

**T. Muraoka**

**Eireneh and shalom in the Bible**

Keynote address at the 22nd European Japanese Christian Retreat

It find is rather significant that this year's retreat of ours is held on the eve of the 60th anniversary of the defeat of Japan in Germany, one of her former allies and that it has been organized by the Japanese church in Köln-Bonn, which has been in contact with a local Korean church for some time, and that with an awareness of what Japan did in the Korean peninsula and to its residents in the first half of the twentieth century. The organizers have done me great honor by asking me to hold this opening address.

I intend to take as the basis of my address Mt 5:9, which has been chosen as the key verse for this retreat. The central notion here, the key-word, 'peace,' may sound obvious. One readily thinks of Tolstoy's *War and Peace*. However, the classic authored by a recently retired famous evangelist, Billy Graham, is entitled *Peace with God*, which shows that the seemingly simple word 'peace' could have various meanings and nuances. In general, when a word in language A is translated into language B, unless one provides the translation with a commentary, the possibilities of interpretation tend to become restricted. On the cover of the programme of our retreat you see the key verse, Mt 5.9, printed in three different contemporary Japanese translations, and you will note that, while the key word for 'peace' is rendered with the same Japanese word, the rest varies from one translation to another. My own translation of the verse would read:

"Blessed are those who cultivate peace, for it is they that are going to be called sons of God."

With a view to find out how 'peace,' one of the key notions of the Bible, is presented in the Bible, I have studied how the Greek, Hebrew, and Aramaic words which are translated with 'peace' or suchlike are actually used in the Bible. In this way, it is hoped, some light is thrown on some of the difficulties associated with the use of the Greek word /eireneh/ and the Hebrew word /shalom/ (and the Aramaic /shlam/) and their respective derivatives and also on the depth and rich nuances carried by these words.

I shall look at our theme under six headings:

- 1) Peace as opposed to armed conflicts, wars
- 2) Peace and harmony in interpersonal relationships
- 3) Peace with its social implications, namely peace furthering justice and peace based on justice
- 4) Peace with nature and the surrounding world of mankind
- 5) Inner, spiritual peace with God
- 6) Title "Sons of God".

In the course of my address I might make some provocative remarks, which are, however, meant to raise some issues for further thinking and discussion among ourselves. I recently retired after thirty odd years' teaching profession, and I sometimes find it difficult to resist the temptation to serve as the devil's advocate. Some of the Scriptures I quote are my own translation.

Mt 5.9 is concerned not with a vertical relationship between God and man, but with a horizontal, interpersonal relationship. Human deeds, whether good or wicked, take place between different persons. However, the two dimensions are often inseparable. This is manifest in the structure of the Decalogue, and the two great commandments that we need to observe in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. When Nathan the prophet drew David's attention to his affair with Bathsheba, the king confessed, "I have sinned against the Lord," and not "I have sinned against Bathsheba" nor "I have sinned against Uriah the Hittite." His sin was, ultimately, a sin against the Divine. He degraded and devalued sex outside of the institution called marriage divinely established as the basic unit for a salutary human society, and willingly destroyed a human life for no good reason, a life which was given by God as a gift. Here the vertical and the horizontal dimensions intersect each other. Nevertheless, we shall for the present consider the two dimensions separately.

#### 1) Peace as opposed to armed conflicts, wars

With the sixtieth anniversary of our defeat just round the corner we would like to spend a while to ponder about war and peace and consider what is expected of us Japanese Christians burdened with the burden arising from the fact that we initiated the Pacific War, in the course of which our fatherland committed all kinds of unforgivable and destructive misdeeds. In view of the recent tension between Japan and her neighbours, China and South Korea, one wonders whether we can remain complacent with the thought that Japan is a peace-loving nation.

"To cultivate peace" implies that it is not good enough to be passively thinking about peace, being desirous of peace, and to maintain a peaceful attitude, but we are being asked to act and work towards peace. That is what the theme of the retreat, "to live peace," is all about. Jesus Himself acted by offering Himself as a sacrifice on the cross, thereby doing away with the wall of partition separating Jews and gentiles, reconciling the two parties, transforming them into a new person, and also reconciling them with God" (Eph 2.14-17).

However, this very Jesus, who was conferred by some New Testament authors the title taken from Isaiah, the prince of peace, says that He came to the earth not to cast peace, but a sword, strife and friction (Lk 12.51; Mt 10.34). If our Jesus could become an occasion for strife and discord, how could we, His followers, serve as arbitrators in conflict situations, between warring individuals or groups? Would this statement by Jesus justify "just wars" fought so many times in the history of mankind? How about the Reformation? It was not just about theoretical debates by cool-headed theologians; it was not once accompanied by bloody hostilities. The God of the Old Testament is often depicted as a warlike, aggressive god: "it is none other than the Lord your God that leads you in your wars" (Dt 3.22; Josh 23.3). Are there really wars for justice, just wars, sacred wars at all? Isn't a war for peace a contradiction in terms? Are Quakers, who stand for absolute peace and no war, the

only authentic Christians? Is it alright for Christians to invest in weapons industry? Should a CEO of Mitsubishi Heavy Industries become a Christian, ought he to resign his post? But the Old Testament also has a verse such as "The Lord of hosts will make wars cease to the ends of the earth; he will break the bow and shatter the spear; he will burn the chariots with fire" (Ps 46.10). On the wall of the UN headquarters in New York, I am told, you can read "He will beat their swords into ploughshares, and their spears into pruning hooks" (Is 2.4; Mi 4.3), a message which is, however, seemingly contradicted by "Beat your ploughshares into swords, and your pruning hooks into spears; let the weakling say, 'I am a mighty warrior'" (Jl 3[4].10). Scripture verses call for careful consideration; otherwise they could turn into a double-edged sword.

