

Vision of Praise

August 2020

From the editor

This time, we would like to share a testimony, "The Encounter with Holy Alleluia" by Michael Suzuki, a Kohitsuji no Mure staff, together with feedback of the Easter Concert 2020.

The Encounter with Holy Alleluia

Michael Suzuki

I still remember it as if it happened just yesterday. On January 16, 2000, I witnessed the door opening up to a new dimension of praises called the Heavenly Praise.

The reason that it is called Heavenly Praise is because they are heard by an ordinary woman named Mitsuko who has no musical background and simply hears them coming down out of heaven. We believe that they are not from man but are given to us through her from heaven.

The very first song given to us was "Holy Alleluia," and the day we sang this praise song for the first time was January 16, 2000. The encounter with "Holy Alleluia" had a huge impact on my life.

The praise, "Holy Alleluia" is from the Revelation chapter 4 verse 8, "Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!"

Before going any further, I would like to share with you what one American high school girl said to me upon listening

to “Holy Alleluia” for the first time.

She was a Christian and a member of a church in California, which had an active praise band and played contemporary praise songs including rock music every week.

Here is what she said to me upon hearing “Holy Alleluia.”

“I feel more comfortable with the praise songs which I sing in my church, because in this tune I can see how my feelings can be connected to my faith in God. After all, I love our church praises. On the other hand, however, with the song I just listened to, I couldn’t confirm my thoughts and feelings. Instead, something I do not normally think about comes to my mind. For example, ‘Why am I here?’ ‘What am I going to do?’ or ‘What is the meaning of life?’ I cannot help but think of something deeper. It’s a strange song . . .”

I think her comment strikes the very essence of the deep yearning of a teenager. Heavenly Praise reaches deep within each of us to the realm of the meaning of our own existence. I believe in the reverberating sound of the Heavenly Praise brims with divine power which leads us to discover what truly lies deep within us: purity and beauty which God, our Creator, sees in us. I consider myself to have been touched to the very core of my being with “Holy Alleluia.”

The day I first heard “Holy Alleluia,” I experienced a feeling I had never had before. It was a sense of deep healing pouring into the realm of my being, where I am not usually aware of.

Mitsuko who receives the Heavenly Praise once said, “All that exists in the universe is God and my love for Him.” If I describe the feeling I experienced in the praise “Holy Alleluia,” it would be exactly this.

In singing Heavenly Praise, I felt like my own flesh was being stripped away from my spiritual self as if I were inside a centrifuge! Everything except my love for the Lord faded away and my own body felt like disappearing and becoming translucent.

The existence of all physical things quietly faded away, and the only thing existed was God and my love for Him. Even through my senses and my feelings seemed to have faded away, I somehow knew something more solid remained in me.

It was very strange and at the same time very profound and deep healing. I truly knew that I was wholly loved just the way I was. There is a world where I do not have to do anything to be loved by God or men, a world where I do not have to prove anything by my deeds. I am accepted and loved for being just who I am.

That evening, some staff members who were there testified, “I felt like lifted up to heaven while singing.” Because we all felt we were no longer on the earth, but ascending to heaven. I was filled with great peace and at the same time was filled with deep joy. This realization made the image of being in heaven even stronger.

We sang the new praise song, “Holy Alleluia” over and over again, losing track of time. After singing it for a long time, I opened a room curtain there and looked outside the window. There was the familiar view which we had always seen, and I remember feeling surprised with a strange sense of relief:

“We’re still on the ground.”

Looking back now, I think that sense of relief in looking outside the window that day was the relief of knowing that I came back to a world where I was living in my flesh. In another word, it was a sense that I returned to a world where I was surrounded by physical things. I think that the view outside was a symbol of my life in the flesh.

This experience was a great healing for me, not as a single event in the past, nor as a mere sensory experience, but as an everlasting healing which will continue.

In Romans chapter 7 we find the following words.

For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?
(Roman 7:22-23 NKJ)

When I was young, I wondered if a saint like Paul would have such earthly troubles. I have thought about it before, but now I understand.

The gap between the spirit and the flesh, the friction between God’s wish and our own desire, the conflict between the law and our yearning to have freedom in our faith, and with all sorts of other words to express this anguish: these are all common human conflicts.

There is no human being who lives without conflicts, even if the person is a saint. And if there is a universal suffering, there must be also a universal healing.

The world of the living God, which harmonizes the spirit

and the flesh, reconciles God's wish and our own desires, and unites the law and our yearning for freedom, was revealed to me in the midst of "Holy Alleluia."

