

# Vision of Praise

October 2020

*From the editor*

Ever since the heavenly praise started to be poured upon us in 2000, we have witnessed abundant healing through the resounding tunes of praise. This time, we would like to share an incredible healing through heavenly praise, "Praise Became the Foundation of My Faith," by Mr. Hiroshi Matsubara, a Kohitsuji no Mure house church leader in Seattle.

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## Praise Became the Foundation of My Faith

Hiroshi Matsubara

My paternal great-grandfather was a Christian missionary. In the late 19th century, he was inspired by Jo Nijima and became a believer in Jesus Christ. He became a pastor in Tokyo and started working as a missionary. As a missionary, he first came to Maui, Hawaii, where he preached to Japanese immigrants working in sugarcane plantations. He moved to Los Angeles later and became one of the founders of Japanese Union Church which still exists in downtown, Los Angeles. Naturally his daughter, my grandmother became a Christian and went to a college in Los Angeles where she met my grandfather who also was attending a college in Los Angeles. They fell in love, got married and then returned to Japan. My grandfather became a professor of American literature at a university, and my grandmother became a piano teacher.

Around the same time my maternal grandfather studied architecture in a college in Oregon and worked in an architectural firm in New York. He joined one of Japanese Christian churches in Seattle prior to entering college and became a Christian. After the Great Kanto Earthquake in 1923, he returned to Japan, got married and then ran his own architectural design office.

Both of my parents grew up as Christians who felt that Sunday school in church was more important than regular school. They believed in Jesus so much, but my father was too busy with his work to go to church and my mother was too sick to go to church either. Consequently, growing up in Tokyo, my brother and I had little recollection of going to church, though I have many happy memories of singing old Christian hymns, reading verses in the Bible, and celebrating Christmas with my relatives. Often my parents told me about the Christian faith, but I did not even understand the difference between faith and religion. I regarded myself as a Christian since I grew up in a Christian family, but I did not think about Jesus any more than most Japanese people, following Buddhist traditions, think about Buddha.

In 1985, I moved to Los Angeles to study architecture in a graduate school. I fell in love with a wonderful woman at the school and we got married in 1992. The Lord gave us two beautiful children and we moved to Seattle. In 2000, I started my own architectural firm so that I could spend more time with my children.

In 2004, I met Michie Zinserling as my client, who is a leader of a Kohitsuji no Mure house church. This was the first time to hear about Kohitsuji no Mure Church in my life. Even

though we were talking about her house project I was working on, Michie ended up talking about her spiritual experience with Jesus to me.

Prior to the encounter with Kohitsuji no Mure Church, I was searching for the real meaning of my life. I lost my mother in 2003. Watching my mother passing, my life felt very empty and meaningless. I was looking for spiritual guidance in Shintoism, Buddhism, and Spiritual channeling. However, I did not find any answer there. I went to a local Japanese Christian church where my maternal grandfather was baptized, but did not find it very spiritual.

Kohitsuji no Mure Church told me that everything is completed in praise. When I heard it, I did not understand what that means, but soon I realized that here was an answer I was looking for. When I first attended a prayer gathering at Michie's house, the praise songs sounded very unfamiliar to my ears and reminded me of ancient Byzantium hymns. I was simply astounded to find out that all the praise songs are given from the heaven through Mitsuko (a founder of the church) who has no music training. But quickly I was drawn to Kohitsuji no Mure Church because the church believes that Jesus guides each person in the praise without a minister's sermon or church fellowship.

In December 2004, two missionaries came from the Kohitsuji no Mure main church in Japan. I felt an invisible force behind me to accept the offer of baptism by them. When I think about it now, it was as if a closed door had just been opened in front of me.

In the baptism, I was told by the missionaries, who knew nothing about my background, that my grandfathers who had

passed away a long time ago were with me and were very pleased at my baptism. I realized that they had been waiting for me to believe in Jesus just as they did. I was very happy that finally I became a Christian.

