

# Vision of Praise

September 2022

*From the editor*

This time we would like to share a message spoken at the regional worship service in New York, "Worship in Spirit and Truth" by Yuki Shibuta & Michael Suzuki, staff worker.

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## **Worship in Spirit and Truth**

*from the Regional Worship Service in New York*

Yuki Shibuta & Michael Suzuki

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

Michael (prayer):

Holy, holy, holy. Alleluia to the holy Lord. Thank You Jesus for giving this beautiful morning. The new morning of hope.

We place our hope in You, You alone. You dwell amid our praises. Let us seek Your love, and touch Your everlasting grace.

Thank You Jesus, we worship You in Spirit and truth. For that's why we are gathered here now. Thank You for Your name, Jesus Christ, in Your holy name, Amen.

*♪ Alleluia to the Holy One & Alleluia before the Throne*

Yuki:

Last time I came here in NY was one month before the pandemic started. We had our Valentine Praise Concert in Manhattan in February 2020, and I joined the concert and sang together with you. And we never imagined that a month after

that NY would be hit by coronavirus and the City would be completely locked down. It lasted so long and so many people died, which was truly heart-wrenching.

For two-and-a-half years, we could not gather like this, and this is in fact our first mission trip after the pandemic, which is not ended yet.

Even during the pandemic years, God was with each one of us, and He was pouring out heavenly praises continuously. We have so many new Alleluia praises during this hard time. It was more than we could receive. And I believe that these praises are the prayer of God. It is not for us to remember or memorize all the praises, but it is for us to receive His prayer and deliver it as we just resound with it. This is the way of God.

For this mission trip there was one theme that pushed us to come. It was a phrase, “More Crystal Meeting.” This strange word came in English to Mitsuko in February this year. We had the retreat in Japan in March, and one month before the retreat, she had a dream and saw the letters in English, “More Crystal Meeting,” and it woke her up. It was a kind of riddle to us, and we wondered what it meant. And at the retreat Pastor Peter said, “‘More Crystal Meeting’ is worship before the throne written in the book of the Revelation.”

Before the throne there was something like a sea of glass, like crystal. (Revelation 4:6 NAS)

Then he explained to us that our pure worship before God is the worship before the throne. We believe this is what God is desiring for us right now.

Now is the time of division, nations rising against nations, and even war has started. We do not know what would happen tomorrow. Something that no one had never imagined happened in Japan the other day. Japanese ex-prime minister was shot. It was truly shocking for the whole world. Darkness is so near. That is why God is looking and desiring for our pure

worship clear as crystal.

As you know, Kohitsuji no Mure has started with a vision, “Love of Christ alone is sufficient” and “Everything is completed in praise.” That is our start. And now I think God wants us to stand clear on this vision because there is nothing more important than the love of Christ.

We have so many different opinions, ideas, and ways on how to survive in this end time. But that is not where we stand. We stand on the love of Christ alone.

We do not care what denominations you belong to or what political views you have. We just let go of everything before worship and praise Him alone. I think that is what God wants from us right now.

Next, we would like to sing one of our newest praises, “Hu hu hu no Alleluia” Alleluia of the Wind Blowing. “Hu hu hu” is the sound of the wind in Japanese. This is one of the Alleluia songs given to us. I believe this is a prayer of the wind for us and for the whole world. Let us become one with the wind and praise together with the wind.

♪ *Hu hu hu no Alleluia (Alleluia of the Wind Blowing)*  
*Hu hu hu.... (Sound of the wind)*  
*Please heal and protect this beautiful planet.*

And in the flow of Alleluia praises, we sing a new praise with old praise songs or worldly songs together. Now we will sing a new praise called “My Sad Child.” This praise was given from one of the most famous hymns, “Amazing Grace.”

When one person gave a testimony at the Church of the Wind that she met God through the hymn, “Amazing Grace,” another person who heard her testimony was so touched that he wrote a report on it. When Mitsuko read the report, she heard a new melody called, “My Sad Child.”

*O My child in sorrow and pain, come to Me. Come to Me.*

Now we are in pain, sadness and sorrow, but I think this praise is God's message for this painful world. And when it is sung together with "Amazing Grace" which so many people must have sung until now. Most of them are already in heaven, but they must be singing together with us. And even those who did not have faith but knew this song, they must be also joining us too. When you hear "Amazing Grace," you can feel those who returned to heaven are also joining our worship to sing together with us for the whole world which is in pain.

First, we will sing "My Sad Child" and after that two praises are sung multi-dimensionally. If you start hearing "Amazing Grace," those of you who know it, please sing together with us.

♪ *My Sad Child*

*O My child in sorrow and pain,  
come to Me. Come to Me.*

♪ *Amazing Grace*

*Amazing Grace, how sweet the sound  
that saved a wretch like me.  
I once was lost, but now I'm found.  
Was blind, but now I see.*

Michael:

This morning I would like to read scriptures from John chapter 4 verses 19-24. This is a dialogue between Jesus and a Samaritan woman. Let me read you part of it.

The woman said to Him, "Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship."

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe Me, the hour is

coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshippers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.”

(John 4:19-24 NKJ)

Jesus spoke of the very truth to this woman. In the passage He prefaced saying “Believe,” He was, in a way, implying that He would make a revolutionary statement; He indeed made a very astonishing statement. That is this: The hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.

You know how important it was for the people of Israel to worship the Lord Adonai in Jerusalem. King David proclaimed in Psalm 122 that going up to Jerusalem to give thanks in the name of the Lord is the testimony of Israel. Jesus, being a Jew and the branch of David, knew of this importance most and said that the hour is coming when we worship God in the place that is not in Jerusalem. It is a mysterious statement.

