

Executive Council Sets Relief Categories and Financial Goals

In response to the disaster caused by the unprecedentedly strong earthquake and tsunami in eastern Japan, the Kyodan Executive Council called a special session on April 18, which was attended by 28 of the 30 council members. Kyodan Moderator Ishibashi Hideo outlined a basic policy for relief that aims to rebuild churches to serve their local communities. While focusing on rebuilding “houses of worship,” it is through those churches that we endeavor to give support to children, the elderly, and other socially disadvantaged persons. We want to make this a project of the entire Kyodan. Moderator Ishibashi also reported that many donations were coming in, including from overseas churches, beginning with a gift of 100 million yen from Germany.

At the March 22 Executive Committee meeting, the Kyodan Relief Task Force was formally established, and its first meeting was held on April 4. The Task Force is headed by Executive Secretary Kato Makoto, who together with General Affairs Secretary Fujimori Yuki will oversee the office of the task force. With the exception of Okinawa District, which did not attend, the other 16 districts gave a report on what damages, if any, they experienced and what relief efforts they have been involved in. Then Kato explained the proposed “Overseas Donation Project,” saying, “Within less than a week after the earthquake, we received almost 30 messages of concern and encouragement from overseas churches. However, there were also messages to the effect that although donations

were being received, since the way the Kyodan will spend the money is indefinite, it is difficult to solicit and send funds.” He explained that it is important for the Kyodan to both establish a goal for relief funds from within Japan, based on the confirmed damages, as well as to quickly establish the general guidelines for overseas relief funds.

A total of 1.2 billion yen was set for the overall goal, with the two major classifications being regional restoration and church restoration. Within the regional restoration category, which totals 1 billion yen, a goal of 200 million yen was set for scholarships over a 10-15 year period for 30 children who were either orphaned by the disaster or who were evacuated. Likewise, the goal of 100 million yen was set for scholarships through Christian mission schools. The goal of 200 million yen is set for expanding orphanages and foster home programs, and an equal amount for rebuilding orphanages, childcare facilities and kindergartens. With respect to living assistance and counseling care for both children and the elderly in the affected areas, an additional 150 million yen goal has been set. The final subcategories for this program are 100 million yen for program expenses for the Kyodan staff and 50 million yen for a contingency fund. The other main category of church restoration has as its goal 200 million yen, for a grand total of 1.2 billion yen. (Tr. TB)

—From *Kyodan Shinpo* (*Kyodan Times*)

Emergency Council Meeting Held on Earthquake-related Issues

At the emergency Executive Council meeting held in Tokyo on April 18, either the moderator or another representative from each district gave reports on issues related to the Great East Japan Earthquake, with more time allotted to the three districts that have suffered significant damage.

Ou District Moderator Ohara Muneo’s report mainly covered the damages suffered by and the relief activities of four churches and the neighboring areas: the Miyako, Shinsei-Kamaishi, Senmaya, and Ofunato. It was reported that at least one person is missing at Uchimaruru Church.

Miyako Church’s first floor sanctuary and its parsonage were inundated by the tsunami but have been cleaned by the staff members of Morioka YMCA and Canaan Gardens, so the church has become the center of relief activities for the neighboring areas. The report on Shinsei-Kamaishi Church noted the cleanup of sludge and rubble from the sanctuary by volunteers, the service of doctors and nurses

from Yodogawa Christian Hospital in Osaka, as well as the efforts of Hokkai District helpers and Tokyo Union Theological Seminary students, who did their best to aid the local people. Also, some confusion brought about by unorganized volunteer activities not under the oversight of Ou District was touched upon.

As the sanctuary and parsonage of Senmaya Church were declared dangerous, it was forced to relocate to a rented house. Ofunato Church, which is situated on a hill, suffered little damage and thus was able to serve as a relief center for the surrounding area, including the work of volunteers from Saitama District who prepared food for the local people, who were all very appreciative.

