

Executive Council Establishes an Executive Committee

The second Executive Council meeting of the 36th General Assembly biennial period took place at the Kyodan headquarters on July 6 and 7. The Executive Council consists of 27 delegates elected at the General Assembly, including the *san'yaku* (the three top officials: namely, the moderator, vice-moderator, and secretary of the General Assembly). Prior to beginning with the regular proceedings, the changes in council membership were announced. One of the members had suffered a subarachnoid hemorrhage and thus was unable to continue, so his resignation was received. Kishita Nobuyo, the next in line in the General Assembly voting, was installed as the replacement, necessitating his resignation as chairperson of the Commission on Ecumenical Ministries although he will continue as a member of the committee.

The first item on the agenda concerned observers. Pastor Sugawara Kuniaki's request for permission to be an observer at the meeting was discussed but denied, based on his previous actions. Specifically, he was accused of showing disrespect for the communion service at the General Assembly by his actions in the distribution of the elements.

As it had been over six months since the previous meeting of the Executive Council in December 2008, many issues were raised about items in the reports of the General Assembly secretary and the Kyodan general secretary. Questions were raised particularly about the report on the "Kyodan Subsidies for District Activities," the "Designated Observer Report," and the "Report on the Admonition of Pastor Kitamura Jiro," but in the end, all of the reports were approved. (See KNL issues 347 and 349.)

Regarding the appointment of executive secretaries, the present structure provides for two full-time executive secretaries (General Affairs and Financial Affairs, both being appointed for four-year terms) and four part-time executive secretaries, with terms of one year each. The

four part-time executive secretaries are recommended by the general secretary each year for approval by the Executive Council.

This year, it was decided to approve the part-time executive secretaries one at a time instead of the usual way of ratifying their selection as a block. As a result, one of the nominees was rejected, and when this was announced, the executive secretary said that he could not accept this decision. He immediately submitted his resignation and left the meeting. Needless to say, this brought on a crisis, and so it was left up to the *san'yaku* (the moderator, vice-moderator and secretary of the General Assembly) and the general secretary to work things out.

On the second day of the session, the discussion shifted to that of establishing the Executive Committee, which up to that point had not been duly constituted as stipulated in Article 37 of the bylaws. As the Executive Council had not been able to meet for over six months, important issues had to be delegated to the executive secretaries. In order to avoid such an undesirable situation, seven members of the Executive Council were chosen to serve in this capacity. Their first meeting was scheduled for August 31.

The other main topic addressed was that of the examination for the status of director of Christian education. At the most recent qualifying examination for directors of Christian education, there was only one applicant, and that person did not pass. With respect to this situation, the issues of what constitutes a qualifying examination and how someone who has failed should be treated were raised and debated. However, the proposal to discuss the actual content of the qualifying exam was rejected, and with that, the session ended. (Tr. TB)

— Ishimaru Yasuki, executive secretary
Based on article in *Shinpo* (Kyodan Times)

Commemorating 150 Years of Protestant Evangelism in Japan

The worship service commemorating the day of the Kyodan's founding, held on June 24 at Fujimicho Church in Tokyo, also celebrated 150 years of Protestant evangelism in Japan. This was the Kyodan's 68th commemorative worship service, which 320 persons from 133 churches attended, giving thanks for the planting of the seeds of Protestant evangelism and for the mercy of God, the guiding force of history. The sermon, entitled "Make Disciples of All Nations," was delivered by Yamakita Nobuhisa, moderator of the Kyodan's General Assembly. Joining in the Confession of Faith and taking part in the communion service was truly meaningful. A ceremony for presentation of awards followed the worship. This was carried out to express gratitude for the work of pastors who have continued active ministry in church evangelism for over 50 years. There are 61 such pastors. To these ministers Moderator Yamakita presented handwritten letters of appreciation and Bibles, in commemoration. The longest time of continued ministry was 66 years.