Mt 5.9 is concerned, in the first place, with the role of arbitrator between individuals or groups of individuals in conflict. However, it could be made to relate to warring parties themselves coming to terms and a resolution of conflicts. An expression closely affiliated with the word which I have rendered "cultivate peace" is used elsewhere in the Scriptures with reference to two armies engaged in hostilities coming to a temporary armistice or permanent peace treaty. Other speakers for this retreat might address this issue, so that I shall content myself with the following observation. Reconciliation follows when sins are forgiven. The parties concerned, however, must be absolutely certain as to exactly what sins or wrongdoings have led to the conflict in the first place. It is totally unsatisfactory to try to get out of the problem by taking recourse to typically Japanese, vague, ambiguous or equivocal generalities such as "I'm sorry for all the trouble I've caused" and to assume that the other party is capable of reading between the lines. Furthermore, to forgive or to be forgiven is a grave and serious matter; one should not treat it as a mere verbal ritual. When you are asked to forgive, you must make it plain what your decision is.

Here we are dealing with a fundamental aspect of human ethics. When God created Adam, He gave him the freedom not only to sin, but also not to sin. Whoever has chosen the first option has exercised this God-given freedom and cannot get away and shirk the responsibility by attributing his action to some mitigating circumstances, the general tendency or situation that prevailed at the time, or his desire to get along with his colleagues and the like. Our Foreign Minister, Machimura, said recently that Koizumi, the premier, pays official visits to the Yasukuni Shrine in order to vow that we would never go to war again and to commemorate those war dead who were unwillingly sent to a battle field. This is of course an absolute nonsense, and an insult to everybody's intelligence.

If one repents one's sins or wrongdoings, one must change his behaviour and philosophy of life. That alone is a genuine repentance. Words of repentance must be translated into matching deeds. When one prime minister after another of ours repeatedly speaks of "having caused many nations tremendous harm and pain by our wars of aggression and colonialism and seriously reflecting on the past history and offering heart-felt apologies," it is no wonder that our Asian neighbours are not convinced. Japan must be able to demonstrate that she truly knows what sorts of harm and pain she caused, teach her citizens this history undistorted, to offer appropriate compensation if she admits guilt, and make efforts to heal the pain she caused instead of saying that the San Francisco peace treaty exempted her from

the obligation of compensation and referring to subsequent, separate treaties signed with other nations such as China and South Korea. When her politicians, turning a deaf ear to continuing criticism by neighbouring nations and many of her own citizens, persist in paying visits to the Yasukuni Shrine where those who are responsible for causing the harm and pain mentioned above are commemorated, the phrase "seriously reflect on the past" is bound to sound hollow. This oft-used very word "hansei" is highly dubious and problematic. It has no precise equivalent in English, for instance. It roughly means 'to reflect critically on something.' It could connote a touch of remorse, but not necessarily. It is indicative of a typically Japanese mentality and way of thinking or saying. We, Japanese citizens, are here to taken to account for having voted for such politicians. When the post-war Far East military tribunal held in Tokyo decided not to consider the Emperor's responsibility for the war, the majority of his subjects sighed a sigh of relief. Nobusuke Kishi, who, together with those who were condemned by this court as A-class war criminals, was held in the Sugamo Prison, was set free as a result of the new American international policy, and returned to politics, serving as prime minister (1957-60), few eyebrows were raised. By contrast, the post-war (West) Germany welcomed back W. Brandt, who had been in exile in Norway during the Nazi regime, and he would become the mayor of Berlin, subsequently the head of the Federal Social Democratic Party and the Chancellor, and K. Adenauer, who made substantial contributions to the post-war recovery and rebuilding of Germany, was a sworn Nazi critic. Moreover, this nation went as far as to pass a special law in order to provide that the crime of genocide is unprescribed, and even today apprehends already elderly Nazi criminals and takes them to court. The contrast between this country, in which this retreat of ours is being held, its citizens and Christians on the one hand and Japan our fatherland, her citizens and Christians on the other cannot be more stark. True, apologies were offered in the past by Premiers Murayama, Obuchi, Koizumi, and others. Their apologies, however, are essentially personal. Wars, however, are declared and ended, in a modern state, by a decision of the parliament, members of which have been elected by us. Unless an apology is offered, therefore, by the parliament on behalf of its constituencies, it carries precious little weight. For that to happen, we citizens must be unanimous in our condemnation of the past war of aggression, invasion, violence, deprivation, and part with them resolutely. It is not easy for me with my father as a professional officer of the Imperial Army to speak in public and critically of the war. Yet, unless we hundred million sincerely repent. our past cannot be cleared. The spectre of this past will keep harrowing us, and I fear that the tragedy more devastating than the one 60 years ago might befall us. Moreover, the great majority of churches in Japan willingly endorsed the path pursued in the recent past. The first time when Christians in Japan seriously faced the question of war guilt was when the Council of Japanese Churches (Kyōdan) issued in 1967 a declaration entitled "A Confession by Kyōdan regarding its responsibility for the period of the Second World War." It is astonishing that there should have elapsed as many as 22 years for such a confession to be made public. Observing the current political situation in Japan one can hardly escape the impression that not only politicians of the ruling party, but also a substantial part of the general population do admit that they suffered a great deal during the past war and immediately after, but do not believe that the path pursued then by their nation was really that wrong. It seems that Japan, though

