History, Official Documents and Structural Information of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan)

October 2009
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  Committee to Examine the Issue of Dendosho, Committee on Aid for Reconstruction of Churches Damaged in the "Noto Peninsula Earthquake"

Communications Center Committee, Kyodan Shinpo Editorial Committee,

  Kyodan Newsletter Editorial Committee, Website Administrator

Research Institute for Mission, Buraku Liberation Center

Kyodan Board of Publications

Board of Pension, Program to Support Retired Ministers

Kyodan Mutual-Aid Society for Church Facilities, Independent Related Organizations

National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies,

  National Association of Church-related Kindergartens,

  The Japan Association of Christian Nursery Schools

Statistics

Brief History
THE CONFESSION OF FAITH

We believe and confess that:

The Old and New Testaments, inspired of God, testify to Christ, reveal the truth of the Gospel, and are the sole canon upon which the Church should depend. By the Holy Spirit the Holy Bible is the Word of God which gives us full knowledge of God and salvation, and is the unerring standard of faith and life.

The One God, revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ, and testified to in the Holy Scripture, being Father, Son and Holy Spirit, is the triune God. The Son, who become man, for the salvation of us sinners was crucified and made our redemption by offering Himself to God as the perfect sacrifice once for all.

God chooses us by His grace, and by faith in Christ alone He forgives our sins and justifies us. In this unchangeable grace the Holy Spirit accomplishes His work by sanctifying us and causing us to bear fruits of righteousness.

The Church is the Body of Christ the Lord, and is the congregation of those who are called by grace. The church observes public worship, preaches the Gospel aright, administers the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and being diligent in works of love, waits in hope for the coming again of the Lord.

Thus we believe, and with the saints in all ages we confess the Apostles' Creed:

I believe in God the Father Almighty; Maker of heaven and earth; and in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sitteth on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and dead. I believe in the Holy Spirit; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE CONSTITUTION
(Official Translation under consideration April 4, 1968)

God, summoning from every land and people those whom, in Christ, it pleases Him to call, consecrates these people and reveals to them His grace and truth, bestowing upon them the fellowship of the Holy Spirit. This, then, is the holy catholic Church.

This Church, visible as well as invisible, established on the foundation of the prophets and apostles with the Lord throughout all generations, is committed to carrying out the will of God, by preaching the gospel, administering the sacraments, and awaiting in hope the return of the Lord.

On June 24, 1941, evangelical churches of over thirty formerly existing, independent denominations, as well as churches of other traditions in our country, through a unity given in the Holy Spirit under the wondrous providence of God, and having respect for one another's unique historical characteristics, entered into the fellowship of the holy catholic Church. The Church thus formed is the United Church of Christ in Japan.

Article 1. This United Church, being one with the catholic Church that honors Jesus Christ as its head, embracing the Confession of Faith established by this United Church and in conformity with the provisions of its Constitution and By-Laws, understands its true purpose to be the carrying out of the functions of the catholic Church, the Body of the Lord, the accomplishment of which is the mission for which it exists.

Article 2. The Confession of Faith of this United Church, grounded in the Old and New Testaments and conformed to the Ecumenical Creeds and to the evangelical Confessions of Faith, was enacted at the Eighth General Assembly of the United Church on October 26, 1954.

Article 3. Rescinded.

Article 4. This United Church, in accordance with the provisions of its Constitution and By-Laws, shall conduct the administration of its affairs by means of an assembly system.

Article 5. The highest administrative organ of this United Church shall be the United Church General Assembly.

The ecclesiastical functions and business of this United Church, to be conducted in accordance with the decisions of the United Church General Assembly and within the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws, shall be under the supervision of the Moderator of the United Church General Assembly.

Article 6. This United Church, for the carrying out of its ecclesiastical functions and business, shall set up districts.

The district is a regional group of churches belonging to this United Church General Assembly.

The ecclesiastical functions and business mentioned in the first paragraph of this Article (6), to be conducted in accordance with the decisions of the District Assembly and within the provisions of the Constitution and By-Laws, shall be under the supervision of the Moderator of the District Assembly.

Article 7. A local church belonging to this United Church, being an organized body of people who embrace the Confession of Faith of this United Church, shall have as its highest administrative organ the local church congregational meeting.
The ecclesiastical functions and business of the local church, to be conducted in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws, shall be under the supervision of the moderator of the local church congregational meeting.

The moderator of the local church congregational meeting shall be the minister in charge of the local church.

Article 8. Local churches shall hold services of worship at the times they decide on every Lord's Day and observe the sacraments.

The service of worship shall consist of hymns, readings from Scripture, a sermon, prayers, an offering, etc.

The sacraments consist of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, which are to be administered by ministers in full standing.

Article 9. Ministers of this United Church are persons who have been called of God and, having gone through the regular procedures established by this United Church, dedicate themselves to its service.

Ministers are classified as ministers in full standing and licensed preachers.

A minister in full standing is one who has received ordination; a licensed preacher is one who has been authorized to preach.

Article 10. Lay members of this United Church are persons who have received baptism and who are members of a local church.

Article 10, Part 2. The officers of the local churches of this United Church are persons chosen at the respective local church congregational meeting.

Article 11. Regulations necessary for the execution of this Constitution shall be provided in the By-Laws.

The aforementioned By-Laws shall be adopted at the United Church General Assembly with the approval of at least two-thirds of the delegates present.

Supplementary Rule.

Article 12. This Constitution shall not be amended unless, three months prior to the opening of a United Church General Assembly, the proposed amendment shall have been publicly announced. General Assembly must be attended by at least two-thirds of the total delegates, and at least two-thirds of those in attendance must give their approval.

Enacted at the Fourth United Church General Assembly, October 16, 1946
Revised at the Fifth United Church General Assembly, October 28, 1948
Amended at the Ninth United Church General Assembly, October 24, 1956
Amended at the Twelfth United Church General Assembly, October 25, 1962
Amended at the Twenty-ninth United Church General Assembly, November 17, 1994
GUIDELINES FOR CHRISTIAN LIVING

(Official Translation under consideration April 4, 1968)

Having been baptized by the grace of God in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and admitted to the Church, which is the Body of Christ, we put aside all iniquities and superstitions, maintain with one another the close fellowship of brothers and sisters in the Lord, pray always for the manifestation of the glory of God, and made the following pledge:

1. We will respect the order of the Church, obey its teachings and discipline, emphasize the importance of Lord's Day worship, prayer services and other meetings, observe Holy Communion, be diligent in evangelism, and labor for the support and development of the Church by giving our time, treasures and talents.

2. We will study the Scriptures daily, be constant in prayer, and maintain a life of piety, purity, temperance, and diligence.

3. We will serve God, our whole family together, by emphasizing the importance of family worship, maintaining harmony in the home, and leading our children into the faith.

4. We will strive for the realization of Christ's justice and love throughout the world, by respecting each other's personality, loving our neighbors, and laboring for the welfare of society.

5. We will endeavor, following the will of God, to uplift the morality of the taste, to realize international justice, and to attain world peace.

May God be gracious to us, and enable us to accomplish these intentions.

Amen.