Those who entered Japan as Protestant missionaries in 1859, when the ports of Yokohama, Hakodate, and Nagasaki were simultaneously opened, were John Liggins, C.M. Williams, G. Verbeck, J. C. Hepburn, Samuel R. Brown, and D. R. Simmons. This was during the final years of the Edo (Tokyo) Shogunate government, a time of upheaval in Japan. The missionaries came to Japan to bring the Gospel, but public notices outlawing Christianity were posted throughout the nation. Consequently, the missionaries applied their energy to Bible translation and to editing and publishing Japanese-English dictionaries. The public notices forbidding Christianity were removed in 1873. This enabled the missionaries to begin full-scale evangelism. As Japan opened its ports, the number of young people wanting to engage in Western studies steadily increased. Reportedly, nine of the young people who gathered around J. H. Ballagh in 1872 were baptized, thus laying the foundation for the first Protestant church in Japan. The missionaries, while proclaiming Christianity, also enthusiastically taught Western studies, social work, education, and medical treatment. They advanced these retarded areas of Japanese culture and built the foundation for a new Japan.

The theme of this year's events is the Protestant evangelism that began 150 years ago in 1859; but on April 30, 1846, (13 years earlier), Bernard John Bettelheim, sent from England as a missionary by the Anglican Church, arrived in Okinawa. Bettelheim landed with his family in the Ryukyus (now Okinawa) and for eight years, in spite of persecution, diligently devoted himself to evangelism, medical care, and translation of the Bible into the Ryukyu language. He is believed to have left Okinawa, gaining passage on a ship in Perry's fleet, which was pressing Japan to open its ports. So it might be said that Bettelheim is the one who first engaged in Protestant evangelism in Japan. Thus, when we commemorate 150 years of



150th year commemorative worship service at Fujimicho Church, site of the founding of the Kyodan

evangelization in Japan, dating it from 1859, we must remember Bettelheim's lasting pioneer labor. Also to be noted, as we celebrate these 150 years, is their relationship to earlier celebrations commemorating 50 years and 100 years of evangelism, counting from the same year. However, the earliest introduction of Christianity into Japan goes even farther back to 1549, when Francisco Xavier came to Japan as a missionary of the Roman Catholic Church. Thus, Christianity has been propagated in Japan for 460 years.

As the year 2009 approached, several of the Protestant churches in Japan decided to sponsor jointly a mass meeting commemorating 150 years of Protestant mission in Japan. One event planned early was the commemoration dinner held on July 7, when 915 persons gathered and rejoiced while eating together. Representatives from the U.S. Episcopal Church, the Presbyterian Church USA, and the Reformed Church in America presented greetings. The archbishop of the Roman Catholic Church in Tokyo also brought greetings.

A commemorative assembly was held on the following days, July 8 and 9, at the Pacifico Yokohama National Hall. Under the theme "One in Christ (as the Lord's witnesses)," the various Japanese Protestant denominations came together as one to give thanks and celebrate the past 150 years. The attendance at the opening worship service on July 8 was 4,500; at the memorial ceremony on July 9: 3,700; and at the "sending out for witness" worship service: 4,000.

This fall, the Kyodan will hold a lay persons' mass meeting on Nov. 22 and on Nov. 23, a ceremony commemorating these 150 years of evangelism. We offer heartfelt thanks to God who has guided our history leading to these 150-year commemorative celebrations. (Tr. RB)

—Suzuki Nobuharu, secretary
Kyodan General Assembly

Reflections on the Kyodan

by Sasaki Michio, vice-moderator
Kyodan General Assembly

I have been serving as the Kyodan vice-moderator since being elected to the post at the 36th Kyodan General Assembly in the fall of 2008. There is so much for me to learn as I participate in the various committee meetings, such as the Kyodan Executive Council, and in ecumenical relations with our partner churches overseas, and as I strive to understand the structural workings of the Kyodan. As one of the top executives of the Kyodan, I am aware of the heavy responsibilities that are before me. Daily I pray for the more than 1,700 Kyodan churches and house churches around the country, for their daily witness and ministries.

This year marks 150 years of Protestant mission in Japan, and there are many commemorative ceremonies and evangelistic programs being held in the various Protestant denominations as well as ecumenically. It is important to remember with gratitude the commitment of missionaries in the past, who worked tirelessly to spread the gospel of Christ and to serve the people across Japan. The missionaries walked every corner of Japan, carrying the message of Christ with them. Along the paths that they tread grew churches, schools, and social welfare organizations that still stand to this day. We, as the Kyodan, need to receive these blessings of the past and to continue to serve with joy and thanksgiving. At this time, Kyodan churches around the country are faced with the issue of evangelism. As you may already know, many of our congregations are aging, and the number of young people in our churches is decreasing.

