

Disaster Relief Planning Headquarters Opens — Supported by prayer and hoping to give personal support

On July 22, 2011, the Kyodan opened the Disaster Relief Planning Headquarters in Room 11 on the first floor of the Japan Christian Center to restore damaged churches as well as to develop the Overseas Donation Project, aimed at humanitarian support.

A variety of projects are in progress, including the Tohoku District Center for the Support of Victims in Sendai (Emao Ishinomaki, which started in August and is referred to as “Emao,” based on the biblical place name “Emmaus”), and other supportive activities for the rebuilding of lives. Likewise, there is the Center for the Prevention of Suicide, which offers grief-care in Tono, the Installing Air-conditioners Project to protect the lives of children who are exposed to radiation, the Short-term Reprieve Program, and the scholarship project for Christian schools. The Disaster Relief Planning Headquarters also offers support for the Aizu Radiation Information Center, for the provision of emergency food, for other church-related grassroots activities, for ecumenical collaboration, and for various other Christian institutions.

Planning and clerical work can be done even in Tokyo, but in order to connect the victims with those who support them, staff members need to be on-site and involved in the actual relief projects. We avoid using the word “inspect” and instead go to “work” together with volunteers and the local staff as much as possible. “Inspectors” are only permitted to view the stricken scenes, but “workers” in the area can meet with the people who are actually suffering. The victims have said, “We will not be deceived by tears, but we do believe in sweat.” Taking their words to heart, we are running to and fro in Tohoku with the motto, “Work anytime, whenever we have a chance!”

Regarding support activities in the disaster zone, the problems in Iwate, Miyagi, and Fukushima are quite different from each other. The issues that confront the Center for Preventing Suicide being developed in Iwate around “issues individuals cannot face alone,” including loneliness and isolation in temporary housing, are becoming increasingly serious. What is needed now,

before winter sets in, is to take time to build up reliable human relationships.

Also, concerning the issue of exposure to radiation, long-term solutions are being implemented, such as the Installing Air-conditioners Project, which took shape through the enthusiasm of the members of the Disaster Relief Planning Headquarters to “protect the lives of children,” and the Short-term Reprieve Program, which was born from the proposition: “Let’s start a concrete program to get children away from radiation exposure.” Likewise, in order to be better supporters of the Aizu Radiation Information Center, we have visited the center many times and listened to the opinions of the staff there, paying careful attention to each of their activities.

Three people work in this office: Kato Makoto, the Kyodan executive secretary in charge of disaster relief (and of the Commission on Ecumenical Ministries), as well as Shiratori Masaki and Maekita Mio [the writer], both of whom have worked through Emao as volunteers, cleaning up debris and mud. We opened this room in July but have been overwhelmed by the magnitude of the disaster and the scale of the cleanup operations. Nevertheless, we continue to seek God’s leading as we endeavor to make a difference, and we give thanks to everyone who has supported us with their prayers as they sent us into the disaster zone.

It has been over eight months since the disaster, and no doubt people in areas unaffected by the quake have settled back into a normal routine. However, those in the disaster zone call out to us saying, “Please do not forget us. There is still such a long way to go.” So we ask people everywhere to please continue their support. (Tr. AY)

—Maekita Mio, staff member
Disaster Relief Planning Headquarters
From Nov. 26, 2011 issue of
Kyodan Shinpo (*Kyodan Times*)

Founder of Kochi Girls' School (now Seiwa Jogakuin): An Educator of Love

Annie Dowd was born as the third daughter of a lawyer on Nov. 6, 1861. Her home was so well known that mail was delivered even without a proper address. People only needed to write Dowd, Mississippi on the mail. After graduating from a women's college, she worked as a music teacher at a church-related school. Later, however, she gradually started having a strong desire to share the Gospel overseas. At that time American Southern Presbyterian Mission received a request for another missionary in Kochi, Japan, and Dowd was sent there when she was 26 years old.

In 1887, Dowd arrived in Kochi as a teacher at Kochi Eiwa Girls' School, but in her free time, she also taught the Bible to women and communicated the gospel eagerly herself. Although this school was closed within ten years, Dowd stayed on in Kochi and preached the gospel to the people in the countryside. She could not forget the underprivileged girls she had met while she travelled the countryside, and she started praying for them to have faith and education.

In 1901, when the then 40-year-old Dowd returned to Japan after being successfully treated for breast cancer, she rented a house in Takajomachi, where she welcomed two girls into her home and started educating them. This was the start of Kochi Girls' School, which later became Seiwa. She started receiving girls one after another who were raised in poor homes and had had no opportunity for an education, even at the age of 15 or 16. Dowd lived with them and taught them life skills as well.

