

“...inspired by [the prophetic utterances] you may wage the good warfare, holding faith and a good conscience”

Timothy 1: 18b, 19a

Hearts Ablaze

The nation was afire with anger. People took to the streets this past summer to protest the passing of the new set of security laws proposed by the Liberal Democratic Party (LDP). Non-violent demonstrations were also held on one day in August in 350 locations all over the country. It was the young people who stood at the forefront of this movement.

Although the security laws (called “war laws” by the opposition) allow for Japan to ignore six decades of constitutional debate around the peace constitution, and to join in military activities all over the world were passed on September 19th, the protest movement has given many people reason to hope.

On October 2nd, a gathering was held on our Kwansei Gakuin campus in protest of the new security laws. There were 200 people packed into the classroom that evening. One of the speakers was T, a fourth year female student. She was one of the participants in the student led movement called SEALDs (Students Emergency Action for a Liberal Democracy).

Aki is another college student who addressed the Diet assembly the day before the passing of the fateful laws. He pleaded with the delegates saying: “I ask each of you to stand as one lonely individual. Before you think of factions, political loyalties and power politics, I want you to be your own lonely self as you ponder the choice before you.”

I am encouraged to see these young people speak out. I am encouraged to know that young people in Japan have a political conscience. I am also encouraged to see that many of the young leaders of this movement were raised in Christian families.

Jeffrey Mensendiek is a faculty member in the theology department of Kwansei Gakuin University, and a chaplain of the Center for Religious Activities. His appointment is made possible by your gifts to Disciples Mission Fund, Our Churches’ Wider Mission, and your special gifts.



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