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Sunday, Nov. 22, 2009

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Duty to beg off religious activity

By PASTOR PETER TEO
Church of Our Savior
Fujisawa, Kanagawa

Regarding the Nov. 11 article "[Ozawa lashes out with scathing remarks on Christianity](#)": As a pastor of a local church, I would like to share some of my thoughts on Democratic Party of Japan secretary general Ichiro Ozawa's comments. Although I have great respect for Ozawa's political skills, I believe his scathing remarks about Christianity are untrue and unbecoming a man of his political stature.

As a politician, Ozawa has a responsibility to uphold Article 20 of the Japanese Constitution, which states: "No religious organization shall receive any privileges from the state or exercise any political authority. No person shall be compelled to take part in any religious acts. The state and its organs shall refrain from religious education or any other religious activity." Under this article, Ozawa — as an influential member of state organs — is obliged to refrain from religious activity, which includes a public denunciation of Christianity.

sk,1 Additionally, I believe that Ozawa's description of Christianity as a "dead-end religion" shows his lack of religious and historical awareness. Over the course of many centuries, the Bible has been a fundamental source of wisdom and guidance to political luminaries like William Wilburforce and Martin Luther King Jr. Christianity is anything but a "dead-end" religion. It is a religion that has engendered the abolishment of slavery and recognition of universal equality. It is one that deserves to be respectfully tolerated by Ozawa. I hope Ozawa apologizes for his unkind and untrue statements.

The opinions expressed in this letter to the editor are the writer's own and do not necessarily reflect the policies of The Japan Times.

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