Kochi Girls' School was a home-like school with a dormitory. A time of worship was held every morning and evening, and on Sundays, everyone attended church. The school laid emphasis on English and music, and everyone was able to play the piano and organ. The embroidery patterns made at school were sold at churches in the U.S. to help pay for school fees.

Financial management of the school was difficult, but the administrators always managed to supply the girls' needs. Dowd scrimped in every way she could in order to use her own salary for the needs of the school. She bought second hand clothing and had to tailor them to fit, and she often wore mended socks and sown buttons over the holes in her skirts.

As the school's numbers continued to increase, the mission took over the management of the school from 1915, and in 1924, a new school building was built in Takajomachi with funds contributed by church women in the U.S. Sadly, on Dec. 3, 1927, after only three years of operation, a fire caused by a faulty stove burned down the building. Dowd led the students out of the burning building, taking with her only her old Bible, but fortunately nobody was injured. The headlines in the local newspapers read "Crying students and Dowd's tears." It explained how Dowd led the students to safety as quickly as possible. At this time Dowd was 66 years old, and although she was disappointed by the loss of the new school building, she said "Let's stop crying. There is nothing that God cannot do." And immediately, she started praying for a new school building. She was unable to get support from the mission, however, as they thought it best to just close



Left: Annie Dowd as a young missionary



Right: Annie Dowd as a school administrator

down the school. However, she was able to rebuild a new school the following year with the support of former students and other people who valued her work. Because of Dowd's hard work and endless community support, Kochi City decided to honor her with a commendation ceremony. At first, she intended to decline such an honor, but the teachers of the school encouraged her, saying this was a reward for her hard work in serving God for his glory. So she accepted it on Feb. 11, 1933. The certificate of commendation stated: "You are calm and sincere, rich in philanthropy, and you came all the way to this city as a missionary to passionately engage in evangelism. You also established Kochi Girls' High School and educated underprivileged girls for over 30 years. Even though you are over 70 years old, you never show signs of fatigue and continue to put your efforts into local education. Your achievement has been enormous." The name Dowd and her work were known all over the prefecture.

Dowd had been postponing her retirement as a missionary, but when the mission delegated management of the school to Kochi Church, she decided that this was the appropriate time to return home. Dowd, who was 76 years old, arrived back in the U.S. on April 12, 1937. She offered almost her entire adult life to Kochi. She had said, "I do not really want to return, and if it is God's will, I would like to die here." She had even bought a cemetery plot on Mount Takami. God had appointed her to work in Kochi but also decided that she should return home.

Seiwa Girls' School, which was established in 1901 by one missionary, still exists despite some difficulties, continuing to treasure Dowd's mission. When we hear the name Dowd, we remember that small works of faith bear much fruit.

After Dowd went home, she lived in a retirement home in Jackson, Mississippi. In spite of difficulties walking, seeing, and hearing, she continued to serve by visiting bedridden women in the home, as well as continuing a Bible study, always praying and reading her Bible as she was able. On April 23, 1960, she passed away at the age of 99, having served God her whole life. (Tr. NS&JGO)

—Yokoyama Yoshiro, principal
Seiwa Girls' Junior and Senior High Schools
Kochi Prefecture, Shikoku

"Lord, thank you, thank you, thank you!"

by Reiko Okuma, pastor
La Gloria Church
Colonia Okinawa, Bolivia

"So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." Isaiah 41:10 (NIV)

It has been 33 years since I was led to come to Bolivia, and during this time, these words of God have continued to support and encourage me daily. I have nothing in my heart but thankfulness to the Lord.

There are three incidents I would like to relate in which the Lord helped me.

1. The first one happened 25 years ago. That day, there was a conference in Santa Cruz, about 100 kilometers away from our village. I was coming home late at night. In those days, there were few cars, and by 10:00 at night, there were no cars at all on the roads. I noticed that in front of me, there was a man standing next to a motorcycle in the middle of the road, holding a long gun, and looking at me. On both sides of the road, there was only jungle, and not a single house. In a moment of surprise, I said, "Huh?" In my heart, I cried, "Oh, Lord, help me!" I drove by the man, and as soon as I passed him, I increased my speed and continued driving. I drove about 40 kilometers from that place, and returned safely to the parsonage and breathed a sigh of relief. I said, "Thank you, thank you!" to the Lord for protecting and helping me.