boasting to be a democratic, peace-loving nation, hasn't changed very much over the past sixty years.

Most of us present here today were born or grew up after the war, and as such we are not responsible, in strictly juridical terms, for what happened during the war and what was done by Japan and her soldiers. However, a social critic, Shuichi Kato, is certainly right when he says that it is wrong to think that we have nothing to do with that past or it does not matter to us. If we know of this past and yet say or do nothing when this past history is being falsified or painted over, then we run the risk of complicity. On the fortieth anniversary of Germany's defeat Weizsäcker, former Federal President of Germany, said: "The post-war young generation cannot be held responsible for what happened during the war. But they ARE responsible for what will emerge from it. He who closes his eyes for the past becomes blind to the present [Wer vor der Vergangenheit die Augen verschliesst, wird blind für die Gegenwart]." I might add: "Such a person has no eyes to see the future." In Weizsäcker's own words: "He who refuses to remember the inhumanity runs the risk of being infected again [Wer sich der Unmenschlichkeit nicht erinnern will, der wird wieder anfällig für neue Ansteckungsgefahren]." About Weizsäcker's statement a well-known sociologist, Rokuro Hidaka, has this to say: "Germans pride themselves on not forgetting criminal acts perpetrated in the past by their own people, and this is an indication of their perception that in this way they can expect to win friendship from nations around the world." True patriotic education must teach the young generation to face squarely and honestly facts of the history of their own nation, learn them and from them, and not to push them under the carpet, and to build a vision of their future on that basis. From the Bible we learn that our God does not transcend time, but works in and through history, closely observes the present situation of mankind against the background of their past history, and on that basis constructs and designs their future. This equally applies to individual humans. For sure He forgives sins, which, however, are not forgotten or eliminated from His memory. We cannot wipe out history nor should we do so. Otherwise history would wipe us out. Those who think that all that we need to do is wait just a while until all those surviving victims of our past aggression and violence die out are fatally deluding themselves. The moment those fast ageing survivors died out, we shall have missed our last chance to deal with this issue once and for all. That moment is fast approaching. The recent criticisms and protests by China and South Korea are the last warning. Blindly toeing the American line we have sent troops to Iraq, and we bear a considerable portion of the annual UN budget. For all those efforts, two of the major players in the political arena of Asia, China and South Korea, are adamantly opposed to Japan's long-held desire to gain a permanent seat on the UN Security Council. Japan is still an orphan of Asia.

In the preface to a biography of Anne Frank published in 1998 its author, Melissa Müller, says: "It is a mere four days when there raged no war somewhere on the globe since the end of the Second World War. .. History must be told .. it must be kept being told so that it will not be driven into oblivion." It is our very minimum obligation to learn history and transmit it to the future. This is not what some people call masochistic historiography. When it comes to our dealing with the past war and its aftermath, Japan is often compared with Germany. Weizsäcker's statement quoted earlier is taken from the speech he delivered in the Federal Parliament on 8 May 1985, 40 years after Germany capitulated. When compared

with the communiqué released in 1995 by the then prime minister, Murayama, and that by our emperor, one cannot but notice some considerable difference in the respective stance and depth of thought of the respective leaders of the two nations. The emperor's words give a glimpse into his heartfelt sorrow and commiseration for our fallen soldiers and his sympathy for the hardships his subjects went through during and immediately after the war. However, there is not a word said about what happened in Japan's former colonies and lands occupied by her army. Nor can one detect the perception that the past war was conducted under the Meiji constitution, and those kamikaze pilots in their late teens or early twenties took off from a special airbase in Chiran in the home prefecture of Rev. Morinaga of London Japanese Christian Fellowship Church and myself flew at and on to American warships, while shouting "Long live the Emperor!" It is of course to be conceded that our emperor with a Shintô background and our non-Christian premier have their own outlook. Even so, we Christians ought to note that Weizsäcker's speech is anchored in the biblical teaching. Before mourning the fallen German soldiers he mourns six million Jewish victims. Quoting a well-known Jewish proverb — "A desire to forget prolongs exile; the key to salvation is memory" — he goes on to say: "Memory is experiencing what God does in history. Memory is the source of hope for salvation. This experience gives birth to hope, and it leads to belief in salvation, reunion of the separated, a firm belief in reconciliation. He who forgets this loses his faith."