## The Lord's Amazing Healing

The day after I was baptized, I was surprised to find the daily stress was taken away. Ever since I moved to the United States, I had always been under the stress, living away from Japan, with my own work and parenting in the US. Immediately after the baptism, I was filled with joy because I felt free from the fear of not knowing where I was heading in my life.

However, after a while, I went back to the same stressful life with many spinning plates on sticks. My faith was still fragile. I prayed the Lord to help me only when I was in a crisis at work or in my daily life, and I thanked Him when my prayer was heard by Him.

In October 2012, I came home after a successful project meeting and took a shower. I noticed an unknown bulge on the lower abdomen. It appeared to me some sort of built-up fat tissue, but I decided to go and see a doctor. Within a week after a series of scans at the doctor's office, I was diagnosed with stage 3 lymphoma. The doctor told me that the lymphoma was spreading to multiple organs and that I should undergo a chemotherapy treatment. During the CT scan, I noticed that one of the lymph nodes was the size of a large sausage sold in a supermarket.

Honestly I was not scared by the possibility of death so much, but I was really terrified by the suffering during the chemotherapy treatment before dying.

Michie told me that Mitsuko and Pastor Peter were coming to Hawaii for a healing service in November. I heard about amazing healing services by them through other church members, but I myself had not been in any of healing services. Since I had a project in Hawaii, I decided to attend the healing service in person.

After the healing service, Mitsuko and Pastor Peter prayed for me. In retrospect, it was as if a personal healing service for me. Pastor Peter and Mitsuko put their hands on me and prayed quietly. I could hear Pastor Peter's speaking in tongues, and praising song by other members in the distance. Then Mitsuko knelt in front of me and pointed out that my legs were more than 10 centimeters off from each other in length. In the next second, I closed my eyes while Mitsuko was fixing my uneven legs in her prayer because I was too scared to see what was happening to my legs. When I opened my eyes next time, my legs were even again. Then she started praying with her hand on my lymphoma around the abdomen. She said that a mass of cancer symbolized the unrecognized stress of living in the US. At that point I burst into tears because I realized that God knew about my stress even though I tried to ignore it as weakness. I felt that all of a sudden the door was opened in front of me. God showed me the pain I had been carrying inside of me.

During the healing prayer by Mitsuko and Pastor Peter, I sincerely hoped that my cancer would disappear like a magic through it. However, in the middle of the prayer, Mitsuko

paused and told me that my lymphoma was vibrating as if praising the Lord along with the praise sung by other church members. Eventually Pastor Peter and Mitsuko completed the prayer by thanking Jesus for healing me, and told me to go home safely. During this healing service, I sensed the presence of God, but I was too afraid to admit that. I saw the door was wide open in front me, but I hesitated to step forward through the door. On the way home from Hawaii, I was just perplexed by the fact that my cancer cells responded to the praise song instead of disappearing. I wondered why God had not taken the cancer cells away from me during the healing service.

### Live a Second Life

In January 2013, right before starting the chemotherapy treatment, while I was thinking about its coming schedule, I felt someone whispered in my ear - "Live a second life." All of a sudden I was filled with deep peacefulness, and quietly I said to myself, "Since it is the second life that the Lord has given me, I should not worry about anything but leave it to the Lord." During seven months of the chemotherapy treatment period, I worshiped the Lord with the praise songs of Isaiah 53 and Psalm 23 every day. After the worship, I realized that I was filled with peace all day long.

Before starting the chemotherapy, my faith was on a part-time basis. I used to prioritize what I wanted to do, and spend time in front of Jesus only when my priorities were finished. For some reasons, I decided that five minutes a day for prayer was more than enough time with God. As the chemotherapy

started, I realized that my life was not going to be as I used to plan it. The hospital schedule was very unpredictable, and everything during the chemotherapy took much longer than expected. I had no idea when the side effect of the chemotherapy would start and when it would end. My life was totally out of control. On top of that, there was always a fear that the cancer might take away my life. It was time to move forward through the opened door to accept what Jesus had prepared for me.

