

From the editor

On March 11, 2011, the Great Earthquake hit the northern part of Japan. The earth is shaken in a way we have never seen, and we are in awe of the Lord. There is the only one thing we need now. It is to worship the Lord God in Spirit and truth.

For this time, we'd like to share with you the message from Pastor Peter, "The Bride of Christ Is Now on the Earth" written a little before the Earthquake.

The Bride of Christ Is Now on the Earth

Peter

On January 17 (precisely the midnight of the 16th) in 2000, we received the most unusual visitation. It could be compared only to Mitsuko's initial experience of the *White Dove* on December 3, 1987. It was an extraterrestrial praise flowing through Mitsuko. When singing the praise, one of the staff workers opened the window curtain just to make sure if they were still on the earth. The new tune was so transparent and heavenly that we called it *Heavenly Praise*, which seemed the embodiment of the Third Person of the Trinity.

Exactly on the same day of five years prior to that visitation, we went through the Great Hanshin Earthquake. It was the devastating hell with enormous casualties. More than 6,500 people died.

What a radical contrast two events show! Light and darkness. Life and death.

After experiencing the two extremes, I said to myself, "The time of the Revelation has come here on the earth."

I would not have made the statement just with the catastrophe, even though it was literally the devastation of apocalyptic proportion. However, I saw clearly the time of the Revelation arrived when the *Heavenly Praises* began to pour out. They count more than 1,000 in number at the time of this writing, but the very first one was memorable, because it was “Holy Alleluia” taken directly from the Revelation chapter 4 verse 8:

*Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty,
who was and is and is to come!*

When the outpouring of *Heavenly Praise* first started, we called it *Revelation Praise*, for most praises were based on the last book of the Bible. Later we began to receive other praises such as on the beauty of nature, so we called them *Heavenly Praise* for the entire group of original songs. Mitsuko who has no music knowledge is the sole receptive instrument of all praises.

Listening to the heavenly tunes, I once said, “These praises originate in the Third Heaven. No doubt about it,” denoting the Apostle Paul’s ecstatic experience of the celestial dimension. It is no exaggeration, for the *Heavenly Praise* is so transparent, sacred, and full of light and life.

Christendom has produced thousands of hymns for the period of 2000 years. Most of them, from the Gregorian to the contemporary, are beautiful. I remember my young days when I was moved to tears listening to Antonio Vivaldi. Mozart’s Requiem was my favorite. I also liked some of the original praises born in the height of the charismatic movement in the 1970s.

The *Heavenly Praise*, however, is different. Professional musicians with no faith in Christ can play ecclesiastical

music, but it is impossible to sing the *Heavenly Praise* without the faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Moreover, one cannot even appreciate just listening to it. A number of people feel it offensive to their intellect and emotion.

When the *Heavenly Praise* was released from the heaven, there were great reverberations on the earth. Some embraced it, and others rejected it from the first outset. When some showed their honest perplexity, I advised them to wait for a while and immerse themselves in the praises. I had a kind of premonition that their hearts would soon be opened to worship the Lord.

It turned out to be right. I believe that the *Heavenly Praise* is the heavenly baptism, immersing all in the Holy Spirit. Just as the people were baptized into Moses in the cloud and in the sea (1 Corinthians 10:2), we were baptized into the Body of Christ when we drank the intoxicating wine of the *Heavenly Praise*. Just as the Red Sea was divided, the *Heavenly Praise* became the divider. Many came up to the seashore of praise, but a number of grumbling souls left us.

From the inception of *Kohitsuji no Mure*, we adopted no membership for the church. Anyone can come, and anyone is free to leave. Nothing binds a soul. We believe that a soul accepting the Lord Jesus Christ is forever His, and that the Lord will oversee His sheep no matter what. The sheep may worship the Lord together with us or he may go out. He will never be out of the Lord's care.

As a matter of fact, I have not seen any other group or church that takes the same stance as ours. The traditional denominations have rather complicated ecclesiastical systems to run their churches. With *Kohitsuji*, none what so ever. No membership. No boards of elders or presbytery. No doctrinal or ethical rules. No pledge of donation.

You may wonder how we can manage finance to run the *Church of the Wind* and the office with many staff workers. Our staff are asked to stand on self-supporting faith, though the Church may help some. The *Church of the Wind*, however, cannot stand for a day if we do not believe the Lord's abundant grace. We believe the Lord will supply all our needs. If no income comes because of our no-pledge policy, so be it. If the Church cannot run and people scatter, so be it.