(Enacted October 28, 1954)
A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE KYODAN

(Official Translation under consideration April 4, 1968)

Protestant Christianity in our country originated from the work of foreign missionaries who came to Japan in 1859. On February 2, 1872 (according to the old calendar), the first Protestant Church, the Nihon Kirisuto Kokai, was established in Yokohama. This church belonged to none of the denominations found in foreign countries but was, as it were, a supra-denominational church. Subsequently, however, denominations from Europe and America were transplanted to Japan, and as their mission work expanded. From a different angle at about the same time, proposals for union arouse frequently among the several denominations, partly stimulated from abroad by the ecumenical movement. Finally, the opportunity arose, coincidentally occasioned by the promulgation of the Religious Organizations Law, for all the Protestant churches of the country to unite. On October 17, 1940, at a mass meeting in Tokyo of Christian layperson from all parts of Japan, a declaration of church unity was made. On the basis of this declaration, over thirty Protestant denominations achieved unity at a Founding General Assembly held at the Fujimichio Church on June 24-25, 1941. Thus, the present United church was established, in accordance with the following general doctrinal statement:

"The Triune God, being Father, Son and Holy Spirit, revealed by the Lord Jesus Christ and attested in the Holy Scriptures, grants forgiveness of sins to those who believe in the atonement affected by the Son who, for the sins of the world and its salvation, became man, died, and rose from the dead. These believers He accounts as righteous, He sanctifies them and grants them eternal life.

"The Church, as the body of Christ made up of those who are called by grace, observes worship, preaches the Gospel, administers the Sacraments, and waits in hope for the coming of the Lord."

Later, in conjunction with the annulment of the Religious Organizations Law, the proposal was made that the United Church's organization be revised. On October 16, 1946, the Constitution was re-enacted, making it publicly evident that this body was indeed a united church of its own volition. Then on October 27, 1948, the Constitution was revised, and it was decided that the United Church would confess its faith in the words of the Apostles' Creed. At length, on October 26, 1954, the United Church adopted its own Confession of Faith. Thus this United Church, which under a wondrous providence and in the unity of the Holy Spirit had from the time of its founding labored for the formation of a stable church, in this way publicly established its oneness with the holy catholic church.

Enacted
CONFESSION ON
THE RESPONSIBILITY
DURING WORLD WAR II

The twenty-fifth anniversary of the founding of the United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan) was celebrated during the Fourteenth General Assembly of the Kyodan held in October 1966. The serious concern for us now is “The Kyodan of Tomorrow.” Taking this as our theme, we prayed and reflected on the responsibility the Kyodan bears towards the future of Japan and the world.

It was indeed on this very occasion that we freshly realized yet again the mistakes we committed in the name of the Kyodan at the time of our formation and during the following war years. We therefore seek the mercy of our Lord and the forgiveness of our neighbors.

In those years, the government of our country, out of the imperatives of waging war, demanded as a matter of national policy that religious bodies be consolidated and cooperate with the war effort.

From the opening of Christian mission early in the Meiji Era (1868-1912), most Japanese Protestants had long desired to dissolve the various denominations and to establish a single evangelical church in Japan. Therefore, the church leaders of the time, taking advantage of this demand by the government, entered into church union whereby the Kyodan was formed.

When we recognize that the Providence of God, the Lord of History, was at work in the formation and continued existence of the Kyodan despite our weakness and failings, we not only feel a deep sense of profound gratitude, but with fear, we painfully realize our responsibility.

The church, as “the light of the world” and as “the salt of the earth,” should not have aligned itself with that war effort. Love of country should, rather, have led Christians to exercise a rightful judgment, based on Christian conscience, toward the course our nation pursued. However, in the name of the Kyodan, we issued a statement at home and abroad in which we approved of and supported that war, and encouraged prayers for victory.

Indeed, even as our country committed sin, so we too, as a church, fell into the same sin. We neglected to perform our mission as a “watchman.” Now, with deep pain in our hearts, we confess our sin and ask the Lord for forgiveness. We also seek the forgiveness of the people of all nations, particularly in Asia, and of the churches therein and of our brothers and sisters in Christ throughout the world; as well as the forgiveness of the people in our own country.

Over twenty years have passed since that war ended; and we are fearful that our beloved country, set in today’s problem-plagued world, is once again headed in a dangerous direction. At such a moment, we seek God’s help and guidance so that the Kyodan may not repeat its errors but, rather, may rightly carry out its mission in Japan and in the world. Looking toward tomorrow, we hereby make public this resolution.

Moderator Suzuki Masahisa

Approved by the Kyodan Executive Committee, Feb. 20, 1967
Issued on Easter Sunday, March 26, 1967
Revised English translation issued Jan. 20, 1982
The Organization of Kyodan

**CHURCHES**
1,725 Churches
188,485 Members

Districts Assembly

**Districts**
- Hokkai
- Tohoku
- Kanto
- Tokyo
- Nishi-Tokyo
- Kanagawa
- Tokai
- Chubu
- Kyoto
- Osaka
- Hyogo
- Higashi-Chugoku
- Nishi-Chugoku
- Shikoku
- Kyusyu
- Okinawa

Sub-Districts
Program to Support Retired Ministers

**General Assembly**
Meets every two years
Moderator, Vice Moderator, Secretary
185 Clergy
185 Lay Members
30 Appointed Delegates
400 + Participant Observers

**Executive Council**
Meets three times a year
14 Clergy
13 Lay Members

Executive Committee

**General Secretariat**
General Secretary
Board of Publications
Board of Pension
Buraku Liberation Center
Steering Committee
Research Institute on the Mission of the Church
Committee
Other Board
Mutual Aid society for Church Facilities
Commissions

Commission on Mission
Commission on the Ministry
(Joint Pastoral Studies Seminar)
Commission on Faith and Order
Commission on Ministerial Qualifications
Commission on Finance
Commission on Ecumenical Ministries

Committees

Committee on Evangelism
Committee on Education
Committee on Social Concerns
Subcommittee on Imperial and Yasukuni Shrine Issues

Committees under Executive Council

Committee on Kyodan-KCCJ Cooperative Ministries
Special Committee on Solidarity with Citizens of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Living in Japan
Committee for Preparations of the 150th Anniversary of Protestant Evangelism in Japan
Committee to Examine the Issue of Dendosho
Subcommittee on Clarification of the Various Kyodan Centers
Committee on Aid for Reconstruction of Churches Damaged in the "Noto Peninsula Earthquake"

Committees under General Secretary

Communications Center Committee
Kyodan Shinpo (Kyodan Times) Editorial Committee
Kyodan Newsletter Editorial Committee
Website Administrator

Committees under Commission on Mission

Subcommittee on Dealing With Handicapping Conditions
Committee on Unification Association Issues

Autonomous Organization

National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies
The Association of Christian Nurseries in Japan
The National Network among Church Kindergartens

Committees under Commission on Ecumenical Ministries

Committee on Taiwan Church Relations
Committee on Swiss Church Relations
Committee on Korean church Relations
Committee on Mission Personnel
Committee on Ecumenical Relations
Committee on Missionary Concerns
The Commission on Ministry shall perform the following functions, according to Article 43 of the Bylaws.

1. Items Concerning Institutions for Ministerial Training
   (1) Act as the conduit between the Kyodan and its related seminaries: namely, the Kyodan founded seminary (one school) and the seminaries approved by the Kyodan (five schools). Distribute to the above schools seminary support funds and offerings made on Seminary Day.
   (2) Visit the above mentioned schools to inquire about their situation and concerns and to promote mutual understanding.

2. Ministerial Training
   (1) Continue holding orientation programs for new ministers. This orientation enhances new ministers' awareness of being Kyodan ministers and encourages them to share in the Kyodan's mission issues.
   (2) Aid for ministers' continuing study
      Partial aid is provided for ministers with two or more years experience to attend seminars or do study that will enhance their pastoral work.

