



*Dialogue*  
Creating the Next 60 Years

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**Project Report**

June 1<sup>st</sup>, 2012

Founder's Day Chapel Hour 2012: 60th Anniversary



60th Anniversary Project  
INTERNATIONAL CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY



# Dialogue

Creating the Next 60 Years

Seeking Truth, Finding Freedom:  
The Legacy and Promise of International Christian University  
A Chapel Address for the 60th Anniversary of the University's Founding

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Chair, The United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia

Mitaka, Tokyo, Japan June 11, 2013

Introduction: President Junko Hibiya, Distinguished Trustees, Faculty and Staff, Students, Alumni and Friends: Thank you for inviting me to celebrate with you the 60th anniversary of International Christian University's founding. What an honor – and what a joy -- to join the community that in recent months has marked this milestone. Many thanks





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Many thanks to the university's leaders and staff whose careful planning and warm welcome have made my first visit to this university so memorable! You have even translated my remarks into this beautiful country's language – and I hope only that the Japanese text will seem more eloquent than the English in which I'm obliged to address you.

Please accept the greetings from my colleagues at the Henry Luce Foundation in New York City, for the past 77 years a catalyst for learning and leadership, promoting especially Americans' understanding of East and Southeast Asia.

I bring congratulations also from Dr. Nancy Chapman, the trustees and staff of the United Board for Christian Higher Education in Asia, which I'm honored to chair. Celebrating the United Board's 90th anniversary this year, we are grateful for our long- lasting partnership with International Christian University. In fact, the current issue of the United Board's newsletter *Horizons* salutes Dr. Hibiya on her appointment last year as your president – and recognizes her leadership in the renewal of liberal arts education on your campus and in the wider community.

Finally, I give special thanks to your Managing Trustee for General Affairs, Kano Yamamoto, and to Professor Shin Chiba – honored trustees of the United Board who have been my teachers and my cherished friends for many years.

The Anniversary: At colleges and universities, why do we celebrate an anniversary? There are several reasons, I think: to get in touch again

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with the founding vision; to honor and thank those whose dedication and stewardship, indeed whose sacrifice, have led to the school's flourishing; to take a measure of the school's status at this moment – to answer the question, “where are we today?”; and to recommit ourselves to a shared mission, a mission that is urgently needed today – and for the future.

Although I am a newcomer to this country, I know that one's 60th birthday here is especially meaningful – the *kanreki*. On your 60th birthday, ICU has reached, like a human individual, the fullness of maturity – that moment when, dressed in red, an elder can return to the wonder of childhood. The visionary English poet, William Blake, explored this mystical process in his *Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience*: after the daunting experiences of growing up and taking on all of the responsibilities of adulthood, we have a chance to recapture the innocence of childhood at a higher level. Like children we can see the world truly, as God sees it, as one unbounded place of beauty, harmony and hope. And so at 60, ICU not only can look backward with pride, but can also begin its work afresh, in much the same way that you re-launch the university's mission each year when you enroll a new class of students.

Recalling the Past: Let me invite you, just for a moment, to think back to the founding of this special university. Imagine the devastation that surrounded the Japanese people in the early 1950s; imagine their uncertainty, their sense of loss, their fear. The tragedy and dislocation of the 1950s in East Asia remind me of the Gospel accounts about the early apostles, who huddled in isolated rooms, grieving, after the crucifixion and death of Jesus. After the catastrophe of the second World War, this university's founders

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were very much like those first disciples, sharing their experience and also their faith: they found Christ still present, when they least expected, in places from which God had seemed to depart; and they found themselves empowered by Christ's Spirit to complete the work He had begun.

How easy it would have been to retreat into blame and shame! Instead, your university's founders took up the daunting task of reconciliation, seeking alternatives to conflict. Rejecting isolation, they built bridges – in Japan and beyond Japan. Your university's story represents one of the educational miracles of the last century: it's a story of living beyond one's fears and taking great risks for the sake of a greater good. With faith and courage, in 1953 ICU began as the University of Tomorrow, as your first president Dr. Hashiro Yuasa called it– and here you are sixty years later, still poised on the brink of tomorrow!