On August 16 last year, there took place in Okokarara in Namibia a special gathering to commemorate what had happened a hundred years before at a place called Waterberg when the land was still a German colony. At least 60,000 locals who stood up against Germany were mercilessly put down. The meeting was attended by Ms Wiecek-Zeul, a minister of the Federal German cabinet. Both local papers and the media back home were unanimous in suggesting that she would do everything, as all her predecessors had done, to wriggle herself out of the constricting situation by means of all manners of evasive remarks and non-committal statements. But, totally contrary to this speculation, she said: "We Germans accept our guilt and responsibility for the crimes we committed at that time. In accordance with the prayer taught by our God we sincerely beg your forgiveness for our sins," which led to a jubilant, vociferous applause among the local Hereros present. She was most likely referring to a part of the Lord's Prayer. Given two million soldiers fallen in battle fields coupled by a vast number of victims of the two atomic bombs (Hiroshima and Nagasaki) and civilian deaths in Okinawa and overseas, the total Japanese casualties estimated to top three million, which means one casualty for every five households, Japan suffered enormously, which nobody can gainsay. However, one should not focus exclusively on our own victims. Lately the Japanese media has been full of news about Japanese civilians abducted by North Korean agents. The total number of victims is said to be fifteen. Some Japanese politicians arrogantly propose an economic sanction. One wonders whether they forget tens of thousands of Chinese and Koreans who were abducted or forcefully transported to Japan before the end of the war to work as slaves. I have not been yet to Nagasaki. The museum and other exhibitions commemorating the tragic bomb dropped on Hiroshima are clearly focused on Japan and citizens of Hiroshima as victims. When another museum is built nearby, documenting atrocities perpetrated in Japan's former colonies and occupied lands on the one

hand and no less excruciating atrocities meted out to Japanese civilians by the wartime thought police, only then a genuine process of Japan confronting her recent past and willingly learning from it will have begun. On the memorial statue commemorating Hiroshima's victims of the atomic bomb is engraved: "Rest in peace. We shall not repeat our error." Survivors of atrocities in our neighbouring countries during our military aggression are still demanding sincere apologies from our responsible leaders and an appropriate compensation; they say they cannot die in peace until that happens. We need to know precisely what that error was which we pledge not to repeat. In a declaration adopted by the Japan Evangelical Association in April 1995 at its annual general meeting we find a fairly long litany of sufferings and hardships resulting from the war of aggression started by Japan. There are some omissions such as the fate of Dutch and other European militaries and civilians trapped when Japan invaded Indonesia or those POWs forcefully transported to Japan and illegally put to hard labour. There are also matters which became widely known only after the publication of the above-mentioned declaration. One such gruesome example is a case of a considerable quantity of poison gas and estimated 700,000 bombs with poisonous contents left behind, hastily buried in Manchuria by the withdrawing Japanese army and would subsequently explode or leak, causing quite a number of casualties among the local Chinese. I read such a report in a Japanese paper back in 2003. The Tokyo District Court ordered the Japanese Government to pay the Chinese victims a compensation of about € 130,000. It appears that the first incident was reported as early as 1991, and the Japanese Government sent an investigative team in the following month. But nothing was done in the meantime until the Chinese victims took the matter to a Japanese court. No subsequent media report says that the unit concerned or its commander had been identified or anybody had come forward. It is really pathetic when one thinks that this was done by those who called themselves Emperor's soldiers. I am depressed at the prospect of facing Chinese students in Singapore in September and in Hong Kong next year where I am going to offer voluntary intensive courses.

Some of you might protest: this is all politics, which should not be mingled with matters relating to religion. But is it really right to devote oneself exclusively to pietistic pursuits, taking no notice of what is happening in the way of political decisions taken in local town halls, for instance, or in the national parliament? If it is true that the "considerable harm and hardship" suffered by Asian peoples, troops of the Allied forces and their civilian nationals was caused by politicians elected by Japanese citizens then and militaries supported by them and that issue still remains unsettled, then we Christians, for whom the issue of evil and sin is central, ought to know what we should do. As said earlier, Japan also sustained enormous casualties. Many of us may have in the meantime learned to come to terms with this reality, but we have no right to expect that, after 60 years, victims of other nations should also be able to put the past sufferings behind. As we shall see later, both 'eireneh' and 'shalom' are far more than a pietistic, personal peace of mind, the Buddhists' nirvana.

True, St Paul says that our citizenship is in heaven (Phil 3.20). But, just as a non-descript "cosmopolitan" Japanese is loathsome, so would a Christian hanging somewhere up in the air be hardly welcome as a citizen of the kingdom of heaven.