3. Ministerial Appointment Help
   Lists of "Ministers Seeking Positions" and of "Churches Seeking Ministers" are prepared and sent to district moderators and others asking for their cooperation. It is hoped that this modest effort will fulfill its role.

4. Admonition of Ministers
   Responsibility for admonition of ministers lies with the Commission on Ministry, but in reality, so many matters must be solved that it is difficult to handle this task.

5. Committee on Joint Pastoral Studies Seminar
   A joint pastoral training program was being carried on with the interest accrued from the German EMW fund, but continuation became difficult, and so at the 6th meeting of the Executive Council of the 30th (1996) General Assembly, it was placed under the jurisdiction of the Commission on the Ministry.
   Between 1973 and 2002, twenty-seven sessions were held.

The Commission on Ministerial Qualifications carries out the following activities:

1. In accord with the Constitution and Bylaws and rules of this Commission, a ministerial qualifications examination is held twice a year, spring being primarily for "licensed preacher" (a 1st level of ordination — one that doesn't involve the laying on of hands) status and fall being primarily for "minister in full standing" (full-ordination) status.

2. An effort is made to prepare questions that call for a basic, overall understanding of each subject.

3. For the question on "Biblical Exegesis," an exegesis of the assigned sermon topic text must be submitted along with the sermon/meditation before the examination date. Also, written dissertations for the "Systematic Theology" and "Theological Dissertation" topics for the full-ordination level ministers' examination, and "Pastoral Theology" for the licensed preachers' examination are to be submitted before the examination date.
4. There is a thorough personal interview, and also there is a "General Meeting" in order for all
the examinees to meet together and come to a consensus concerning the issues of becoming
a Kyodan minister.
5. As the examination is carried out from the standpoint of the roles of the local church,
district, and Kyodan (Commission on Ministerial Qualifications), the recommendation from
the district moderator and the pastor of the church the examinee is a member of will be
given considerable weight.
6. The commission endeavors to improve the system of ministerial qualifications as it deals
with a broad spectrum of issues concerning the ministry, beginning with consideration of
Article 9 of the Kyodan Constitution.

Commission on Faith and Order

The Commission on Faith and Order administers matters set forth in Article 44 of the
Bylaws. (1) Matters concerning the Kyodan's Confession of Faith, (2) Matters concerning
interpretation of the Constitution and Bylaws, (3) Matters concerning worship, the sacraments,
and other rituals, (4) Matters concerning faith, order, and ecclesiastical functions.

The central role of the Commission on Faith and Order is to issue reports responding to
consultation from the Kyodan, the districts, and various committees on matters concerning
interpretation and application of the Bylaws as listed in (2) above. In preparing such reports,
the policy is that commission members rid themselves of personal ideology and dogma and
adhere strictly to the intended meaning of the Constitution and Bylaws. Also, it is affirmed
that when there is a consultation, the commission issues reports concerning only that
consultation and does not lift up issues for consideration on its own. Reports are sent not only
to the party asking for consultation but also to each district, and are included in the Kyodan
General Assembly record. Further, all reports issued to date are printed in the "Collection of
Interpretations of the Constitution and Bylaws." A revised edition was published in September
2002 and can be purchased from the Kyodan office.

Also concerning item (3) above, the "Provision Concerning Establishing a Subcommittee
to Revise the Book of Ritual" was approved at the 31st (1998) Kyodan General Assembly,
and a subcommittee for that purpose was established under this Commission through the 35th
(2006) General Assembly. This task was to be a complete rewriting of the "Colloquial Book
of Ritual," and a preliminary version of "Rituals for Worship, Marriages, and Funerals" for
evaluation purposes has been published. A similar preliminary version for evaluation purposes
of the other aspects of the "Book of Ritual" is scheduled to be published during 2009.

Commission on Finance

The Commission on Finance is an administrative organ and standing committee of
the Kyodan, and as stipulated in Article 46 of the Bylaws, it administers the budget and
expenditures. In contrast to this administrative organ, there is the Kyodan General Secretariat,
which is an executive organ, the Research Institute for Mission, a research organ, and the
Board of Publications, the Board of Pensions and the Buraku Liberation Center, which make
up the boards and agencies of the Kyodan. The Commission on Finance handles the finances
of the administrative, executive and research organs (hereafter referred to as the General
Secretariat accounts), which are reported every fiscal year in the "Financial Statement of
the Kyodan General Secretariat." Also, the financial statement of the Kyodan Board of
Publications and the budget and expenditure reports of the Buraku Liberation Center are
reviewed by the Commission on Finance.

In the past, the General Secretariat accounts have been so much in the red that they had been referred to as “leaking tanks,” and so through both structural and financial reforms, we are working with balanced budgets. This has been in response to the policies developed by the Task Force on Kyodan Structure, which includes requiring the operations of the Kyodan to remain within the income through apportionments from the districts and various contributions. In accordance with this, such practices as money transfers from the Board of Publications, and absorbing previous years’ surpluses into current accounts were abolished. Also, efforts were begun to address the shortfalls in the pension reserves, reserves for operating expenses and the reserve fund for depreciation, etc.

Remaining issues include sorting out the remaining mess (uncollected funds from the past, as well as unpaid expenses) and simplifying the complex accounting system that results from having numerous special accounts. Likewise, we can expect that the recent downward trends in membership and related statistics is likely to continue, and so that needs to be factored in as well.

**Auditing Committee**

The Auditing Committee consists of 3 members who are installed as standing members at the Kyodan General Assembly, which, according to Article 27, section 1 of the Bylaws, “shall inspect the papers and financial ledgers, audit the receipts of money and materials, and review the management of assets and other business affairs.” They are to then report all of this to the Kyodan General Assembly. Thus, according to these rules, an audit of the Kyodan General Secretariat finances is to be performed and a report included in the financial report of the Kyodan General Secretariat.

The bylaws were revised at the 34th (2004) Kyodan General Assembly, with the phrase that the Auditing Committee is also to “review the management of assets and other business affairs” being added to the 2nd section of Article 27. Thus, the authority to audit not only church finances but also activities was entrusted to this committee.

Primarily, this means establishing an internal audit system and reexamining the structure of the Kyodan so that it can bear an external audit of the Kyodan as a religious juridical body. After discussion, it was decided to begin working on the following: (1) Make a comprehensive audit system for the General Secretariat, Board of Publications and Board of Pensions; (2) Centralize administration of the finances of the various (program) centers; (3) Make a survey of each district’s audits; and (4) Reexamine both the special funds held by the Kyodan and the various facilities that do not have “hojin” (literally, “juridical person,” the term for a legal entity) status.

Based on the above, action is being taken following the 35th (2006) General Assembly to move forward in implementing each of these items. Concerning (1), to hold a joint meeting of auditing staff and sharing opinions, and also to prepare a joint financial report of the 2 boards and secretariat. Concerning (2), the restructuring of the management system, in line with the government’s tax reforms, committees related to each center are to give top priority to discussing whether to address this by making each center a separate juridical body (person) or whether to address it through an internal restructuring of the Kyodan. Concerning (3), to produce a chart showing the results of the survey, and concerning (4), to get a clear picture of Kyodan special assets held in each district and to properly manage them.

