. Ken'ichiro, Katsuyama, executive secretary of the Kyodan. For the complete text, please go to <http://www.uccj.or.jp/knl/2009/04/150-years-of-evangelism-in-jap.html>)

Protestant Christianity has been preached in Japan for 150 years. Various commemorative events were planned for this milestone.

When Protestant evangelism began 150 years ago (1859), Christianity was still prohibited in Japan by the Edo Shogunate. However, with a strong love for the souls of the Japanese, the missionaries felt no fear of persecution and came to plant the word of God in Japan. Through the prayers and dedication of these missionaries and those yet to come, the gospel was spread throughout the country as churches, Christian schools, Christian hospitals, and Christian welfare agencies were founded. The results were clear: education brought greater status and roles for women, and higher ideals were brought to society at large. We give heartfelt thanks for the work of these missionaries across the years.

Of course, we must not forget that part of the background for those accomplishments was the work of the Roman Catholic Church in Japan following Francisco Xavier's visit in 1549, as well as the work of the Anglican Church in Okinawa.

Certainly there were extreme difficulties at many points in this history, as well as the sacrifice of many. Today's reality is that material prosperity and spiritual disinterest have encumbered evangelism since the late 20th century. Even within the Christian community, we see less interaction among Christian organizations and a weakened unity among denominations. The fact that we are not advancing our evangelistic efforts is cause for individual Christians and the church at large to repent.

At this time of commemorating "150 Years of Evangelism in Japan," we give God thanks for his grace through Christ and pray that we may come together in prayer, understanding one another and deepening our fellowship together for the continued evangelism of Japan. May we give of ourselves, our talents, and our resources as we strive to be tools for this task. This is the commitment to which we are being called.

In 1909, when the first 50 years of Protestant evangelism were celebrated, the Church of Christ in Japan took

leadership in planning a revival at the Tokyo YMCA in Kanda on March 13~14 for the celebration. Following this, revivals and retreats were held at local churches throughout Tokyo. The Methodist Church observed a "Revival Month," the Congregational Church observed a half year of "Extension Revivals," and other special forms of evangelism took place. Then, a joint commemorative symposium was held at the Tokyo YMCA, Oct. 5-10. During this time there was a special service of thanksgiving, as well as symposium topics on Christian education, Christian literature, Christian influence, as well as other opportunities for study.

With the approach of the 100th Anniversary of Protestant Evangelism in Japan, plans for commemorative evangelistic events were approved at the 8th General Assembly of Kyodan in 1954. The goals were to double the overall membership of the Kyodan and to move more deeply into the life of the general public. The slogan accompanying these goals was "Go forward with Christ." These events continued through 1958.

As we enter this 150th Year of Protestant Evangelism in Japan, we feel that active participation in the following events is a positive response to our Lord's invitation.

Some of the events held were: June 24, a Commemorative Worship Service for the Founding of the Kyodan at Fujimicho Church, Tokyo. On July 8, 2009, a Commemorative Convention for 150 Years of Protestant Evangelism in Japan at Pacifico Yokohama. On November 22, a Kyodan Laity Convention. On November 23, a Kyodan Celebration: 150 Years of Protestant Evangelism in Japan held at Aoyama Gakuin, Tokyo.

NCCJ Committee changes and additions:

- The International Affairs Committee is now the International Sharing Committee.
- The Committee on Humanitarian Aid to DPRK is now the Peace and Reconciliation in East Asia Committee.

The Chernobyl Project committee has disbanded.

NCCJ has two new committees:

- The Promotion of the Japanese Peace Constitution Project
- Life Ethics Project

A Voice for Peace

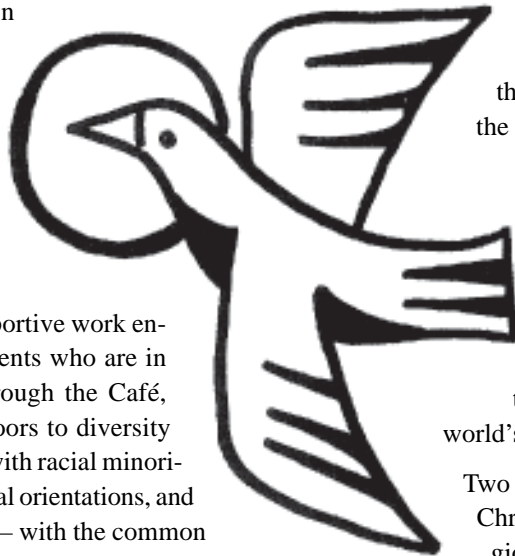
Martha Mensendiek is a UCC missionary teaching social welfare at Doshisha University in Kyoto. She grew up as a "MK" (missionary kid) in Japan in Sendai. Below are excerpts from a sermon she gave in her home church, Church of the Crossroads, in Hawaii. Martha and her brother, Jeffrey, were translators for the Inter-religious Conference on Article 9 which was organized by NCCJ.