Nor should one misquote Jesus' saying: "Render to Caesar the things which are Caesar's; and to God the things which are God's" (Mt 22.21). This does not teach us to be indifferent to and uninterested in secular authorities and politics. It does teach the principle of separation of church and state. However, there have been, and still are, times when the secular power intrudes the domain proper to God and attempts to usurp His authority. When such happens, the children of God should not turn a blind eye to it or obsequiously follow the secular power, but insist that what is God's is God's. Let us not forget many a saint who put their lives on the line, refusing to worship Caesar. During the war and before it, people in our colonies and occupied lands as well as Japanese at home were forced to worship the Emperor as a god. Not a few Asian brothers and sisters in the Lord lost their lives in this struggle. Japanese Christians in those years, with very few exceptions, knelt before Baal called Emperor.

## 2) Peace and harmony in interpersonal relationships

Interpersonal peace and harmony are taught in various places in the Scriptures. One such example is "Seek peace with everybody" (Heb 12.14). Does this mean that we ought to bury our principles and views, trying to be harmless, docile persons, to get along with everybody, avoiding arguments and quarrels at any cost, putting up with any insult and abuse (Mt 5.11-12)? Our Japanese society is such that you are not supposed to stick out, a talk of individuality, assertiveness, and identity is instantly shouted down. But Heb 12.14 goes on to say: "Seek holiness, without which one cannot see God." It is not for nothing that Mt 5.9 is preceded by another beatitude, "Blessed are those who are pure of heart, for it is they who can see God." Now, in the Bible, holiness implies selection, and universal tolerance and accommodation are often alien to it. One should of course avoid criticism for criticism's sake or personal attack. But there are occasions when, in order to determine what is right and holy, one ought not shy away from a vigorous debate, even a confrontation. This is in keeping with the famous saying in Ps 85.11: "Mercy and truth meet each other; righteousness and peace (shalom) kiss each other." If we were to seek peace at any cost, there wouldn't have been the Reformation. To accept everybody and everything with the warmth of Christian love sounds beautifully pious and saintly, but it could result in cheapening the love of Christ, who, in the interest of this principle, bore on his own body the suffering of the cross so that God could forgive our sins and reconcile us to Himself. We should not be putting this precious love on a par with the notion also called love in plebian pop songs. It is, for sure, no easy task to put this principle into practice in our daily lives. Nonetheless, Paul, hot-tempered and strong-willed by nature, must have known this better than anybody else, and yet he insisted on being friends with everybody if possible at all (Rom 12.18). There is no easy way out. H. Grotius, a renowned 17th century Dutch doctor of laws, comments on this verse: "Be friends with everybody, if possible; if you cannot be mutually friends, then at least you should be friends." In the presence of Pilate, Jesus held his silence, ignoring all false accusations thrown at him, after the fashion of a lamb described in Isaiah 53. But, in his moments of excruciating agony on the cross, he cried out: "My God, my God, why has thou forsaken me?"

## 3) Peace with its social implications, namely peace furthering justice and

peace based on justice

In the Old Testament the word /shalom/ is very often used side by side with words denoting justice, integrity, fairness and the like. To give just a few examples:

"True instruction was in his [= the priest's] mouth, and no wrong was found on his lips. He walked with me in shalom and uprightness, and he turned away from iniquity" (Mal 2.6)

"O that you had paid attention to my commandments! Then your shalom would have been like a river, and your justice like the billows of the sea" (Isa 48.18, where the word /shalom/, in view of its parallel 'justice', can hardly mean success or prosperity, but rather it must be about a peaceful and harmonious society in which justice and integrity are maintained)

"That which is brought about through justice is shalom, that which is engendered by justice is serenity and eternal security" (Isa 32.17)

"Speak truth with one another; in your gates judge in accordance with truth and shalom" (Zech 8.16).

From all this we learn that shalom is, along with justice, integrity and uprightness, one of the cardinal pillars on which the life of a community and society is to be based.

Ps 85.11 quoted earlier points in the same direction.

In families, churches, work-places or any other community, when one member is willfully wronged or hurt, the parties concerned need to become aware of precisely what has gone wrong, the wronged party has to be offered an apology, and compensated for the wrong as appropriate. Only that way the future harmony of the relationship can be secured.

In discussions about the Palestinian issue we often hear of "a just and lasting peace." Even if one party were, by virtue of its military superiority, capable of imposing a ceasefire or "peace" treaty, the situation could easily be disrupted as long as the other party's justifiable perception that they are wrongly oppressed and exploited is not faced and adequately dealt with.