This is the Church of the Lord Jesus Christ. He is the Shepherd. He takes full responsibility. This is our faith.

Let me come back to the *Heavenly Praise*.

Kohitsuji no Mure started in 1989 in Japan, and we have witnessed a phenomenal number of baptized souls. In 1999, the yearly number of baptism reached its maximum 1,882. Needless to say, we rejoiced in the outpouring of the Spirit. In the year 2000, however, when the *Heavenly Praise* started to flood upon us, the number dwindled to 1,230, and afterward decreased to 550. Some have sounded an alarm, saying that the number of the baptized people has dwindled because we are not faithful to the Lord.

To those who question our faith, I answer in the manner of Jesus, "You are mistaken, because you know neither the scriptures nor the power of God." Man commits error when he ignores the word of God and the reality of the Holy Spirit.

To be honest, I have never been concerned with the number of the baptized. I have labored at the field of the Lord, reaping hundreds of souls sometimes and a few souls at other times. To me, there is no difference. My most concern is to be faithful to the leading of the Holy Spirit for all seasons.

Let me trace the movement of the Holy Spirit in the book of Acts, which shows how the Spirit worked through men and women in the Early Church. I believe the Lord God implanted the wisdom and the treasure of the Spirit in the book of Acts, so that we can discern easily whether we are following the Holy Spirit, not man's wishes or manipulation.

On the day of Pentecost, the greatest outpouring of the Holy Spirit took place in the salvation history. More than 3,000 people were baptized on the day alone. And we know how spectacularly the Spirit was demonstrating hereafter. "And fear came upon every soul; and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles." (Acts 2:43) The Early Church was so thrilled that people gave up their private properties and formed a faith-community.

And all who believed were together and had all things in common; and they sold their possessions and goods and distributed them to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they partook of food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (Acts 2:44-47)

It is recorded that the similar phenomena took place among the Spirit-filled groups down in history. Most of the revival movements, however, followed the same pattern as the Early Church. They enjoyed the great visitation of the Holy Spirit and floated on the top of high wave, and in a comparatively short time the wave subsided. When the phenomenal happenings lulled down, they received rather harsh comments. "These holy-rollers must have lost God's favor." "They were just emotional bunches. They confused

the Holy Spirit with psychic phenomena by evil spirits.”

Some of the critical comments may be justified, but those who were outside and inside the revival movements forget to see the flow of the Spirit displayed in the book of Acts and fail to learn God’s wisdom and vision.

When you read the Acts carefully, you will notice that the high wave of the Spirit settled down gradually. The faith-community in the beginning of the Early Church was no longer active as the time passed. Although the Spirit continued to work throughout, spectacular and miraculous records decreased. When the apostles were jailed because their ministry had created uproar among people, an angel of the Lord at night opened the prison door and brought them out. (Acts 5:19) On the other hand, Paul and his company had to endure the lengthy attacks by the Jews. When tried at the council, “Paul perceived that one part were Sad’ducees and the other Pharisees,” and took the opportunity for his benefit, declaring himself a son of Pharisees. (Acts 23:6-8)

Great! The Lord rescued Paul and his team out of the enemy’s hands. However, why not a supernatural intervention anymore? Why did not the Lord send an angel to break down the prison door?

When I read the Bible for the first time in my life, I got curious about the difference. The curiosity drove me to prayer and meditation for a considerable time. At last, I thought I found a watershed in the movement of the Holy Spirit. It was Paul as the instrument of God and his vision of the Church Universe.

Paul was not in the first group of the apostleship. Saved on the way to Damascus, he immediately went to proclaim the Lord with the power of the Spirit. Imagine what a sensational reaction this man caused among the people in

Damascus and its neighboring towns. A highly respected man in the Jewish community and a revered prosecutor he was. And over night, he became a chief instigator for the hated group called Christian! He finally had to escape from the town at night.

Although the Acts seems to indicate that Paul went to Jerusalem to join the disciples soon after his escape from Damascus, it was not so exactly. According to his own account, Paul went to Arabia and then to Jerusalem. After a lapse of three years he was finally accepted by the Church leaders in Jerusalem. (Galatians 1:17-19)

He had to be alone in the Arabian desert for three years. He must have been in the “dark night of the soul,” a term adopted by the mystics in the middle age to denote the Spirit’s scorching discipline on a chosen vessel. Chosen he was that he might become the great apostle.

