

NSKK NEWSLETTER

日本聖公会管区事務所だより

NIPPON SEI KO KAI Provincial Office

Editor : E. Hajime Suzuki

65 Yarai-cho, Shinjuku-ku,
Tokyo 162-0805 JAPAN

Tel. +81-3-5228-3171
Fax +81-3-5228-3175

Ten Years after the Great -Hanshin-Awaji Earthquake- Challenges for Christian Churches

The Rt. Rev. Andrew Y. Nakamura,
Bishop of Kobe Diocese

Ten years have passed since that great earthquake 〓 it was like a nightmare. We all heartily grateful for the warm supports given to us by a number of kind-hearted people throughout the world during these days.

Let 1 s recall that terrible moment. As there were a number cracks in the ground, which caused the suspension of water, people in Kobe Area were just vacantly watching their houses in raging flames; they were suffering from buzzing of ten 1 s of aeroplanes and helicopters which reached to their ears all day long; and they had to realize innumerable collapsed houses. People who lost their houses poured in public houses such as school buildings, and gymnasia or class-rooms immediately turned to their shelters. There were long lines of the victims in the schoolyard to get their daily meals. A few months afterwards, lines of dump-tracks or excavators came to take away rubble heaps from which dust storms were raised around the streets. Whole piles of rubbish were instantly disappeared and then there appeared plane grounds with no buildings.

In this way, City of Kobe has lost a number of residents in Nada Area, business/shopping quarters in the periphery of San-nomiya Station, Kobe Port which is known as a symbol of International City and Minato-Kobe, and downtowns along the sea shore; thus more than 6,400 precious lives were lost by quakes of the earth for only 10 or so seconds.

Over 100 billions of yen were raised for resuscitation of the damages by which buildings and roads have been reconstructed. They look much more gorgeous than those in pre-earthquake days. There are tall residential building where a number of solitary people are living. Each resident has been given a seemingly comfortable private room. I made a visit to a Community Center located in a corner of one of these buildings. To my regret and surprise, there was no sign of people gathering routinely in the Community Center. The Center ought to be built for the purpose of chatting together with those who have similar painful experiences to share their hardships. However, because of their loneliness,

their hearts are becoming cold and weathered. It seems that concrete tables and chairs installed for chatting together indicate their state of mind. It was originally thought by the planners and designers that if such a gorgeous building and an artificial space, in which a number of victims could be accommodated, might have offered comfortable life, much better than that of the pre-earthquake days. Those who would move into this gorgeous space might have communicated each other and there should be pleasant and deep communications among those residents with post-earthquake traumas. However, the first intention seems to be a kind of mere illusion.

After the end of the World War II, a number of people came to Kobe in order to obtain spaces for daily life. Numerous temporary shelters stood side by side on the streets. These shelters gradually turned to buildings, and in the downtown area, these were changed to wooden houses. People used to get together around the place, and to talk cheerfully about various topics.

The earthquake deprived of over 6400 lives in a moment. Those survivors who lost their fathers, mothers, sons, daughters, and/or friends should have met new acquaintances with similar post-earthquake traumas and established new relationship with them. It is stated in the Bible that Jesus wept for Mary and Martha who lost their loving brother Lazarus, took compassion on them and returned Lazarus to Mary and Martha. Ten years have already passed, and I strongly feel that all the Christians in the Kobe District should assume our duty to continuously comfort their minds. We will have to accomplish the duty now and for ever, as a challenge imposed on us.

Helping hands for those suffering from the Tsunami disaster in the Indian Ocean

Thoughts after attending an emergency meeting of CCA to address rescue and rehabilitation concerns

The Rev. Laurence Yutaka Minabe
General Secretary of NSKK

I attended the emergency meeting of CCA which was held in Colombo, Sri Lanka between January 26 and 30. People from the 7 countries affected by the Tsunami and 6 CCA member countries who are willing to offer help gathered to exchange information and discuss rescue and rehabilitation programs. The stricken area is vast and each area has its own particular concerns. Also other issues not related to the disaster were brought up and discussed.

In the western and southern areas of Sri Lanka the level of damage was very severe. The tsunami had hit from between several hundred meters to several kilometers from the shore line depending upon its geographical features. The first thing that the people had to do was to bury the dead. Then they had to clear and sterilize the area. Clearing is simply to get rid of all rubble and trash. I was amazed to find a fishing boat so far from the shore line.

Those who live in the villages along the shore line are mainly fishermen except for those who are involved in tourism. They are afraid that the government may not allow them to rebuild their villages within 100 to 200 meters from the shore line. They may be allowed to rebuild in an area far from the shore but this means that they will not be able to continue

their conventional fishing because they can not feel or smell the sea from where they are settled. They are also facing the immediate problem of not being able to sell their catch, even if they could start fishing immediately, because the sea is contaminated

Casteism is another issue for fishermen. They are not a part of casteism. So they can not give up fishing and take up different jobs because people in other jobs will not allow new comers from a different job category. How to return to fishing is a big challenge for these fishermen whose only livelihood can be in fishing.