Tohoku District Moderator Takahashi Kazuto shared a list of 29 damaged churches, explaining the severity of the damage each has suffered, and reported that three persons have been confirmed dead and one missing from four churches. Besides reporting on the situation of the areas

(Cont'd on p.6)

Cooperative Research Committee on Kyodan-KCCJ History Convenes 3rd Meeting:

The Agreement on Cooperative Ministries and Changes in the Kyodan's Understanding of Mission

On Feb. 8, 1984, The Korean Christian Church in Japan (KCCJ) and Kyodan concluded an agreement on cooperation in ministry for the purpose of encouraging mission cooperation and a deepening of fellowship between the two churches. Based on this agreement, the Kyodan's Mission Cooperation Committee established the Cooperative Research Committee on Kyodan-KCCJ History in June 2009 at its 43rd regular meeting. The committee is made up of three members from each denomination. The Kyodan general secretary attends as an observer, and the office work is managed by the Kyodan.

At the first committee meeting held on Sept. 21, 2010, discussion centered on issues of cooperative ministry to be considered, and a decision was made to begin by reflecting on the history of the two denominations. At the second meeting on Dec. 9, 2010, committee member Lee Chong-II used a chronological table to introduce in great detail the history of the KCCJ, from its beginning in 1883, through the establishment of the present KCCJ in 1908, and up through its recent history.

During the wave of Westernization that opened the door to modernization in the late 19th century, the countries of East Asia experienced many changes. The tempo of change in Japan and Korea was slightly different, and that in combination with a number of other factors, created the situation in which Japan annexed the Korean peninsula in the early 20th century and eventually found itself going through the tragic days of World War II.

This history influenced the Christian church in both countries. The KCCJ was born into this period of history and witnessed to the gospel in the midst of the suffering and oppression of Korean people living in Japan. Japan and Korea were "near but distant neighbors," and as emotions subside, the people of both countries are seeking an improved relationship in the 21st century. The Kyodan and the KCCJ were, in fact, precursors of this time through their establishment of the Agreement on Cooperative Ministries in 1984, their testimony to the rule of God in their mission of witness to the gospel, their prayers together for peace and human rights, and their commitment to work together.

The third committee meeting was held on March 10, 2011, the day before the Great East Japan Earthquake. Harita Makoto, a Kyodan member of the committee, spoke about changes in the Kyodan's concept and understanding of mission and the historical events that took place in the Kyodan from the 1960s through to the 1980s, when the agreement with KCCJ was formalized.

Because of differences about the understanding of mission within the church, the Kyodan experienced a long and aggravated period of internal dissension after 1969. Little by little, the Kyodan is trying to overcome this dissension, and in that sense, it is both meaningful and essential

to reflect on the concepts of mission of the past as we consider the future mission cooperation of the Kyodan and KCCJ. The essence of Harita Makoto's presentation was as follows.

The Kyodan was formed in 1941 as a grouping of the evangelical (Protestant) churches active in Japan at the time, and soon found itself embroiled in World War II. It was actually very difficult for the Kyodan to identify itself adequately as a "united church," and in the confusion following the war, several denominations withdrew. The understanding of mission and concrete plans for carrying out the church's work were only discussed in earnest in the late 1950s after the "Christianity boom," which had given the church a euphoric vision for the future of Christianity in Japan, had died down. Church leaders were studying concepts of mission that were developing in Europe and North America, and in the early 1960s the Kyodan issued its own Mission Policy and Basic Theory of Mission, calling for a "structural improvement" of the church so that the gospel could become available to all people and for an approach to evangelism that was clearly directed to specific areas.

The Basic Policy on Social Issues was drafted in 1966, with statements on the importance of acknowledging its wartime responsibility, the protection of democracy, and the advance of social welfare activity. The 1967 Confession of War Responsibility issued in the name of the Kyodan moderator had an influence both within and beyond the church. The confession opened the possibility for cooperative agreements with three representative denominations in Korea and with the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan. It made possible discussions about union with the church in Okinawa, which was still under U.S. occupation. However, at the same time, discussions about the place of the confession in the Kyodan, its interpretation, and the way in which it should be used caused confusion and division within the church.

