Executive Director's Annual Report, 1999

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The Forty sixth Academic Conference of the Japan Society of Christian Studies was held at Tokyo Union Theological Seminary, on August 24-25, 1998 under the Presidency of Prof. Dr. Toshio Sato, with about 140 members present.

The theme of this year's conference was "Religion of Word and Religion of Sacrament." The keynote address entitled "Religion of Word and Religion of Sacrament" was delivered by Prof. Dr. Toshio Sato (Tokyo Union Theological Seminary). Prof. Dr. T. Sato suggested that "The center of the worship service in the Roman Catholic Church is the sacraments. The celebration of the Eucharist within that is important. During the mass, the consecration of the bread and wine is emphasized. Catholicism transmits grace through the physical elements of bread and wine. In contrast to that, in Protestantism the sermon is the center of the worship service, and grace is transmitted through the Word of God from the Bible."

Three major papers on the conference theme were read in a public symposium by Prof. Dr. S. Takayanagi (Sophia University), Rev. K. Suzuki (Chitose Church, UCC in Japan) and Prof. Dr. Y. Nagami (Rikkyo University).

Dr. S. Takayanagi in his paper subtitled "Word, Gesture and Sacramental Religion" stressed that "Contemporary Catholic theology strongly emphasizes the connection between the word and the deed of revelation. Words are not just a statement, but an action or something that causes action. Words are gestures and gestures communicate. Because that is behavior and performance. Furthermore, the religion of Word and the religion of Sacrament are not in opposition to eliminate each other, but the two are one. Under the subtitle, "Concerning

Metaphorical Theology in Sallie McFague," Dr. Y. Nagami cited McFague, stressing that "the sacraments and God's Word are both metaphorical expressions in essence." Rev. K. Suzuki discussed characteristics of "The Religion of Word and the Religion of Sacrament from the view point of Protestant Theology."

Twenty-two individual research papers were given in simultaneous sessions at this year's conference with lively debate on each proposed theory. Subjects ranged from the Dead Sea Scrolls, New Testament, historical, systematic and modern theological problems to cross-cultural communication, information processing and interdisciplinary approaches to theology. From these, two outstanding papers are included in this volume. The first paper, on "Theologie des 'verborgenen Gottes' bei Heidegger" read by Prof. Makito Shigeru, explores how Heidegger himself referred to God in the 1930s and developed his own thought from 'Philosophie der Wahrheit des Seins' to 'Theologie des verborgen Gottes,' in analyzing Heidegger's two works, *Vom Wesen der Wahrheit*, 1930 and *Beiträge zur Philosophie*, 1936-38. In the second paper, Prof. Y. Murakoshi explores the characteristics of Adam Smith's perspectives on natural theology and economic life. This volume also contains fourteen book reviews of Christian and theological works published in Japan last year.

Local chapter meetings were held in Kanto, Kinki and Kyushu districts. In the Kanto meeting, held on March 25th at Toyo Eiwa Woman's University, five scholars gave papers in the morning and two in an afternoon symposium on the theme of "Terminal Care and Christianity."

At the Kinki district meeting, which was held at Kobe Woman's University on March 25th, seven scholars gave papers in simultaneous sessions and two scholars gave papers in a public symposium on the theme of "Examining a Theology of Life — In an Era of Technologically Advanced Medical Treatment."

The Kyushu Meeting, held on March 29th at Seinan Gakuin University, included five papers and a public lecture by Prof. T. Kodaira

(Junshin Woman's Junior College) on the theme of "Francisco de Xavier in Kagoshima."

The Tohoku and Hokkaido districts are presently making preparations for their meetings. The Tohoku meeting planned for June 18th at Tohoku Gakuin University, will include five presentations and a public lecture by Prof. Dr. Kiyosti Tsuchido (Tohoku Gakuin University) on the theme of "Current Trends in New Testament Studies."

At the Business Meeting of the Society, Prof. Dr. Isao Kuramatsu (Tohoku Gakuin University) was elected President; Prof. Dr. Kiyoshi Tsuchido, Executive Director; Prof. Dr. Seiichi Yagi (To-in University), Editor of *Theological Studies in Japan*; Prof. Dr. Tetsuo Sasaki (Tohoku Gakuin University), Secretary; and Prof. Dr. Kosuke Nishitani (Tohoku Gakuin University), Treasurer.

It was confirmed that the 47th meeting of the Society would take place at Tohoku Gakuin University in Sendai on October 7-8, 1999 and that the total membership of the society is 710. The Treasurer's Report by Prof. Yasuhiro Sekikawa noted that the general state of the Society's finances is healthy. Prof. Dr. Katsuhiko Kondo, Executive Director, reporting in place of the editor, Prof. Dr. Y. Morita, noted that the circulation of *Theological Studies in Japan* is satisfactory.

(translation: Paul Tsuchido Shew)