



Dialogue
Creating the Next 60 Years

Project Report

June 12th, 2012

Founder's Day Chapel Hour 2012: 60th Anniversary



60th Anniversary Project
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



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ICU 60th Anniversary Projects Date: June 12, 2012

[Founders Day Chapel Hour 2012: The 60th Anniversary]

Presider: Rev. Takashi Nagata

Hymn: No.312 “What a Friend We Have in Jesus”

Scripture Reading: 1 Peter 4:10-11 Rev. Takashi Nagata

The Sermon: A Path Toward Making Use of Our Gifts Mr. Kakutaro Kitashiro
Chair, Board of Trustees

The University Chapel, having watched for over the university for nearly sixty years of its history, was the location for a service on 12 June 2012 commemorating ICU’s 60th anniversary. Reverend Nagata (photo: right) led the service.



During the service’s majestic organ prelude, played by ICU organist Tetsuya Kan, the pews became filled with approximately 300 participants, drawn from the student body, faculty, staff, and alumni, including some 40 members of the 10th graduating class, who were on campus for a reunion event.

The service started with a prayer from Reverend Nagata, followed by the congregation singing together the hymn, “What a Friend We Have in Jesus,” and then a reading from the First Letter of Peter.

In his address to the congregation, Kakutaro Kitashiro, the chair of the Board of Trustees, offered the message that, “Sixty years ago, those people before us who founded ICU built the university from nothing. You and I must never forget their hard work. ICU is able to move forward through our own efforts to make use of the great gifts we possess, by having joy in our hearts and walking the path God shows to us, and by helping one another.”

A Path Toward Making Use of Our Gifts

Kakutaro Kitashiro
Chair, Board of Trustees

I’m delighted to be able to speak with you here at the service to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of ICU’s founding.

First, I would like to read a passage from chapter four of the First Epistle of Peter, which always fills me with a sense of encouragement:

“Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God’s grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.”



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Peter's first epistles were written after Christ's Ascension. They were written by Simon and Peter when they were advisors at the first church and were sent to Christians who had scattered and taken up residence in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia.

It appears that about seventy years after the birth of Christ, Jerusalem was occupied by Rome and Jews who believed in Jesus Christ were scattered to different lands. The first chapter of First Peter states that he was writing to "elect resident aliens" who, it is thought, were driven out of their homes because of their faith.

In chapter 2, verses 11 and 12, Peter writes: "Dear friends, I urge you, as foreigners and exiles, to abstain from sinful desires, which wage war against your soul. Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us."

While, according to this, these people, who were scattered to various foreign lands, were starting lives according God, why were these people, even though they were driven from their homes, able to continue their faith? I think this was because the Apostles—that is, Christ's disciples—spoke passionately as witnesses of His existence, for, even if they lacked conviction about His being the son of God, His disciples came into contact with Him after His death and resurrection and came to believe.

This is written in John, chapter 20 starting from verse 25, where, after

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Christ has died on the cross, Thomas has doubts about His resurrection, but after actually confronting Jesus is able to believe: Though the doors were locked, Jesus came and stood among them and said, 'Peace be with you!' Then he said to Thomas, 'Put your finger here; see my hands. Reach out your hand and put it into my side. Stop doubting and believe.' Then Jesus told him, 'Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.'"

I was baptized in the same year that I began work after university. Although we couldn't see God with our eyes, it was a great encouragement for believing in the existence of God that the disciples, who walked with Christ, were able to meet Him after His resurrection, gain strength and faith, and become witnesses for Christ.

Acts 1:8 says, "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." In this way, the disciples, as witnesses to the existence of God, went out with faith from Jerusalem to the various lands. Those who were believers in Christ through those powerful disciples and their acts, they were minorities scattered and living in society. Even so, I think, that with hearts that sought the nation of God, they took the path of a life of faith.

In Japan today, Christians are extremely few in number and exist as a minority. It is likely that less than 1% of the population is Christian. Though we live surrounded by those who are not Christians, I think we are

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not necessarily persecuted, like Peter describes in his epistle, nor is it necessary for us to give up our jobs and escape from here. In this sense, we can say we are extremely blessed.

However, World War II was a difficult time in Japan for Christians to follow their faith. Some individuals were imprisoned for their faith and many others had to change their faith. This is perhaps no different from the persecutions Christians met with at the hands of the Romans. Today, when religious freedom is respected, it is difficult for us to imagine the hardships of those before us. Also, the suppression of democracy and violation of human rights were characteristics of wartime Japan. Even so, in that time there were many who believed in Christ's resurrection and held on to a strict Christian faith.





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After these hardships, the war came to an end. Christians in America offered support primarily to those Christians in Japan at the time, and through donations from many people who were not Christian and from many businesses, ICU was founded as a Christian university that would transcend religious denomination.