2. One day I visited a home, and we were able to have a very good conversation. After that, I returned home, giving thanks in my heart. In front of my car, there was a boy riding a bicycle. Perhaps he did not notice my car. Without looking behind him, he suddenly tried to cross the road. I cried out "Oh no!" as my car bounced over something twice before I was able to stop the car. I thought, "I ran over someone with my car. Now I will not be able to do evangelism here." I got out of the car and noticed that I was right in front of the police station. I looked under the car, afraid of what I might see. The boy was crouching there. The boy was immediately taken to a nearby hospital, and I went to the police station and reported my name and occupation. Then I hurried to the hospital. While I was sitting in a chair and waiting at the hospital, I kept praying, "Lord, please spare the boy's life." Soon, the head nurse came out of the medical consulting room and asked me, "Ms. Okuma, did you really run that boy over with your car?" Surprised, I answered, "Yes. I clearly remember the car bouncing over something twice." The nurse said, "The boy is all right. There are some scratches on his abdomen, but there is no pain when his abdomen is touched." Apparently, because the car's frame was high off the ground, the boy's body stretched out and fit neatly under the car, and the tires and other parts of the car did not touch him. Also, fortunately, the front and back wheels of the car rolled up onto, and rested upon the bicycle, and because of that, the boy's body was miraculously protected. When I heard what had happened, I prayed, "Lord, it was you who helped him. Thank you! Thank you!" And I thanked the Lord again and again.

3. The regular worship service (those days it was evening worship) had ended. As I was going to bed, I was thankfully praying, "Lord, thank you for watching over me today." Outside, I could hear music with the volume turned up very loud. It was about one o'clock in the morning. Suddenly I thought I heard a banging sound. The next thing I knew, somebody opened my bedroom door and came in. I thought, "What? Who's that? If that person has a knife, I'm in big trouble!" The text for that day's sermon

had been Psalm 121, and I had been blessed with the opportunity to speak these words: "The Lord will surely protect us and help us, so instead of feeling uneasy about the future, let us give thanks to the Lord, and with joy in our hearts, let us live to the fullest, every day which has been given to us." I cried out in my heart, "Lord, I trust in your protection." Then, the man came onto my bed. Instinctively, I sat upright. The next instant, I was grabbed and held tightly by the man. Struggling was useless. That man was much too strong for me. Right away, I gazed steadily into his face, even though it was dark in the room and I could not really see anything. Then, perhaps because the man's face had been seen, he suddenly left me and ran away outside. As he was leaving, he did not notice the offering money lying on the desk, so the offering was also protected. Of course, the Lord protected me too, completely, and kept me safe. Lord, thank you, thank you, thank you!

There are still many more times when the Lord helped me. I have had on a daily basis such experiences as I have described here. I am strongly, strongly reminded that there is power in the word of the Lord. Daily, I continually cry out, "Lord, I give thanks to you!" This place which I was led to is an Okinawan settlement. It is now officially recognized as "Okinawa Village". When Okinawa was under the rule of the American military forces, a policy was under consideration to encourage people to emigrate people overseas, and Bolivia was chosen as the destination of the emigration. On August 15, 1954, in accordance with the primary emigration program of the Ryukyu(Okinawa) government, 275 emigrants were relocated to a settlement in Bolivia. This emigration was continued until the 19th emigration program in 1998. A total of 584 families, including 3385 people, emigrated. In 1998, the Bolivian government established "Colonia Okinawa" as an administrative district, and the Okinawa Village City Hall was erected within the first settlement (there are three settlements in total), and this City Hall remains until this day. I live in the first settlement. All the people of Okinawa have emotional scars caused by the war. Therefore I (from Saitama prefecture), of course as a follower of Christ, and also as a fellow human being, am happy to cooperate in any way I can.

In our village a big event is held every year, called "Colonia Okinawa Jukan(traverse) Ekiden", which is a long-distance relay race. A sash is passed along by a team of 29 people for a distance of about 38 kilometers. The anchor leg is designated to be run by a man who is in his 60's, but in recent years, by the request of the village sports committee, I have had the honor of running the anchor leg. The anchor runner runs one kilometer along the main street of the village. Last year, the mayor, who is Bolivian, cheered me on with a loud voice, saying, "Pastora Reiko, ganbare!! (Let's go, Pastor Reiko!)" I responded by waving my hand. We do not compete as a team; rather, prizes are awarded to the top three runners of each leg of the race, so even when I come in last place, it is no problem. However, the people on the sports committee never forget to prepare a special prize for "the woman who ran the leg that is designated for a man". I am honored to be able to work in a village which has such considerate people, and I am thankful, so thankful for the blessing of being able to serve gladly the people of this area, in any way that I can. This is due to the fact that I am blessed because the Lord gives me strength, and helps me.