We might say that these trends are indicative of Japanese society as a whole, but they are especially noticeable in the Kyodan. If the generation that has supported the church in so many ways throughout the years is aging, and the next generation is not able to follow in turn to carry on the church, then we can assume that the witness of the churches, the ministries of service to society, and the financial feasibility of the church itself will be put in question in the years to come. In particular, for the churches that witness in areas with a declining population and that carry the gospel to a wide variety of communities in the rural countryside, there is a real question of the church's survival. At the various district annual meetings this spring, as delegates discussed district activities and budgets, people did express their concerns on this matter.

The Kyodan's Finance Committee produced a report last year entitled "Data on the Kyodan over the Past 50 Years." The report, with hard figures that reveal the state of our

churches, was circulated at district annual meetings across the country. The committee also made suggestions for the future of the church. There may be various opinions regarding this report, but it is clear that our churches have been experiencing the hard realities that this report confirms. The report brings to the fore major issues that we must face. We must find the strength and resolve to overcome these obstacles as we join in evangelism.

I have been pastoring a relatively small church for the past 30 years. I have been very aware and grateful for the ways in which the missionaries have, over the past 100 years, nurtured and given form to each of our churches in the area. In certain instances, I have trembled anew at the words of the risen Christ to "go therefore to the ends of the earth to make disciples of all nations." These are places that missionaries and our predecessors in the faith came to over 100 years ago under conditions much more difficult than our own. In these places they tried to evangelize. These are the places in which God called them to build a church. All over Japan there are such places where our churches now stand. Many of our churches are still small, and yet it is in these places that the gospel is preached, and the churches are able to make their witness. These churches represent the hard work and the prayers of so many people throughout the years who fought to protect and support the church.

These, our churches, are now facing a major crisis. In order to hope for a future in Christ, we need to pray and continue our efforts in evangelism. We are called to pray together and to evangelize together as one body. As members of the apostolic church who are called to hold firm to "what we have heard from the beginning," we must be resolved to stand firmly in the faith. We can only proceed by finding common ground in our understanding of ordained ministry. The Kyodan can only support each individual church if we are able to find unity in faith and trust between our churches.

As vice-moderator, I am humbled by the major issues that stand before us. But I am also aware that the power to overcome these obstacles comes from the Spirit, and from the Word, which is the foundation of our church.

I am very grateful both for the witness of our partners across the seas as well as for all of you who continue to pray for the Kyodan. (Tr. JM)

Taiwanese Churches Promote the Gospel in Japan



Worship service commemorating the 30th anniversary of Takadanobaba Taiwanese Church's founding

Takadanobaba Taiwanese Church

The Taiwanese church in Takadanobaba, Tokyo, was established through the pioneering work and hardships of God's faithful servant, Pastor Sho Shuji. On April 2, 2008, the church celebrated its 30th anniversary with joy and thanksgiving, giving praise to God. I myself took over as Sho Shuji's successor on October 6, 1991, and looking back now, I rejoice at the way the elders and the whole congregation have single-mindedly devoted themselves to spreading the gospel. In 1994, our church was accepted into the Kyodan, and so, as well as starting to establish links with other Taiwanese churches, it is natural that we are also able to make good connections with Japanese churches.

In our international circumstances of living in Japan, and with a responsibility for the spiritual well-being of our fellow Taiwanese, we at Takadanobaba Taiwanese Church conduct all our gatherings in Taiwanese. This is because for those of us residing or studying here, as well as for visiting relatives and tourists who also come, it is especially moving to praise, pray, hear God's word, and have fellowship through our Lord in our mother tongue, more so than when everything is conducted in Japanese. We take this privilege very seriously, and see it as a significant part of the existence of Taiwanese churches in Japan.

Here are some ways we are currently promoting the Gospel.