Victims are often the weak, the despised, dropouts, social outcasts, are discriminated against and neglected. In the Bible, in the Old Testament in particular, four vulnerable groups of the society are very often mentioned side by side: orphans, widows, foreigners, and economically disadvantaged, poor people. They are mentioned as in need of special care and consideration (e.g. Dt 27.19). The first two, orphans and widows, are mentioned together at least 16 times. At Ps 10.18 the text speaks of 'orphans and the weak'. That the society should be constantly mindful of special needs of these groups belongs to the horizontal dimension. This requirement, however, is underpinned by the vertical dimension as manifest in Ps 68.6 "God, in his holy residence, acts as father for orphans and as husband for widows." In this respect, too, our Japanese society is fraught with unique problems. When I was still in Japan, a child of one-parent family, even where the mother or father had died of a disease or accident, was looked upon as a potential risk at work and disadvantaged when applying for a job. Even today survivors of the atomic bombs are harassed by bureaucrats who insist that those victims must be accompanied by a witness in order to qualify for state aid. When Vietnamese boat people reached the shores of Japan, they were allowed to stay a while in order to recover from their exhaustion, only to be hurried on to Canada or

the USA. Our Lord went out of His way to approach the disadvantaged of the society such as the sick, psychiatric cases, (former) prostitutes, tax-collectors universally shunned, children and women. So much so that sometimes one wondered whether his actions were deliberately provocative. When approached by a leper who must have broken the rule and got out of a detention centre, Jesus touched him with his bare hands and healed him, relieving him at the same time of the social stigma. Our Lord was spearheading the movement of liberation of our society's ghetto residents, burakumin.

#### 4) Peace with nature and the surrounding world of mankind

"And through him [= Jesus] God was pleased to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, by making peace (/eireneh/) through the blood of his cross" (Col 1.21)

One may laugh at the suggestion that rocks and stones, horses and cows may have an ethical relationship with God. The above-quoted verse, however, with "all things" (and not "everybody"), teaches us otherwise. When one breaks the stem of a flower or fells a tree, sees some fluid oozing out, and thinks of the scripture saying "Life is in blood", is he out of his mind? Is it not merely the case that the flower and the tree do not possess the same means of expression and communication as we humans, and the fluid is their tears? Looking at the magnificent Swiss Alps or Japan Alps, our Creator's handiwork, we burst into praise. But is there anything wrong with saying "Thank you" to a simple, but beautiful flower in the field or to a dog or cat as an elderly person's company? Those who love flower-arrangement or keep pets will understand. When approached with such an attitude, a rustling rivulet in spring-time might sound different in our ears. One of the groups of the Japanese Christian Fellowship Church of the Netherlands come together for their monthly Sunday worship held in a building called affectionately "Sheep's hut" on the premises of the family Payton. Could their goats and chicken be allowed to join in? They might of course have to be house-trained first. "Let heaven and earth praise him, the seas and everything that moves in them!" (Ps 69.34). This indicates that the nature also joins us in worshipping the Creator. The Israelites' crossing of the Red Sea, Jonah's quieting the wild Mediterranean Sea or Jesus calming the stormy Sea of Galilee, all these stories are usually taken as a manifestation of God's supernatural power over the forces of nature, physical, impersonal phenomena. Could we not see here the sea and the lake "personally" responding and submitting themselves to their creator? You may of course justly wonder if inanimate objects such as stones and rocks do really possess a will. When Jesus was about to breathe his last on the cross, the whole earth was suddenly covered with total darkness. I wonder whether the sun was protesting to God: "O God, you uttered 'Let there be light', and called forth light. Look at the way your only son, whom you have sent as the light of the world, is being treated. Is this really right and fair?" Thereafter, according to Matthew, the earth shook and rocks split open. Are they not joining the sun in its protest and communicating their horror in the language at their disposal? "... a spirit from on high is poured out on us, and the wilderness becomes a fruitful field, and the fruitful field is deemed a forest, then justice will dwell in the wilderness, and righteousness abide in the fruitful field. The effect of righteousness will be peace, and the result of righteousness, quietness and security for ever" (Isa 32.15-17). "Give the king your

justice, O God, and your righteousness to a prince. May he judge your people with righteousness and your poor with justice. May the mountains yield shalom for the people, and the hills, in righteousness" (Ps 72.1-2). Are these texts nothing other than poetic, figurative utterances or exaggerations? If it is true, as Paul says in the passage quoted at the beginning, that God reconciles himself with his works of creation other than humans, surely there must be an ethical relationship possible between God and nature. This goes farther than prevention of cruelties against animals and pets. The famous passage in Isaiah, "The wolf shall live with the lamb, ... a little child shall lead them ... The nursing child shall play over the hole of the asp ..." is usually understood as a picture of an utopian, peaceful coexistence of humans and wild animals when even infants will have no fear of them. Is it not possible, however, to think that in that era these animals will have no fear of humans, either? All these quotations are from the poetic books of the Bible. Paul, however, in his prose epistle to the Romans, has this to say: "Nature eagerly waits for the appearance of the children of God. Nature was compelled to submit itself to futility, but not of its own will but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will eventually be set free from this destructive bondage into the glorious freedom of the children of God. We know that the whole nature has been groaning in labour pains until now" (Rom 8.19-23). At the beginning of the human history God declared to Adam: "The earth is alas cursed because of you" (Gen 3.17). To Eve, who had tempted her husband into a sin, he said that she would not be able to fulfill the most important task assigned to her without awful pains. Paul says that nature is also groaning and going through the same pains. For quite some time we have been made aware that, due to what we humans do or fail to do, quite a few species of flora and fauna are threatened with extinction. In insurance policies drafted in English one sometimes comes across an expression, 'acts of God,' a reference to natural calamities such as floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, thunders which are considered to be beyond human control and therefore are not covered by the insurance. I have no specialist knowledge on seismology or geology, for instance, but it is generally known that landslides, for instance, are due to irresponsible felling of trees. Global warming and the rising sea-level are hardly natural calamities, but acts of God in a sense different meant by insurance brokers. "Let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air" (Gen 1.26) was meant to entrust humans with responsible management of nature, not willful, egoistic exploitation of its resources.

