

Vision of Praise

March 2011

From the editor

We'd like to share "As the Wind Blows(1)" from the book "The Vision" written by Pastor Peter in 2001. He wrote about the walk of *Kohitsuji no Mure* Church during the first 10 years since the first retreat in 1992.

Let us follow the Lord wherever the wind of the Holy Spirit blows.

As the Wind Blows (1)

Peter

I

The summer of 2001 will find the Tenth Annual Retreat for *Kohitsuji no Mure*. Ten years can be a chapter of the heavenly movement of praise, should I say, celestial hymn. The words are not enough to express the depth, width and the quantities of what the Lord has done for us during these 10 years. It is impossible to know how many people have been touched by heavenly life. The people touched by God's love could not help telling others about it. The fire of the Holy Spirit has been spreading throughout Japan and worldwide just like wildfire. The wind from heaven has blown and is blowing ever strongly.

Kohitsuji no Mure started as the House Church Ministry. From its own inception, it did not have organizational background. It lacked organizational perspective, but deliberately it adopted the Early Church style. Some mega churches have "house churches" as their cell groups in the lower level of their organization. However, we did not have

ambition to become a large church and therefore felt no need to organize God's people. For one instance, we did not and still do not have church-membership. We believe that our heavenly membership is sufficient. Since there is no membership, we need not soliciting systematic fundraising such as monthly pledge. The Lord will provide our needs. At this point, we have about 100 staff workers who are engaged in various kinds of evangelical works.

What is the reason why *Kohitsuji no Mure* has grown so fast? What is the difference between the organizational churches and that of *Kohitsuji no Mure* church? The answer is only one: from the start of *Kohitsuji no Mure* church, we have had the simple conviction that the Lord God has called us to be "a flock of praising the Lord." Our style of praising worship has fitted into "the House Church Ministry" as it were a custom-made container. Where two or three are gathered in the name of Jesus, the Lord Himself stands in the midst of them, and that is "church," manifestation of the invisible body of Christ. She may not wear ecclesiastical clothing, but she is a church in the purest sense of the word. She may not have a pastor, but she has praising people.

They are to read the Scriptures, to give testimonies, and to pray for one another. They are all meant to praise the Lord in a simple and spontaneous worship. Without any authoritative teachers nor trained pastors, the Lord is where the joyful people who praise God are gathered: the Holy Spirit teaches the Words to the people, and the people have direct access to the Lord. Healing gifts are abundant, but they should never be focused. Various gifts of the Spirit are being manifested, but they should never take place of pure worship. This is such a simple church dedicated for praising the Lord. This is the house church, and this is the church for the Lord

Jesus Christ.

Nine years ago when we had the first Retreat at Tozanso Inn in Gotenba, Shizuoka, Japan, I did not know who would participate with us. We had a few helpers and not a single trained worker as we have now. With anticipation and fear, I just stepped into the hall of Tozanso. I had no idea who was in charge of the registration and reception. How about the room assignment? Who is going to play the piano? Do we have enough money to compensate with the cost, in case of less than 50 participants?

You talk about starting without solid foundation. We had none. And yet we had one thing going strong with us. It was our deep conviction that the Lord was calling His people for His praises. We had neither an organization nor campaign. Deep in our hearts we had an unshakable conviction that the Lord was to do great and marvelous things in the midst of praise.

What the Lord prepared for us was not to establish another church in a traditional style. It was not to follow the complicated theological doctrines and the old fashioned church structure. New wine is to put into a new wineskin. Life from heaven is to put into a wineskin of His praise.

“Retreat” in Japanese for the traditional church term is “Shuyo-kai” (disciplinary training), which might be borrowed from the Confucian terms and give the impression of moral training. I preferred an English term, “Retreat,” which means to be still before the Lord. I think this is far more biblical.

Normally a nation-wide convention like our retreat is to be held sometimes after establishing its local organizations. But we did it in reverse order. At first we had a big national retreat, and then the local house churches started in various

areas in Japan and worldwide.

Come to think about it. It was biblical, wasn't it? If men prepare an organizational system, the first thing is to establish the fundamental part of the organization, and then the national convention would be held. The way of the Holy Spirit is totally different and it does not depend upon man's organized system. First, God poured the Holy Spirit into the central city, Jerusalem at the Pentecost. Then, the fire and wind of the Holy Spirit was spread out in Judea, Samaria and to the world's end. It was not the order of that the local house churches had started first in various areas in Israel and then the central church was established in Jerusalem, where the pouring of the Holy Spirit was taken place as the symptoms of the Pentecost.

It was the way 2000 years ago and it is the way for us today. And it was quite natural sequence that first fire ignited at Tozanso spread all over Japan in a short period of time. The wind was blowing.

The first Retreat was far beyond our expectations. The number of people who stayed at Tozanso was 90. The number of participants for the Retreat was about 180. We had no advertisement. No one knew about "Kohitsuji no Mure." The people who heard about the Retreat by word of mouth came as if irons were attracted to the magnet.

The Lord gave tremendous miraculous healings from the beginning. Many people experienced miracles and they were overwhelmed with the healing presence of Jesus Christ. To this day I still remember a middle-aged man in line for a healing prayer standing in front of me. As soon as he got a chance, he asked me, "I am the representative of the supporting members of a Buddhist parishioner. Do you mind praying to Jesus Christ for me?" No, of course not. I prayed

for him as he accepted the Lord Jesus Christ as his Savior.

As the Lord gave the amazing miraculous healing to those who were Buddhists or to those who knew nothing about Christ, we enjoyed the world of heaven as if we were drunken by the Holy Spirit at the Pentecost.

There was a family of the Itoh, who were among the healed at the time. Now Mr. and Mrs. Itoh are our staff-workers. I thought it was worthy to have held the Retreat even just for this family. (Their heart-moving story has appeared in our periodicals.)

Kohitsuji no Mure Christian Church

3-25 Yoko-cho, Ashiya, Hyogo 659-0034 Japan

URL:<https://kohitsuji.com/english>