Her Three Areas of Work

My primary responsibilities are teaching social work at Doshisha University. I teach courses such as Social Problems, International Social Work, Introduction to Social Work and Field Work. Besides teaching, I also serve as the advisor to the campus chapter of the Habitat for Humanity.

The second place I am involved with is the YWCA. I am involved with a hotline and counseling center we have for migrant workers.

And the third part of my ministry is involvement with the work of the Kyoto Conference of the United Church of Japan. I am a member of the Asian Action Committee, which is involved in various mission projects in the Philippines, Nepal, and Thailand, as well as with outreach to persons with AIDS. Ten years ago, our conference started a coffee house ministry, called the Bazaar Café. As the name Bazaar Café implies, it is a meeting place, a gathering place, a place with good food and music. A major mission of the Café is to provide a supportive work environment for foreign residents who are in some need of support. Through the Café, the church is opening its doors to diversity and building community – with racial minorities, people of different sexual orientations, and to people of different faiths – with the common vision of an inclusive society.



The Peace Constitution

Many of you may know that Japan has a Peace Constitution. Article 9 of Japan's post-war constitution prohibits Japan from having a military and participating in war.

What is troubling is that in recent years, the Japanese government is taking strident steps toward militarism and nationalism. It has been moving forward on efforts to revise the constitution to do away with Article 9. Interestingly, the very government (ours!) that helped Japan draft the constitution has for many recent years now been pressuring Japan to join more fully in war efforts, including of course the present war. You may know too that Japan actually has a huge military budget since it pays for US military bases in Japan, and has helped with the Iraq war by sending its Self

Defense Forces to the Indian Ocean to help refuel US war machines. The nationalistic leaders of the Japanese government are advocating for the revision of Article 9. Their reasons are that:

"Japan needs to join the world in defeating the war on terror",

"The Constitution was forced on us after our defeat, and we need to establish our sovereignty."

Now, that reasoning actually seems to make sense in the world view that many of my fellow Americans hold. "Of course, Japan should have a military." "Of course, Japan should have a right to protect itself and also share its part of the burden of protecting the world from rouge forces!"

But, our partner church in Japan, the Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan and its related organizations and our own Global Ministries of the UCC are supporting the efforts to preserve the peace constitution.

Why?

Because we believe that the Peace Constitution is a gift to the world.

That we need to uplift this idea that a country can renounce war and do more to lead the world in non-violent ways of solving our world's conflicts.

Two years ago, and again this year, the National Christian Council in Japan hosted an inter-religious conference on Article 9. At the end of the conference, the attendees drafted a petition to the Japanese government, advocating for the preservation and promotion of the Peace constitution. Quoting from the petition: "... peace can never be achieved through military violence but only through promoting a culture open to patient dialogue and diversity that promotes justice, equality, and respect."

I call this to your attention because I feel it is important for you to know that our church, the UCC is in solidarity with the church in Japan, in its efforts to witness to a different world view (a world view that believes there is no future in a militarized world). Japan is a country that knows the horrors of what our weapons are capable of and so it has a critical role in keeping that memory alive. And with its relative wealth and its educated population, many believe it can

(Cont'd on p. 5)

Presiding Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori visits Japan

Katharine Jefferts Schori was elected Presiding Bishop of The Episcopal Church in June 2006. She serves as Chief Pastor and Primate to The Episcopal Church's members in 16 countries and 110 dioceses. She joins with other principal bishops of the 38 member Provinces of the worldwide Anglican Communion, seeking to make common cause for global good and reconciliation. On September 22, at a classroom at Rikkyo University, Bishop Katharine met with about 20 Seikokai (Anglican) women priests and women seminarians from dioceses all over Japan (from Hokkaido to Okinawa) who shared their experiences of the joys and challenges of being women in ministry in Japanese churches. On September 23, from 5-8 p.m., a bento dinner and talk given by Rev. Dr. Katharine Jefferts Schori (the Presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church in the United States), was organized and presided by NCCJ moderator and Anglican priest, Rev. Isamu Koshiishi at the Japan Christian Center in Waseda. Her talk was based on the "Relationships between the U.S. Churches and the U.S. Government." Pastors and lay people from various churches attended.)

