

Peace Declaration on the Centennial Anniversary of Seinan Gakuin: A Confession of War Responsibility and Post-War Responsibility

Seinan Gakuin, in commemoration of the Centennial Anniversary of its foundation in 1916, intends to follow the words of our founder, C.K. Dozier, “Be True to Christ” over the next century. We feel deeply responsible for our past as we look back over the history as a Christian school. Despite the fact that Seinan Gakuin values peace and human rights based on Christian principles, we involved ourselves in the Asia and Pacific War and in the enormous pain and suffering that was inflicted on many people in other countries including Korea and China. Furthermore, we did not publicly express responsibility in the years following the war. Now, before God and neighbor, we confess that we did not observe the words of the founding spirit of our school and sincerely apologize and repent for our unfaithful acts in the past.

Jesus Christ said “love the LORD your God” and “love your neighbor as yourself” (Mark 12:29-31). He also said “love your enemies, pray for those who persecute you” (Matthew 5:44). “The LORD God” tells us “I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery” (Exodus 20:2). The God of the Bible liberates us from every sort of suppression. God frees us from the specific values of the world, whether these values are the Christian church, family, race, ethnicity, religion, nation, or wealth. Jesus Christ “has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility” and became “our peace” through the cross (Ephesians 2:14-22). He said to his followers, “Blessed are the Peacemakers” (Matthew 5:9). We believe that it is a universal value for us to face one another and love one another, even our enemies.

Seinan Gakuin should have followed the teaching of the Bible consistently. However, under the wartime military regime, Seinan Gakuin requested and granted *goshinei*, the portrait of Their Majesties, and a holy shrine called *Houanden* was built with donations to keep the *goshinei* and the Imperial Edict on Education. During school ceremonies and events a profound obeisance towards the Imperial Palace was observed and singing the national anthem in unison and readings of the Imperial Edict on Education were introduced. Under the pressure of military officers attached to our school, physical education was replaced by military drills, and students were dispatched to the war front. Seinan Gakuin actively forced students to sacrifice their life for their country and kill

people in other countries. When American missionaries, who were considered to be enemy aliens following the attack on Pearl Harbor, were forced to return to their country, their Japanese colleagues in Seinan Gakuin did not share their trials and tribulation. Considering the restrictions on religious freedom at that time, it is not hard to understand the difficulty in following the words “Be true to Christ,” but this fact cannot be an excuse for not taking responsibility for our past.

We also have to face up to our faults beyond wartime. During the post-war history of our school, we have not confessed our liability and irresponsibility in actively promoting war. We have not shown empathy towards the torment of the non-Japanese victims of war and have not taken responsibility for the injury we have inflicted on people who suffered from our war of aggression conducted under the name of the emperor. We evaded responding to the anger, pain, and lament of the wounded and bereaved families beyond nations and borders.

On our Centennial Anniversary, we extend our thoughts to the past and the future. The students and staff of Seinan Gakuin shall wake up and take action so that we never repeat the same mistakes of being self-centered and suppressing the dignity of humanity through power and violence. We hereby declare our unwavering determination to be part of the global community and to be truly a part of international society and live in the blessing of “those who work for peace.”

April 1, 2016

Educational Corporation

Seinan Gakuin