The longstanding, internal dissension in the Kyodan occurred while the cold war were at loggerheads; while the philosophy of Mao Zedong was at its peak in China; and while Japan, not untouched by this, was going through a period of social confusion. In 1982 the Kyodan Commission on Mission issued a Review of the Basic Policy on Social Issues, which included materials for discussion on the basic concerns of mission and the place of social issues within those concerns as well as articles on mission by the Kyodan from the 1970s through to the 1980s. Social issues were presented as primary mission concerns; there was radical criticism of Japan's post-war democracy; and the church was called to stand clearly with the oppressed and to open its ears to their voices. (Tr. RW)

—Harita Makoto, pastor
Toriizaka church, Southwest subdistrict, Tokyo

Intercity Japanese-American Church Adopts “Boys Town” Ministry Model

by Kuyama Yasuhiko, missionary pastor
Japanese-American Church
Los Angeles, California, USA

Whatever the denominational affiliation, Japanese American Churches are entering the final stage of their life cycle. There are no more first-generation Japanese (*issei*). The core members of the church were second-generation Japanese (*nisei*) but they are now about 80 years old or older. For many reasons, there are only a few third-generation (*sansei*) churches that can create the critical mass to maintain or expand the church. Furthermore, those who came to the United States after World War II as marriage partners are typically in their 70s and have many language and culture issues. More than half of them are divorced, and they are facing old age.

It is becoming increasingly difficult to minister in the Japanese language, even with the support of an English division in the church or with denominational help. Japanese language ministry has been sustained as an oyako-ko (respecting parents) ministry for the last 20 years by the nisei generation, but that era is now over. Additionally, many missionaries from Japan have a hard time comprehending the complicated psychological aspects of Japanese Americans. Due to their interment experience, Japanese Americans typically emphasize their Americanness, but at the same time they live in an ambivalent situation in which, in order to maintain their identity, they also exhibit a fondness for their own culture. At one time, they identify themselves as Americans, while at other times, Japanese-Americans or Asian-Americans, which complicates their relationships with Japanese-American churches. Many pastors involved in Japanese language ministries have found that this difficult cultural situation, along with the financial uncertainties and often difficult relationships with English divisions, have worn them down.

This way of looking at things, however, is from the standpoint of just maintaining our existing congregations. Obviously, it is important to provide quality pastoral care for existing congregations while we continue to evangelize. In addition to Sunday morning worship, I lead five group meetings, do visitation, and help several community organizations work on solving problems in our community. This, however, is insufficient to deal with the realities we face. The church needs to return to its original mission and find new ways to communicate the gospel while clarifying our ministries. Here in Los Angeles, if we broaden our vision, we can see that there are many people who desperately need the love of Jesus Christ. Many of them are new immigrants who are working hard to make a living, despite being looked down upon by others. Since we too have experienced immigration, we can identify with the problems and pains they are experiencing.

When I first came to this downtown church and began searching for direction in my ministry, I became acquainted with Father Greg Boyle, a Jesuit priest, who was involved in an ex-gang rehabilitation program. He was very supportive, and we worked together by inviting ex-gang members who desired to leave that life to my Sushi Chef School. He was instrumental in helping me find my way in ministry. “Do whatever comes from your heart, and God



Boys Town program introduced to Japanese childcare agencies

will bless you for that,” he said as he encouraged me. The key is to focus on the ministries that communicate Christ’s love as you follow your heart.

Japanese language ministry is unique in some senses. We use two languages and two cultures daily and have a very unique interface. Just as in the story of Joseph, we feel that God has sent us in advance to preserve others’ lives. We have introduced the Boys Town program to Japanese childcare agencies in Japan as we believe that Boys Town provides the best social skills program for abused and neglected children. Many businessmen, former university librarians, and school teachers have not only translated an unbelievable amount of manuals and textbooks but are also serving as oral translators. After six years, we have been able to establish our own non-profit foundation, separate from the church and just for ministries, which now serves as the sole liaison between the Boys Town organization and Japan.

As our church is located close to one of the worst slums in the United States, our non-profit organization is planning a summer program for the children of homeless families. About 70 percent of the breadwinners in these families are working, but their incomes are very low, so it is very easy for these children to be drawn into gangs during summer vacation since there are no programs that they can afford. Hope is a precious commodity here in downtown Los Angeles. We really want to provide a quality skill-based program for these children that can give them hope and are looking for corporate sponsorship now. We also want to restart our Sushi Chef School soon, which we had to close due to recession. There are many young people who would not get involved in crime if they only had a job.