On September 22, 2009, The Most Rev. Katharine Jefferts Schori gave the sermon at vespers at an Anglican University in Tokyo, Rikkyo Gakuin University. Below is the text of her sermon.

We're here tonight to give thanks to God for 150 years of an Anglican presence in Japan. We are here as well to give thanks for the earliest province of the Anglican Communion which had not been part of the British Empire. I will begin by acknowledging, however, that the Nippon Sei Ko Kai owes its roots to American imperialism instead. Commodore Perry's insistence on a trade agreement in 1853-4 was soon followed by the entry of American missionaries who had been serving in China. God continues to work good out of things which did not begin in peace and holiness.

Fr. Channing Moore Williams, Fr. John Liggins, and Dr. Schmidt came directly from China, and soon began medical and educational mission efforts, including the institution that led to this university. It was some years before active evangelism became possible, but the history of the former Chinese missionaries here was of significant importance. The global mission work of Anglicans and others in the mid-19th century was beginning to shift toward a much less colonial and far more indigenized form.

Henry Venn and Rufus Anderson had begun to talk about indigenizing ministry at about the same time as these three Episcopal missionaries first came to Japan. The goal was to seed a church that could be self-supporting, self-governing, and self-propagating, and it was a way of being



Rev. Makoto Iijima, Rev. Isamu Koshiishi, Bishop Katharine

that became essential to the continuation of the church in Japan through the shifts in government policy in ensuing decades.

The ideal of a localized and autonomous church, able to evangelize from its own resources, facilitates the kind of vision that Jeremiah proclaims – people streaming from all directions and stations of life, God bringing together all families and nations into one whole. That is surely a vision yet to be fully realized, but the seeds sown here have begun to flourish and bear fruit. The vocation of the NSKK, like that of each part of Christ's body, is to work toward the reconciliation of all the world, and indeed, all creation, in an earthly image of the reign of God or the kingdom of heaven.

The passage from Matthew's gospel offers two very pointed hints for joining in this work. The first and the last of the beatitudes offer blessing that leads toward the kingdom of heaven, for the poor in spirit, and for those who are persecuted for the sake of justice and righteousness. Both of those qualities mark the NSKK and its mission.

The ability of this church to repent of its part in the violence of occupation and war has been a bold example to other Christians around the globe. The poor in spirit have no need for arrogance or defensiveness, but speak truth even when it is painful or shameful. That truth shares in the way, the truth, and the life, and begins to bring in the kingdom of heaven. The apology of this church had powerful consequences for the Anglican Church of Korea. The work of TOPIK (Towards Peace in Korea) would not be possible without the witness of the Japanese church.

The second blessing is for those who are persecuted for seeking justice. This church's advocacy for the Okinawan and Ainu people has not always been popular, but it has brought a measure of the heavenly kingdom

in these islands. You and many others are blessed in that ministry.

The challenge this church faces today is like that of the last 150 years – how to be faithful, poor in spirit, and righteous in a culture that doesn't always share those values. Your ability to transform the society around you toward that vision of the heavenly kingdom lies in your ability to speak to this context, to live into those three selves of the 19th century missionaries (who learned them from the apostle Paul). This indigenizing church needs to speak good news in pachinko parlors, in anime, in the anonymity of crowded cities. This church has the ability to do that in this generation, as it has in generations past. Your witness can teach others as well – particularly the churches of Western Europe and North America who also labor in secular and consumerist cultures. What will you teach us? How will you help to propagate the gospel from seeds grown in the good earth of Nippon? — *Bishop Katharine Jefferts Schori*

A Voice for Peace *(Continued from p. 3)*

and should step forward to take a lead in the world wide efforts for peace.

And so, I ask for your prayers for the people of Japan. And their leaders.

That the voice for peace will be heard.

