

Ecumenical Trace and Future in the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in Japan

日本在宗教改革 500 週年的 合一追尋與未來

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[ABSTRACT] For Lutherans, 2017 is a significant year: the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (JELC) has committed to historical events of this year. Although there are many events and conferences related to the commemoration, it is clear for JELC to make a basic principle to do commemorate Reformation 500. JELC decided not to do for self-celebration and take into consideration that the time of reformation was the time of division. The commemoration is an opportunity for reconciliation with others.

I would do presentation about several events between Lutherans and Catholics in Japan. One of them is the commemoration that JELC and Catholic Bishops' Conference of Japan co-organize for Reformation 500 at Urakami Cathedral in Nagasaki, the southern island of Japan on Nov 23, 2017. We are aimed at offering our commemorating prayer of Reformation 500 toward reconciliation. However, our prayer is also directed forward beyond reconciliation within two churches. Lutherans and Catholics came to decide Urakami cathedral as the gathering place of the commemoration. The

Urakami of Nagasaki, one of oldest and biggest Catholic community in Japan, is also “ground zero” of NAGASAKI atomic bomb in August 9th, 1945. Standing on the place together for prayer means that we move forward from our own reconciliation to working together for making peace. Through the report occurring in Reformation 500 of Japan, I would contend about the future and issues of the ecumenical movement in Asia.

【摘要】 對路德教會來說，2017 年是重要的一年：宗教改革 500 週年。日本福音派路德教會（JELC）致力為當年的歷史事件搞活動。雖然有很多紀念活動和會議，但 JELC 決定不把活動囿於自身的團體，而是考慮到宗教改革時亦是分裂的時間，紀念活動是與他人和解的機會。

文章闡述路德教會和日本天主教徒之間的事。其中之一是 2017 年 11 月由 JELC 和日本天主教主教會議在長崎 Urakami 大教堂合辦的改革 500 年紀念，並為和解祈禱。事實上，禱告更超越了兩個教會的和解。Urakami 大教堂是日本天主教最大和最古老的一個教堂，是 1945 年 8 月 9 日受原子彈嚴重毀壞的地方。站在這個地方祈禱，可見從和解向前邁進一大步：共同努力實現和平。通過日本宗教改革 500 年的報告，作者討論到亞洲基督徒合一運動的未來和問題。

I. The arrival point of the ecumenical movement in the 500th anniversary of the reformation

The Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and the Roman Catholic Church jointly had the Common Prayer toward repentant and reconciliation in the name of Jesus Christ, led by Bishop Munib Younan, president of the Lutheran World Federation, and Pope Francis at the Lutheran Cathedral of Lund, in Sweden on Oct. 31st

2016. It points to the arrival point that both churches have continued the ecumenical dialogue for the past fifty years. They have already come to the theological arrival point of the ecumenical dialogue in the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification in 1999. This time, from the doctrinal document to the more active and practical document, they moved forward: *From Conflict to Communion*, in 2013. On the basis of the document, they held the Common Prayer in the commemoration of reconciliation. In this memorial opportunity, they also declared for the five ecumenical imperatives that had already appeared in *From Conflict to Communion*. The declaration led both churches from the doctrinal dialogue through the ceremonial unity to the practical direction of the churches toward common mission. They brought the ecumenical commemoration of the Reformation into the Declaration of Intent by the Lutheran World Service and the Caritas international, in which both international organizations started common projects for human aids such as refugee and immigrants supports. Both churches are called to the commitment to common witness and service in the world.

The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church (hereafter the JELC) planned to work for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in the context of Japan. This article presents what the JELC has done the anniversary in accordance with the global ecumenical movement and think about the future of ecumenical movement.

1. Enthusiasm and Conflict in the 400th anniversary of the Reformation

In the history of ecumenical movement, it is remarkable that the Protestants came to Edinburgh, Scotland, for the International Missionary Conference in 1910. It was an ecumenical conference to promote the cooperation of global mission among Protestants. However, the Western world came to be entangled with the chaos of the World War I soon after the enthusiastic gathering of the IMC.