(Cont'd on p.5)

Threat of Invisible Radioactivity Breeds Isolation and Panic

by Kataoka Terumi, member
Wakamatsu Sakaemachi Church

Aizu Wakamatsu, Fukushima Prefecture, Tohoku District

March 11 was a very important day for my husband and me. It was our wedding anniversary as well as our fourth son's junior high school graduation day. Being the chairperson of the PTA, I gave an address at the graduation ceremony in the morning and was on my way to Nishinomiya in Hyogo Prefecture, where our second and third sons awaited me. Our second son was also graduating from university.

I got on the 2:14 p.m. train and after about 30 minutes, the Great East Japan Earthquake occurred. Fortunately, since the train had not gotten very far, I was able to get back home around 8 p.m., after having been stranded on the train for about 3.5 hours. In the midst of continuing aftershocks, my mother called me in the middle of the night, saying "Get ready, Ms. Uno Akiko is coming to church to seek shelter."

Uno is the chairperson of the committee for Decommissioning of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant. This committee was planning to hold events around the entire prefecture throughout the year from the end of March, in order to call for the decommissioning of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, which was approaching its 40th year of operation, and to fulfill energy needs without nuclear power plants while focusing on the local community.

Uno, who has been tackling the problem of nuclear power plant for many years, judged the seriousness of the Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant caused by the earthquake and the tsunami, and she took her little daughter with her friend and her children to seek shelter from Fukushima city. It was about 3 a.m. on March 12, 12 hours after the earthquake.

After that, about 30 other people followed after Uno and came to take shelter. All the children were wearing raincoats and masks. Needless to say, they were for protection from exposure to radioactivity. But Aizu Wakamatsu was not safe enough for them, and so after getting their families together, they evacuated to places further away. Our fourth son who experienced such a state of emergency complained, "Mom, I think I'm going out of my mind." I thought I stayed calm, but come to think of it, I was beginning to quietly panic on the inside.

The Decision to Evacuate

The word that Uno left me was "We must evacuate in order to change the sense of crisis around us. However, I felt I couldn't do that myself. This was perhaps because my impression of Ms Uno, the leader of a movement against dependence on nuclear power, running away from Aizu Wakamatsu just after meeting her husband who had been away on a business trip, was not very positive. She seemed callous, as she left her friends and their children, who had evacuated together with her to Aizu Wakamatsu, behind.

**{The ability to clearly perceive a crisis and come to a common understanding*

When I saw Uno and her family evacuating, I certainly did sense "human callousness" at that time. But now, some 10

months later, I have come to understand that I was in error. The reason that she took that action was, in fact, based on her "ability to clearly perceive a crisis," and that itself was grounded in her long involvement in the anti-nuclear power movement. Likewise, whichever Uno or her friend had evacuated first, they could respect each other's decision because they had a "common understanding of the crisis." Thus, I now understand that it was because of that that they took different courses of action in fleeing the situation.}

My parents, the former pastors of this church, urged us to evacuate again and again, since they were ready to stay behind in church instead. But I had already decided that I would never leave the congregation and our precious friends behind. I would never be able to do that.

My husband headed for Sendai and its turmoil right after the service on March 13. I sent all the evacuees, along with our fourth son and niece, to my brother-in-law's house in Mie Prefecture, and I endeavored to remain calm while all alone at home. The following day, March 14, was Monday. It was a practice day for Aizu Mass Choir, a gospel choir that used the church as its base, and the members who had gasoline for their cars gathered together. They discussed volunteer work and how to receive the victims from that time on.

But early morning on Tuesday, I saw subtitles on the TV indicating that express buses to Niigata from Aizu Wakamatsu had resumed operation. I had assumed that I could not run away because I could not drive myself. But there was a way to do it! I called my husband right away and said, "Sorry, I want to get away after all."

If he had responded, "No, you are supposed to protect the church; you cannot leave," I don't know whether I'd be here today. But he concurred that I should leave. So together with my nephew, who resisted because he did not want to miss his elementary school graduation ceremony, we left Aizu two hours later. Together with two other friends who had come to discuss evacuating, we went via Niigata and Tokyo to take shelter at my brother-in-law's house in Suzuka, Mie (about 500 km from Fukushima), where my sons and niece were waiting.

Days of agony

As soon as I arrived in Suzuka, I called my fourth son's junior high school and the Aizu Wakamatsu city board of education to entreat them to work out countermeasures against children's exposure to radiation. However, neither the school nor the board of education took any action, as no evidence of danger was apparent. (Later, the city made an announcement that there were 2.57 and 2.22 microsieverts of radiation per hour on March 15 and 16.)