- * Before the weekly Sunday service, in order to improve our hymn singing, we spend ten minutes practicing hymns. Then after the worship service, everyone reads a scriptural text aloud together.
- * Twice a month, everyone who has attended worship stays for a Bible study meeting and prayer meeting, in which we learn about sound faith and seek power from our Lord in order to live strong Christian lives.
- * The women's circle has its regular meeting once a month, including Bible study and prayer as well as times of testimony and activities, such as lectures about health. These provide a varied program to which non-Christians can also be invited.
- * At Christmas and Easter, the whole congregation, led by the choir, joins in services of praise.
- * Four Taiwanese churches have joined together to form the "Sing-ni-hoe" (fellowship) for elderly believers.

This group holds regular meetings four times a year, and also has lectures about health, classes on the arts and culture, and other activities, such as cooking, trips, and walks. These all contribute to the promotion of balance in faith and in daily life, and help to attract non-Christians to church.

Our congregation is small, but we ask for the encouragement and prayers of all our brothers and sisters in Christ in all the churches, and we commit ourselves with you to untiring efforts for the spread of the gospel.

Chiba Taiwanese Church

The first service of worship of what has now become Chiba Taiwanese Church was held in the home of a believer in Sakura in March 1992. In those days, the group made repeated requests to various pastors of Taiwanese churches in Tokyo to come and preach. Two years later, in November 1994, after a private house in Nobuto in the Central District of Chiba City was purchased and remodelled as a place of worship, the group moved its meeting place from Sakura to Chiba. This was registered as the Chiba Taiwanese Preaching Point (church) of the Kyodan, and the dedication ceremony took place in March 1993. As no minister was assigned to the preaching point at this stage, retired ministers from Taiwan who were able to speak Japanese and who could come for short terms of service were invited.

In January 2002, as the preaching point was celebrating the 10th anniversary of its founding, Cho Sei Ko, a retired pastor of Ikebukuro Taiwanese Church in Tokyo, was welcomed as minister. At that time, the meeting place in Nobuto was hard to find and had no parking space, so the members were constantly praying for a new place of worship. Very soon after this, they learned of the present location in the Central District of Chiba City, which is on a main road, with good access from the station, and already has parking space for eight cars in the building at street level. It seemed like the ideal place for a church. The fact that, at the same time, a buyer appeared for the former meeting place, spurred us to purchase the new church premises.

In order to provide the funds for the new church, in May 2002 many people were contacted with requests for donations. In this way, with the proceeds from the sale of the former premises and everyone's donations, it was possible to purchase the new church building. The name of the building was changed from "City Building" to "Chiba Christian Center," and the following month the first worship service took place on the 7th floor. With the cooperation of the Kyodan, Pastor Chang So En was invited to come from Taiwan in July 2007, and his installation took place in September that year.

In April 2009, all the members of the Chiba Taiwanese Preaching Point gave thanks as its status changed to that of a small-sized church of the Kyodan, and its name changed to Chiba Taiwanese Church. We currently meet for worship at 11 a.m. every Sunday, with Bible study and Sunday School from 1 p.m. Such groups as the choir and the Women's

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EMS Mission Council Meeting Held in Ghana

*Report on Missionary Council of the Association of Churches and Missions in South Western Germany (EMS)
“Department of Mission and Ecumenism, and Developing Nations Church Assistance” of the Württemberg Church*

The International Mission Council of the Association of Churches and Missions based in Southwestern Germany (Evangelisches Missionswerk in Südwestdeutschland: EMS) held its Annual Meeting in Abokobi near Accra in Ghana, June 15-21. At the meeting, 36 EMS representatives from 23 churches and 5 mission societies in ten countries in Europe, Asia, and Africa, along with the EMS administrative officers, debated and determined future mission activities. This meeting is held annually, and every sixth year it is held outside of Germany. Twelve years ago, it was held in Indonesia and six years ago in India. This is the first time for it to be held in Africa. The council was hosted by the Presbyterian Church of Ghana, an EMS partner church that worked hard to put this conference together. Among countries in Africa, Ghana is politically stable with good peace and order.

This meeting focused on future mission policy for at least the next three years (2009-2012), along with the financing to make that possible. Regarding the content of missions, EMS administrative officials prepared detailed materials with evaluations of past activities and future-focused proposals. With respect to finances, EMS is dependent to a large degree upon the German state church and is facing a major problem because of the sharp decline in church tax income predicted for the German churches. To be specific, by 2012 the Association must decrease its budget by 150 million yen (one million Euros). EMS's annual budget is about one billion yen, and so this financial problem was an important topic of this Annual Meeting.