During the same period, the society in Japan was in the high period of the democratic movement; *Taisho* democracy. People were engaged in the social reformations toward a democratic society. Protestants in Japan came to the 400th anniversary of the Reformation in the social background of the democratic movement and made opportunities of connecting the heritage of the Reformation with struggle for freedom and egalitarianism in terms of modern ideals. Timothy McKenzie researches the resources of those days and summarizes the feature of the 400th anniversary as Protestants enthusiasm and conflict for Roman Catholics.¹ A half of century had already passed after Protestant missionaries fully started their missions in Japan, when the government changed the foreign policy from closing to opening the country to the world. Japanese Christian leaders of the first generation made colorful of the 400th anniversary of the Reformation in the whole country. According to the texts of those days, some of Protestant leaders appealed to the freedom of conscience and liberty of education in the connection with the Reformation teaching, and others celebrated the Reformation as the origin of the progress and development of human society for the past four hundred years.² Within the Protestants camp, it seems to be ambitious that they planned the anniversary gathering beyond denominations and actually gathered, prayed and learned from the heritage of the Reformation, and also carried messages about freedom, equality, and conscience to the society in the midst of democratic movement. The atmosphere is enthusiastically intellectual, evangelical, and ecumenical. However, behind the enthusiasm of Protestant ecumenism, the anniversary was presupposed to place the Roman Catholics out of Protestant sights. It was limited within Protestant understanding of the Reformation. On

¹ Timothy McKenzie, "The 400th Anniversary of the Reformation in 1917 Japan" in *Study on Luther*(2014), 127-177.

² *Ibid.*, 154.

the other hand, McKenzie also researches the documents that the Roman Catholics made in terms of the 400th anniversary of the Reformation. The tone is cold and severe. They mentioned the Reformation as "Deformation." The anniversary also appeared as the negative sign of the division of Christian churches. Thus, in the 400th anniversary, the original partners, the Protestants and the Roman Catholics, had no chance to make mutual understands to each other. It was a hundred years that passed since those days. Both churches come to the joint text of *From Conflict to Communion*. The JELC tried to take into consideration the progress of ecumenical movement for the past century.

2. The JELC's Project for the 500th anniversary of the Reformation

The Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church is the largest church among Lutherans in Japan in which there are one hundred twenty congregations. The JELC are also engaged in various social institutions like social welfares, education, nursery school and kindergarten, and so on. Those facilities are historically and administratively related to Lutheran missions. The JELC and these Lutheran social institutions form *the Lutheran Mission Association* as the community of mission in Japan.³ Therefore, from the beginning of Lutheran missions in Japan, the missiological context is manifold and plural. And also, as well as missions in other areas of Asia, we are always challenged by ongoing issues of the society. In this sense, our mission is always ecumenical in nature. Because the

³ R.B.Peery, a first missionary to Japan sent by the United Synod of the South, a predecessor of the Lutheran Church in America, came to Japan in 1892. Lutheran church had a first worship in the city of Saga. It was a historical year of the JELC. Now, there are approximately one hundred and twenty congregations nationwide. As many as the number of the congregations is, there are Lutheran social facilities. While many of them are independent legally and administratively, their articles of associations and mission policy are rooted in Christian idea, and keep mission relationship with the JELC as *the Lutheran Mission Association*.

population of Christians is approximately one percent of Japanese population, our mission is practiced with religious others. For example, the congregation that I served until this spring administers a preschool since 1950s. Approximately one hundred kids and their parents come to the church facility as a preschool and twenty teachers including a fulltime and part-time job works for them. Staff meeting starts with worship every morning and they pray with kids. However, the proportion of Christians in the kindergarten is largely not different from the portion in the whole population of Christians in the society.

