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# TSEF BULLETIN

MARCH-APRIL 1987  
VOL. 10, NO. 4  
\$4.50

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A Publication of  
**THEOLOGICAL  
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FELLOWSHIP**

mit to their husbands found in the household codes (Eph. 5:21ff; Col. 3:18), which is also based on a hierarchy which makes the husband the head of the wife (Eph. 5:23), has been called into question by certain interpreters, particularly those who wish to emphasize the notion of "mutual submission" within marital relationships.<sup>33</sup> Clearly, the larger evangelical community needs to reach a consensus on whether or not the maintenance of hierarchy between the sexes is important within either sexual relationships or church structures. A determination of the significance of a hierarchical world view for the Evangelical churches becomes central, particularly if it will help us in our struggle over the issues of homosexuality and lesbianism.

In the end, it would seem that if the church is going to deal with the issues of sexuality it is also going to have to deal with hierarchy. We need to grapple with the possibility that our conflicts over the appropriate use of human sexuality may rather be conflicts rooted in a need to legitimate the traditional social structure which assigns men and women specific and unequal positions. Could it be that the continued affirmation of the primacy of heterosexual marriage is possibly also the affirmation of the necessity for the sexes to remain in a hierarchically structured relationship? Is the threat to the "sanctity of marriage" really a threat to hierarchy? Is that what makes same-sex relations so threatening, so frightening? Certain theologians and ethicists have begun to ask these questions.<sup>34</sup> Evangelical Christians need to begin to question their unexamined positions on sexuality and hierarchy, particularly if they wish to have a voice in the call for equality for all men and women, not just a few.

<sup>1</sup> For a discussion of the proceedings of the Seventh Plenary Conference of the EWCI, see *Update: Newsletter of the EWC* 10 (Fall 1986) as well as Anne Eggebrotten, "Handling Power: Unchristian, Unfeminine, Unkind?" *The Other Side* 22 (Dec. 1986), pp. 20-25.

<sup>2</sup> Quoted by William O'Brian, "Handling Conflict: The Fallout from Fresno," *The Other Side* 22 (Dec. 1986), pp. 25, 41.

<sup>3</sup> Brief of petitioner Michael J. Bowers, Attorney General, on Writ of Certiorari to the United States Court of Appeals for the 11th Circuit; Dec. 19, 1985; Bowers vs. Hardwick, no. 85-140, pp. 20-21.

<sup>4</sup> Brief of the Amicus Curiae, American Psychological Association, American Public Health Association, p. 8ff.

<sup>5</sup> Augustine, *The City of God* XIII, 13; XIV, 19.

<sup>6</sup> Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence* I, 6, 7.

<sup>7</sup> Augustine, *On the Good of Marriage* II.

<sup>8</sup> Augustine, *Confessions* Bk. VIII, XI.

<sup>9</sup> Augustine, *On Marriage and Concupiscence* I, 4, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Augustine, *On the Good of Marriage* XIII, 15.

<sup>11</sup> *Summa Theologica*, Pt. II, Ques. 154, art. 11.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>13</sup> *Summa Theologica*, Pt. II, Ques. 154, art. 12.

<sup>14</sup> Luther, *Sermon on the Estate of Marriage*, 1519.

<sup>15</sup> Luther, *Commentary on Genesis* 1:26, 27; Calvin, *Commentary on Genesis* 1:26, 27.

<sup>16</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III, pt. 4, p. 166.

<sup>17</sup> Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, vol. III, pt. 4, p. 170.

<sup>18</sup> Karl Barth, "Church Dogmatics," in *Homosexuality and Ethics*, Edward Batchelor, Jr., ed. (New York, NY: The Pilgrim Press, 1980), pp. 48-51; Don Williams, *The Bond that Breaks: Will Homosexuality Split the Church?* (Los Angeles, CA: BIM, Inc., 1978); David Atkinson, *Homosexuals in the Christian Fellowship* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1979); Lewis B. Smedes, *Sex for Christians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1976), pp. 62-75; "Scripture and Homosexuality," in *Homosexuality and the Church: A Report of the Assembly Committee on Homosexuality and the Church*, Gordon S. Dicker, ed. (Melbourne, Australia: Uniting Church Press, 1985), pp. 40-53.