On March 17, I began to panic. Images of having "left the congregation behind while I ran away" and "locking up the church door as I ran away" welled up within me one after another. I cried and cried and kept on blaming myself. Somehow I saw the disciple who betrayed Jesus on the cross in me.

My first and second sons came to visit me when they sensed something was happening to me. I thought they just did not want to see their mother crying, but they said to me, "It's okay, Mom. Your decision was right because you are the only one who can protect the life of Kibou (my fourth son)."

Although it took a long time for my tears to dry, I was certainly beginning to be able gradually to bounce back. I was given strength by the hugs and words my husband's parents, my sister-in-law, the family of my brother-in-law, my sons, and Pastor Kawakami Jun, his family, and the church members at Higashi Kobe Church when we visited for the service on March 27, together with our friends from the Kobe Mass Choir. Through crying together and sharing meals around the table, a sense of normality returned, which gave me strength.

At the same time, I began to sense "colors" again. I came to feel that everyday life was filled with colors. What I saw from the train as I was stranded on March 11, and then from the bus when I was evacuating to Niigata, was only gray skies and blowing snow. That image was seared in my eyes, which may have made me insensitive to any colors.

Solidarity with people who were isolated and misunderstood

About that time I was informed by my colleagues in the "Kenpo Kyujo-no-kai" (an association supporting continuation of Article 9 of Japan's "Peace" Constitution, the article renouncing war in the Japanese Constitution) in Aizu that a petition drive to demand the decommissioning of the Fukushima nuclear power plant had begun.

Even though I was far away, I found something I could get involved in. I contacted the Kyujo-no-kai in Suzuka and began a petition drive. I kept sending emails to my friends in and out of Japan to ask for their signatures.

Then, on March 29, I went back to Aizu Wakamatsu. I expected to hear comments like: "You obviously evacuated; do you have any idea what has been said about the church?" But the friends came to greet me were gratifying figures indeed. "Was it easy to be away from here?" When I said honestly, "No, far from it; I cannot tell you how much I blamed myself for doing that," my friends, who had wanted to evacuate but could not, forgave me saying, "That's what I assumed."

The death of one Russian couples' child and its relation to Fukushima now

My evacuation was a struggle with my own thoughts. I am the only one who can protect my children's lives, but how will I be viewed by the surrounding people? Am I, being 100 kilometers away from the Fukushima nuclear power plant, making the right decision?

When I returned to Aizu, there were mothers who were experiencing the same bitterness I was. These mothers, are frightened by radiation they cannot see or feel, but other people tell them bluntly that they are worrying too much. The bonds of families and neighborhoods were beginning to fall apart. Thus, we formed the Aizu Association For Protecting Children's Lives From Radiation in order to help such isolated people connect with each other.

About 15 years ago, a Russian baby in our church's baby home suddenly died after several months in our care, due to a rare disease. I was shocked when I saw the body, because it had the same purplish face as the children who had died from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster, which I had seen in a photographic collection. When I was reminded of this incident, after the Fukushima nuclear accident, someone who had been with the deceased baby contacted me. Apparently, the cause of death was exposure to radiation from the Chernobyl nuclear disaster. In fact, the area where the baby's mother was brought up had been contaminated with radioactivity. This tragedy struck ten years after the Chernobyl disaster. I never want the parents in Fukushima in ten years time to shed the tears of that young couple.

Thinking about the pain of pastors and their families and all the church members, who live in the area being exposed to radiation, makes my heart ache. I have been put in a difficult situation for these past five months, filled with the anxiety of continuing to stay on versus the emotional turmoil of whether I would be able to live with myself and maintain my Christian faith if I ran away.

We Japanese committed a serious sin against our Creator and our children's future. Our not being able to prevent this nuclear disaster from happening is regretful beyond words. But we do not have the luxury of a reprieve anymore. We need to take action, while praying and raising our voices of anger, in order to protect lives of our children. (Tr. SM)

From "The 3/11 Great East Japan Earthquake: A Briefing Session in the Field," compiled under the joint sponsorship of the Nippon Christian Academy, the Kanto Activity Center, and the North Subdistrict of Tokyo District, as reported in *Shinto no Tomo (Believers' Friend)*

*The section in brackets was added to the KNL translation for clarification.