The JELC forms congregations in this setting, and commits itself to mission and social service. It is necessary to deepen questions about *what our neighbors are in our mission* and *what our mission is in relation with our neighbors*. It is a contextual question that Asian Christians has tackled for long time. The richness of theology and mission, which have been formed in the West, is good at helping us think about the former question without losing Christian identity: what mission is. However, it is also risky that theology and mission decide what our neighbors are. Just as Kosuke Koyama proposed “neighbor-ology”, we are also require to learn what theology and mission are from our own neighbors without losing Christian relevancy for our living context. These led the JELC to commemorate the 500th anniversary of Reformation. The main question of the planning is with whom we share the grace of the commemoration.

3. To Neighbors

Preceding from the project of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the JELC called for the logo design in public. The elected logo puts the cross in the center of the design. It symbolizes the heart of our community of mission. The three pairs of hands

under the cross that are gradually from being opened to being joined together are designed to signify a repeating movement between invitations and prays on behalf of God's grace. Open hands seek for gratitude and peace and moves forward to the hands of prayer. The hands of prayer are opened to invite others. The five colors of hands mean the varieties of the world that make us remind the history of the grace of God. Again, the logo puts forward the missional question, "with whom we celebrate the anniversary?" It leads to what the JELC does in the anniversary.

The JELC's proposal of the project was note in May of 2015. The two basic principles to manage the project are:

1. The project is not intended to plan a transient event of celebration.
2. The project is not intended to present a Christian retrospective display from the museum of Christian history.

Although the principles are written in the negative sentences, the intention is positive. It moves toward to share our heritage with others and find the grace of God through the anniversary. It reflects on a simple setting of Japanese Lutherans. Lutherans are double minority. Lutherans exists with other religious people in a secular society as religious minority. Further, they also live with other Christians from Roman Catholics throughout other Protestant denominations to evangelical-pentecostal groups as Christian minority. Therefore, reflecting on Lutheran identity in Japanese context, at least, the JELC takes into considerations three kinds of otherness: other Christians, other religious people and other non-religious people. In the project of the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, the JELC comes to challenge this otherness. Therefore, the project is not just celebration within a small community, but is directed to commemorate and make testimony of the grace of God

from the perspective of the Reformation. It is a missional mind rather than just celebrating. This is a new perspective that appears in this period.

The direction of the JELC's project is based on Japanese context of Lutherans, and therefore, different from the context of global community of Lutherans. However, in spite of differences of context, the principle and ideal is shared with global level of the 500th anniversary of Reformation. The Lutheran World Federation planned the project of anniversary in terms of three principles: ongoing, global and ecumenical. LWF takes time to do the anniversary to celebrate with others beyond Lutheran community and thus develops dialogue and mutual understanding into unity and reconciliation.

II. Programs of the project in the JELC

I survey some programs that the JELC carried in the 500th anniversary of the Reformation. The JELC comprehensively understands composed by evangelizing (*kerygma*), education (*didache*) and service (*diakonia*). The JELC are accustomed with the way of thinking that three components are developed into three parts of mission. The church organization has divisions and committees correspondent with these components. However, it is noteworthy that the church comprehensively implemented the project by concentrating the comprehensive understanding of mission. Even if each program has own tendency to spot one of three divisions of evangelizing, education and service, it keeps other aspects integrated into the project. From the point of view, the programs were planned in crossing departments of evangelizing, education and service. It comes to the reality of mission in theology. Thus, following programs could be sorted out as one of three features of the

comprehensive of mission, but actually, any program can be considered to be integrated into the mission of the commemoration this time.