As a yet unfinished university, ICU was established with an enthusiasm to create a university that would always move forward, always walk ahead. In the brief interval since it was founded, ICU now reaches its sixtieth anniversary. In that time, ICU has experienced many problems in terms of university operations, the form of the Christian-based education, financial difficulties, and the like, but today's ICU exists as the result of the hard work of its faculty, staff, students, parents, alumni and many others. I never knew ICU's first president, Hachiro Yuasa, nor its first chair of the Board of Trustees, Kiyoshi Togasaki, but these individuals who went before us possessed a vision to create a university that would educate "superlative young people in the service of God and mankind" and who would contribute to peace in Japan and throughout the world. So that regardless of the diverse difficulties they encountered, it was with this vision and with God's guidance that they each made use of their unique gifts and, I think, through this created the foundation for the ICU we know today.

So then, do we know what gifts God has granted to each of us? In my case, I started working at my company as someone with the technical ability to create computer software, so I think my gift was the ability to make such software. But the path God put before me was not one of a technician but rather a path in the business world of sales and



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management. Christians are a minority in the business world, too. Surely I did not experience anything like the persecution of that during the time when the first churches were built, but the lives of those around me was different from that of walking towards the nation of God. However, when I would come to a crossroads in my work, God showed me which path to take. I believe that was the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As for the working of the Holy Spirit, as is written in many places in the Bible, it was an extremely concrete path. When I was thirty-six years old, I had an extremely difficult time at work because I was making important business deals even though it was my first time to be engaged in management work and oversee sales. Although there were times when I would have to work through the night, I had faith, just as Peter writes in his first letter, that I had been given gifts, and when I made efforts to make use of those gifts all the fruits of those efforts are provided by God. After two years of hard work, I was met with success. Then, when I was forty-eight and became president of IBM Japan, I had to face the first time that the company released a budget showing it was in the red. I spent many a sleepless night but was able to overcome the situation with faith in this passage from the Bible. The hard work I put in cannot compare to that of the Christians driven from Jerusalem and who established the first church, but in any time we can have find encouragement in hard work that makes use of the gifts we have been given. In this way I discovered gifts, which, even if I thought about them, I didn't recognize, and through the God's mysterious guidance I became a company's business administrator and I am here at the ICU Chapel speaking with you today.

ICU creates a community that encompasses also those students, faculty and staff who are not Christian. The word community implies that we, as the people forming it, each have a role we must fulfill.

The members of a community must make use of their individual gifts, experiences and knowledge and use them in the service of one another.



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Faculty members must make use of their gifts and raise up education and research. That is their mission. Staff members have a mission to make use of their gifts, make creative changes, and realize an even better university administration. The trustees, including myself, as chair, are asked to make use of our gifts, make use of our experience and knowledge from working in the world, and contribute to the university's administration. This is a matter of making use of our gifts and walking our paths. As for students, they have an important mission to work hard in their studies, make use of their gifts, and find the path that will lead them to contribute to society.

Today, ICU has numerous issues that need to be resolved. After sixty years, University Hall, a portion of the student dorms, and faculty and staff housing are all showing their age. In order to prepare for the next sixty years and truly realize a liberal arts education in Japan, I believe it is necessary to build a classroom building that is appropriate for such a liberal arts education. Additionally, we have an important mission to cultivate gifted global citizens who can work throughout the world. In order to accomplish this, it is necessary for superlative faculty and staff to make improvements to education in small classes, but at the same time there are financial limitations to realizing this goal. Also, the accomplishments of ICU's excellent education are not yet fully recognized by Japanese society. Furthermore, we must address the question of how to move forward in complying with ICU's "Christian code" for faculty with respect to the small number of Christians in Japanese society. Yet, Japanese society needs the liberal arts education offered by ICU, and it is our important mission to build a superlative learning environment and cultivate superlative students. Sixty years ago those people before us who founded ICU built the university



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from nothing. You and I must never forget their hard work. ICU is able to move forward through our own efforts to make use of the great gifts we possess, by having joy in our hearts and walking the path God shows to us, and by helping one another.

Romans 8:28 says, “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.”

I hope that we will take strong strides into the next sixty years so that we can each of us make use of our gifts, fulfill our mission to move the “unfinished university” forward and cultivate “superlative individuals in the service of God and mankind.” I believe there are blessed results waiting there for us.

Allow me to raise this word in prayer.

God in Heaven,

Today we have been able to celebrate the 60th anniversary of ICU as it was built by You.

This university You built seeks to cultivate superlative young people who work in service to You and mankind. We ask for Your guidance as the university grows amid Japanese and global society.

We ask that You guide each of us who comes together at ICU, helping us to make use of the gifts You bestowed upon us as we move forward to make this a better university.

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We also that You heal us of those things that cause us pain.

Support us, Lord, as we take bold steps forward towards the next 60 years of the university's history.

We give sincere thanks that so many of us are able to be here at such a great occasion to mark together ICU's past 60 years and move forward into the next 60.

Support the development of ICU, Lord, from Your position always above us. We thank You for Your guidance and blessings.

This prayer we lift to You in the name of Your son, Jesus Christ.

Amen.