The urgent question the church faces today is how we are going to communicate the love of Christ that transcends all races and peoples. I am convinced that the way forward is not to be inward-looking and focused on self preservation but instead to be outward looking. For it is through reaching out to those in need of Christ’s love that those who are in tune with those ministries are drawn into the church, and we are all spiritually transformed. I think that the kind of missionaries we will need in the future are those with the talents to be “sacred entrepreneurs.” We need persons who are able to help the church create and actualize ministries that communicate the love of Christ.

Anne E. Randolph (1827-1902): Pioneer of Women's Education in Nagoya Leading to Kinjo Gakuin

Born on September 14, 1827, in what is currently the state of West Virginia, Elizabeth Anne Priscilla Edgar Randolph was an educator in the United States before being commissioned as a missionary to China. Upon her return from China to the United States, Mrs. Randolph stopped in Japan for a short visit of rest and recuperation from the harsh conditions of China. However, her short stay in Japan turned into four years, in which she founded the Women's Kibokwan which is the present-day Kinjo Gakuin. Her principle of education is still alive today in the spiritual legacy of the school's foundation.

Randolph was a school teacher for about 30 years in the states of Alabama, Georgia, and Kentucky. In 1871 she revealed her desire to become a missionary to Rev. Stuart Robinson of the Second Presbyterian Church in Louisville, Kentucky. She met with the Executive Committee concerning her application for missionary service and was appointed as a missionary to China. Randolph was sent to Hangzhou, China in 1872 to take up the position of principal at a women's boarding school.

In 1888 she was compelled to return to the United States for health reasons. On her way home, she decided to visit Mrs. Rambus, her best friend and a former missionary to China, in Kobe. When Randolph discovered that the Japanese climate was good for her health, she moved to Nagoya, having been invited by Robert E. McAlpine, an American Southern Presbyterian Church-related missionary. She became an English teacher at Kibokwan, a boys' English-language school which was directed by Ban'no Kaichi, pastor of the Japan Christ Nagoya United Church (currently the Kyodan's Nagoya Church). While teaching at that school, Randolph saw the low position held by Japanese women with her own eyes.

Realizing the need for women's education, Randolph decided to open an English class for women in January 1889. With the closing of the boy's Kibokwan in August, she accomplished her goal in September 1889 with the opening of the Women's Special Kibokwan with an inaugural class of three female students. She had two classrooms built at her own expense and made it a rule to be self-supporting and independent. Her golden rule was this: "Fear God and devote your life to serve Him by training women to make loving people their life's work." This was her education principle and is precisely the spiritual legacy of Kinjo Gakuin.

In the year following the school's opening (1890), the Women's Special Kibokwan was combined with the Kofu Women's School (the Cumberland Presbyterian Church), and the name was changed to Kinjo Private Women's School. The number of students increased, and a new



school building was built making it a favorable start. Unfortunately, some parts of the school building were damaged by the Nobi Earthquake that occurred in October 1890. Randolph's health began to fail again due, in part, to the aftershocks, so she had to return to America in 1892.

Randolph was very strict regarding education. She reportedly made the students memorize new English vocabulary every day, and those who failed a recitation were put in the back row. But the students did not complain and made great efforts so as to be able to sit in the front row. It was Randolph's personality that whetted their appetite for study. Although she could speak Chinese, she had trouble remembering students' names as she was poor at Japanese. However, it is said that she always called her students "daughters," and the students had warm feelings and affection for her and would rush towards her to get ahead of others in wanting to be helpful to her.

Although she stayed in Nagoya for only four years, the seeds of women's education that she planted during that time and her achievement in building the foundation of Kinjo Gakuin are her great legacy. Kinjo Gakuin University's Randolph Memorial Auditorium was constructed as one of the memorial projects for the 100th anniversary of the school's founding, so that the name of Randolph would be passed down through the generations as one of the educators of women in Nagoya. (Tr. SM)

—From *Kinjo Gakuin Daigaku Monogatari*
(*Story of Kinjo Gakuin University*)

Agreement through Spiritual Union:

An address given at the 100th anniversary celebration of the Education Association of Christian Schools in Japan

by Nomoto Shinya, board chair
Education Association of Christian Schools in Japan and
Doshisha University

This organization, referred to in this address as “the association,” has continued for 100 years. On this occasion, more than anything else, we need to give thanks to God our Father for guiding us through these years.