The Church as Witness

This morning I gave two examples of this witness. The Bazaar Café, is one way that the church in Japan is in solidarity with the poor and vulnerable. In Mark's gospel lesson today, Jesus' disciples, who were concerned about the crowds of people needing food, at such a late hour and suggested sending them away. But Jesus says, "You give them something to eat." This is a central message of our faith, is it not? That Jesus is with the vulnerable and the poor, and God is with us, if we are with them.

And the second example from Japan is that the church is a witness to God by being a voice for peace. As Paul writes to the Ephesians, "peace is proclaimed to those who are far and those who are near. And that you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God."

God's mission in the world today is about partnerships between churches in other parts of the world, working together in solidarity to respond to God's call to "do justice, to love mercy and walk humbly with our God." We are truly partners in mission. Thanks be to God.



ORIENTAL MARY

From Hiroshima and the Korean Peninsula, Peace Remains an Urgent Task for People of Faith

(Taken from the CCA Update. For more information on The Christian Conference of Asia, go to <http://www.cca.org.hk/>)

Two ecumenical meetings took place in South Korea reminding Christians and people of other faiths that peace remains an urgent agenda for the ecumenical movement today. Eighty Christian, Buddhist, and Muslim faith leaders met from 1st to 3rd December at the Academy House near Seoul, to reaffirm a commitment to a world without wars and free of military activities. The meeting focused on Article 9, a Peace Clause in the Japanese Constitution and listened to voices of the victims, recalled scriptures and cited movements for peace in every religion.

The Conference participants vowed to broaden their perspective of peace, undertake a more vigorous peace education among women, children and youth, expand peace constituencies and networks, work for nuclear disarmament, and promote interfaith dialogues on peace.

From 4th to 6th December, Hwacheon, South Korea near the border with the North was the venue of another peace-related meeting of ecumenical leaders from Fiji, Pakistan, Canada, Norway, USA, the Philippines and South Korea on the theme of “world peace without nuclear weapons.” The meeting was organized by the Asia-Pacific Graduate School and the Korean YMCA, with the support of the World Council of Churches and the Christian Conference of Asia.

Held close to the Peace Bell Park, the conference reflected on a nuclear-free Korean Peninsula, an understanding of the current state of affairs on the nuclear regime, and the challenges from ecumenical and interfaith perspectives. The fifteen participants issued a call on ecumenical communities, people of other faiths, local, regional and global to be engaged in promoting ecumenical actions to promote world peace without nuclear weapons.

By Charlie Ocampo, CCA’s Executive Secretary for Justice, International Affairs, Development and Service



Meet NCCJ new part-time staff!

Toshiyuki Mineda was born to the north of Kyoto in Fukui City on March 22, 1956. Growing up in a non-Christian family, he didn’t become interested in Christianity until college. He majored in French at Jochi (Sohia) University, a Catholic University in Tokyo. As part of his studies, he spent ten months in Lyon, France as a student. After graduation in 1980, he became a Christian and presently attends a Kyodan (UCCJ) church where he teaches Sunday school to elementary and middle school children and serves on the church council.

Toshiyuki came to NCC in June. As he is also a free-lance illustrator and graphic designer, he was asked to design the new NCCJ brochure. Toshiyuki serves as the International Relations Executive Secretary (which covers issues in various areas, e.g. China, Philippines, Germany). He also oversees the Asia and Pacific Peace Committee and the Wakachiai Committee. He and his wife, Kumiko, have a 16 year old son, Ryo, who serves as the pianist once a month at church. Their son’s name, “Ryo,” means “good” and was taken from the book of Genesis. Their daughter’s name is Kaai, meaning “add love” from Colossians 3:14. She is a university student. Toshiyuki’s interests are: reading, marathon running, and going to museums. He likes working at NCCJ because of the ecumenical activities. His skills as a graphic designer are really appreciated at NCCJ when making flyers and brochures

You can email him at: mineda@ncc-j.org



Toshiyuki Mineda after a marathon run.

WCC-CCA-PCC

AGAPE Consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Asia and the Pacific *Chiang Mai Declaration*

Preamble

1. We, people of faith and church leaders from Asia and the Oceania, with the accompaniment of our sisters and brothers from other continents, have gathered in Chiang Mai, Thailand, from 02 to 06 November 2009 to reflect deeply on the fundamental links between impoverishment, wealth creation and accumulation, and ecological crisis according to our Christian faith, in dialogue with other faiths, and from the perspectives of Indigenous Peoples, women and young persons. We met at the time of the Buddhist *Loy Khratong* Festival – when people offer flowers and light candles and incense to give thanks to the River Goddess. The festival became for us a symbol of our coming together in the common search for the River of Life.