<sup>19</sup> Letter of the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith entitled "The Pastoral Care of Homosexual Persons," printed in *Origins*, 16:22 (Nov. 13, 1986), pp. 377-382; par. 16. This Letter is originally dated Oct. 1, 1986, but was released Oct. 30, 1986. It was signed by Cardinal Ratzinger and approved by Pope John Paul II and is therefore an accurate representation of the opinion of the church hierarchy of the Vatican.

<sup>20</sup> Lutheran Church in America, American Lutheran Church, United Methodist Church, in "Appendix B" of Brief of Amici Curiae, The Presbyterian Church (USA), The Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends, The American Friends Service Committee, The Unitarian Universalist Association, Office for Church and Society of the UCC, The Right Rev. Paul Moore, Jr., on Writ of Certiorari to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals, Bowers vs. Hardwick, no. 84-140, in the Supreme Court of the US, Oct. Term, 1985. See also Brief of the Amicus Curiae, American Jewish Conference. For an enumeration of recent church discussions of homosexuality, see Robin Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality: Contextual Background for Contemporary Debate* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1983), pp. 1-16. Various scholars who call for a legal tolerance of homosexuality while maintaining a theological disapproval are William Muehl, "Some Words of Caution," in *Homosexuality and Ethics*, pp. 71-78; H. Kimball Jones, "Toward a Christian Understanding of the Homosexual," in *Homosexuality and Ethics*, pp. 105-113; Atkinson, *Homosexuals in the Christian Fellowship*, pp. 120-121. A few ethicists, while maintaining a clear disapproval of homosexual practice for Christians, feel that celibacy is not possible for certain homosexuals, nor is change to a heterosexual orientation. They advocate an "optimum homosexual morality." See Smedes, *Sex for Christians*, p. 73; H. Kimball Jones, "Toward a Christian Understanding of the Homosexual," in *Homosexuality and Ethics*, p. 109ff.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted by Joanne Ross Feldmeth, "Fresno '86 Conference: Surviving Our Adolescence," *Update* 10 (Fall 1986), pp. 15.

<sup>22</sup> Letha Scanzoni and Virginia Ramey Mollenkott, *Is the Homosexual My Neighbor?* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978), pp. 54-72; Norman Pittenger, *Time for Consent: A Christian's Approach to Homosexuality* (London: SCM Press, 1976), pp. 81-87; Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, pp. 99-129; "Perspectives on Biblical Passages Dealing with Homosexuality," *Homosexuality and the Church*, pp. 29-39. For an overview of recent literature, see "Study Report of the Assembly Committee on Homosexuality and the Church," *Homosexuality and the Church*, pp. 9-28; Atkinson, *Homosexuals in the Christian Fellowship*, pp. 4-28.

<sup>23</sup> Smedes, *Sex for Christians*, p. 67.

<sup>24</sup> Smedes, *Sex for Christians*, p. 67; Helmut Thielicke, "The Theological Aspect of Homosexuality," *Homosexuality and Ethics*, pp. 96-104.

<sup>25</sup> Jerome Murphy O'Connor, "Sex and Logic in I Cor. 11:2-16," *CBQ* 42 (1980), pp. 482-500.

<sup>26</sup> Bernadette J. Brooten, "Paul's Views on the Nature of Women," in *Immaculate and Powerful: The Female in Sacred Image and Social Reality*, Clarissa W. Atkinson, Constance H. Buchanan, Margaret R. Miles, eds. (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1985), pp. 61-87.

<sup>27</sup> Brooten, "Paul's Views," pp. 76-77.

<sup>28</sup> Scroggs, *The New Testament and Homosexuality*, p. 59.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 48.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>31</sup> John Boswell, *Christianity, Social Tolerance, and Homosexuality: Gay People in Western Europe from the Beginning of the Christian Era to the Fourteenth Century* (Chicago and London: Univ. of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 28ff.

<sup>32</sup> Brooten, "Paul's Views," p. 78.