1. Carrying Message to Message

Reformation Banner

The Reformation Banner had been displayed in front of buildings of the congregations and Lutheran institutions. According to calculation, by displaying them in all Lutheran congregations and social institutions, 8000 people per day see this banner with information. It seems to be commercial campaign, but really responsive to sustainable issues in Japanese Lutherans. In general, Japanese students learn about two Christian priests in the standard text books of domestic or world history. The one person is a Jesuit priest, Francisco Xavier, who is a first missionary to come to Japan in 16th century. Another is Martin Luther as the character of the Reformation. Therefore, it is not difficult to hear one of them, if you ask for someone to know well known Christians in history. Japanese knows the name of Martin Luther and the Reformation movement as a historical event. However, unfortunately and curiously, it is not necessary that they identify Lutherans in Japan with the historical event of Reformation and Martin Luther. One reason is related to the translation and pronunciation of Luther and Lutheran Church. The pronunciation and spells of "Luther" in Japanese language has showed complex transitions in modern national education. In some periods, Luther is spelled and pronounced as *rūtel*, but in other periods, as *rūtā*. It is a unique issue in relation with Japanese language beyond the capability of the church. Currently, *Lutheran* of the Lutheran Church is spelled out as *rūtel*, but *Luther* of Martin Luther as *rūtā*. Thus, many people cannot linguistically think Lutheran Church in connection with Luther-Reformation. This is a

background of the banner project. The banner functions as connecting “Luther” of the historical feature of the Reformation with “Luther” of Lutheran Church through the design.

Eighth Foldings Pamphlet

This project is also directed to those around Lutherans in line with banner project. Reflecting on the context that the majority knows the history of the Reformation and Martin Luther but not about Lutherans, the JELC makes the pamphlet for connecting both. The eighth folding pamphlet is an old but new medium remarked in this digital mediating society. This is a just printed pamphlet as an outlook, but this paper-based pamphlet is a communicating tool. Reading pages one by one in order, readers gets to the information from Luther five hundred years ago through a contemporary connection of Luther and the Reformation into neighboring Lutherans around them one after the other. Unfolding the first page, you find the information about Martin Luther and his story around the Reformation. Opening out the third page, you find the topic in connection with general information of Luther and Lutheran legacy connected with your ordinary life such as music, bible, media, education, human aids and social welfare. More spreading out it at next page, you find your local Lutheran churches and institutions spread in the whole country. Then, folding the pamphlet into the final page, the message of Lutheran group in Japan is written with the well-known words of Lutherans among Japanese: “even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.” This project is also aimed for Lutherans to work for neighbors hands by hands. It is a unique form of mission in Japan.

Publication on Book

This is a third project that the JELC makes tools to share the grace of the Reformation with neighbors. The book is beautifully

illustrated and summarizes all about Luther into small pages, but according to the director of the project, it is a most difficult project. There are many publications about Luther for the past hundred years. Some are theological, others are Christian books for believers. Still others are intellectual books that are provided for intellectual people. This book is not categorized into anyone. As mentioned, the majority of Japanese is not Christian, but has so many points of contact through Lutheran social institutions. Taking up the kindergarten for which I took responsibility, the church member's is around a hundred laypersons, and a hundred kids and their family members are so many in the community. While it is still important for us to engage in evangelizing as outreach, we cannot regard them mere as non-Christians in an old-fashioned way of mission. Actually, for sixty years, they are our friends, good partners for nurturing and educating kids, and cooperators for the administrations of the kindergarten. They have worship, praise and pray for the Lord together. Their relationship with local Lutherans is similar to "who fear God" in chapter tenth of Act in the New Testaments. Many of them are not necessarily concerned about Luther and the Reformation intellectually, academically nor theologically, but the line between Luther and those who fear God is connected with the fact that both of them live in the world and have their own living worries and struggles by reason of life and death. The book is not intended to enlighten people from the top of mountain, but to carry Luther and his wisdom to their lives. The missiology in the background of the book is not that which considers them as candidates for something, rather our neighbors who live next to us in the world created by God. This model of mission take it consideration that mission should be dialogical, respectful and mutual understanding. We need learning together, mutual understanding and concern, and compassion beyond religious belongings. What the book finds out in Luther is a new image of

Luther. The image depicted here is not the religious hero nor professor, but Luther who lived in the midst of this worldliness. He was troubled by family matter, struggled with economic-political matter, had so many illness. Luther was married, had children, ate and slept with them. Through the ordinary life, his happiness turned into sorrow. He loved caring for kids, and lost his lovers. Then, he came to face his own death. In a word, it was Luther as a human being. However, his life is outstanding in that he sought for the grace of God, received for the word of God, and trusted in Jesus Christ as being with him. These are the parts that the book tried to bring to those who live in the world different from fifteenth century Wittenberg. In this sense, the pretty book is ambitious.