A world and region in peril

2. Our planet, and particularly the nations and islands in Asia and the Oceania, are confronted by unparalleled and multiple catastrophes.

3. Asian nations, which account for more than half of the global population, have often been held up as a successful application of the neoliberal economic model, described as “economic tigers and dragons” and a “global factory.” But our region’s wealth is being siphoned off in the form of corporate profits squeezed from cheap, predominantly female, labour; external debt payments to international financial institutions made at the expense of massive cuts in social expenditures; the privatisation and commodification of land; and exports of people, lumber and other “raw materials” from poor to wealthier nations. We listened with heavy hearts to stories of: Burmese migrant workers fleeing political and economic oppression only to encounter other forms of oppression in Thailand; tens of thousands of farmer suicides in India; Asian students falling into debt because of spiralling tuition fees; women in the Mekong region trafficked into prostitution...

4. Because Asia’s system of wealth creation is centred on the global economy, our region has been heavily battered by the current global financial and economic crisis caused by heightened “financialisation” (or the de-linking of finance from the real economy). Factory workers in export processing zones have been retrenched in large numbers. The monies sent home by our migrant workers are dwindling. Many of our governments are too indebted and cash-strapped to respond with even the barest of social protection.

5. In the pursuit of super-profits, the neoliberal system of wealth creation and accumulation in Asia has not only produced poverty, it has generated tremendous social and ecological debts – debts owed to Mother Earth; to the impoverished, Indigenous Peoples and women who bear a disproportionate burden of adjustment to drastic changes in the climate and the rest of ecology; and to young people and forthcoming generations whose very futures are endangered by dominant production and consumption patterns that fail to respect the regenerative limits of our planet. We listened with heavy hearts to stories of: forced ecological migrants as sea waters rise and threaten to inundate Oceania islands and archipelagic nations like Bangladesh; Indigenous Peoples dispossessed of their ancestral lands by mining corporations and mega-dam projects, resulting in the ethnocide of indigenous communities and cultures; villages facing famine and water shortages across the region...

6. In Asia and Oceania as in elsewhere, violence has often been used by the economically and politically-powerful in securing the planet’s “natural resources.” Imperialist terror and greed desecrate both Mother Earth and women’s bodies. We listened with heavy hearts to stories of: church people gunned down in the Philippines for defending ecology and farmers’ and workers’ rights; communities dying from toxic pollutants in military bases; intensified violence against women in their own homes in times of economic hardship and in militarised zones...

Asia-Oceania spiritualities in response to impoverishment, greed and ecological destruction

7. We believe that the interlinked economic and ecological crises are manifestations of a larger ethical, moral and spiritual crisis. For it is in putting absolute faith in “free markets,” in worshipping wealth and material goods, and in following a gospel of consumerism and mindless expansion that human beings have exploited their own sisters and brothers and have ravaged their only home.

8. Therefore, overcoming the crises requires nothing less than a radical spiritual renewal. We reaffirm, according to our Christian tradition, that such a transformation must be founded on the Biblical imperatives of God’s preferential option for the marginalised (justice) and the sacredness of all Creation (sustainability).

9. At the same time, we draw important learnings from the deep wells of Asian traditional wisdom. “When you unite

(Cont’d on next page)

wealth, you divide the people. When you divide wealth, you unite the people.”

