

*“Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
neither shall they learn war any more”*

MICAH 4:3

Learn War No More

Recently I was deeply honored to interpret at the “Inter-Religious Conference on Article Nine of the Japanese Peace Constitution”, organized by the National Christian Council of Japan. Article Nine of the Japanese Constitution renounces war as a means of solving international disputes and prohibits the maintenance of armed forces. This cross-cultural exchange included over 200 people from Japan, India, Korea, China, and America. Muslims, Buddhists, Christians and Hindus all came together, out of a deep commitment to our religious traditions, to affirm a common commitment to protect life. It was a community that declared “No More War!”

The Japanese constitution is scheduled to be reviewed in 2010, and there is an internal struggle between powerful nationalist political forces who want to do away with Article Nine, and other grassroots people’s movements who want to renounce war once and forever. The voices we heard at the conference were the voices of religious people who refuse to stand in despair, and who dream together of an alternative world where people would learn war no more.

One of the closing prayers still stays with me and I share part of it:

O God of love

Into a chalice, we have poured our stories of the wounds of war

Into this cup, you have dropped your tears of compassion

But also your breath, your grace, your power to transform.

In moments when we dance on the edge of despair

Help us remember this cup of stories and longing

And drink strength from new global bonds of solidarity

Fuel us to be co-authors to break open a new moment in history

And chart a path to abolish war forever. Amen.

Jeffrey Mensendiek serves with the Council on Cooperative Mission as Director of the Gakusei (Student) Center in Sendai, Japan.



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