Regarding the content of the mission activities, most are administered by the EMS officers, but the basic framework for the “three-year plan” was proposed by the Indonesian church. Activities have been diverse up to now and spring from the rich fellowship of the churches and mission societies that form EMS. Europe (primarily Germany) and fellowship (partnership) with Asia and Africa is occurring at the local level. For example, local exchanges between Germany and South Korea and between Germany and Indonesia have been ongoing for about 20 years in some places. Unfortunately, there is not even one Kyodan local church in regular partnership with a German church. The Kyodan churches and laity have learned from German theology, but it must be said that actual exchange has been rare.

EMS has maintained 85 projects in the past. In the headquarters in Stuttgart, there is an “Asia Desk” that maintains relationships with churches in India, Korea, China, and Japan and jointly bears with



A worship service, with containers for collecting the offering

them responsibilities and shares issues. The liaison secretary for Japan is Lutz Drescher, assisted by secretary Gisela Koellner. Mira Sonntag has been sent from EMS to Japan and serves as the director of Tomisaka Christian Center in Bunkyo-ku, Tokyo.

Previous activities, such as dealing with gender issues and measures for prevention of HIV & AIDS, have been well regarded and will be continued for the next three years. Also, volunteer activities that representative youth from Japan also participated in were seen to produce good results in starting new fellowships and networking among youth. Furthermore, related to the financial problem and EMS's particular relationship to the Kyodan, EMS has changed the budget for support funds as follows: 450,000 yen to be given for the work of “prison chaplains” in 2010-11, similarly 900,000 yen for the Buraku Liberation Center, and likewise, 900,000 yen for the Japanese-Filipino Family Support Center located at the Japan Christian Center.

At this Annual Meeting of the Mission Council, there were lively deliberations and decisions regarding the EMS Focus. “Giving Account of our Hope” was chosen as the slogan for 2009-12, and eagerness can be felt for witnessing to the hope in Christ in an age of hopelessness.

As for my own reflections on participating in this Mission Council, I felt that since EMS has high expectations for and solidarity with the Kyodan, the Kyodan has a responsibility to respond. Reductions in personnel funds limit the Asia coordinator to visiting Japan only once every other year, but through other exchanges, I hope that we can further deepen our relationship. (Tr. PST)

—Minami Kichie, Kyodan Overseas Minister

The Journey of Mary Eddy Kidder, Pioneer in Women's Education in Modern Japan

by Tabei Yoshiro, principal
Ferris Jogakuin Junior and Senior High School

Ferris Jogakuin, Japan's first school for women, was started by Mary Eddy Kidder. Kidder was the first missionary woman to Japan, arriving from the U.S. in September 1870. The school got its start when Kidder began to teach in one of the infirmary rooms of the Presbyterian medical missionary, Dr. James Hepburn. (The infirmary was located at Foreign Settlement # 39 Yamashita-cho in Yokohama.) Kidder's students were pupils of Hepburn's wife, some of whom were young women. Japan was in the third year of the Meiji Era, and although modernization had begun, Christianity was still prohibited. At a time when it was hardly imaginable for a woman to be educated, Kidder offered women an education based on Christian principles.

Kidder was born in Wardsboro, Vermont in 1834 and as a teenager dreamed of going abroad as a missionary. She realized her dream at the age of 35. By the end of the Tokugawa Shogunate, Protestant missionaries were coming to Japan in rapid succession, one of whom was the Reverend Dr. S.R. Brown of the Dutch Reformed Church in America, later to become the Reformed Church in America (RCA). In speeches in the U.S., Brown emphasized the need to educate women in order to modernize Japan. Recognizing her faith and strong call to foreign missions, Brown encouraged his Foreign Board of Missions to accept Kidder, then teaching in a private school, as an educational missionary to Japan.