10. From the peoples of Oceania, we learned about the peoples’ intrinsic connection with lands and oceans and all life therein in affirmation of God’s presence in all Creation. It is in this understanding that the peoples of Oceania are striving to regain a spirituality of the ecology in which we “live and move and have our being.”
11. From the spirituality of Asian and Oceanic Indigenous Peoples, we learned to expand the greatest Biblical teaching to “love our neighbours” to “Mother Water,” “Brother Kangaroo,” and “Cousin Tree.”
12. From eco-feminism, we learned about the falsehood of dichotomies between mind and body and between humans and nature that translate into inequitable relationships.
13. From the vibrant indigenous, women and youth movements in Asia and Oceania, we learned about the spirituality that is found in resistance and political engagement. We derived hope from stories of: indigenous women transferring traditional knowledge and communitarian values and contributing to sustainable economies; and young people playing a leading role in preventing land grab by Arcelor-Mittal, a multinational steel company in the state of Jharkhand in India.
14. From other ancient faiths and religions birthed in Asia, we learned about Buddhism’s “middle way;” Hinduism’s *ahimsa* (nonviolence) towards ecology and all human beings; and Islam’s injunction to fight oppression in all its forms.
15. Genuine faith and spirituality entail action. We assert that the multiple crises we confront today urgently demand radical and collective responses, not only from Asia and Oceania, but also from the worldwide faith community. United in God’s love, *we can and must* begin to construct flourishing and harmonious economies where:
 - all participate and have a voice in the decisions that impact their lives;
 - people’s basic needs are provided for through just livelihoods;
 - social reproduction and the care work done predominantly by women are supported and valued; and
 - air, water, land and energy sources that are necessary to sustain life are protected and preserved.

In short, we can and must shape Economies of Life and Economies for Life.

Our commitments and calls

16. In view of the foregoing, we, the participants of the AGAPE Consultation on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology in Asia and the Pacific, commit to the following:
 - a. Build and strengthen a faith-based network or networks advancing social, economic, and ecological

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The days of China Trip was from Aug.13 to 20, 2009.

The Japan delegates were Rev. Isamu KOSHIISHI (Moderator of NCCJ), Rev. Makoto IJIMA.

(General Secretary of NCCJ), Rev. Makoto WATABE (Chairman of China Committee of NCCJ).

They met with Chinese Christians and visited churches in Qingdao, Haerbin, Shanghai, Xiamen. The photo of inside the church of the congregation worshipping is a church which holds three services a Sunday with an average attendance of 4,300 people per service. At 5:00 p.m. the church bells play the Hallelujah chorus which is heard across town and in the evening the youth gather for worship.



Rev. Iijima, NCCJ General Secretary, was one of three speakers at Kim Dae Jung's Memorial service.

August 22, Saturday, from 4- 6 p.m. was Kim Dae Jung's Memorial Service.

(Editor's note on Kim Dae-Jung: Kim Dae-jung was President of South Korea from 1998 to 2003, and the 2000 Nobel Peace Prize recipient. His policy of engagement with North Korea has been termed the Sunshine Policy. A Roman Catholic since 1957, he has been called the "Nelson Mandela of Asia" for his long-standing opposition to authoritarian rule. Kim Dae-jung took the name Thomas More as his Christian name at his Baptism. Thus, his name is most correctly written as Thomas More Kim Dae-jung. Kim was almost killed in August 1973, when he was kidnapped from a hotel in Tokyo by KCIA agents in response to his criticism of President Park. Kim returned to Seoul alive but he was banned from politics and imprisoned in 1976 for having participated in the proclamation of an anti-government manifesto and sentenced for five years in prison, which was reduced to house arrest in 1978. Kim was reinstated in 1979 after Park was assassinated. However in 1980, Kim was arrested and sentenced to death on charges of sedition and conspiracy in the wake of another coup by Chun Doo-hwan and a popular uprising in Kwangju, Gwangju. Pope John Paul II sent a letter to then-South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan on 11 December 1980, asking for "clemency" for Kim.

With the intervention of the United States government, the sentence was commuted to 20 years in prison and later he was given exile to the U.S. Kim temporarily settled in



Boston and taught at Harvard University as a visiting professor to the Center for International Affairs, until he chose to return to his homeland in 1985. Pope John Paul II sent a letter to then-South Korean President Chun Doo-hwan on 11 December 1980, asking for "clemency" for Kim, a Catholic, who had

been sentenced to death a week before. The National Archives of Korea revealed the contents of the letter at the request of the "Kwangju Ilbo," the local daily newspaper in Kwangju.)