The seed of the gospel was planted in Japan some 150 years ago, and Christian schools and educational institutions began springing up in each district. However, as soon as they had begun to grow, they were forced to struggle against nationalism. This period also coincided with the beginnings of the ecumenical movement around the world, and so it was in such a situation that the association was born through the prayers, cooperation, and solidarity of the leaders of these schools.

In the first half of the 20th century, overwhelmed by the waves of history, both of Japan and of the world, and forced to cooperate with Japan’s war effort, the Christian schools faced a terrible ordeal. However, in the second half of the 20th century, they received cooperative support from both churches and mission organizations in the West, and as a result, democratic education began. Effort was made to incorporate moral education based on Christianity through mutual association, support, and fellowship among the member schools.

At present, in the association, there are 97 governmentally recognized school corporations, which include a total of 282 institutions with schools from elementary through university, with approximately 346,000 students. This is despite a Christian population of less than one percent, clearly showing that the principles and results of Christian education are generally held in high regard in Japan.

However, the history of those who have gone before us is a history of struggle. When we remember those of our predecessors who literally gave their lives in order to fulfill their calling from God, I feel a strong sense of gratitude and respect. At the same time, looking back at that history of struggle, we cannot overlook God’s blessing interwoven with that history. On this occasion, we are eager to learn about this history from the completed chronological index and, by next year, the compilation of original source documents of the 100-Year History of the Education Association of Christian Schools in Japan. Then, by extension, we may see our path forward and, I think, see our history interwoven with both joy and pain.

Further, even though each school in the association is based on Christian principles, they each have their own histories and traditions, and so they have varying understandings of Christian teaching. For this reason, it has been difficult to achieve a common opinion on issues and, I believe, this will continue to be true in the future.

However, in order for the association to be able to continue, as we must face our present reality and issues, and as we accept our weakness before God and each other, we must respect each other’s differing opinions and positions as we seek unity. That unity, of course, must be a unity based in spiritual union.

Today, as we approach the 100th anniversary of the association, I believe that we should not think of this as a mere point in the passing of time, not a “chromos” but a true “kairos,” in which we can receive anew the gospel of Christ and affirm together the spiritual union we have already received. We should use this opportunity to deepen our unity and fellowship.

As we look back on our past history, both the struggles with the narrow-minded nationalism that was forced upon us, as well as in times when things were more favorable, we need to learn from the experiences of our predecessors in the association, how they sought to fulfill their calling to bring to fruition the freedom and love based on the Gospel of Christ and also the reasons why they could not. We should learn again from the firm resolve, faith, and wisdom of the teachers who went before us in the past 100 years. We should make our own that firm resolve that they have passed on to us. Further, ought we not to confirm that we are being led by the hand of God, which guides history, and use this opportunity to deepen our faith and solidarity? (Tr. GM)

—From *Kirisutokyo Gakko Kyoiku*
(*Christian schools and education*)

KNL Corner

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

Japanese-Americans' Wartime Experiences Shown on Japanese TV

by Tim Boyle, missionary
Kwansei Gakuin, Nishinomiya

For five nights in November 2010, Japanese television showed a ten-hour-long dramatic series entitled "99 Years of Love, the Japanese-Americans." It was a powerful and emotional drama that brought back memories of watching Alex Halley's *Roots* some 30 or more years ago, with its portrayal of the African-American saga.

The plot is quite true to history, with the unavoidable exception that all the Japanese-American characters are able to speak perfect Japanese but not very good English—necessitated by the parts being played by Japanese actors for a Japanese audience.

The story begins in 1911, when Hiramatsu Chokichi, a young man from a poor farming family, comes to Seattle to seek his fortune. He overcomes many obstacles through sheer determination and good luck, and after many years, builds up a thriving farm. He and his wife Tomo, who came to the U.S. as a "picture bride," introduced by photograph and arranged by a marriage broker, are blessed with four children. But in 1940, as U.S.-Japan relations sour and anti-Japanese sentiments soar, they decide to send their two young daughters, Shizu and Sachi, to live with relatives in what they thought would be the safety of Japan, while they and the two older boys, Ichiro and Jiro, guard the farm and wait for things settle down.