On January 16, 2000, I experienced the world where the spirit and the flesh are completely fused into one through "Holy Alleluia."

Just as I saw the familiar earthly view when I opened the curtains that evening, I found myself in my own flesh more than once. I have had countless gaps and conflicts between my spirit and my flesh since that day.

But I believe that God's healing is eternal. What happened to me that night is not just a one-off experience. It is a healing that has completed in the very core of my existence.

No matter how many times I struggle, suffer, or am troubled, I can go back to that world where all that exists is my praise of God and His love, hundreds of times over.

And I may find myself in Christ who is the Lord of all things.

I give praises to the Lord who has invited me into the beauty and love of His praises. I will dwell in it forever and more.

One thing I have desired of the Lord, That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days
of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, And to
inquire in His temple. (Psalm 27:4 NKJ)

February 5, 2020

The Restoration of the Israel

Joy of the Easter Concert 2020

Michael Suzuki (Ashiya)

I have a friend who lives in Jerusalem.

He is Jewish, born and raised in Jerusalem, and a medical doctor who practices oncology. His name is Moishe, meaning Moses. Generally speaking, he is ordinary Jewish.

I sent him the YouTube link to our Easter Concert, and immediately received his short comments. It appears he listened to every praise song including Japanese narration. As I expected, he liked the praise from Psalm with Tombak (an ancient Persian instrument). Here I will introduce his comments as is.

I listened to everything. I was interested in it.

I realized right away. Your Tombak is not as the background of praises, isn't it? Tombak itself is voicing independently of praises. So, the contrast was wholly astonishing. The praises were also beautiful.

I have a suggestion. The choir was pronouncing "Alleluia," wasn't it? To express in Hebrew, it is "Hallelujah." . .

In modern Hebrew spoken by today's people in Jerusalem, "Hallelujah" is often pronounced "Alleluia," changing "H" to "A." Because it has been changed from the original meaning of "Praise the Lord" to express a nuance of the meaning of Love." But in the praise from Psalm, I think it important to sing "Hallelujah." It is my opinion.

I was so amazed to say the least, because he was seeing

the same vision of praise with us, though he heard heavenly praises for the first time sung in Kohitsuji no Mure Church. During concert practice, Mitsuko often says, “Musical instruments are not accompaniment of praises, but each instrument is a voice praising the Lord.” Rarely we hear such comments like him from people outside of Kohitsuji no Mure Church.

I think that he was brought up as Jewish (Israelite) worshipping the Lord in original language (Hebrew), he must have been hearing the resounding tunes of the original Psalms, and must have felt something very familiar with the Heavenly Praise from Psalm. And when the voice of the Tombak is added to it, something inside him must have moved.

May 6, 2020

One with the Breath of Christ

Joy of the Easter Concert 2020

Yasuko Noguchi (Brooklyn, NY)

English narration of the Easter Concert was so beautiful that I was deeply moved. As if the White Dove were flying around, English narration was voicing over Japanese narration, slightly delaying sometimes, coming together most times, and leaving apart some other times. It was as if listening to the multilayered, multidimensional praise of the Japanese and English languages.

When the breath of Christ was released with the first note of the first praise by the choir, Japanese narration and English

narration followed simultaneously – resounding, layering, and weaving in together, just like the vision of a multicolored picture or wallpaper which Mitsuko saw in the early days of her faith (written in “The White Dove I” Chapter 32), and opening up the world where everything is made to praise and become one with the breath of Christ.

I remember that Yumi Kuriyama who did the English narration wrote one article: “The presence of the Lord be in a single word. I wish to be an instrument to dispatch it. I prayed to become one with the breath of God.” “Amen!” I cheered.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (John 1:1 NAS)

I pray that the presence of the Lord be in a single word we utter, for we were all invited to God’s salvation by the cross of Christ who staked His life for us.

At the end of the concert, Pastor Peter proclaimed that the Light, Hope and Love of Christ was revealed. I am praying now more than ever that the Light, Hope and Love of Christ be to the chaotic land of America and the peace and healing of the Body of Christ be done to its people.

Thank you very much for the beautiful heavenly Easter Concert, held at the risk of your lives.

May 30, 2020

Kohitsuji no Mure Christian Church
3-25 Yoko-cho, Ashiya, Hyogo 659-0034 Japan
[URL:https://kohitsuji.com/english](https://kohitsuji.com/english)