Rev. Iijima's speech which was in Japanese but translated into Korean, shared how Japanese supported Kim Dae Jung when the Kwangju Uprising happened in May of 1980 and Kim Dae-Jung was sentenced to the death penalty by then President Chun Doo-hwan. Japanese were also aware of how he was kidnapped from Tokyo by KCIA agents in 1973 and forcibly taken to Korea. After the Kwangju Uprising, Japanese public opinion changed and many started to support democracy and freedom in Korea. Japanese showed sympathy and solidarity to the democracy movement. Rev. Iijima also shared how many people working for democracy were impressed by the words of Kim Dae-Jung when he was sentenced to the death penalty. "When I was told I had the death sentence, my heart was calm because if this is the will of God, then I will be killed. If not, then I won't be killed. Therefore, I leave everything up to the will of God." Rev. Iijima explained how many Japanese saw Kim Dae-Jung's strong faith in this statement. Rev. Iijima said; "This statement implies the importance of human

dignity shining through. Human dignity cannot be violated by power and is protected by God."

The new path that lead to a relationship with Korea was started by then NCCJ general secretary, Rev. Nakajima and later continued by NCCJ general secretary, Rev. Shoji and then by other general secretaries of NCCJ. Rev. Iijima continues, "I also, as general secretary, wish to continue this relationship and work for peace and justice between Japan and Korea."

Rev. Iijima closed by giving his heartfelt condolences to Kim Dae-Jung's wife and family.



2009 marked the 100th Anniversary of the Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary.

The Lutheran Church in Japan began in 1892 and the church already celebrated the 100th anniversary of its beginning back in 1992. On September 22 there was a JELA (Japan Evangelical Lutheran Association/Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary) celebration. A worship service was held in Ebisu at the JELA office at 10:00 a.m. After that the JELA sponsored luncheon and fellowship. Then at 3:00 p.m. at the Tokyo Lutheran Church in Shin Okubo, there was a Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary symposium "How and Where Do We Proceed? The Future of Lutheran Evangelism." The following day at 10:00 a.m., the memorial ceremony was held at the Mitaka City Public Hall. A commemorative worship Communion service took place at 1:30 p.m., and again at 3:00 p.m. in the Lutheran school chapel. The sermon was given by Professor Emeritus Yoshikazu Tokuzen. Many former Lutheran missionaries also came to Japan to attend these events at the invitation of JELA (Japan Evangelical Lutheran Association).



Overflow crowd for JLC Worship



Chapel at Japan Lutheran College and the Japan Lutheran Theological Seminary

Letter to President-elect Barack Obama

Editor's note: This letter was delivered to the US Embassy (in Japanese) while Obama was in Japan on November 8, 2009.

To the Honorable Barack Hussein Obama Jr, President of the United States of America

Dear President Obama:

We are the Committee on Peace and Nuclear Issues of NCCJ (National Christian Council in Japan), a network of 31 Christian organizations in Japan.

It is our firm belief that God asks us as corporate global people to realize a world where all human beings and all creatures on Earth are able to live in peace and peacefully. Further, we believe that we are called to support each other beyond cultural and national boundaries to cooperate in becoming peacemakers. In that belief, we strongly urge you to consider the following on the occasion of your visit to Japan

Currently, in Japan, plans are being discussed to relocate the US Futenma Base in Ginowan city in Okinawa, in order to restore the land to Okinawa for its own use. However, the people of Okinawa do not wish for the base to be relocated within the prefecture. The people of Okinawa experienced unbearable suffering during the Pacific War. They have also suffered repeated damage as the result of US bases continuing to be located in Okinawa for these sixty-four years even after the war was supposed to have been concluded.

This suffering includes the pain of the people in Okinawa realizing that they are still "taking part in the war", by allowing the existence of US military bases on their soil. Thus, the establishment of new bases and the strengthening of any current bases are against the will of the people of Okinawa. We, the members of the NCCJ who pray and wish for the realization of peace, share the same will as the people of Okinawa.

Arms do not realize peace. In fact, military bases are the initial targets when wars begin. We ask that you and the United States of America please not make Okinawa the target of war anymore. Please do not entangle Okinawa in any further wars. Please act on the belief that peace is realized through dialogue, not the development of or use of arms.

The Japanese Government is beginning to consider relocation of the Futenma base outside the territory of Okinawa. It is reported that the U.S. is pressuring the Japanese Government by indicating that there can be no reconsideration of the current US-Japan security agreement.

However, we trust that you, President Obama, are sincere in attempting to act for the realization of peace in the world. Given this premise, we would like to again strongly urge you to consider our request:

Please close down the Futenma Base because it continues to add to the suffering of the people in Okinawa; remove the base from Okinawa entirely.

Further, please stop pressuring the Japanese Government to retain the base in Okinawa and, instead, cooperate in its work for the realization of peace.