Pearl Harbor and the outbreak of war, however, ruin their plans. Together with 120,000 fellow Japanese-Americans along the West Coast, they are forced to sell their farm for next to nothing and are herded into Manzanar Relocation Center, one of the hastily construction camps in the interior. Their two daughters likewise face severe hardship in Japan, with Shizu ending up in Hiroshima, where she survives the A-bomb, and Sachi in Okinawa, where she barely escapes with her life. They are briefly reunited, but Shizu dies of radiation exposure and Sachi, feeling she has been utterly abandoned by her family, disappears in the postwar chaos.

During the war, many people viewed the Japanese-Americans as enemy aliens, so to prove that he is a loyal American, Ichiro volunteers to serve with about 1,000 other nisei (second-generation Japanese) in the 442 battalion, which becomes the most highly decorated unit in U.S. history. Ichiro loses his life, saving his fellow soldiers, but more than anything else it was his heroics, along with that of the others, that changed the attitudes of U.S. society toward the Japanese-Americans.

In the story, the Hiramatsu farm had been basically stolen by a white man who hated the Japanese, but on learning that Ichiro had given his life in the dramatic rescue of his beloved Texas regiment (the "Lost Battalion"), he repents and as an act of contrition, gives the family back their farm, which then serves as a base where other Japanese-Americans can get back on their feet. Then in 2010, Sachi comes back to the U.S. for the first time in 70 years and is reunited with Jiro, thus completing the cycle of "99 years of love," and learns of Ichiro's ultimate sacrifice. "Greater love has no man than he lay down his life for his friends." (Jn. 15:13) The sacrifice of Ichiro and his fellow Japanese-American soldiers had overcome the curse of prejudice and discrimination.

It is a powerful story that portrays the insanity of both racism and war, and with the inclusion of the atomic bomb, also the horrors of nuclear weapons. It appeals to President Obama's pledge to rid the world of nuclear weapons and sends a powerful message of peace.

The beginning scenes can be viewed on the following website: <http://www.dramacrazy.net/japanese-drama/99-nen-no-aijapanese-americans-episode-1/> The English subtitles are quite good, and there are links that enable the entire show to be viewed in successive episodes.

Adapted from an article by the author published in the weekly Kwansei Gakuin University Bulletin

Emergency Council (Cont'd from p.1)

and churches affected by the nuclear power plant accident, detailed reports were presented on how the district has dealt with the situation since immediately after the earthquake until the present time.

The fundamental policy to be proposed to the Tohoku District Assembly is to "reduce or freeze the general activities of the district in order to concentrate our efforts on dealing with the present situation." This policy statement reveals the severity of the damage in the district as well as the deep empathetic feelings of those dealing with them. Most deeply impressive is the statement of purpose for the establishment of the Committee on the Relief and Recovery of Tohoku District Churches: "for the churches in the damaged areas and in the district as a whole to become the center of renaissance and recovery through Jesus Christ."

Kanto District Moderator Hikita Kunimaro reported on the specific damage at 22 churches and institutions. He made it clear that the damage is serious not only in the coastal areas, which was expected following the coverage by the news media, but also inland in such areas as Ibaraki and Gunma. Some explanation was also given about the establishment of a committee to aid victims and committee activities so far. People from Saitama District visited Ofunato Church to deliver warmth to people with chilled hearts in that chilly place by providing them with warm food, such as grilled meat, fried noodles, and sausage.

Representatives from the other districts described briefly their efforts and their plans for future work. Their enthusiasm and sincerity will be an encouragement to all the suffering people in the stricken areas. (Tr. AY)

—From *Kyodan Shinpo* (*Kyodan Times*)

PCT General Assembly Thanked for Earthquake Relief Support

From April 26 to April 29, I attended the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. There was heated discussion at the assembly, but what surprised me most was seeing, for the first time, assembly members taking blood tests. With health notebooks in hand, they got their blood tests; and the following morning, based on the results, those assembly members who had a reading that was marked in red received advice about consulting a doctor. Those who were elected as assembly officers were given the privilege of getting a health check. Furthermore, between the most animated discussions, there was a lottery in which a digital camera and a bicycle were awarded. There were also times of great laughter.

