

## **Memorandum of Understanding, Japan-North America Mission Forum**

In response to the commitment made to one another at the final meeting of JNAC in January 2005, we, the representatives of churches in Japan and North America, held the Japan-North America Mission Forum under the theme of "Mission in Japan – Perspectives on Cooperation in Mission," from March 27 to 29, 2007 at Aoyama Gakuin University in Tokyo, Japan.

Joining the representatives from the United Church of Christ in Japan, the Korean Christian Church in Japan, the Presbyterian Church in Canada, the United Church of Canada, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the United Methodist Church, the United Church of Christ (USA) and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA and Canada, and the Reformed Church in America were several resource persons and ecumenical guests, for a total of 56 persons.

We listened to God and to each other through worship and keynote presentations on the context of mission in Japan under the following titles: "Mission in Japan – Perspectives on Cooperation in Mission;" "On Level Ground Before the Cross and the Empty Tomb;" "Aiming at a World We Can Live Together In: Missiological Issues of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Diaspora Church." There were also four workshops under the titles of: Nationalism in Japan and Christianity; The Role and the Mission of Christian Schools in Japan; Leadership Development Among Christians in Japan; and Young Adult Ministry: Outreach, Discipleship, and Christian Ministry Training. Through these presentations and workshops, along with a "youth evening" during which the youth shared their vision for mission in Japan, we deepened our mutual understanding as we explored and affirmed our partnership in mission and considered ways of doing mission together in our changed circumstances.

Through this process, we affirmed that the participating churches and institutions desire to establish bilateral relations between churches in Japan and North America. Likewise, we developed an action plan in covenant ministry together as we dealt with the following issues: Globalization and Migration of People; Economic Dislocation and Disparity; Demographic Shift to an Aging Society and Church; and Racial, Ethnic and Gender Discrimination.

### **Action Plan**

1. In response to the rising trend of xenophobic nationalism in Japan, we have covenanted among ourselves a specific action plan that includes having: 1) the Japan partners share statements and background information with North American partners concerning the issues they are dealing with, such as the revision of Japan's Constitution to remove the peace clause (Article 9) and revisionist history as taught in schools and used for political purposes, the re-imposition of the fingerprinting system, and issues surrounding U.S. military bases in Japan; 2) the North American partners share this information with their church constituencies and with ecumenical agencies, the religious news media, etc.; and 3) Japan ecumenical partners invite North American churches to join in fact-finding teams to visit Japan.
2. We affirm the role and mission of Christian schools in Japan by encouraging North American churches to share personnel with the schools. Such mission schools are also encouraged to add to their curriculum racial, ethnic and gender justice issues.
3. We will endeavor to increase educational opportunities and funding for leadership development. This includes exchanges and scholarships for visitations to specific events, such as youth and women's events.

4. We will support a joint KCCJ/UCCJ youth leader training program. We will also support a program to have youth leaders from North America act as resource persons and learn from the churches in Japan.
5. KCCJ and UCCJ will invite their covenant partners in North America to participate in the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of the KCCJ in 2008 and the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of Japanese Protestantism in Japan in 2009.
6. In order to actualize this action plan, the partner churches and institutions will designate their own contact persons.

We pledge ourselves to work towards the realization of these goals to which we believe God is calling us in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Presbyterian Church in Canada

United Church of Canada

Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)

United Methodist Church

United Church of Christ (USA) and Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in the USA  
and Canada

Reformed Church in America

United Church of Christ in Japan

Korean Christian Church in Japan

The Japan Christian Social Work League

The Christian School Council on Cooperative Mission