During the 36th Assembly Period (since the 2008 General Assembly), the Kyodan leadership has been addressing numerous issues, including each of those listed above, in an effort to improve and strengthen the auditing system of the Kyodan as a religious juridical body, beginning with the financial audit of the General Secretariat.
Commission on Mission

In Article 41 of the Bylaws, the following items are set forth as this Commission's jurisdiction:
1. The mandate of the Commission on Mission is as follows:
   (1) Matters relating to basic mission policy
   (2) Matters relating to overall mission activities
   (3) Communication and cooperation with district committees related to mission
   (4) Any other important matters related to mission
2. With respect to items (1) and (3) above, the Commission is to hold a mission strategy conference.
3. This mission strategy conference is to be composed of members of the Commission on Mission, mission-related persons from the districts and anyone else that the Commission deems necessary.
4. In order to facilitate the activities of the Commission, it can organize groups to work independently on various activities.

In Article 42 of the Bylaws, the following permanent special committees are established in the Commission on Mission:
1. Committee on Evangelism
2. Committee on Education
3. Committee on Social Concerns

Other matters that are handled:
(1) Committee on Discrimination Against Disabled Persons: (The way the name in Japanese of this subcommittee is written was changed to reflect sensitivity to the Japanese word “shogai” — disability, since the character pronounced “gai” has the meaning of “harmful,” the character is no longer written but only its phonetic pronunciation.) As a subcommittee under the Commission on Mission, this committee gathers and shares information and cooperates with districts and local churches in their activities.
(2) A Committee on Unification Church Issues has been established, with the chairperson of the Commission on Mission as the representative person. It jointly deals with the problem and acts as a "window for consultation" in the districts. It is hoped that the pamphlet "This is the True Face" (100 yen) will be used.
(3) Promote cooperation in mission with the Korean Christian Church in Japan.

Subcommittee on Dealing With Handicapping Conditions

One issue that the Church faces is how to facilitate those with various handicapping conditions, including the elderly, to be able to have a fulfilling church life. While we need to deal with each issue in a thorough manner, we also want to deal with the overall picture of people with handicapping conditions and how we can facilitate their having a fulfilling church life. We hope to place all of this on the Kyodan website to make it available to all churches.
Likewise, we hope to hold a national conference for people with handicapping conditions, but as the cost is an issue, we plan to receive contributions towards that end and hold the conference when sufficient support is in.
Committee on Evangelism

As stated in Article 42 of the Bylaws, the Committee on Evangelism is a permanent standing committee under the Commission on Mission. According to the Bylaws, it handles the following matters:
1. Rural, urban, industrial, and pioneer evangelism. Also, research and planning for evangelism.
2. Aid and guidance in purchasing land and erecting church buildings and other buildings necessary to further such evangelism.
3. Recommendations to related committees.
4. Other matters necessary to promote evangelism.

Concerning 1:
(1) Consultations for persons active in "rural evangelism" are held. There were reports on activities and efforts concerning "rural" in several parts of the country, and seeking for a common sharing of issues. Out of this discussion, the necessity of establishing a network was lifted up. At the first meeting of the Committee on Evangelism during the 36th Assembly Period, the name was changed to "Council On Rural Evangelism," and the next conference was scheduled for Feb. 2010 in the Kanto District.
(2) There will be a consultation for the chairpersons of district committees on evangelism every other year to share each district's situation and common issues.

Concerning 2: There are two types, "Aid for Pioneer Evangelism" and "General Loans." "Aid for Pioneer Evangelism" is used for land purchase and constructing church buildings and parsonages in locations that will be strategic for mission, and also to acquire other locations the Kyodan deems especially important for mission.
"General Loans" are used for construction or renovation of church buildings, parsonages, or attached buildings, or for purchasing land or buildings, but may not be used for kindergartens or day nurseries.
Besides the above, recommendations may be made for the WCC-related ECLOF (Ecumenical Church Loan Fund).

Concerning 3: Members are delegated to the Commission on Mission, the editorial committee for the publications "Kokoro no Tomo (Friend of the Heart)" and "Shinto no Tomo (Believers' Friend)," the committee on rural evangelism, and the committee on prison evangelism.

Concerning 4: Publication of a Braille edition of "Kokoro no Tomo" to be used in literature evangelism for the visually handicapped.

Association of Kyodan-related Prison Chaplains

At the 6th General Assembly in Oct. 1950, in the restructuring that was decided then, each focus committee was placed under the auspices of the general evangelism committee, and within that context, then, the “Prison Evangelism Committee” was begun in Oct. 1956. Through this, the existence of Kyodan-related prison chaplains came into view, but while it was clear that there were quite a few, there was no system for keeping track of the numbers. This is because the work of a prison chaplain was viewed as an independent work of the chaplain and not as a ministry of the overall Kyodan or its districts.

At the 15th General Assembly in Oct. 1968, the name of the “Prison Evangelism Committee” was discontinued, but in order to not allow this effort to simply fade away, the “Association of Kyodan-related Prison Chaplains” was formally organized in July 1969 as an independent organization, and presently almost 100 prison chaplains are members. Once a year, they hold a seminar. The Evangelism Committee cooperates with this work.
Committee on Education

The duties of the Committee on Education are laid out in section 3 of Article 42 of the Bylaws as follows:

1) Investigation of and planning for Christian education in the churches and kindergartens.
2) Developing and training of Directors of Christian Education.
3) The leadership of youth.
4) Cooperative relation between the Church and schools.
5) Recommendation of appropriate members for related committees.
6) Other matters related to Christian education.

Thus, the Committee on Education is involved in a wide variety of activities, from programs for young children through young adults.

This committee is confronted with the problems of stagnation and decline in church schools and how to revive the church school education program. Presently, they are involved in producing church school education materials and putting together conferences of district education leaders and church school seminars. Under the theme of “Living Together as Children of the World,” they are endeavoring to foster in the children of the church schools a sense of joy and responsibility of “living together” by promoting a special Christmas offering and sending those funds to worthy organizations and institutions. Likewise, a portion of those funds is used to prepare special certificates and badges for children who regularly attend, so as to foster in them the desire to faithfully attend.

With respect to youth and young adults, the committee also sponsors an exchange program with youth from the Presbyterian Church of Taiwan. One problem they face, however, is that there is no functioning national youth organization for Japan, and so it is difficult to get the Japanese youth together. In hopes of overcoming this problem, the committee is planning a conference for the youth coordinators from each district.

With respect to the position of Director of Christian Education, the present qualifying exam system is being continued.

Committee on Social Concerns

As stated in Article 42 of the Bylaws, the Commission on Social Concerns is a special standing committee under the Commission on Mission. According to the Bylaws, its mandates are as follows:

1. Surveys and planning related to social action programs
2. Cooperation and communication with social welfare institutions
3. Other matters related to social issues

With respect to 1, the commission will continue the “Basic Policies of Social Action” and discussions related to this.

Concerning 2, strengthening relationships with the Japan Christian Social Work League, the Association of Christian Day-Care Centers in Japan and other Kyodan-related social work institutions.

Concerning 3:

a) Issue a statement against capital punishment. Also, take steps to prevent capital punishment from being carried out.

b) Hold a Nationwide Meeting for Chairpersons of Social Concerns Committees to share the situation and concerns of each district.

c) Collecting funds for aid in natural disasters, both in Japan and overseas.

d) Provide aid for church-related institutions that do not receive public aid.

e) Christmas presents to retired ministers and surviving spouses who do not receive a
Kyodan pension.

Continuing discussions and actions on other issues, including the issue of the Japanese Constitution, the problem of suicide, and issues related to military bases, etc.

Subcommittee on Imperial and Yasukuni Shrine Issues

At the 33rd (2002) General Assembly, the "Imperial and Yasukuni Shrine Information Center" was abolished, and it was voted to establish the Committee on Imperial and Yasukuni Shrine Issues under the Commission on Social Concerns. Based on that, this committee was established at the 1st meeting of the Commission on Social Concerns following the 33rd (2002) General Assembly.