<sup>33</sup> See Don Williams, *The Apostle Paul and Women in the Church* (Van Nuys, CA: BIM, 1977), pp. 88ff. Scott Bartchy is also a key proponent of this view. His paper entitled "Patriarchy and Submission in Ephesians 5?" was the topic of a panel discussion of the Women in the Biblical World Section of the SBL chaired by Elizabeth Schüssler Fiorenza and Susan B. Thistlethwaite at the recent Annual Meetings of the AAR and SBL in Atlanta, GA, Nov. 22-25, 1986. Other panelists included David Balch and Katie Cannon. The session drew a crowd of over 100 scholars, which is evidence of the keen interest in the topic of hierarchy in religious academic circles.

<sup>34</sup> Tom F. Driver, "The Contemporary and Christian Contexts," pp. 14-21; Gregory Baum, "Catholic Homosexuals," pp. 22-27; Rosemary Radford Ruether, "From Machismo to Mutuality," pp. 28-32, all in *Homosexuality and Ethics*.

## Japanese Christians and the Yasukuni Shrine Issue

### Introduction

Regardless of the social and cultural matrix within which a given Christian community may find itself, sooner or later it will inevitably be forced to grapple with the problem of competing demands for allegiance.

Since its inception in the 16th century, the Christian church in Japan has been acutely aware of the conflicting demands of Christ and Caesar for loyalty. And although the post-World War II Constitution guarantees complete freedom of religion, there has been recently an increase in activity linked to attempts to provide official government sanction of religious values and traditions closely associated with Shintoism, Japan's major indigenous religion.

The focus of the current controversy is the Yasukuni Shrine in Tokyo, which was established in 1869 to venerate those who had died in battle in service of the Emperor. Those killed in action were automatically enshrined as kami (divine). Over 2.4 million persons have been enshrined there, including the group of A-class war criminals from World War II headed by General Tojo. There have been repeated attempts to place the Shrine under official government sponsorship, but so far without success. However, the Christian community is alarmed by increasing support for such a move, and has been actively opposing it for several reasons. Not only would this be a clear violation of the constitutional principle of separation of religion and state, but it would have disastrous consequences for Christian evangelism in Japan. Throughout its

history in Japan, Christianity has been regarded largely as an irrelevant Western import, and has been rejected in favor of indigenous beliefs and traditions. Japanese national identity has been intimately identified with the values and traditions of Shintoism. This, of course, was most explicit in the extreme nationalism and militarism of the Emperor cult in pre-war Japan. Christians fear that the Yasukuni Shrine could become a rallying point for a resurgent nationalism which would not only have profound political repercussions in Asia, but would further alienate Christianity for being "un-Japanese."

Although still numerically small, the Japanese evangelical community is mature, and is increasingly vocal in social issues. The open letter which follows was written by a Japanese evangelical, Rev. Yoshiaki Yui, in an effort to increase understanding of the Japanese situation among North American Christians. The evangelical church in Japan needs our support and our prayers.

Mr. Yui is a graduate of Asbury Theological Seminary (M.Div.) and Princeton Theological Seminary (Th.M.), and is currently pastor of Nagatsuta Christ Church. He also teaches at Tokyo Christian Theological Seminary—**Harold Netland, Tokyo.**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ:

I write this open letter out of a sincere desire to further your understanding of the present situation in Japan and to encourage you to pray for the Japanese evangelical church.

The Christian Church in Japan faces many obstacles, but a growing concern in recent years has been the problem of the Yasukuni Shrine. The Yasukuni Shrine is a major Shinto shrine where soldiers who have died are honored and worshipped as gods. Some historical background may be helpful.

Japan has a history of oppression and persecution toward Christianity. In 1549 when Roman Catholicism was introduced to Japan, those who were in power reacted by banning Christianity and severely persecuting believers. This policy was strictly enforced through 300 years of the Tokugawa regime. When Japan was again re-opened to the West, the new government that came to power in 1868 had no intention of changing the policy of banning Christianity, although pressure from the West forced Japan to allow entry of some Protestant missionaries. But whenever the Japanese Church began to grow, she was hit hard by the hammer of state-sponsored religion.