Even though many miracles happened through Paul’s ministry, his concern was not a supernatural manifestation of the Spirit. Charismatic gifts would come and go. It is the same God who rescued Peter out of the prison, and who let James the brother of John killed by Herod the king. A miracle or not a miracle, that was not the question at all.

What concerned Paul more than anything was the Church – the Bride of Christ. Because he received the vision of the Body of Christ, he was determined to realize it with all his faith and strength. Once seen, never gone. That is God’s eternal vision.

Paul was a seer, visionary and prophet. He never dismissed any possibility of God’s supernatural intervention throughout his life, but he knew it was entirely in God’s timing and His sovereign will. The man of God had to be

obedient to the vision given to him no matter what might happen to him and how he might be criticized. The Lord God committed His vision also to me. How could I ever choose any other way?

On the exact same path, I see that we *Kohitsuji no Mure* have been walking along. The path was prepared by the Holy Spirit. One of the visions Mitsuko received in her early time was a path leading to the forest. A brilliant light was cast upon the forest, and many small animals and sheep jumped into the path as they walked on it praising the Lord.

In the beginning of *Kohitsuji*, we witnessed phenomenal manifestations of the Holy Spirit. Miracles which I had never heard happened on a daily basis. After baptizing the Ethiopian eunuch, the Spirit of the Lord caught up Philip and he found himself in Azotus. Some call it “transportation by the Spirit.” With us the Spirit’s transportation took place a number of times in the early time. Wonder of wonders.

We simply enjoyed all that the Lord was doing. We knew they were happening not because we were any better than others. We knew they were happening according to the Lord’s sovereign will. When spectacular manifestations subsided, however, we also accepted it as the Lord’s will.

We rode on a surfboard, enjoying the splash of water. When we came down to the beach, we also enjoyed walking on the shore. If the Lord lets us walk in a different way, so be it. We have no argument with the Lord. Like little children, we have enjoyed walking along the path so far, and will enjoy a further walk till we arrive at the final destination.

The ultimate vision, the final destination, is the Church Universe, the embodiment of the Bride of Christ.

The Apostle Paul was the super architect who

envisioned the Body of Christ to be achieved here on the earth. That is the reason why the Lord chose this vessel as the torchbearer of the Holy Spirit. Paul never quenched the fire of the Spirit as some theologians think he did, but he was the one who faithfully carried the fire and the vision from the Lord all the way. Once having seen the vision of the Church, he never ceased the burning desire to achieve it. The book of Acts tells us that the charismatic explosion of the Holy Spirit took place in the beginning, because it was the booster to launch the Church of Christ. Once the Church was on the orbit, she was now to fly by faith. The turning point of the movement of the Holy Spirit in the Early Church was the appearance of Paul on the stage. He was God's chosen instrument to bring forth the vision of the Church not only to his generation but also to the successive generations to come.

He died without seeing the vision achieved on the earth. Do you think he was a failure? By no means!

Here is what the Spirit cries:

Write the vision; make it plain upon tablets,
so he may run who reads it.

For still the vision awaits its time;
it hastens to the end - it will not lie.

If it seem slow, wait for it;
it will surely come, it will not delay.

Behold, he whose soul is not upright in him shall
fail, but the righteous shall live by his faith.

(Habakkuk 2:2-4)

The vision of God will surely be achieved. The Church of Christ as envisioned in the heart of Paul is coming to the earth. He was not a failure. He was a seer, true visionary and prophet.

Now is the time.

I believe that we are living in the final stage of God's salvation history. I see the Bride waiting for the Bridegroom in the Heavenly Praise.

The *Heavenly Praise*. Yes, it is the sign of the eschatological time, the time when the Church Universe will appear on the earth and all human history will be consummated in the redeeming love of the Lamb.

We are in the end time. We will see more of catastrophes and sufferings: war and the rumors of war, famines and earthquakes in all the surface of the earth. At the same time, we will see the most beautiful Jerusalem coming down from heaven. This is the Lamb's marriage, and we are all invited to the celebration. Christ, the Bridegroom, will receive His Bride, the Church.

Thus, the redeeming history will be completed.

Lament not over the suffering earth, for the Redeemer has redeemed it already. You shall only see the unfolding love of God's redemption from this time on.

March 8, 2011 (from "Eternal Purpose")

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