##### 5) Inner, spiritual peace with God

On this topic I shall be brief, as other speakers will deal with them.

"We therefore have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, since we have been justified by faith" (Rom 5.1). This must be read in conjunction with another passage: "we, who were once his enemies, have been reconciled with him through the death of his son" (ib. 5.10). This means more than a mere sense of relief and inner serenity, but rather the enmity between God and us has now ceased thanks to the forgiveness made possible through the sacrifice of Jesus. "The thought of the flesh amounts to a hostility towards God" (ib. 8.7) is in the same vein.

The apostle speaks of the eireneh beyond human comprehension (Phil. 4.7). This is a thought and idea typically and uniquely Pauline, although Paul also uses the Greek word in relation to interpersonal conflict and strife (Col. 3.15; 1Cor 14.33).

Such a thought is hardly to be found in the Old Testament. Even Ps 119.165 "Great shalom have those who love your law" is quite distinct from Paul's use of the word /eireneh/. The well-known high priestly blessing, "May the Lord make his face shine upon you ... give you shalom" (Nu 6.25-26) does not quite belong here. The pronoun 'you' is in the singular, but it is actually referring to the entire congregation of Israel.

#### 6) Title "Sons of God"

Mt 5.9 uses the plural forms, hence 'the sons of God.' Therefore we would think that Jesus is not including himself here.

The Greek word used here, /huios/, is sometimes translated as 'child'. Greek has several words which could be so translated. Another is /teknon/, which lays emphasis on the biological link between parents and their offspring. By contrast, /huios/ underlines the fact that he shares and mirrors the character of his father, and is an heir to him, not only in material, financial terms. Any child, however silly or incorrigible, is a teknon of his parents. But a huios of God can be properly applied only to someone who, following in the footsteps of his father called God of eireneh (1Thes 5.23; Rom 15.33 etc.), strives after eireneh in his daily life; it is a title of honor to be won, not to be taken for granted. In the New Testament period, this title was conferred on emperors who managed to quell rebellions and restore peace in their empire. This title of honor will be conferred, according to Mt 5.9, on those humble saints in a family, an obscure village, a small church, a city or even in a nation as they go about restoring and cultivating peace and harmony, extend a helping hand to those who are unjustly oppressed, expose injustice, and ensure that human dignity is preserved on behalf of fellowmen who were all created in the image of God, who showers rain on the just and the unjust. Such people are said to be comparable to Augustus and Alexander (H. Windisch). What a beatitude! Here we are talking about a magnificent blessing, which can come true only when we remain firmly bonded to Him, who said: "I leave you peace (eireneh). I give you my eireneh, though not the kind of eireneh which the world gives" (John 14.27). Through Him, and through Him alone, we may become citizens of the kingdom of His father and become His sons. In this way the horizontal and vertical dimensions of our relationships to fellow humans on the one hand and to our Creator on the other meet each other.

#### Appendix: a witness

It is often said: "Didn't the western powers also do awful things in their colonies? Why is it that Japan alone is asked to apologize? Two years ago, when I retired from my university position, I decided to dedicate one tenth of my time to God, also a gift from God just as monetary income, and this by teaching five weeks every year as a volunteer at universities and theological seminaries in Asian countries which suffered under the Japanese aggression in the past century. I would like people in those countries to know that there are Japanese citizens, maybe not as many yet as one would like to see, who do not share the official view

and policy of their government and admit that many things happened in those countries, things which should not have happened, and we still have an outstanding debt.

When we returned from South Korea, the first country we visited, I was asked by a Dutch organization called Initiatives of Change [formerly Moral Rearmament] headquartered in The Hague to speak at a regular meeting of the group under the title "What can an individual do for a reconciliation between nations?" During the question and answer session one Dutch gentleman stood up, introducing himself as one who, in 1991, had thrown a wreath of flowers into a nearby pond, a wreath laid by Mr. Kaifu, the then prime minister of Japan, at the memorial for the Dutch victims in Indonesia. A short while later I received a letter from the gentleman, saying that he wanted to see me and discuss several matters along with his fellow survivors who still regularly visited for treatment a centre for victims of wartime violence, a centre which happens to be in a town where I live. I lost no time in replying that I very much welcomed such an opportunity, and asked to know the time and the venue. With no reply coming for quite a while, I rang him up, when he asked me for a little more time. Later on the same day a colleague of his called me to say that the gentleman was not a little agitated and mentally exhausted, even in handling my phone call. I eventually received an official letter of invitation. The meeting was attended by a dozen or so elderly people. One said that I was the first Japanese she met after the war, and that the previous night she had a dream of being chased by a Japanese soldier. At the close of the meeting everyone said that they had found much of value in the encounter. During the meeting another participant said that he had returned to Holland as an orphan with both his parents killed at the hands of Japanese soldiers. As he spoke, he was visually in great pains, and it was equally painful for me, too, to hear such a story. When we took leave of one another, everybody shook hands with me, but he was the only one who held my hands with both of his hands. When the director of Initiatives of Change heard this, she said that the Dutch could learn some valuable lesson for their efforts to repair their relations with Indonesia.