(Cont'd from p.3)

The church has a kindergarten attached to it, which holds a worship service every morning from Monday to Friday. The kindergarten children memorize scripture in Japanese and Spanish, and also sing hymns in Japanese and Spanish. The Lord watches over these energetic children, and we are thankful, so thankful every day. As for the church, at last year's Christmas worship service, a high school girl was baptized, and this year, at the end of November, a boy who has just graduated from his third year of junior high school will be baptized. In this way, the Lord provides souls for baptism, and all of us rejoice together. Also, we pray that the Lord will use many young people in many ways in future worship services, including leading worship services, and giving offertory prayers. Because I will soon be 73 years old, I put in a request to the World Mission Board for someone to serve as the pastor here, and one woman responded, and she is now scheduled to come here as a pastor in May of next year. She is from Yomitan in Okinawa, so the members of the church are already waiting for her with great joy and prayer. (Some members are from Yomitan.) We can do nothing but bow our heads in admiration of the Lord's wondrous work, filled with love. We have only thankfulness to the omnipotent and loving Lord, who knows our needs better than anyone else, and works everything out to be perfect for us. Thanks be to the Lord! (Tr. KT)

Home Hospice Care, Supported by Words of Faith A Clinical Report by a Christian Doctor

By Mizuta Tetsuaki, the director of Yoshikawa Chuo Hospital,
member of Matsudo Church, Chiba Subdistrict, Tokyo District

During the first half of the 1960s, 80 percent of Japanese people died at home, but since then the number of people dying in hospitals has increased so that deaths occurring at home decreased to a mere 14.4 percent in 2005. However, following the establishment of the medical clinical support system in 2006, the ratio of deaths occurring at home have increased and in 2009 became 16 percent of all deaths. In particular, it is reported that 60 percent of cancer patients opt to die at home. In relation to that, we would like to introduce one example of home hospice care by a Christian doctor, Mizuta Tetsuaki.

In October 2007 Mariko (a pseudonym), age 47, had surgery following the diagnosis of advanced rectal cancer. Therapy to prevent the recurrence of cancer was begun, but the following year it did recur. Outpatient treatment continued, but in July 2009 her condition worsened, and she was hospitalized. Her condition was thoroughly explained to her and to her mother, and as a result of their discussion together, Mariko chose to begin hospice care at her home from July 23. Mariko did not profess any particular faith, but when she was discharged from the hospital I prayed for her, with her consent, and gave a written copy of the prayer. She responded with words of gratitude. After that, with each house call a prayer was written, and after the prayer was offered, it was given to her and accepted.

In addition, during the first house visit, we exchanged mobile phone email addresses. When a report of Mariko's medication condition was received from the visiting nurse, Mariko was quickly contacted by email, with words such as "May God protect your body and your heart. I do not need a reply. When you are experiencing difficulties, even in the middle of the night, please call me at any time or send me an email"; "We are always with you! Trust in God's love, living each day with care, and let's live together"; "Always praying for you!" In the case of patients with terminal cancer, the visiting nurse is on call 24 hours a day, and the program is structured so that she can call whenever there is an emergency. During one visit, I gave Mariko an "angel" music box to celebrate her birthday. She responded with gratitude.

One of the principles of home hospice care is that, to the extent possible, no restrictions are placed on the patient's normal life. With the passing of time, Mariko's physical condition worsened, and a report was received disclosing Mariko's feeling: "I want to die quickly!" Along with giving palliative care, I asked the visiting nurse to tell her that I had prayed, asking God to take away Mariko's pain. The other aspects of hospice care are for the family: meeting with them, and when the cancer advances and the patient reaches his or her limit, the family is told that death will soon occur. It is important to help the family understand and be able to accept that the death of the patient is a natural occurrence. This is one area of care for the family and is called "death education." Mariko entered into eternal sleep on the morning of Aug. 13, with all her family at her bedside. Three months later, I visited her mother in her home to console her. Bringing consolation to relatives is also part of the work of hospice care and is called "grief care."

Looking back at the experience of this home hospice care, Dr. Mizuta shared the following remarks.

This hospice care is bringing faith to the fore in mental health care. The patient is contacted directly by email. The hospice care given this time was a bit different from a typical one, though basically the same, with religious faith being included in mental care and frequent and direct communication with the patient through email. I think the exchange of email, as a sure means of communication, gave Mariko a sense of security. Depending on the situation, that can be thought of as a very helpful means of care. Prayers were prayed for Mariko in front of her, and the emails also spoke of faith with colorful words. She remembered that with joy, and I think it surely gave her courage and comfort. However, I have doubts about my own words; perhaps I blocked her from really being able to express her true self and by so doing to have a peaceful heart. Mariko shared with the visiting nurse the 'fear of death' that she was not able to tell me about, and received a hearing. By lending an ear to what the patient says, the visiting nurse gives valuable care, I think.

In approximately her last month of home care, Mariko felt stress related to her consciousness of death. I think that even in the midst of that pain, she was able to enjoy the periods when she was physically comfortable and even while experiencing fear was able to transcend it, being able to live out her own strong individual life, which had joy and pain.