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The Three Commitments: The founders' vision had three parts, defined concisely in the three words of your name. On this 60th birthday, let us examine again those three touchstones – three interlocking values that are embedded and embodied in this one place.

First, rather than a think tank or a hospital or a rescue center, the founders of ICU chose to establish a university in the liberal arts tradition. One of their goals, of course, was to address the educational needs of a post-war generation – getting them ready for jobs, for their own financial independence and the nation's economic recovery. But there was a higher goal, rooted in Jesus's message from John's Gospel: ICU was committed to seeking truth. From the beginning and still today, ICU has been a place of discovery, of free expression where multiple viewpoints are welcome. It is a place of encounter – with ancient wisdom, with current issues, and with others whose backgrounds and experiences are diverse. Today, universities around the world are challenged to balance students' immediate needs with their long-term hopes, and some are failing; their curricular experience is fragmented; they reward competition instead of collaboration; and they focus too narrowly on individualistic aims rather than a larger social good. At ICU, the focus of education is on the whole person. This is, genuinely, the meaning of a liberal education – fulfilling God's promise that seeking truth will in fact set us free – intellectually, socially and culturally.

Second, in a country where Christians have always been a distinct minority, the founders built a university whose core identity is Christian. What does that mean? With doors open to students and faculty of all faiths, the goal was never conversion.



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Second, in a country where Christians have always been a distinct minority, the founders built a university whose core identity is Christian. What does that mean? With doors open to students and faculty of all faiths, the goal was never conversion.

Finally, the third word of your name -- and the third commitment: after they had witnessed the horrors of unbridled nationalism, this university's pioneers built a place that is international in vision and in practice. From the very beginning, ICU challenged students to think of themselves as global citizens, sharing a universal declaration of human rights. In the 1950's, this commitment to overcome insularity and to BE international was aspirational -- but in practical terms difficult to achieve. At that time, letters mailed across the Pacific took weeks to reach their destination. There were few opportunities for travel or scholarly exchange. Television was still a new medium -- and it was impossible really to witness distant events in real time.

Today, with advances in telecommunications, transportation, and a globalized economy, the university has new opportunities and new responsibilities to be international. Through the Internet, faculty and students can participate immediately and freely in global research and problem-solving. With the advent of MOOCs (massive open on-line courses), students can hear the world's greatest lecturers -- and then explore what they've heard with their own faculty and classmates at home.

These marvels of technology can be seductive -- and we're challenged to



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harness the new means of connectivity thoughtfully to achieve the mission of a Christian university. We must be vigilant that the forces of globalization do not widen the gap between the richest, most developed nations and the poorest, most struggling ones. In the same way, we need to uphold and embrace the richness of local cultures and local knowledge, so that they will not be erased by a global hegemony. At times of natural disaster, like the destructive tsunami here, we have seen the benefits of the new technology -- as we find ourselves connected in an instant, and can mobilize assistance across boundaries with efficiency and compassion. By those same means, the university's students and faculty can collaborate with colleagues around the world to alleviate the looming dangers of climate change, environmental degradation, epidemic disease and global hunger.

Staring from the jet's window as I flew from New York to Narita just a few days ago, I was reminded that from that distance we see no boundaries, no divisions -- just one world, entrusted to us, and much in need of our care. For a moment -- and again here at ICU -- we have a glimpse of God's perspective.

Your first president, Dr. Hashiro Yuasa, often cited the Old Testament's Book of Proverbs: "where there is no vision, the people perish." As International Christian University celebrates its 60th anniversary, we know that the converse of this proverb is also true: where there IS vision, the people flourish! In its quest for truth, human freedom and reconciliation, ICU has been a beacon of optimism -- in Christian terms, a place of hope. Thank you for your courageous aspiration. Thank you for your faithfulness to the founding vision -- seeking each year new ways to keep it fresh and



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relevant. As the University of Tomorrow, you embrace the future, committed to the transformation of the world. Please accept my congratulations. May God bless each of you and your community!