Another issue in Sri Lanka is conflict between races; namely the conflict between the Sinhala majority and the Tamil minority. They are very different in language and belief. Right now they are observing a truce, but land mines have been placed all over the area. Also during this crisis there is a feeling of inequality in the distribution of relief aid supplies. The Bishop of Colombo emphasized that attention has to be paid so that we do not stir up unnecessary racial conflict by creating a feeling of having been treated unfairly.

I talked with a representative from the Church of North India about the situation in The Diocese of Andaman & Car Nicobar Islands but he was not sure about it because communication to the area was almost non-existent. It is very isolated from India and I believe that language and belief is different from that of India. Comments by a representative of Bangladesh sounded very cynical and sad because he said that every year they experience damage from typhoons and flooding, but that this year they only experienced the effects of the tsunami.

It was reported that over 320,000 people died from natural disasters in the year 2004 and only 30,000 were due to the earthquake in Sumatra Island and the tsunami in the Indian Ocean. In order to rehabilitate people from disasters we, Christians in the Asian Region will pray together and offer a long term rehabilitation program.

What I learned from MJM Seminar

The Rev. Alban Yoshikatsu Abe
Hokkaido Diocese of NSKK

I participated in the Seminar sponsored by MJM New York from Oct. 11 to 28, 2004. It was a great opportunity for me to be given many valuable experiences. MJM means [Metropolitan Japanese Ministry], The congregation organized under the cooperation of Nippon Sei Ko Kai and Episcopal Church in USA, works as a link in the chain for the Japanese ministry in USA. MJM has been very active working together and offering a variety of program to Japanese and American people.

I participated in the 2004 Seminar for the purpose and reason as follows;

1. I wished to observe and learn the reality of religious activities in New York.
2. I wished to know the role the Church takes in the American society. I wanted to study in a hospital, especially about pastoral care practice in the hospital.
3. I also hoped to have the opportunity to exchange with the congregation living in New York.

To New York

On Oct. 11th(Mon) I arrived in JFK Airport at 5:15 p.m., and Ms. Kyoko Kageyama

welcomed me. We had been keeping in touch through E-mail. She kindly took care of me during my stay for the Seminar. I would like to write the summary of the contents of the Seminar in New York/

(This is a part of the Seminar planned by MJM)

1. I participated in a reading circle held at Princeton and Westchester. After we had a Bible study, I joined a potluck party and exchanged information. It was informative and encouraging for me.
2. I attended the Service (Holy Communion), which is held twice a month. I was responsible for the sermon. About ten people are in congregation. After the service I enjoyed a meal and conversation with them.
3. I participated in the Service of MFM, which is for Filipinos and is the same as MJM. After the Service I enjoyed a meal with very friendly people.

The Seminar I hoped to attend

Since I had learned that The United States is one of the most advanced countries concerning Pastoral Care at hospitals and other places, I have waited for this opportunity to learn and experience Pastoral Care at the hospital during the Seminar. Fortunately I was given a chance at St. Luke's Hospital.

In St. Luke's Hospital, an Episcopal female chaplain was working. The patient was cared for by a team unit consisting of a doctor, a nurse and a physical therapist. These medical team and the chaplain were working together.

I learned the role of the chaplain was to care about the patient's spirit. I had imagined that the presence of the chaplain was more independent, but the chaplain was a part of the unit team, which was a well organized system at St. Luke's Hospital. It was different from that I had imagined.

To become a chaplain, one should be trained sufficiently with a deep consideration for the patient's personality. Only those people, who reached the very high level both in training and consideration, are able to take the test and become qualified. That was an explanation I learned from the chaplain. She also explained about the work of the chaplain at St. Luke's Hospital as follows:

1. Being together with the patient (Being on the scene)
2. Showing own presence (Call me anytime, using Beeper)
3. Attending Unit Team meeting

The team works together in a body. All of the team member work for the lives of the patients.

I was amazed that the Care Program was planned so thoroughly and minutely. Based on the assumption that every case is different, all are well organized with the manual and training as well. The chaplains are not only Christian but also Muslim and other religion as well, all are working together. All of this I learned from her.

While I was visiting the hospital ward with the chaplain, her beeper rang. It was a call from a patient's family who had decided to turn off the life-support system for the patient. The patient had lost consciousness following heart surgery and was left in a vegetable-like state while using a life-support system. It has been for several months and recovery was hopeless.

The chaplain had to go to her room. I was not allowed to follow her, but the chaplain explained that she listened to the family's request and prayed together hand-in-hand for the patient. (In addition, the chaplain's agreement to move the life-support system from the patient was required.)

It was only two hour visiting to the hospital, but I learned about so many precious works concerning life. I was deeply impressed but how well-trained each person on the team was and how they focused on the patient in every case.

New Bishop was installed in the North Kanto Diocese of Nippon Sei Ko Kai

On 11th February 2005, The Rev. Zerubabel Katsuichi Hirota was installed as the 9th Bishop of North Kanto Diocese of NSKK. The Confirmation and Installation were held at St. Paul's Chapel of Rikkyo Accademy in Niiza City, Saitama Prefecture. Bishops from each Diocese in NSKK, representatives from Anglican Church in Korea and Urawa Diocese of Catholic Church attended the Service. At the Reception, over 500 brothers and sisters celebrated the birth of new bishop.