The PCT General Assembly was held on the 9th floor of the Mackay Memorial Hospital. The meeting place was a theater-shaped chapel that will seat 500 persons. The Presbyterian Church of Taiwan operates three large hospitals, and because of this, local church apportionments represent only four percent of the total budget, which I frankly found quite enviable.

The PCT and the Kyodan have concluded a mission covenant, mutually sending out missionaries, and

this interchange has a long history. Recently, PCT representatives visited the Kyodan in regard to the devastation caused by the Great East Japan Earthquake. The PCT has already contributed 35 million yen and has promised to contribute an additional 20 million yen.

Japan is facing its greatest crisis since World War II, and developing a strategy for dealing with this disaster has also become an issue of greatest importance for the Kyodan. An emergency response headquarters has been established, and a concrete emergency plan has been formulated to grapple with the issue of raising 2.2 billion yen from both within and outside Japan. I am deeply moved that in the midst of this crisis, the PCT has offered fervent prayers and aid, and furthermore, that earnest prayers were offered up at the assembly.

On behalf of the Kyodan, I expressed to the assembly that in addition to being thankful for the PCT's support, we hope from here on also to deepen the relationship of both of our churches. (Tr. RT)

—Ishibashi Hideo, Kyodan Moderator

"The word of the Lord spread quickly and with power"

by Kyodan Moderator Ishiabashi Hideo

"Amazing Grace"

On Dec. 16, 2010, the movie distribution agency, Prestio, sent me a DVD and an invitation to write a review. The DVD was "Amazing Grace" (2006, U.K.), and I was asked to write on John Newton for the mass media. "Amazing Grace" will be shown throughout Japan from March 2011. Through his faith, the main character, William Wilberforce, fought to introduce a bill to end the slave trade, and was supported in his efforts by the Reverend John Newton.

John Newton, who wrote the lyrics for "Amazing Grace," experienced many failures and setbacks as a youth, but he had a dramatic conversion experience during a storm at sea as he and his ship were spared. As a result of that experience, he went from being the captain of a slave ship to becoming a minister of the gospel. Upon realizing that the Lord could "save a wretch" like him from his sinful life, one for which he could never atone, he was able to sing about God's unbelievable grace—that is, God's "amazing grace." In the movie, at the end of Newton's life, when his eyesight began failing and his memory became dimmer, he exclaimed that even though he may have forgotten many things, there were two things he could never forget; that he was a sinner, and that Christ was his savior. I was moved to recognize this movie as an instrument of evangelism, and wrote the article.

What is Evangelism?

Paul held daily discussions about God's amazing grace in the lecture hall at Tyrannus in Ephesus "so that all the Jews and Greeks who lived in the province of Asia heard the word of the Lord." (Acts 19:10) The Ephesians took time from their lunch hour to listen eagerly to the gospel at the lecture hall. Paul spoke passionately, and the people listened intently. Many people repented.

The evangelism of which Acts speaks is that of repentance. When the Ephesians understood the amazing grace of which Paul was speaking, they confessed their sins, "and

openly confessed what they had done." (Acts 19:18) They were released from their sins, and thus, were also made free.

The towns in Ephesus were full of magic practices. The people who heard Paul's gospel clearly confessed their sins and discarded their magic. They repented and burned the books of magic, which had been at the center of their lives. "When they calculated the value of the scrolls, the total came to fifty thousand drachmas." (Acts 19:19) Scrolls of magic were quite expensive. "Fifty thousand drachmas" represents a huge price in their world. The valuable scrolls of their world were destroyed.

As the magic books were the center of the Ephesians' lives, they depended on them for overcoming the troubles of their lives and this world. People were finally released from the bondage of the magic practices that had enslaved them. The words of the living God have power to change peoples' lives. God frees us from the bondage of magic, myths, and hardships.

God's Words are Influential

"In this way the word of the Lord spread widely and grew in power." (Acts 19:20) Not through Paul nor through the words of people, but through the word of the Lord the message of the Lord Jesus through his cross and resurrection rapidly spread.