Through these programs, the JELC comes to a question, who is our neighbor next to us. What kinds of neighbors are they? Many of them that the JELC directed the project to them are very near to the church through Christian institutions and movements. They are neighbors but far away from the perspective of accustomed mission-mind. What the project challenges us is how we have perspective to see the neighbors in terms of mission. It is a historical and sociological issue but at the same time, a theological and missiological question. In the 500th anniversary of the Reformation, what the JELC is challenged is actually what the JELC has done for neighbors for our 120 years mission history. There is something to be considered before evangelizing and outreaching or giving something and educating for others, so that we find a pathway to share gospel with others from a new perspective of mission. It is similar to the story of Peter and Gentiles, Cornelius in Act 10th. While Peter was called to visit Cornelius, God challenges Peter could not see Gentiles out of nothing other than his conventional eyes. Although Peter led Cornelius to be baptized, it was Peter who was transformed by God throughout mission to the Gentiles.

2. Serving to Each Other: Reminding Being Peacemaker

Stephen Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder depict the appearing three currents of theology of mission in the latter of the twenty century.⁴ One is a Trinitarian theology rooted in Karl Barth and Karl Hartenstein. This theology is developed into *Missio Dei*. The other one is found in the theology of the kingdom of God. We find the current in the social movement and social welfare to promote the kingdom of God. The final one is the Christocentric theology of mission, in which mission depends on the finality of Jesus Christ as the Savior. Bevans and Schroeder contends that through these three currents of theology of mission, mission as "prophetic dialogue" will come to us in the twenty first century. The mission as prophetic dialogue is a new current in accordance with the contexts of global Christianity, but the features of mission is resonant with Christian traditions through the history of Christianity. The mission to which the church is called is composed by 1) witness and proclamation, 2) liturgy, prayer and contemplation, 3) commitment to justice, peace and the integrity of creation, 4) the practice of interreligious dialogue, 5) efforts of inculturation, and 6) the ministry of reconciliation.⁵ Including these six in the context of mission, the mission is not directed to the one that Christians one-sidedly provides something with others, rather standing on the awareness that mission is dialogical in terms of God's mission.

First, mission based on *Missio Dei* stands on *sola gratia*. What the church received comes from God as gift. That is why the mission is theological in agent of God, and the church keep

⁴ Stephen Bevans and Roger P. Schroeder, *Constants in Context: A Theology of Mission for Today* (Maryknoll, NY: Orbis Books, 2004).

⁵ *Ibid.*, 351.

self-understanding of being called and sent by God. Mission with dialogical feature is not to provide a prescriptive way of mission, but good at depicting experiential traces of mission one by one. Especially being surrounded by the diversity of cultures, religions and societies in Asia, the prophetic dialogue helps us develop the future of mission. It can be considered such as dialogue with poor, with other religious and with other cultures in this context of the diversity of Asia. Already we come to know so many of witness to contribute to the mission in dialogue with others. In addition, we come to realize that real locals in Asia are also characterized as post secularization age through the revolution of technology. When the JELC tries to carry out the 500th anniversary of the Reformation in the context of Japan, these others in dialogue is not avoidable. It is asked, with whom we share the anniversary as a message of gospel and how? From the perspective of the mission, the JELC chooses the topic of the anniversary as “peace and reconciliation” to seek for a deep understanding of our own roots in the Reformation and a mission here and now. It urged the JELC to make a contact with the Roman Catholics and had a meeting place in Nagasaki of Japan on November 23rd in 2017.