Last year we spent five weeks in Indonesia. On our return to Holland I addressed a meeting of elderly members of a Dutch Baptist church to which my wife and I belong. When I told them about our impressions and experiences in Indonesia, one of them asked what we found present-day Indonesians thought of the Dutch. Instead of a straight answer I told them the following anecdote.

Aboard the Garuda flight to Jakarta I studied a leaflet explaining visa application procedures. I saw that various countries were grouped into three categories. The first included neighbouring countries such as Singapore, nationals of which require no entry visa. The second comprised most Western countries nationals of which may apply for a temporary visa at the port of entry. The last group included countries nationals of which need to apply for a visa at an overseas Indonesian consulate or embassy prior to their departure. Among this last category I found Japan and the Netherlands. On hearing this anecdote nobody present said anything. I thought that, if we had gone to Indonesia just as tourists, I wouldn't have dared to tell such a story.

**Select literature :**

G. von Rad and W. Foerster, "eijrhvnh etc.", in G. Kittel (ed.), *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, tr. G.W. Bromiley, vol. II (Grand Rapids, 1964), pp. 400-420.

K.-J. Illman, *μlev*, in H.-J. Fabry and H. Ringgren, *Theologisches Wörterbuch zum Alten Testament* (1995, Stuttgart/Berlin/Köln), Bd. VIII, Sp. 93-101.

F.J. Stendebach, *μlv*, *ibid.*, Sp. 12-46.

G. Gerleman, *μlv*, in E. Jenni (ed.), *Theologisches Handwörterbuch zum aslten Testament* (1976, München / Zürich), Bd. II, Sp. 919-935.

H. Windisch, "Friedensbringer - Gottessöhne. Eine religionsgeschichtliche Interpretation der 7. Seligpreisung", *Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft* 24 (1925), S. 240-260.

額瀨厚：「時効なき罪責を担う：世代を越えた歴史の責務として」『福音と世界』95／8：5-9

戒能信生、井田泉、菅根信彦：「座談会：戦後世代の戦責告白とはなにか」『福音と世界』95／8：5-9 10-21

「キリスト教諸教団・諸団体の声明（1）」『福音と世界』95／8：22-40

佐々木悟史：「戦後50年 東アジアの平和を考える。バート・ボルで行われた東アジアターゲットに参加して」『福音と世界』95／8：41-43

「キリスト教諸教団・諸団体の声明（1）」『福音と世界』95／9：20-44

加藤周一：戦争責任の受け止め方、ドイツと日本（1993）

阿部浩己、金富子：「戦争・植民地支配責任をいかに果たすか」『世界』01／6

R. von Weizsäcker, "Der 8. Mai 1945 - 40 Jahre danach", Rede gehalten am 8. Mai 1945 im Bundestag. [和訳：荒れ野の40年（岩波書店、1986）]

藤原帰一：戦争を記憶する、広島・ホロコーストと現在（講談社、2001）

木寺廉太：古代キリスト教と平和主義（立教大学出版会、2004）

朝日新聞山形支局：聞き書き、ある憲兵の記録（朝日新聞社、1991）

渡辺信夫：戦争の罪責を担って、現代日本キリスト者の視点（新教出版社、1994）

許雲樵・蔡史君（編）、田中宏・福永平和（訳）：華人虐殺事件の証明、日本軍占領下のシンガポール（青木書店、1986）

吉見義明：従軍慰安婦（岩波書店、1995）

石川逸子：「従軍慰安婦」にされた少女たち（岩波書店、1993）

遠山茂樹他：昭和史（岩波書店、1959）

常石敬一：731部隊（懇談社、1995）

高崎宗司：植民地朝鮮の日本人（岩波書店、2002）

竹山道雄：ビルマの豎琴（新潮社、1959）

戦争犠牲者を心に刻む会：インドネシア、侵略と独立（東方出版、2000）

上坂冬子：慶州ナザレ園、忘れられた日本人妻たち（中央公論社、1984）

VAWW÷NET ジャパン：戦時・性暴力をどう裁くか、国連マクドゥーガル報告全訳（凱風社、2000）

アニー・ハウツヴァールト夫妻を迎える会：アニー・ハウツヴァールトさん来日記念・広がる心の記憶（2005：注文は350-1319 埼玉県狭山市広瀬1-2-16 岩堀智子へ）

太平洋戦争とその後をめぐる日蘭対話の会 HP [www.djdialogue.org/engtop.htm](http://www.djdialogue.org/engtop.htm)