

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Primate of NSKK(Nippon Sei Ko Kai)
James Toru Uno
Committee for Peace and Justice

Statement by the Primate of NSKK and the Committee regarding Iraq Issue

The Peace of Christ be always with you

It is a very critical moment now for the entire world in regards to whether to go to war or maintain peace over the Iraq Issue. I would like to make my position clear on this matter to my brothers and sisters in Christ, and I ask each one of you to pray for peace so that war may be avoided.

God created the whole world and especially he created all in his own image. This is a symbol of his love towards all people. Therefore God commanded us through Moses “ Do not commit murder(Exodus 20:18)” and he prohibits us from killing each other because of his love for everybody. Therefore terrorism and war are both against God's will for they destroy life. We want to express our opinion that we are against terrorism and war of any kind and ask that the government of USA give up any plan to attack Iraq immediately.

In the past people have failed to obey God's commandment and have started wars and committed mass murder. It has been the history of sinful mankind to retaliate against the sin of war with further sin of war. God has given us his beloved Son, Jesus Christ, to release us from this chain of sins. He teaches us in Matthew 5:44 “ But now I tell you : love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you “ and he lived by his own words. When he was crucified he said (Luke 23:34) “ Forgive them Father! They do not know what they are doing.” The government of USA has a plan to attack Iraq by calling her an axis of evil and claiming that she has weapons of mass destruction and supports terrorists. USA will fight against the evil of Iraq with the evil of war. Once USA starts a war with Iraq there will be retaliation which will in turn create another war and the whole world will be covered with wars. To avoid this chain reaction I will ask you to stand with Christ and do whatever you can. I pray that the leaders of the government of USA to stand with good faith and courage.

During the Second World War Japan endured great loss of life. This greatly influenced its new Constitution founded on the principles of peace; particularly Article 9. This states that we will never go into war and will maintain disarmament. This is in harmony with Christ's teaching. The Anglican Church in Lambeth meeting in 1930 declared that to resolve international conflicts by war is against the teaching and practice of our Lord Jesus Christ. In Article 9 it states that Japan will seek world peace based on justice and order, and give up forever armaments as means of resolving international conflicts by war, threat of military power, and actual military engagement. Unfortunately the government of Japan has expressed support for attack of Iraq by USA against our constitution and is planning to send ships of the Self Defense Force into international waters claiming that it is in a non combative role. I request the Japanese Government to observe our constitution of peace, maintain peaceful actions, and not to support any war action. I pray that not only Iraq but also the entire world, specifically those nations which have capability of nuclear attack, give up their weapons of mass destruction and also disarm completely.

It is believed that the cause of terrorism and war is the existence of injustice in the world; and unless this root cause is eliminated there will never be peace on earth. There can not be peace without justice. God has taught us (Matthew 5:9) " Happy are those who work for peace ". Action towards justice by listening to and working for those who suffer from poverty, oppression, and discrimination because of injustice will bring peace. This is the true form of our faith. NSKK (Nippon Sei Ko Kai) has failed to work for justice and peace in the past but at General Synod in 1996 we accepted a statement admitting responsibility for the War. In this we confessed " its sin for having supported the war". We pray that we will be changed to recognize our mission to do justice as the people of God, and as the vessels of peace, to listen to the voices of the divisions, pains, cries, and suffering of the world. Facing the issue of Iraq war now we need to raise our voice against war and listen to those who are suffering, especially people in Iraq with their fear of war. We also need to pray and take action for justice and peace.

Lent will begin today. I ask each one of you to think about your own faith and also pray and act for peace and justice for the world.

In Christ

2003/3/5 Ash Wednesday