3. Common Prayer in Nagasaki

The JELC and the Catholic Bishops’ Conference of Japan held a joint ecumenical commemoration of the Reformation on 23rd November 2017 at Urakami Cathedral, in Nagasaki, Japan. The JELC decided not to hold the anniversary in the form of celebration held by Lutherans for Lutherans like private parties. From the beginning of the plan of the anniversary, the JELC takes into consideration the anniversary with others. The one of others in the context of the Reformation is the Roman Catholics. The Roman

Catholics in Japan started the mission in the 16th century, and through passing the long period of persecution and ban of Christianity, takes a forty percent of Christian population in Japan. There have been volunteering gathering from prayer to secular activities for social service. The JELC and the Catholic Church in Japan have also the ecumenical committee for theological dialogue. In the line of the dialogue, the JELC, the Catholic Church and the Anglican Church have already held the common prayer in the commemoration of the Joint Declaration of the Doctrine of Justification in Tokyo 2004. This is the fruit of the theological dialogue in the local Christianity of Japan between both churches. However, there is another thread to come to the ecumenical commemoration of the common prayer in 2017.

Lutherans is placed in the double minority in Japan. Within Christian community, Lutherans in Japan is a minor denomination. However, the Christian community in Japan itself is a religious minority in Japan. It does not mean that Christians lives in a small community in the society. Once they take actions in the society, they live in ecumenical and inter-religious setting. For example, when the Great East Japan Earthquake and the accident of FUKUSHI nuclear power plant in 2011 happened, so many religious institutions and secular groups cooperated in the project of human aid and reconstruction from the disaster. A series of actions are called the coming of post-secularization in religious sociology. They serve to each other in the face to the unprecedented disaster beyond any religious boundaries. In the case of Christian communities, they have been long history to cooperate with other denominations, other religious and secular groups for specific actions such as the peace movement, social justice, and human aid, and so on. Dialogical partner is not limited into theological and ecclesiological domains. Rather, Christian communities are engaged in social activities with

others. Focusing on peace and reconciliation as the subject of common prayer, the JELC and the Catholic Church take the context of grass roots into considerations seriously. Thus, the common prayer is aimed to look forward for common mission rather than look to each other.

They choose the place of the common prayer in Urakami Cathedral of Nagasaki to realize the motif of peace and reconciliation this time. Nagasaki is the well-known city placed in the south area of Japan in which the largest number of Catholic community exist from 16th century. Urakami Cathedral is one of the oldest churches. However, Urakami also has another historical site to remember the realization of peace. The city is also the ground zero of atomic bomb on 9th August 1945. In this place, the pastors in JELC and the priests in the Roman Catholic led the common prayer in the Urakami Cathedral.

Speaking about dialogue in the sense of mission, the perspective of dialogue is plural. Understanding the prophetic dialogue, it is helpful to lead the dimensions of dialogue introduced by missiologist: the dialogue of the head, the dialogue of the heart and the dialogue of the hands. The dialogue of the head primarily focused on “a discussion of ideas and beliefs.”⁶ The JELC and the Roman Catholic Church have kept a theological dialogue in the contour with communication between both. The dialogue of the heart is aimed at exchanging experiences in other religious community. That is why it includes a wide range of activities like prayer, worship, and religious rituals. Then, those who take dialogue learn and involve to the spiritual practices expressing joy, hope, sorrow, gratitude, anger, and love. Facing the common practice in the level of

⁶ Craig L. Nesson, “The Cross as Foundation for the Ministry of Reconciliation: Ending Violence in Our Endangered Globe,” *Currents in Theology and Mission*, vol.40, no. 2 (2013), 100.

grassroots, not only Lutherans and other Christians, but also even other religious and non religious people learn to each other the spiritual dimensions of life to each other. Especially, facing the great disaster like the Great East Japan Earthquake, many proposed the dimension of this dialogue in reports. Finally, the dialogue of hands is to use hands rather than mouth. It is aimed to work for human well-being, peace and justice. The JELC is certainly a church, but its mission is practiced not only by the church but also by the Lutheran group of mission such as related social institutions and grassroots movements for social wellbeing, justice and peace.