Soon after Kidder began her classes, girls heard about them and began to gather in the small room where she was teaching. Among those students, girls eager to study had to struggle continually to persuade their parents, who saw no need for them to study. As the number of students increased, Kidder was able to find an ally in the vice-governor of Kanagawa Prefecture, Ooe Taku. He gave her permission to move her classes to the prefectural residence. Meanwhile, with financial aid coming from the U.S. church, school buildings and a dormitory were built on the present school location at 178 Yamanote (in Yokohama). On June 1, 1875, an impressive dedication of the new school building was held, and the following year the formal name of the school became Isaac Ferris Seminary.

The school name "Ferris" is in recognition of Isaac Ferris and his son John. Both father and son served as head of the RCA's foreign missions' program, and under their leadership many Japanese exchange students and delegations were received in the U.S., while at the same time many missionaries, including Kidder, were sent abroad. Since that time, Ferris Jogakuin has been supported by the women's board of RCA's Global Missions.

The educational ideals of the school, based on the Christian faith, were to develop responsible family members, train persons to be the educators of the future, and insure the acquisition of the knowledge and culture required to meet these ideals. Since then, many who



Mary Eddy Kidder



A copy of the small monthly publication
Yorokobi no Otozure (visit of joy)

became leaders in the development of women's education in Japan have been nurtured at Ferris. In particular, many of the women presently involved in higher education for women at the university level have a Ferris background. In fulfillment of the educational ideals that Kidder pioneered, graduates of Ferris Jogakuin have continued to be on the front line of women's education in Japan.

In 1873 Kidder married Presbyterian missionary Rothesay Miller. Fully understanding the importance of his wife's work, Miller became a missionary of the RCA following the marriage. Soon the reputation of Ferris Jogakuin spread, and young women from across Japan were coming to the school. Some came from as far away as Nagasaki, wanting an education to prepare them to be pastors' wives. Others came at the encouragement of progressive parents or guardians.

In 1881 Kidder, whose devoted efforts gave birth to Ferris Jogakuin and built its early foundation, turned over the administration of the school to its second principal, Eugene S. Booth. Leaving her role as educator, she then served in the field of evangelism with her husband. Their service from 1888 to 1902 in the cold of Morioka in Iwate Prefecture is well-known. While she and her husband were involved in evangelism across Japan, Kidder was also publishing articles for children and families in a small monthly magazine called *Yorokobi no Otozure* (visit of joy). In particular, she worked to enhance the position of women and children in Japanese society.

Kidder's 41-year journey in Japan was not just as the founder of Ferris Jogakuin. It was the rich journey of a woman missionary lived to its fullest. This year the city of Yokohama celebrated the 150th anniversary of the opening of its port. It is also the 150th anniversary of Protestant evangelism in Japan. Next year, Ferris Jogakuin will celebrate the 140th anniversary of its founding, which will also be the 140th anniversary of women's education in Japan. We at Ferris Jogakuin take pride in remembering that the foundation for women's education in Japan today is due to the strong faith of a young Christian missionary woman and her strong commitment to women's education. (Tr. JS)

Growing Sweet Potatoes in the Neighboring Vacant Lot "God Gave the Growth"



Momoyama Church school children and church members proudly displaying their crop of potatoes

There is a 15-square meter vacant lot on the south side of our church. Completely covered with almost impenetrable weeds, it posed the danger of sooner or later becoming a trash dump. To help the children

become better acquainted with the adults, our church school joins the adult worship services on Easter, Thanksgiving, and Christmas. On these occasions there is usually a potluck lunch, except for the Thanksgiving lunch, which we cook together at the church. So last year, for the Thanksgiving lunch, we decided to plant some sweet potato seedlings in the vacant lot.

On the last Sunday in May, we planted the seedlings. Of course, in preparation, adult members had cut the weeds, tilled the land, and built ridges in the field. Five months later, on Nov.16, a week before Thanksgiving Sunday worship service, the sweet potatoes were ready to be harvested. Unfortunately, it was raining that day, and there were fewer children than usual. However, the result was as shown in the photo. The children planted, the pastor watered. Otherwise, they were mostly left unattended. It was truly an experience of "God gave the growth". (Tr. RK)

— Tanaka Takahiro, pastor
Momoyama Church, Chubu District
From *Shinto no Tomo*(Believers' Friend)

Former Worship Sanctuary becomes an Art Museum Meditation Space with Famous Biblical Pictures

Using the opportunity when the worship sanctuary was moved down to the first floor, the former second-floor worship sanctuary was converted into a museum of art. The museum features biblical pictures by the late Nishizaka Osamu and some contemporary prints by the late Watanabe Sadao. As the above two artists are comparatively well known, the display surprises some of the visitors.