Soon after the restoration of imperial power in 1868, the attempt to revive the Shinto religion was accompanied by renewal of strong opposition to Christianity. For example, the Imperial Rescript on Education was promulgated in 1889 with the purpose of setting up a national standard of morality based upon Shintoism and emperor veneration. This document was employed by conservatives as a basis of argument against Christianity. It was clearly the nationalistic, patriotic fervor embodied in the Rescript that unified the nation and established national identity. The Japanese Church gradually yielded to the intense pressures of the government and "nationalized" Christian doctrines and programs by stripping off all Western color, and subjected itself to sheer compromise with Shintoism and emperor worship.

The Yasukuni Shrine became the pre-war rallying point of national identity, and was one of the chief symbols of the old value system. Japanese citizens were forced to worship the "deified" war dead there. The Shrine was used as a tool of totalitarian control by the government. Those who would not worship there were branded as un-Japanese and unpatriotic, and were subjected to severe punishment, including, in some cases, even martyrdom.

Following World War II, with the new Constitution guaranteeing freedom of religion and placing Shintoism on the

same level as other religions, the Yasukuni Shrine was reduced to the status of a local shrine.

However, with the great economic success of the past decades, the Japanese people have begun to search for their spiritual identity and have once again turned to traditional Shintoism for meaning. So some in present day Japan are beginning to revert to the former military and spiritual values. In Japan, reverting to the old conservative value system inevitably involves a return to a nationally supported Shintoism and the restoration of government regulation of education and other institutions.

In the past twenty years, pressure has mounted for the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine once again. Every election year the ruling Liberal Democratic Party politicians promise to nationalize the Shrine. Although three recent attempts at nationalization of the Shrine failed in the Japanese Diet, a popular groundswell of opinion favoring nationalization makes this course of action seem nearly inevitable. There is increasing pressure to once again make the Shrine a national Shrine and a symbol of national identity and unity. This, however, would pose a great threat not only to peace and democracy in Japan, but also the propagation of the Gospel in Japan.

The trend toward a return to the old values is matched by a trend toward justifying Japan's role in World War II and the years of expansionism prior to the war. Presently, under the Ministry of Education, there are efforts to rewrite the history of Japan, resulting in teaching students the history of World War II very differently from the way it is taught in other countries. Although several years ago there was a sharp outcry from other Asian countries against such rewriting of history, no substantial changes have been made.

Many were shocked when it was revealed in 1982 that Class A war criminals, who had been executed for their war crimes by the Allied powers, were enshrined in the Yasukuni Shrine as martyrs and gods. Yet, this act is simply indicative of the broader trend toward justification of Japan's role in the war. Many Christians point out that glorification of the war dead at the Shrine was the prop used to support the pre-War spirit of nationalism of the military state. They see the present move to nationalize the Shrine and restore Shintoism as a necessary prerequisite to the future militarization of Japan.

It was Shinto nationalism which, in the years prior to and during World War II, resulted in Japan's ruling over other nations in Asia and causing immeasurable suffering. The wounds caused by the exploitation and suffering of the Chinese and other Asian peoples at the hands of the Japanese have never completely healed. Some years ago, a book was written with the title *When Justice Calls For Us*. Written by Yong Chan Pak, a Korean pastor, the book is the story of his father, Gwan Jun Pak, who refused to bow before a Japanese Shinto Shrine in Korea, when Japan controlled Korea. Gwan Jun Pak came to Tokyo and walked into the Diet building and threw a letter of protest into the chamber where the Diet was in session. He was arrested and put in prison, where he died. The author, in his visit to celebrate the publication of the Japanese edition of his book, stated:

My heart has been deeply grieved to find here in Japan a definite trend toward the revival of the old Japan in the repeated and persistent attempt to revive the nationalization of the Yasukuni Shrine and worship at the Shrine by the Emperor and high government officials.

On August 15, 1985 Prime Minister Nakasone visited the Shrine for the first time in his official capacity as prime minister, and was harshly criticized by China, Korea, and other Asian countries. Unfortunately, however, no strong words of criticism were heard from the U.S. and European countries.

The Yasukuni Shrine issue makes Japanese Christians realize how shallow democracy really is in Japan. Religious freedom and separation of religion and state are ideas fostered by democracy. To take away spiritual freedom is to deprive of all freedom. In 1971, some in the ruling Liberal Democratic Party stated, "Japan has become very prosperous economically, but as a result has lost its humanity; materialistically prosperous but spiritually and morally poor. The way to return to this humanity is to champion the Yasukuni Shrine." This is clearly a case of politics reaching its hands into personal and spiritual affairs which are out of its sphere of concern.