Valuing the patient is an important aspect of hospice care. Good care cannot be given without emotional input. However, if the emotional input is too strong it cannot help but cause one's judgment as a doctor to become lacking in objectivity. Maintaining emotional distance between the patient and doctor is a difficult thing.

Mariko's ability to surrender herself obediently to the support of the persons around her enabled her to live out her last moments in her own way, and beautifully. As persons face death, they frequently return to their true selves and become very beautiful people. Strengthened by that kind of posture, I want to continue from here on to do hospice work. (Tr. RT)

— Summarized by Nishio Misao, member
Suginami Church, West Tokyo District and
KNL Editorial Committee member

Based on an article in *Shinto no Tomo (The Believer's Friend)*

Note: What is home hospice?

Hospice care is care that is given to patients who, at the time when there is no hope of recovery, decide to stop painful medical treatment in the desire to make the most out of the remainder of their lives.

A team representing various specialty professions, in response to societal needs, brings psychological relief in relation to an illness in which a key element is pain, with the basic concept being that care encompasses not only the patient but also the family. When the place sought for medical treatment is the home, and the care providers visit there and carry out hospice care, it is called home hospice.

First Christian Bookstore Award Ceremony

On Sept. 5, 2011, the first Christian Bookstore Award ceremony was held at Christ Shinagawa Church in Tokyo. Winners of the award were chosen by the staff of the 25 nationwide Christian Bookstores that are affiliated with the Christian Publication Sales Association.

All the Christian publications printed and published during 2010 were considered for this award. Among 87 candidates, first prize was given to *Love and Forgiveness* by Hinohara Shigeaki, MD., published by Kyobunkwan, and second prize to *It was Good to Meet All the Lives* by Momoi Kazuma, a photo journalist, Kyodan Board of Publications.

Hinohara and Momoi were invited to the ceremony to be recognized by Kaneko Kazuhito, who at that time was the general secretary of the Christian Publication Sales Association and of the headquarters of Kirisuto Shinbun Co., Ltd. Although both men have been recognized by various organizations in the past, they were honored to receive the first Christian Bookstore Awards.

“‘Forgiveness’ is a precious message for today,” Hinohara stated. “After 9/11, a journalist interviewed the wife of a victim. She said, ‘My husband is not a person to take revenge on anyone. This is a trial which can be overcome only by forgiveness.’ I agree with her. Forgiveness is all about changing yourself, not others. This is the core message of this book.”

“I learned the importance of ‘prayer’ through the earthquake disaster,” Momoi Kazuma remarked. “I have



First Christian Bookstore Award Ceremony
(Left: Momoi; right: Hinohara)

been running around the areas affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake in order to report on the situation. Through that experience, I felt strongly the importance of prayer. The earthquake disaster made it very clear that humans are not the heroes of the earth, nor are we perfect. We need to be reminded of that through prayer, and I have become more and more convinced that we need to speak clearly about God, whose existence transcends human beings. (Tr. NB)

—From *Shinto no Tomo (Believers' Friend)*

Note: Dr. Hinohara's role is Chair of the Board of Trustees of St. Luke's International Hospital and Honorary President of St. Luke's College of Nursing.

Kyodan Commissions Missionary to Seoul, Korea

Following the Kyodan Executive Council meeting's Oct. 18, 2011 session, a service was held to commission Nag Woon-Hae as a missionary to Korea. He is the associate pastor of Saemoonan Presbyterian Church in Seoul, the first organized church in Korea, and is on the faculty of Presbyterian College Theological Seminary, the most influential seminary in the world.

Nag Woon-Hae is Japanese and was born in Japan. After graduating from Tokyo Union Theological Seminary and serving as pastor of two Kyodan churches, he moved to Korea, where he studied at Presbyterian College Theological Seminary to earn a doctorate. With further expectations of his good work, the Kyodan has officially commissioned him as a missionary. This commissioning is particularly important.

As historically recorded, the difficult relationship between Japan and Korea is a history of aggression, starting with the annexation of Korea by Japan 100 years ago. But in the 1980s, during the evangelization of Korea, history also records that many missionaries went to the Korean peninsula via Japan and many Japanese Christians also supported these efforts. Now Korean churches have grown to the point that Korea is called a Christian nation.

Facing the global era of the 21st century, in which national boundaries are lower and society is becoming more pluralistic, we plead without ceasing that the fellowship of these two countries may be enriched through the gospel and that we may develop a closer relationship



Nag Woon-Hae explaining the monthly activities of Saemoonan Presbyterian Church at his commissioning service

through evangelistic cooperation. In the midst of this, it is highly significant that Nag Woon-Hae is ministering at Saemoonan Church and serving as a member of the faculty of Presbyterian College Theological Seminary. We pray without ceasing that he will continue to be used in these roles.