On the other hand, Samaritans would worship God on the mountain named Gerizim. It was the absolute holiness and godliness for them just as for the Jews to worship in Jerusalem. However, Jesus also said that the hour is coming when we will worship God in the place that is not on this mountain. He was not talking about the specific place of worship but rather the quality of worship in Spirit and truth.

What Jesus said is a new dimension that transcends the traditions of the two respective peoples, because He wants to gather together as one those who are loved by God, regardless of their race, background, culture, tradition and position.

Who are His beloved ones? All! All people! Because Jesus died for all and rose for all. The true worshippers are those who believe the redeeming love of Jesus on the cross, and its manifestation in worship. In the true worship His everlasting love is manifested. So, the Father is seeking such worship.

I would like you to consider the following question, because the answer goes hand in hand with the true worship.

Who was the person to whom Jesus spoke such an important subject about the true worship? A Samaritan woman, a Gentile. Mind you, Jesus had never spoken to even His own disciples about the true worship. Jesus had never discussed about the true worship with those religious leaders such as high priests or the teachers of the law. Jesus spoke of it to the Samaritan woman. Was she a devoted woman? Was she a godly woman? Was she worthy to hear of this kind of celestial subject? No, not at all. She was living a sinful life when she came across Jesus. As for how sinful she was, it is written in detail in John chapter 4. But Jesus did not condemn her at all. Instead, he wanted to convey to her the new grace of God which is to worship the Lord in Spirit and truth. Because the true worship is the place where the love of God is manifested most straight forward and most deeply, and from there the redeeming love of Christ shall flow over to wounded land and wounded people, people will receive God's healing through the true worship.

I believe that it is not a coincidence that the forgiveness of God and the true worship were revealed at the same time. This Samaritan woman was forgiven and accepted by Jesus. The love of God goes hand in hand with the true worship. And the true love shall emerge from the true worship.

We have now entered a very catastrophic time that everyone recognizes. And because the lawlessness abounds the love of many grows cold, as Jesus prophesied for the end time.

It seems that people's souls are covered with the spirit of emptiness. So many problems are piled up in this land, but now is the time when our Father is seeking the true worshippers to worship Him in Spirit and truth, because salvation shall be transpired from the true worship.

We want to praise our Lord and worship Him alone in "More Crystal Meeting." I believe that we are called according to His will to be the real worshippers to worship Him in Spirit and truth. That is not only for our own gains but to heal the wounded land and the wounded people. Through the true worship God can restore human souls. Through the true worship God can rebuild the desolate land into the healing land.

Now is the time to worship Him in Spirit and truth. Now is the time to rejoice in the love of Christ alone. Amen.

Yuki:

We believe and worship the Lord in Spirit and truth because we believe that God's desire is for us to live truly happily in peace. Not fighting each other, not hating each other like now we see in the world.

We believe that God created us in His love. And we are given His love and life into our very being. That is why we resound together in praise just as we are. Each of us is different but because different resounding joins together, the harmony is so beautiful. If we were the same kind of people, it does not resound so great. Each of us may be just like a simple note. But because there are many different people, for we are all created differently, when we get together and resound together, God's beauty is manifested in us. That is our true worship. And there is no hatred or non-acceptance, we accept one another because there is the love of God. That is why we throw away all our opinions of other things before the love of God. So, from our heart we want to give our thanksgiving and joy.

Let us sing "Shaloha." This is the word of Shalom (peace)

and Aloha (love) combined together. I think this is the word of peace. With this praise we will have a time of offering.

♪ *Shaloha*

*Shaloha shaloha shaloha hahaha*

*E 'ai a e hula ho 'I me ka hau 'oli a me ka mahalo*

*Shaloha shaloha shaloha hahaha*

*I ko mākou Jehova ....*

*Shaloha shaloha shaloha hahaha*

*lalalala lanlalan lalan....*

*Eat, drink and dance with joy*

*and thanksgiving, to our Lord.*

Michael:

Lastly, we would like to sing “Come Bless the Lord.” Let me read the scripture which is adopted to this praise.

Come, bless the Lord, all you servants of the Lord, who stand by night in the house of the Lord! Lift up your hands to the holy place and bless the Lord! May the Lord bless you from Zion, he who made heaven and earth!  
(Psalm 134 RSV)

In the ancient temple of Jerusalem, daily worship began on the morning at dawn. For the service the priests would make various preparations throughout the night, such as cleaning the sanctuary, maintaining the alter and keeping the candlesticks burning and many other tasks. A paramount preparation was the lamb for sacrifice.

Psalm 134 is a song of praise for priests who serve at night in the temple. Beside those required tasks they must do, what the Lord desired most for the priest was to rejoice and sing for joy lifting up their hands. You cannot lift up your hands if you



are holding something in your hand. Lifting up your hands means to put aside whatever needs to be done and praise the Lord first and rejoice in the Lord first. Likewise, God wishes us to lift up our hands and rejoice in Him.

Come, bless the Lord!

*♪ Come, bless the Lord*

Yuki (prayer):

Come, bless the Lord! From heaven and from earth, from the west and from the east, come bless the Lord!

All people, all creation, rejoice in the love of Christ.

Lord, thank You for Your worship. Thank You for calling us for Your true worship before the throne. You have entrusted Your work to us.

This is the work of Your love to flow out and deliver to the end of the world.

Thank You for all things that You have done for us. I pray in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

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