Japanese Christians fear the loss of religious freedom which has been enjoyed since the destruction of the military regime

in 1945. We believe that in facing the Yasukuni Shrine issue we are engaged in spiritual warfare with the principalities and powers of evil (Eph. 6:15), who are seeking to frustrate the task of evangelization of Japan and the world. We desperately need the prayers of our brothers and sisters worldwide, as we struggle to find the most appropriate way to spread the Gospel of Jesus Christ here in Japan. Please pray that we will be uncompromisingly faithful to the Lordship of Jesus Christ and that we will not repeat the mistakes of the past, as we endeavor to bear witness to our Lord in Japan today!

**For the Sake of the Kingdom,  
Yoshiaki Yui**

# **The Pain of the North American Heart: Reflections on A Recent Ecumenical Student Gathering**

**by Donald Persons**

We need to reflect long and hard about the events of the last several months in which U.S. young adults and theological students gathered to better discern their role in the U.S. ecumenical movement. The young adults & students met in the context of the WCC and NCCC/USA national conference in Cleveland, OH, challenging U.S. Christians to "Embrace the World," and calling for "greater participation of a new generation of ecumenical leaders."

Two objectives were accomplished in the students' meeting. First, those in attendance were exposed to the ecumenical commitment and work of leaders of the World Council of Churches and of U.S. churches involved in the National Council of Churches of Christ. Second, we witnessed a "phoenix event" as the planning committee of the Christian Theological Students Consortium of the U.S. (CTSCUS) handed over its responsibilities to a newly formed Ecumenical Network of Theological Students (ENTS). The purpose of ENTS was suggested only in the closing worship: to foster dialogue among Christian theological students and theologically-engaged persons in the U.S. This is to be accomplished through a newsletter, pursuit of ecumenical academic forums and the continued presence of a WCC staff resource person.

At the same time, there was little discussion of a student role in ecumenism or mission in North America. Issues derived from the addition of "young adults" to the concerns of CTSCUS were poorly addressed. There was no talk about what we experience locally as young adults/theological students. Our rich ecclesial and theological diversity was not really tapped. So it becomes obvious why it was so difficult for the student assembly to arrive at a concrete purpose for its new creation, ENTS. Though the appeal for wider regional participation may first appear wanting, there is, nevertheless, a great significance in the presence of students at the meeting of the WCC and the NCCC/USA with implications for ecumenical aims to "Embrace the World." This article will attempt to draw them out.

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## **The Participation**

The participants gathered from across the country in response to a call from the Consortium of Theological Students of the U.S., the movement originating in the Vancouver Assembly of the World Council of Churches (WCC, *Gathered for Life*, p. 16). Most came from various seminaries and Bible schools and cut across a vast array of denominational, ethnic, theological and even national borders. Three factors became immediately obvious:

1) U.S. theological students represent a much wider age group than merely young adults, with the average age of U.S. theological students in the early thirties. The 85 were not able to bring together under one roof the wealth of an inter-seminary movement along with the critical issues of young adults who are either students, workers or young professionals.

2) The participation and leadership of women and black students was fairly strong, but the meeting did not at all suggest the reality of the U.S. population. There were but two Hispanics and a couple of Canadian Asian guests. Where was the vast Hispanic and Asian American church? Was there a problem in inviting their involvement? Or does this suggest that Hispanics and Asians are not found in many theological institutions? If so, why? Hard questions, yes, but also ones which suggest a truth of student movements: they are useful in monitoring or at least suggesting the missionary health of the Church and its institutions. Great care must be taken in nurturing them.

Few of us had been to Vancouver or had ever participated in a national ecumenical event. This author was among the "new" people. He was also one of the many who had never found a way to get into the work of the WCC & NCCC/USA. Hence, the call to "Embrace the World" was an exciting possibility and vision, but we realized that most students did not yet have a sense of where the previous people were leaving them. We were still too mystified by the diversity of those gathered in Cleveland to be able to step forward together into our future.

## **"Embrace the World" in Student Perspective**

It was clear in the larger forum that embracing the whole