The purpose for establishing this sub-committee was to abolish the "Imperial and Yasukuni Shrine Information Center" and establish a sub-committee that would inherit the issues and take them on under the Committee on Social Concerns.

At the first meeting of the 33rd Assembly Period, it was decided that the subcommittee would hold study and training programs to deal with the following five points to carry on the work.

1. Work to contribute to the transformation of the United Church of Christ in Japan into a confession of faith community.
2. As the major premise for (1), to examine how the Kyodan has understood the relationship of "Kyodan and State" from the establishment of the Kyodan to the present day.
3. Based on (1) and (2), discuss how to take on the "Imperial and Yasukuni Shrine Issue" matter as an issue for the Church and for its members.
4. Taking what has been made clear above, make proposals to the Kyodan through the Commission on Social Concerns and address local churches.
5. To cooperate with the work of the NCC Yasukuni Shrine Issue Committee whenever possible.

The plan is to hold study meetings and training meetings during this term in order to deepen awareness of the issue.

Commission on Ecumenical Ministries

With the dissolution of the Council of Cooperation (CoC) during the 35th General Assembly period (May 2007), the Commission on Ecumenical Ministries took over all of its duties and became an organization composed of 6 focus committees.

1. Committee on Taiwan Church Relations: In 1985, the Kyodan and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan formed a mission cooperation agreement, and in 1987, this was set up as a special commission. During the 33rd General Assembly Period (2002), this was then brought under the auspices of the Commission on Ecumenical Ministries under which personnel exchange and consultations are held.
2. Committee on Swiss Church Relations: The mission cooperation agreement between the Kyodan and the Union of Swiss Protestant Churches was concluded in 1988. In 1997, a conference on mission was held, and also in 2002, a conference on mission for three countries (Switzerland, Korea, and Japan) was held in Korea.
[ Committees 3 – 6 were newly formed at the 35th General Assembly in 2006. ]
3. Committee on Mission Personnel: From 1948, the Council of Cooperation (CoC) had taken
care of the paperwork involved in receiving missionaries from North America, but now this is all done under the auspices of this committee. It endeavors to smoothly carry out personnel procedures between the sending churches and Kyodan-related schools and other organizations.

4. Committee on Missionary Concerns: This committee endeavors to provide support for missionaries, such as improving their working conditions. It sponsors the orientation for new missionaries and the annual missionary conference, plus being there to give individual support.

5. Committee on Korean Church Relations: In 1967, an agreement was concluded with three churches in Korea, namely the Presbyterian Church of Korea (PCK), the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea (PROK), and the Korean Methodist Church, but this was under the portfolio of the General Secretary. Under this committee, plans are being laid to have more concrete cooperation between the 4 bodies as well as the hosting of the 3rd conference between the Japanese, Korean and Swiss churches to be held in Japan in 2010.

6. Committee on Ecumenical Relations: This committee handles mission cooperation with countries other than Taiwan, Korea and Switzerland. Its mandate includes exchange programs between the churches, the sending of youth, and a scholarship program for students from abroad studying in Japan. This “Ecumenical Scholarship Fund of the United Church of Christ in Japan” was able to provide two such scholarships for students in 2008.

**Committee on Kyodan-KCCJ Cooperative Ministries**

On February 8, 1984, the Korean Christian Church in Japan and the United Church of Christ in Japan concluded an agreement on cooperation in ministry. Based on this agreement, the Committee on Cooperative Ministries was established in order to achieve results from cooperation in ministry. Up until the 34th General Assembly period (11/04 to 10/06) this was a working committee, but since the 35th General Assembly (2006), this became a committee under the Executive Committee, based on the stipulations of the cooperative agreement. Members from the Kyodan are the Moderator, Vice-moderator and Secretary, the Chairpersons of the Commission on Mission and the Special Committee on Solidarity with Citizens of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, the General Secretary, and the Secretary on Mission. Comparable members from the Korean Christian Church in Japan are also on the Committee. The 2nd Conference on Mission was held July 23 – 24, 2007 under the theme of "Outlook on Cooperative Mission Between the United Church of Christ in Japan and the Korean Christian Church in Japan As It Celebrates Its Centennial." A total of 48 participants (27 from the Kyodan and 21 from the KCCJ) attended the event at the Higashi Umeda Church and drafted a joint statement. This was the first such meeting since the initial such conference 9 years earlier.

The centennial celebration was held on October 13, 2008. The Kyodan has cooperated with the Korean Christian Church in Japan in its commemorative projects and has helped in raising funds.

This year, on June 8 and 9, we held the 43rd meeting of the Mission Cooperation Committee in Isawa in Yamanashi Prefecture under the theme of “Mission Issues and Cooperative Mission of Both Churches Based on the Joint Statement of the 2nd Mission Cooperation Conference.”

The general secretaries from each church, along with the executive secretaries under whose portfolio this falls, meet each year to develop their respective Mission Cooperation Committees.
Special Committee on Solidarity with Citizens of the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea Living in Japan

Opinions concerning this were expressed at the 35th (2006) General Assembly and the Committee on Solidarity with People of the Republic of Korea and the People's Democratic Republic of Korea Living in Japan was established under the Executive Council during the term of the 35th General Assembly. Five committee members were approved at the first meeting of the Executive Council.

At the first meeting of this committee during the 36th General Assembly Period, the following items were discussed:

1) Study in more depth the history of the Korean Christian Church in Japan. To accomplish this, they were to study the constitution of the Korean Christian Church in Japan and to deepen their understanding of the human rights issues faced by people of Korean ethnicity who live in Japan.

2) Members of the committee will endeavor to attend as many seminars and other events that are related to the topic as possible.

3) Cooperate in the distribution of petitions calling upon the parliament to pass the "Basic Law on Foreign Residents" and to repeal the system of fingerprinting foreigners. Copies are to be mailed across the country and particularly to the district offices prior to district annual meetings.

4) Continue the fundraising campaign for the 100th anniversary celebration of the Korean Christian Church in Japan.

Committee for Preparations of the 150th Anniversary of Protestant Evangelism in Japan

In accordance with the adoption of “Proposal to Hold Commemorative Events for the 150th Anniversary of Evangelism in Japan” (proposed by Kobayashi Sadao), this committee was placed under the executive committee. Its purpose was to discuss and prepare for events that the Kyodan would engage in to commemorate the 150th anniversary of evangelism in Japan during 2009. Likewise, it was to coordinate cooperation with other denominations and entities in gathering information.

The committee also dealt with the question of why the year 2009 was chosen for the “150th anniversary of Japanese evangelism.” Some have expressed the opinion that Bettelheim’s work in Okinawa (from 1846) should be considered the “beginning of evangelism in Japan,” but in accordance with the “history of the formation of the United Church of Christ in Japan,” 1859 has always been considered the beginning year of Protestant missions in Japan. Likewise, the 50th and 100th anniversaries were celebrated based on the start date of 1859.

As for the basic philosophy behind the anniversary events, the previous celebrations hold the key. The “50th year since the opening up of evangelism” was characterized by a spirit of gratitude to the missionaries and a celebration of the recognition Christianity had gained in Japanese society. The “100th year of mission” occurred after the “Christian Boom” following WWII, in an atmosphere of crisis due to many groups leaving the Kyodan, and so this was taken to be an opportunity for comprehensive evangelism. Now, as we approach the 150th anniversary, the theme for all of our events will be “Our Salvation is in Christ Alone,” and our text will be 1 Corinthians 1:18-25.