III. Prospect for ecumenism

1. Missional Image as Being with Others

The 400th anniversary of the Reformation in Japan was full of the Protestant enthusiasm and the inadequate contact and understanding between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics. A hundred years changed the ecumenical pictures in Japan, as well as the global ecumenism did so. Urakami Cathedral in Nagasaki of the Roman Catholic becomes the place that two churches that had been divided five hundred years ago met for the commemoration of the Reformation. There, Lutherans and Catholics led common prayer for repentant and reconciliation. They came to pray together in the memory of being peacemakers. Reflecting on "blessed are the peacemakers" (Mat.5:9), the perspective of "common prayer" goes beyond "peace" among two communities.

They come to realize that peace is not realized without others. Other religious leaders and other secular people who work together for peacemaking are present there. The leaders of both churches could not hold the prayer if they have hegemonical mind over others

and conquering mind over others. Unfortunately, Christianity cannot say that such a mind is not totally alien to itself. In that sense, peace and reconciliation is a deep spiritual practice including self-criticism. We come to an age that Christian mission and theology think about Christian peace in relation with this worldly peace with others more than ever. One reason is the setting of Christian community as global community since the previous century in the consequence of modern mission. The other reason that no peace is without others is our condition around peace. In that point, it is worth listening to Ronald Stone. He mentions the contemporary concern for peace is very biblical and universal, but also comes to a new situation different from that in the past: “Confronted as we are, however, with the question of whether or not humanity will survive, the meaning of peacemaking for our time involves the salvation of humanity as a species.”⁷ Standing on Urakami, the ground zero of NAGASAKI, or the FUKUSHIMA, it becomes real. Stone continues to say that “Peacemaking and the promotion of peace may go on in the family, school, business, church, and government, but theologically speaking, peacemaking today means the existential, activist work in society to prevent the destruction of the human species.”

Again in this context, the JELC, probably other Christian communities too, must repeatedly ask itself that with whom peace be shared. From the perspective of this complex perspective of peace in global age, we cannot realize the peace without others. We cannot realize peace without considerations of other human actions like education, social welfare, and political stability, and economical and ecological justice, and so on. The mission mind for dialogue, mission as “prophetic dialogue,” is imperative in this sense. Peace and

⁷ Ronald H. Stone, the article of “Peace/Peacemaking” in Donald W. Musser and Joseph L. Price eds, *New & Enlarged Handbook of Christian Theology* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2003), 368.

reconciliation are religious but secular, public but private, and theological but sociological matters. Thus, we need as mission to promote mutual understanding and cooperative mind for peacemaking in the specific context without betraying our own tradition of "blessed are the peacemakers."

A Catholic theologian, Robert J. Schreiter, has already proposed a new understanding of catholicity.⁸ It promotes the transformation of theological-missional mind apart from the perspective of modern values on spatial expansion and quantitative growth. The new catholicity focuses on the network and communication between dots of churches. A common question among churches is not how a church spatially and quantitatively enlarges its own effect and power, but how a church connects itself with other churches and other domains in dialogue with them. The image of the catholicity is similar to the Internet web. We are not concern for how the platform is large or small. The platform functions as connecting the one with others. We stop to ask what is exchanged through the web of Christian mission. Who does join the network and for what? This is the issue of mission, but at the same time, beyond the missions of the church. In the anniversary of the Reformation, the JELC found out a sign. It is small but incredible sign of time through praying, gathering and working together.