Please remember to support him and his work with your prayers. (Tr. PST)

—Kishi Norihide, pastor
Chiba Honcho Church
Chiba Subdistrict, Tokyo District

A Message From General Secretary

Recent Kyodan Church Statistics

As the 2012 Kyodan Yearbook has just been published and contains the statistics for the 2010 fiscal year, I want to discuss recent trends within the Kyodan from the standpoint of statistics.

The overall basics statistics are as follows:

Total Number of Churches – 1,724
 Total Membership – 182,418
 Total Number of Resident Communicant Members – 90,184

Average Sunday Attendance – 56,240
 Average Church School Attendance – 15,918
 Total Number of Ordained Ministers – 3,363
 (including 635 retirees)
 – 2,653 of whom are men and 710 are women
 – 1,841 of whom are in local church pastorates

The total number of new baptisms in 2010 was 1,395, which is about the same as the previous year and represents an average of slightly less than one per congregation. When the yearly reports submitted by local congregations are analyzed, there appears to be three peak periods in the distribution of those receiving baptism. One is women in their 30s who are in the midst of childrearing. As they raise their children, they often begin thinking about the meaning of life, what they are living for, and in the process, they discover the answers they are seeking in the Bible and are led to receive baptism. At any rate, that seems to be the general pattern.

The second peak period in the pattern is that of men in their 60s. From the standpoint of society, these are mostly men who have recently retired and who now have time to do things they really want to do. Often they were “wed to their company” so the harder they worked during employment, the more acutely they feel the lack of things to do after retirement. Thus, they begin considering what they want to do with the rest of their lives but realize they really have nothing firm on which to base their lives. As they look for a way to overcome this deficiency and are exposed in church to the gospel of Christ, they discover true salvation and are led to baptism. As we consider the potential for this segment of society, it is really important for local churches to develop strategies for reaching them.

The third peak period is students of junior and senior high school age, including both those who have attended church schools in the local church and those who have attended mission schools for their regular education. We really need to be thankful for these young people, who have either been raised in a Christian home and come to faith under the prayerful watch of their parents or were exposed to the Bible in these mission schools and were attracted to its message, with both types of experiences leading them to receive baptism as a testimony to their budding faith. Nevertheless, as young people who face many struggles

and doubts, the faith of many is subsequently eroded by the cares of this world, leading to unanswered doubts, and thus they end up leaving the faith through the backdoor. This reality speaks to the need for further education and pastoral care to nurture their faith after baptism as well. These young people are the future of the church, so it is critically important for us to put maximum emphasis on training them in the faith.

As I looked through the statistics on baptisms, I noticed that there are a few churches with numerous baptisms during the year, including one with 29 and another with 27. There are many plausible reasons for this, but in looking into the details, there was nothing to indicate that they were doing something special. They were simply emphasizing the preaching of the Word and prayer and praise in worship. The pastor led the laity to provide a warm and welcoming atmosphere for newcomers. In other words, it was not some special program but the faithful diligence of the entire church in providing an atmosphere in which faith could blossom. God blessed this, and the result was numerous new confessions of faith leading to baptism.

I also want to say something about finances. The total income from contributions among the more than 1,700 local churches was approximately 11.8 billion yen, which amounts to an average of about 7.2 million yen per church.

Finally, a word concerning missionaries: There are presently 64 missionaries from overseas serving the Kyodan, while the Kyodan is sending out 21 missionaries to other countries. The history of the church in Japan is one in which missionaries have played a huge role, and so I pause to give thanks for that. (Tr. TB)

—Naito Tomeyuki, general secretary

Publisher: Naito Tomeyuki

Editor: Kawakami Yoshiko *Copy Editor:* Hazel Terhune

Executive Secretary: Kato Makoto, *Staff Assistant:* Niina Tomoko

Editorial Committee: Timothy Boyle, Ishihara Chokai,

Nishio Misao, Mira Sonntag, Tokuta Makoto

Translators: Adachi Yasushi, Timothy Boyle, Nozomi

Brownell, Nakayama Sayuri, Johannes Gysbert Oliver,

Seino Megumi, Paul Shew Tsuchido, Robert Terhune,

Kevin Tysen

Note: The names of Japanese persons are listed in traditional order, with last names first.

◆ *The Kyodan website has a new address* ◆
 The new URL of the revamped English page of the
 Kyodan website is now located at:
<http://uccj-e.org/>

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