Subcommittee on Clarification of the Various Kyodan Centers

This subcommittee was established at the 4th Executive Committee meeting of the 35th General Assembly Period and was based on the report of the Special Committee to Examine Structure that was established for the 34th and 35th General Assembly Periods (2004-2008). The purpose of this subcommittee is to clarify the legal standing of these centers that were
established according to the 2nd section of article 30 of the Kyodan Religious Juridical Body Bylaws. Each center was to be contacted and this issue thoroughly discussed in order to make progress towards this goal. The report recommended that the Kyodan make the necessary clarifications for each of the centers by 2010, and so efforts are underway to accomplish this task. There are 15 such centers, from the Hokkaido Christian Center to the Okinawa Christian Center, but each was established and is being managed in a different manner. Thus, the committee is working with each center and providing them with the necessary materials to help them clarify their legal standing through one of the following three methods: 1) by coming entirely under the Kyodan, 2) by becoming a facility under some religious juridical body or 3) by taking on their own juridical body status.

**Committee to Examine the Issue of Dendosho (traditionally translated as “preaching place” = fledgling (or branch) church)**

In response to the report of the Commission on Faith and Order to the issue of doing baptisms at “dendosho,” a proposal was made at the 36th General Assembly (2008) asking that this report be withdrawn. Likewise, since a variety of opinions have been expressed in the various districts concerning the realities a typical dendosho faces, the Executive Council decided to set up the “Committee to Examine the Issue of Dendosho” to consider this weighty issue. The goal in mind is to have this committee prepare a report, which will then serve as the basis for the Kyodan to make the bylaws more consistent and fill in the gulf that has developed over the issue.

As this statement implies, the Executive Council recognizes that there is a “gap between the stipulations of the bylaws and the realities” that “needs to be investigated.” Based on the discussions surrounding this issue, they will endeavor to first properly understand the situation of dendosho within the framework of the present bylaws and then to get a thorough handle on the realities faced by dendosho before drafting any proposed changes in the bylaws, should that be deemed necessary.

**Committee on Aid for Reconstruction of Churches Damaged in the "Noto Peninsula Earthquake"**

On March 25, 2007, the "Noto Peninsula Earthquake" caused heavy damage to areas of Hokuriku. Due to the fact that this affected area is mostly a tourist area, there was a relative paucity of reporting on the damage, but as the aftershocks continued for more than a month after the initial earthquake, the churches and related facilities were heavily damaged. All of the affected churches are small, and thus the few members, many of whom also have damaged homes to deal with, are not in a position to fund the rebuilding all by themselves.

At the July 2007 meeting of the Executive Council, the Executive Council established a task force to oversee relief efforts in rebuilding the damaged churches. The goal was to raise 150 million yen from around the nation during the 2 years of the 35th General Assembly Period in order to help in the rebuilding effort. The churches of the Noto Peninsula exist in a setting of decreasing population as small churches dotted across a large area, and thus they each are a valuable presence in their respective communities. Thus, the Kyodan has an important mission in seeing that these churches maintain that presence.

Already, the parsonage rebuilding and repairs to the kindergarten of the Nanao Church, the sanctuary of the Uotsu Church, the parsonage of the Wajima Church, the rebuilding of the Togi Dendosho (branch church) of the Hakui Church, and the repairs to the Hakui Shirayuri Kindergarten have been completed. Remaining to be completed are the sanctuary of the Nanao Church and the earthquake retrofitting of the Hakui Church.
Communications Center Committee

In addition to the Kyodan Shinpo (Kyodan Times) Editorial Committee, the Standing Executive Council established the Publicity Center at their meeting on Dec. 8, 1965 and began publishing a newsletter to be sent overseas. Until 1975, there were three subcommittees within this committee — namely the Kyodan Newsletter Editorial Committee, the Audio-Visual Bulletin Committee and the Special Activities Committee. These last two were discontinued at that time, but the Kyodan Newsletter Editing Committee remains.

As stated in the General Secretary’s report to the 2nd meeting of the 35th General Assembly Period Executive Council on July 9-10, 2007, the Communications Center Committee was resurrected, and redesigned to include the Editorial Committee for the Kyodan Shinpo, the Editorial Committee for the Kyodan Newsletter, and the Website Administrator under its jurisdiction.

Kyodan Shinpo (Kyodan Times) Editorial Committee

The Kyodan Shinpo is the bulletin of the United Church of Christ in Japan. It is normally published every other week and is sent to local Kyodan churches and related organizations.

Within the Kyodan organization, this committee is under the General Secretary and is located in the Publicity Department, which is the work is actually done.

While informing local churches of the decisions of the Kyodan, Executive Council, standing committees, special committees and so forth, it also reports actions of the districts and of local churches throughout the country.

It also seeks to report how witnesses to faith are being carried out in evangelism and mission in each church and “dendosho.” We want to receive messages from pastors, and pray that we can praise the Lord along with our readers.

We are also working to improve techniques for the written page.

Kyodan Newsletter Editorial Committee

The Kyodan Newsletter is an English language organ published 5 times per year. It reports various activities of the Kyodan with the desire to have fellowship with churches throughout the world. It reports particularly on the Kyodan’s relations to churches in the world and the activities of missionaries, but goes beyond that to introduce Christian schools and focus on news about youth issues.

In addition, it is preparing an English language introductory pamphlet of the Kyodan. Also, English translations of the Kyodan Confession of Faith, the Confession of Responsibility in World War II, and other important statements are being prepared.

Website Administrator

From April of 2007, work was begun on constructing a Kyodan website, and after considerable trial and error, the official website of the Kyodan was opened at the 36th General Assembly in October 2008. The contents of the website basically consists of the materials handed out at the orientation for new pastors, the official publications of the Kyodan (The Kyodan Shinpo (Japanese) and the Kyodan Newsletter (English), along with any announcements the Kyodan has to make. Links are also planned to site that districts or committees have set up.
Research Institute for Mission

The Research Institute for Mission was inaugurated at the 8th (1954) Kyodan General Assembly for the purpose of doing research on basic and practical issues concerning the United Church of Christ in Japan's mission and church development. Administration of the Research Institute for Mission is carried out by the Research Institute for Mission Committee, which is selected by the Kyodan General Assembly according to the Rules of the Research Institute for Mission.

The purpose of the Research Institute for Mission is written in article 3 of the rules. It is as follows:

1. Getting a grasp on the content of mission.
2. Studying the makeup of the church, which is the primary body of mission.
3. Understanding the object of mission, as well as the times and the society we live in.
4. Studying and planning mission policy.
5. Studying and planning policies on materials used.
6. Studying and planning mission activities.
7. Studying any other items related to missions and make plans.

The stance of working on evangelism and church formation is clearly expressed here.

For a while after its beginning, efforts in line with the purpose of the institute were furthered, but after the Kyodan plunged into conflict in 1969, activities of the Research Institute for Mission gradually moved away from its original purpose and ideology. The primary activities of grasping the content of mission and studying the makeup of the church as the primary body of mission were replaced by the preparing and preserving reference materials, which was not even included in the original stipulations of the research institute.

Presently, the institute is engaged in organizing its materials and preparing a new basic theory of mission. The center has a library of materials that include the various records of the Kyodan and its districts along with the histories of each church and many other materials related to the Church, which are being utilized by various researchers.

Publication of Senken Dayori (Institute News) was resumed in 1996, and in March 2009, the 22nd edition was published.