Speak the Word passionately, listen to the Word passionately, and sing praises to God on high in worship. Let us be an evangelistic church with a burning faith and a passionate witness. May the word of the Lord spread quickly and with power in the Kyodan so that it will be recognized for its evangelism. (Tr. WJ)

—From *Shinpo* (Kyodan Times) published in Jan. 19

The General Secretary's Diary

Thoughts Concerning the Development of Young Evangelists

Recently, I heard the same wonderful report from two laypersons I know well in an outlying city. Last Christmas, three young people were baptized in their church, and this was in large part due to the enthusiastic efforts of a young pastor who had been called to that church the year before. I considered this as further evidence of a trend that I have seen recently of an increase in young, enthusiastic pastors. This is, of course, something I am very pleased to see, and I feel there is much hope for the future of the Kyodan as long as we continue to nurture new leadership with a clear calling from God and a passion for evangelism.

Likewise, a total of 74 persons took this year's spring ministerial examinations, held from March 1. Of these, 58 took the qualifying examination for licensed preacher status, 15 for full ordination, and 1 was transferring from another denomination. Last fall there were 91 applicants: 19 for licensed preacher status, 69 for full ordination, and 3 who were transferring from another denomination. Thus, the total for the two examination periods during the past year is quite a large number, clearly surpassing the number of retiring pastors, which incidentally, was 38 in 2009, 51 in 2010, and this year, as of the end of February, is 42, with the figure at the end of the fiscal year in March expected to be just over 50. So if the number of incoming ministers continues to surpass the number of those retiring, this indeed will be a sign of hope for the future of the Kyodan. It is my prayer that the number of active ministers will continue to increase in the future, rather than decrease.

When I was young, two accomplishments considered to be the barometer of the health of a church was that it produced a flow of young people going into full-time Christian ministry and that it spawned new congregations. When I felt the call to go into ministry some 60 years ago, there was in the church I attended an amazing

spiritual atmosphere in which several young people were led to dedicate their lives to evangelism and outreach. Attendance at the worship service steadily increased, with the sanctuary being filled to capacity. I recall the joy of being able participate in work camps to serve the community and the scene of children packing the church for the church school program. Many junior and senior high school students gathered, and from those, several went into full-time Christian service. But what is the situation now? The number of children in church school programs has drastically decreased, and so something needs to be done. Everyday, I pray that God will raise up young evangelists and give them the strength to fulfill his calling and to experience the sense of joy that accompanies this.

Training and licensing is the means the Kyodan employs to produce such new leadership. The training takes place at the Kyodan-established Tokyo Union Theological Seminary and five other accredited seminaries. The education of these seminaries stresses the Kyodan Confession of Faith, as well as the 2,000-year history of the Christian church. The licensing process consists of testing those who have successfully completed their seminary training, followed by the licensing and ordaining of those who qualify to serve as pastors in local churches. This standard procedure is, of course, the means of confirming the calling and sending forth of these servants by the Lord Jesus Christ. Those who hold a strong sense of calling then eagerly communicate the gospel and build up the church. My heart is full of joy as I see young pastors with a strong sense of calling being sent out to local churches, where they enthusiastically evangelize, leading to clear growth in the churches as new disciples are baptized into the body of Christ. (Tr. TB) (Written on March 4, 2011)

—General Secretary, Naito Tomeyuki

Live-broadcasting on the Internet by Children "Time to Chat ♪ Its Great!"

by Namba Masachika, pastor
Shibetsu Church, Hokkaido

Several times each month, the church school children at Shibetsu Church broadcast live programs over the Internet. The children enjoy making special programs about their experiences in activities of our church, churches in the northern Hokkaido subdistrict and in the district as a whole. They also enjoy covering events in the local community and doing such things as putting together quizzes for the audience. Basically, they write their own scripts, then develop and direct the programs themselves.

These programs were started for members of the church not able to attend worship services. However, discussion of how to relay the kids' vitality through fellowship with the local people led to the making of such "programs for

broadcasting." The programs are characterized by a point of view and a way of speaking that is unique to elementary and middle school children. The aim is to have a variety of connections with people locally and even overseas, through the church. The church members are also being revitalized by the energy of the youth. (Tr. RK)

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

A team from the Japan Evangelical Mission, which is headquartered in Korea, came to Shibetsu and were featured as guests on one of the broadcasts. As an ending, they sang a song in both Japanese and Korean, the title of which translates into English as "You were born to be loved." (See the church's website: <http://www.douhoku.org/shibetsu>.)