As can be seen in the photos, there is a restful ambience between the former sanctuary and these works by Christian artists. One visitor said, "Here one can spend a nice quiet time with a cup of coffee." The museum is not advertised, so it is not widely known, but it serves as a meditation space for this small village church. There is no admission fee. (Tr. RK)

— Hoshino Masaoki, pastor
Matsuzaki Church, Tokai District
From *Shinto no Tomo*(Believers' Friend)



Matsuzaki Church's old second-floor sanctuary has become an art museum decorated with artworks

The General Secretary's Diary

The 43rd meeting of the Kyodan Commission on Cooperative Mission and the Korean Christian Church in Japan was held June 8-9 at the Itoyanagi Hotel in Isawa, Yamanashi Prefecture. Discussion centered on the fact that this year is the KCCJ's 100th anniversary of mission. The theme was "The Two Churches' Mission Issues and Cooperation in Mission." In addition to the three administrative officers namely, the moderator, vice-moderator, and secretary of both churches and the chair of the Commission on Mission, the general administrative secretary and mission administrative secretaries of both churches, presentations were made by the chairs of the Committee on Social Concerns and the Committee on Education of the Korean Christian Church in Japan and the chair of the Kyodan's Special Committee on Solidarity with Citizens of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Living in Japan, making a total of 14 persons in attendance.

The presentations of the two members of the Korean Christian Church naturally dealt with the problems of Korean people in Japan; and those concerns, particularly the protection of human rights, were the primary focus of the conference. These are issues of mission and important issues that must be dealt with cooperatively. Historically speaking, most of the Korean people now living in Japan are second- and third-generation descendants of people who were forcibly brought to Japan as a policy of the Japanese government after the "annexation," which was in fact an invasion of Korea. Also, a considerable number have come of their own volition in recent years, primarily for the purpose of mission. The situation of Korean people in Japan is severe, and the church not only must work to stop their fingerprinting but also must seek basic solutions to support their existence and human rights and enable them to live freely.

Few of us Japanese know well the history of North Korea and South Korea, which are our neighboring countries. The history of China is taught to some extent in junior and senior high school, but the history of the two Koreas has hardly been taught at all. The misunderstanding that results from this ignorance causes ethnic and cross-national conflict and can be seen as the cause of the friction in our relationships. In light of this, we strongly feel that the churches of both countries, which share the same Christian faith, specifically the Korean Christian Church in Japan and the Kyodan, must deal with this problem as an important issue for cooperative mission and seek breakthroughs.

Below are three points discussed and agreed upon at this meeting of the Commission on Cooperative Mission.

- 1) A 2009 Peace Message will be issued in the names of the moderators of both churches.
- 2) The Korean Christian Church in Japan will erect a five-story Mission Centennial Hall near the Nishi Waseda Center, with an estimated cost of 270 million yen. The Kyodan will cooperate in raising funds.
- 3) A joint historical study committee will be established. The committee will gather material concerning relationships of contact between the two churches to study that history. Based on that, a history will be compiled. The committee will consist of six persons, three from each church. (Tr. WE)

—Naito Tomeyuki
Kyodan General Secretary

Taiwanese Churches *(Cont'd from p.4)*

Circle are also active. It is cause for thanksgiving that more than 20 people regularly attend worship. The members of the congregation are mostly people from Taiwan who are residents in Japan for reasons of work or study, who are naturalized Japanese citizens or permanent residents here, or who have come to live in Japan because of international marriages. As a Taiwanese church situated in Japan, every three months the minister of the local Japanese church is invited to come and preach, and worship takes place in Japanese. There is also a lecture on culture once a year, events to introduce Taiwanese culture, and various activities through which the church seeks to promote exchange with local residents. (Tr. SN)

—Ishihara Chokai, pastor of Takadanobaba Taiwanese Church, North Subdistrict, Tokyo District
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