Buraku Liberation Center

The regular publications of the Kyodan Buraku Liberation Center are as follows:
1. Japanese newsletter, Kaiho e no Habataki (Wingbeats Toward Liberation)
2. Interchange newsletter, Buraku Kaiho Zenkoku Tsushin (Nationwide Buraku Liberation Communication)
3. English newsletter, "Crowned with Thorns"

History

A discriminatory statement against the buraku by the pastor of the Toyonaka Church in Osaka in 1974 was the incident that sparked the establishment of the Kyodan’s Task Force on the Buraku Discrimination Issue in 1975. This was the beginning of the formal engagement of the Kyodan with this issue. This task force, then, was developed into the Buraku Liberation Center in 1981. Buraku discrimination is the problem of judging persons and discriminating against them based on their family backgrounds, their place of birth, their place of residence, or their occupation. There has been definite improvement through the efforts of many people in various places, but the problem still exists deeply rooted in the lives of people, and it exists embedded in the structure of society.

Activities of the BLC are being promoted according to the buraku liberation policies established at the 5th Executive Council meeting of the 31st General Assembly period (July
The main activities of the Buraku Liberation Center are as follows:

1. The "Buraku Liberation Day of Prayer" movement.
2. The Movement for Retrial of the Sayama Incident
3. Liberation Dramas
4. Discussions on Human Rights Education in Seminaries and Other Places
5. The Buraku Liberation Youth Seminar
6. The National Conference on Buraku Liberation
7. The Buraku Liberation Shikoku Caravan 2009
8. The Overnight Buraku Liberation Seminar
9. Monthly Buraku Liberation Center Prayer Breakfast
10. Summer Intern
11. BLC Website (http://www1.odn.ne.jp/burakuliberation)

Solidarity With Other Organizations

1. The Association of Christian Churches Dealing With the Buraku Issue
2. The National Council of Human Rights Education in Christian Schools
3. The National Christian Council in Japan and the NCC's Kansai Youth Council
4. The Association of Religious Faiths Dealing With the Problem of "Dowa" (a term referring to integrating the buraku people in the general society)
5. The Council on Buraku Liberation for the Daito and Shijonawate Region
6. Solidarity with International Organizations such as the relief efforts in support of the Dalit in India following the Indian Ocean Tsunami
7. Solidarity with other antidiscrimination groups
8. The Working Group that continues to address the issues addressed by “The Association of 6 Committees Seeking Wartime Reparations”

Kyodan Board of Publications

The Kyodan Board of Publications fulfills its role in the greater responsibility for mission that the Kyodan carries out by opening up the way for studying the Word of God, supporting the churches and lay persons, and endeavoring to communicate the Christian message in a way that can be easily understood by society. There are some 70 clergy and laity from both within and without the Kyodan on the various specialized committees that oversee the planning for the various publications of the Board of Publications.

As for books, technical books are handled primarily by Subcommittee #1 of the Planning Committee, and general publications and books on faith for lay persons are handled primarily by Subcommittee #2 of the Planning Committee. Books published include "A Contemporary Biblical Commentary," "The New Century Bible Commentary" and other commentaries; a series of introductions, including "An Introduction to Christian History" (3 Volumes); dictionaries including "A Dictionary of Christian Worship and Liturgy," books to support lay persons in their life of faith and textbooks for Christian schools, and picture books.

Five periodicals are published — namely, Shinto no Tomo (Believers' Friend) to support the life of faith for lay persons and to connect Kyodan churches, Kokero no Tomo ("Friend of the Heart") for newspaper evangelism, the church school curriculum Kikan Kyoshi no Tomo ("Friend of the Teacher Quarterly"), a publication for study of homiletics, Sekkyo Mokuso — Aretêia ("Sermon Meditations — Aletheia"), and a magazine on the study of worship, Reihai to Ongaku ("Worship and Music"). Each is edited by its own editorial committee. We are particularly placing our hopes in the Shinto no Tomo magazine, which celebrated its 45th anniversary, that it may encourage a renewal in strength in the churches and laity.
The United Church of Christ in Japan Hymnal Committee focuses its efforts on sponsoring and supporting Christian music seminars and in increasing the use of the hymnals it publishes, namely the Sambika 21 (Hymnal 21) and the Kodomo Sambika Kaiteiban (Revised Children's Hymnal).

**Board of Pension**

Concerning the Kyodan Retirement Pension
1. Joining the Kyodan Retirement Pension System
   - The Kyodan retirement pension system is for United Church of Christ in Japan ministers and their survivors and directors of Christian education and is established to supplement the public pension.
   - It is recognized that this pension system is indispensable to the Kyodan's mission, and all newly assigned ministers and directors of Christian education are expected to join it.
   - Anyone who has not yet done the process of joining (submitting the "Salary Report Form" and paying the premiums) is asked to please complete the process without delay.

2. Content of the Kyodan Retirement Pension System
   (1) The premium is 8.0% of a pastor's standard monthly salary, with the pastor paying one-third (2.7%) and the church (enterprise) paying two-thirds (5.3%). The premium is paid to the Board of Pension through the district office by the end of each following month.
   (2) Pension is paid from the month following retirement. A minister with 30 or more years of premium payments who retires after age 65 can receive pension until his or her death. However, if the minister retires between the ages of 65 and 69, there is an incremental decrease in the amount of the payment. Likewise, if the minister has less than 30 years of service, the pension has a time limit placed on it, which varies from 3 to 10 years.
   - There are some voices saying, "Irregardless of ministers' salaries having been greater or lesser, can they not at least receive equal pension from the Kyodan?" This is a pension system based on premiums, and so a difference arising from the amount of premium payments is inevitable, but the difference in pension amounts within the Kyodan pension is not as great as that in the public pension. The ratio between the highest class premium, 38, and the smallest class premium, 1, is 10:2.3. On the other hand, the ratio of the amount of pension received is 10:6.0. This is the result of efforts made from the standpoint of solidarity and mutuality.
   (3) Survivor's Pension
   - When a minister dies, survivors receive a survivors' pension.

**Program to Support Retired Ministers**

The "100 Yen Offering" is lay movement for the purpose of "Supporting Retired Ministers."
   - The "100 Yen Offering" is a program in which lay persons voluntarily make offerings of 100 yen units each month as an expression of gratitude for retired ministers, who devoted most of their lives to evangelism and pastoral care, and for their survivors. It is a lay offering program done in prayer that they may live out their lives in peace.
   - This program began with lay people in the Toyooka church in Asahigawa of the Hokkaido District and advanced to become an offering of Hokkaido District. Receiving approval at the 20th Kyodan General Assembly in 1978, it became a nationwide program and continues to the present.
   - The gist of the General Assembly decision was that 1) The "100 Yen Offering" program in
support of the pension system would be promoted; 2) a contact person would be selected for each church; and 3) the Kyodan would establish a promotion committee. This committee is charged with the responsibility of encouraging each local church to join in the program, and presently a bit over 50% are actively engaged in it.

The "100 Yen Offering" is used in the following ways:

1) Due to the effect of extremely low interest rates, among other factors, the situation since 1998 has been that the total paid out in pensions is more than the total that comes in from contributions, and thus to support the pension fund, the Kyodan has been contributing 35,000,000 yen each year plus any surplus funds carried over from the previous year.

2) A Christmas gift of 20,000 yen is given to all retired ministers and their survivors.

3) In order to support the pastors and their families for those who retired prior to the inception of the Kyodan pension system in 1964, the Kyodan has also been contributing 2,000,000 yen as a base for the "Gratitude Fund," and from this fund, then, recipients receive a once-per-year payment of 70,000 yen.