This was when my faith was changed to full time. I did not realize it then, but now I know that the Lord had already healed me during the healing service by Mitsuko and Pastor Peter in Hawaii. The Lord left cancer for me because He knew that if the cancer was gone by then, I would go back to my old self right away. He gave me a chance to go through the chemotherapy treatment period to open the door again. Despite my fear of a horrible side effect from the chemotherapy, I had an absolutely minimum side effect during the treatment. Most of my clients even did not know that I was going through the chemotherapy. After all, Jesus provided me what He thought I needed most.

After seven months of the chemo treatment, my cancer disappeared completely. The doctor told me that I was in a complete remission. I started feeling better and was hoping to do things that would please my desire. However, whenever I started losing my faith, the Lord has guided me to get back to the right track. For example, two years after the completion of the chemo treatment, I contracted shingles and suffered with acute pain on the back of my leg for six months. With the severe pain, I was asking the Lord to ease it. Instead of pleasing

myself, I was praising the Lord by memorizing Romans 8 every day. Each scripture from Romans 8 was a spiritual meal of the day during the time. The Lord knew what I needed, and helped me to focus on it.

I also realized that the praising songs became my daily staple during the chemotherapy treatment period. During this period, I finally understood what “everything is completed in praise” meant. The praise songs became the foundation of my faith. Since then, whenever I run into a problem, I pray to the Lord with the praise songs for help. Unfortunately, my first instinct is always to try to solve issues by myself. However, after many attempts, I realize that the things are out of control. Then I simply sing praise songs and I pray to the Lord and ask Him to solve the issue on behalf of me. After the prayer, I often witness that the issue is solved or disappears very mysteriously.

For a long time I could not comprehend my experience during the healing service with Mitsuko and Pastor Peter in 2012. Especially I was puzzled by the fact that my cancer resonated with the praise songs during the service.

However, in 2015 when I was sitting in my backyard and watching a beautiful Hosta plant, I just realized everything on the Earth is made of matter. Matter is a vibrating body, including DNA and even light. Without energy there is no vibration. A cancer cell is a vibrating body, and a sound is vibration of air - a form of energy. Therefore, it is natural that the cancer cells resonate with the sound of praise songs. When I discovered this, the verse from the Bible came to my mind:

Before the world was created, the Word already existed: he was with God, and he was the same as God.  
(John 1:1 TEV)



I understood that the Word is this energy which vibrates everything on the Earth. And I also realized that without this energy (Word), nothing on the Earth can exist. However, I was not sure why it was only the cancer cells and not the rest of my body that resonated during the service. Perhaps, the Lord wanted me to think about this more. Now when I think about this experience, I understand that God is the ultimate source of the energy. And even a cancer cell itself is a part of God's creation. If a cancer cell is a part of God's creation, then my entire body must have been created by Him.

Last summer, I invited my wife to a daily morning prayer time with praise songs. She had been reluctant to join me because she did not think she would need any help. Due to the extremely stressful work condition, one day she decided to join the daily prayer time. I believe Jesus touched her deeply, and since then we have been having a morning prayer time together every day. I do not know how many times a day I sing praise every day. I feel well protected with the praise songs as a spiritual shield.

Also, I feel myself stay connected with my late parents through the praise songs. I am so grateful that the Lord gave me a second life in 2013. I am also very grateful that the Lord showed me a door to Him through the praise songs. I am not sure how many more doors are waiting to be opened for me before I complete my second life, but I will be praising His name with the praise songs until then.

Here is one of my favorite verses from the Bible.

Once there was a man who went out to sow grain ...  
Some of the seed fell among thorn bushes, which grew  
up and choked the plants. But some seeds fell in good

soil, and the plants bore grain.

(Matthew 13:3, 7-8 TEV)

I always imagine that I am one of the seeds. I surely hope that one day I will be a large plant that bears grain in front of the Lord.

Amen.

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