

## CALL TO WORSHIP

In 1543, Portuguese sailors introduced guns into Japan. By 1560, they were being used in battle there. The Japanese made dramatic improvements in the metallurgy and mechanics of firearms. Before the end of the century, Japan was using more guns in battle than England, Spain, and France combined.

When Commodore Perry's black ships glided into Tokyo Bay in 1853, there wasn't a gun in sight. No cannons guarding the harbor, no rifles, no pistols – even the word for gun had become an academic artifact.

How did this happen? Can you recall a single instance in which an effective military technology was invented and then abandoned? Was there some keen insight about gun control in the consciousness of nineteenth century Japan that somehow has been mislaid? On this red-letter day that we call Justice Sunday, as our religious movement considers publishing a statement of conscience concerning war and peace, might this obscure historical episode have some meaning for our religious community?

Come, let us live in the questions again today. Come, let us worship together.