4) An annual offering of 500,000 yen to support the "Retired Ministers' Home, Shin Ai So" and "Niji no Ie," a residence for retired women pastors and deceased pastor's wives.

5) Together with the Board of Pension, both a news quarterly Yorokobi (Rejoicing) and a special edition of the Kyodan Times on pension matters is published.

Kyodan Mutual-Aid Society for Church Facilities

The Mutual-Aid Society for Church Facilities was begun in 1955, when churches related to the Kyodan established a fund for helping each other rebuild facilities damaged or destroyed in natural or other disasters. It is managed as a "Fire and General" insurance program that applies to damage incurred in sanctuaries, parsonages, education buildings, kindergartens and other such facilities. The coverage of this program includes all that would be covered in a general policy for stores that regular insurance companies offer plus more. It even includes earthquake insurance. In a regular general policy for stores, when damage is the result of a fire caused by an earthquake, there is a minor payback, but when the building simply collapses in an earthquake, there is none at all. However, in the policy of the Mutual-Aid Society for Church Facilities, there is a compensation payment even for earthquake damage. The premiums paid into the system run about 60 to 73% of typical insurance premiums, and therefore it is a good buy.

(Office for the Mutual-Aid Society for Church Facilities, tel/fax 03-3207-0256, Monday thru Friday, 9:30 am to 4:30 pm)

Independent Related Organizations

Independent Related Organizations are organizations that the Kyodan Commission on Mission has recognized and that maintain mission activities independent of the Kyodan. As stipulated in article 41, section 4 of the bylaws, in order for the Commission on Mission to work along side and give support, they are to maintain communication with these organizations and they work in their respective areas of mission.

Presently, there are 3 such organizations:
The National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies
The National Association of Church-related Kindergartens
The Japan Association of Christian Nursery Schools
National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies

In the organizational revision done at 15th (1968) General Assembly Kyodan, the National Federation of Kyodan Women's Societies was established as an organization working independently within the Kyodan and related to the Commission on Mission. Taking the basic stance of a faith based on the Word of God and service to the Church, this organization engages in its own activities to promote the mission activities of local church Women Societies on a national scale. Structurally, it is a national organization with district women's societies as its base and has a centralized committee that serves as its top decision-making body. There is a central office that coordinates activities that are funded entirely by offerings.

Federation activities include district and sub-district activities, activities on a national scale, and subcommittee activities. District and sub-district activities are left to their own discretion. We want to especially lift up the upcoming 40th Annual National Conference to be held in June, with the theme of “The Salt of the Earth, the Light of the World: Engaging in Tomorrow's Mission as Branches of the Church.”

One sacrificial ministry they have been involved in is the retirement home for retired women pastors and deceased pastor's wives, Niji no Ie, which recently merged with Shin'ai So to form a new entity Niji no Ie Shin’ai So. Specifically, a new wing was built in Ome to complete the merger.

National Association of Church-related Kindergartens

Discussions to establish the National Association of Church-related Kindergartens were held at the 8th National Meeting of Heads of Church-related Kindergartens in Karuizawa from June 1-3, 1971, and the organization was formally organized in 1972. At the urging of the Committee on Evangelism, it was decided to recognize this organization as an independent related organization at the January 17, 2007 meeting (of the Executive Committee). There are approximately 360 kindergartens that receive the 3-times-per-year mailings from the association.

Every year, various seminars and meetings are held to encourage growth and understanding, including meetings of bbbkindergarten principals, summer seminars, district communication meetings, and the general assembly. The costs are distributed among the participants as they endeavor to work together on the mission of church kindergartens. The association also sponsors an orientation for graduates of seminary who are scheduled to pastor a church with an attached kindergarten.

The Japan Association of Christian Nursery Schools

This organization consists of social welfare juridical bodies and religious juridical bodies founded by Kyodan churches or individuals. There are 210 such institutions that are divided up into 14 regional districts. Some of the Kyodan districts have few if any such institutions, and so they have been regrouped into 14 regions for association activities.

There is also a national event once a year called the “Summer Nursery School College,” and the 2008 event was the 50th such conference, with over 300 in attendance. Each year, the event draws between 300 and 400 participants.

Within each regional district, there are seminars for nursery school heads, teachers, nutritionists and cooks. Likewise, the association headquarters provides opportunities to learn
together the basics of Christian nursery schools by holding a seminar for nursery school heads, a training institute for new personnel, one for teachers and another for leaders, in addition to its twice-a-year board or directors meeting.

The office of the association is presently being handled by the Kyoto region, but work for the association is proceeding in each of the regional districts through both the local boards and also the national board of directors.
Statistics

2008 Fiscal Year Statistics (From the 2010 Kyodan Yearbook) As of March 31, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>No. of churches</td>
<td>1,730</td>
<td>1,726</td>
<td>1,725</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Membership</td>
<td>193,357</td>
<td>190,774</td>
<td>188,485</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicant Membership</td>
<td>94,709</td>
<td>94,265</td>
<td>92,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Pastors</td>
<td>2,213</td>
<td>2,161</td>
<td>2,178</td>
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<tr>
<td>Worship Service Attendance</td>
<td>58,691</td>
<td>58,160</td>
<td>57,284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Church School Attendance</td>
<td>17,872</td>
<td>17,389</td>
<td>16,797</td>
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<tr>
<td>Baptisms</td>
<td>1,424</td>
<td>1,747</td>
<td>1,170</td>
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<tr>
<td>Churches Excluded from</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Number of Clergy As of March 31, 2009

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Ministers in Full Standing</th>
<th>Licensed Preachers</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pastoring Churches</td>
<td>1,625</td>
<td>246</td>
<td>1,871</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evangelists</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminary Professors</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
<td>197</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>249</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving Overseas</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leave of Absence</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Serving in a Church</td>
<td>358</td>
<td>208</td>
<td>566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retired</td>
<td>574</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>606</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2,810</td>
<td>549</td>
<td>3,359</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Male</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2,297</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>2,645</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>513</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>714</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Brief History

1859  The first Protestant missionaries arrived in Japan.

1872  The first church, Nihon Kirisuto Kokai was established as an ecumenical church, when Christianity was still illegal.

1875  Conversation about unity continued through-out the period when many denominational churches were founded.

1875  In response to Japan's "Religious Bodies Law," 34 Christian groups formed the Nihon Kirisuto Kyodan (The United Church of Christ in Japan).

1941  After World War II, some groups withdrew and the Kyodan was reorganized.

1946  After World War II, some groups withdrew and the Kyodan was reorganized.

1946  The Kyodan Confession of Faith was formed.

1947  The Confession of Responsibility during the World War II was issued.

1947  A covenant was ratified between the Kyodan and three churches in Korea (the Korean Methodist Church, the Presbyterian Church in the Republic of Korea, and the Presbyterian Church of Korea).

1948  The union of Nihon and Okinawa Kyodans was formed.

1948  A covenant was ratified between the Kyodan and the Korean Christian Church in Japan, KCCJ.

1954  The covenant between the Kyodan and the Presbyterian Church in Taiwan was revised.

1954  A covenant was ratified between the Kyodan and the Federation of Swiss Protestant Churches.

1984  The covenant between the Kyodan and the three churches in Korea was revised.

1984  Covenants were ratified bewteen the Kyodan and the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and between the Kyodan and Reformed Church in America.
The United Church of Christ in Japan (Kyodan)
Communications Center Committee

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