2. Ecumenical Mapping for the Future

In the commemoration of Lund, 2016, LWF and the Catholic Church have common prayer and declared the five ecumenical imperatives, and in the final section of the common prayer, another

⁸ Robert J. Schreiter, *The New Catholicity: Theology between the Global and the Local* (Maryknoll: Orbis Books, 1997).

significant event happened. It is the Declaration of Intent signed by the Lutheran World Service and Caritas Internationals. The fifth of the ecumenical imperatives is especially considered there. It says that “Catholics and Lutherans should witness together to the mercy of God in proclamation and service to the world.” In response to the imperative, the two organizations to work for human aid move forward to the next stage of their actions. Analogically speaking, the theological dialogue between both churches for the past fifty years is corresponding to the dialogue of head, and the common prayer to the dialogue of heart. The Declaration of Intent signifies to the intention of both churches in the level of the dialogue of hands. This is the direction to the future of both churches. This direction is significant for local Christian churches and institutions to reflect on the common prayer and the Declaration of Intent, because it suggests the strategical principle of mission. Although the common prayer is certainly the event that specific churches planned and hold, the significant is also witnessed for the future of mission. They could find ways to work for peace and reconciliation by using their own gifts and talents. The commemoration is ongoing. Theologically speaking, it is ongoing eschatologically: already but not yet.

The JELC also celebrated the anniversary of the Reformation with the Roman Catholics with the commemoration of peace and reconciliation. It was done *already*, but what the JELC will do is *not yet* attained at the next stage. It is an opened to the future. The JELC as a double minority of the society and Christian community in Japan seeks for a pathway to practice the dialogues of head, heart and hands with others toward the eschatological goal of peace. For the end, the church has to make platforms for dialogues to promote in global and local levels.

3. Crisis of Love for Neighbors

When the former LWF President, Bishop Munib Younan, who was one of the hosts of the common prayer in Lund, came to Japan last year, he spoke to the major newspaper of Japan about the crisis of loving neighbors. It is interesting to find a simple fact that Younan succeeds in speaking to secular and other religious people about the common issue in and out of Japan: "crisis of love for neighbors." In the interviews, bishop Younan left important insights by telling the crisis of loving for neighbors. He says that any peace movement is local. He loves local people and works for local peace with people in Palestine. In the reality of the local context, he finds neighbors to promote dialogue with patient and mutual understanding. In his context of peace movement, dialogue is imperative face to face.

He also mentions that the dialogue by face to face is challenging and crisis of one's own life. He says that loving neighbors is not emotional. It is to acknowledge the diversity of alien neighbors and pain by loving neighbors. Thus, he is a grass-roots messenger and at the same time, the messenger of Christian perspective for peacemaking. In other words, his local context is not merely local but also global. Local mission is in the midst of mission and communion of the world. Theologically speaking, his peace movement is God's mission: *Missio Dei*. Institution is also important to "seek for realistic solution, not utopian solution in the devastating division among neighbors." We are engaged in local missions, but we need a sensitive to serving global mission here and there. In the case of Lutherans, probably as well as other denominations, we are good at forming global networking theologically and institutionally. It does not mean for me to suggest making another organizations or institution necessarily. Rather, what the local church is necessary is a kind of networking to share issues and struggles, and grace and hope,

in the name of mission. This prospect helps us depict the future of Asian mission.

Bishop Younan visited Japan to receive the peace prize from Buddhist peace foundation by the reason of his religious approach to peacemaking in Palestine. His message sounds universal and simple even in the local context of Japan. He succeeds in sharing common issue between his local context in Palestine and Japanese context alien to Christian ethos by speaking the well-known biblical vocabulary of loving neighbors. It is also noteworthy considering his interview in the ecumenical context of Asian mission. Our crisis around peace in Asia is human catastrophe possible by human actions. It is how the JELC and Roman Catholics gathered in Nagasaki for the common prayer. Even if a specific church engages in a specific mission in local context, the significance of this is connected with the global reality of peace.