Let us together create true peace, which will be realized through dialogue, not the development or use of arms.

Thank you for your sincere attention to our request,

The members of the NCCJ Peace and Nuclear Issues Committee

WCC... (Continued from p. 8)

justice in partnership with civil society organisations and social movements in the region;

- b. Share widely, communicate creatively (e.g. through websites and videos), discuss deeply, and teach consistently the Chiang Mai Declaration together with the Asia-Pacific Indigenous Peoples', Women's and Youth Statements on Poverty, Wealth and Ecology to our constituencies, congregations, seminary students, and partners; and

- c. Be living alternatives that promote sustainable communities beginning with practising eco-just consumption.

17. We further call on our churches in Asia and Oceania, and global and regional ecumenical organisations to:
- a. Emphasize research and advocacy efforts on redistributive economic policies, especially land reform, and alternative consumption and production systems in the Asia and the Oceania;

(Cont'd on next page 12)

NCCJ Calendar Highlights 2009

June

- 22-26 14th International symposium on Committee Alien Registration Law in Japan
 28 One year memorial service for Dr. In ha Lee

July

- 7-9 150th year Commemorative Assembly on Protestant Mission in Japan
 10 NCCJ Welcome Dinner Reception for Rev. Dr. Ririmase, WCC Vice Moderator
 23 Peace action organized by Interfaith Peace Network (Submitted petitions to Prime Minister's office)

August

- 6-8 20th Seminar: Human Rights Education for Christian Schools
 10 Secretariat meeting on Article 9 conference in Korea
 13-20 NCCJ delegates visit China
 15 Prayer Meeting for Peace (Chidorigafuchi)
 22-24 Rev. Iijima attend ecumenical memorial service for the late President Kim Dae Jung in Korea

September

- 10 Preparatory meeting for second Inter-Religious conference on Article 9 in Korea
 16 Rev. Iijima attended the board meeting of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) in Kobe
 26 Symposium and peace march in Hiroshima organized by Inter-religious Article 9 Association.

October

- 4 NCCJ Ecumenical youth gathering
 21-23 International Consultation on Peace, Reconciliation and Reunification of Korean Peninsula (25th anniversary of Tozanso process) in Hong Kong

November

- 7 NCCJ Culture and Human Rights Seminar & Field Work on Buraku Issues in Asakusa area in Tokyo.
 14 NCCJ Lecture Meeting on Refugees and Human Rights Issues of Foreign Residents in Japan

December

- 11 Caroling for Peace sponsored by the Christian Network for Peace and held at St. Ignatius Church

WCC... *(Continued from p. 11)*

- b. Support Oceania churches' initiatives and advocacy efforts on resettlement plans, adaptation and reparations to small island states in Oceania and other Asian countries rendered victims by ecological and climate change to address the ecological and climate debt owed to them;
- c. Accompany member churches of the WCC and PCC in Oceania in:
- Developing local, national, sub-regional, regional and international plans to ensure respect for and protection of the rights of forced climate migrants;
 - Promoting research on prospective resettlement plans and on instruments such as ecological audits to ascertain the costs of resettlement; and
 - Developing the framework for a new Convention or Protocol on Resettlement to cater for forced ecological migrants; and
 - Commissioning studies on the links between poverty, wealth and ecology in the Oceania region with a view to presenting the findings in the 10th Assembly of the Pacific Conference of Churches in 2012.
- d. Allocate more resources to WCC's programmes on ecological debt, climate change, and water in order to address the incredibly pressing challenges in these areas;
- e. Empower women, Indigenous Peoples and youth – who bring a wealth of wisdom and energy – to participate fully in policy – and decision-making in church processes, especially in the urgent work on economic and ecological justice;

- f. Conduct ecological debt and gender audits to account for the social and ecological costs of church initiatives and activities;
- g. Strengthen and provide a platform for Indigenous Peoples with adequate financing and resourcing of the existing Indigenous Peoples' desk at the WCC and immediately convene a working group to develop the terms of reference and scope for an Indigenous Peoples' Christian Action Forum;
- h. Participate in alternative lifestyle cultures that reject consumerist corporate cultures through regenerating common public spaces of dissent and creation, and engaging in public awareness and education especially among young people; and
- i. Organise a dialogue on poverty, wealth and ecology with multi-faith communities to bring meaningful solidarity.



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