Kohitsuji no Mure Retreat March 12-14

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If Anyone Is in Christ*

Peter

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:17-18 NAS)

When you encounter His redemptive love, you are made anew at that very moment, for the cross of Christ renews all things. If anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature. Yet, looking at yourself, you cannot help but think that you are still your old self. Faith, however, is to see the divine fact that the Scripture declares. When God says to you, "You are a new creature," it is indeed so in His eyes. You are made completely new in the garment of righteousness.

Still, you may say, "Then what about this contradiction in me? I feel jealous of others, and I am lazy just as before." I understand what you say. That is why I am telling you to look at yourself with the eyes of God, not the surface but your inner spirit deep within. Whether you are aware or not, the fact is that your spirit has been made anew. The image of God hidden in you has now started to shine.

It has nothing to do with positive thinking. You need no mental training to think positively or see only good points in yourself and in others. That is worldly wisdom. There is no cross in humanism.

With the eyes of God you can see the most beautiful image of each person you meet. John chapter 4 has an article on a Samaritan woman, whose true image is revealed with the eyes of God.

^{*} From "Redeeming Love" (2021) Peter Shimada, Chapter 5.

She had changed husbands one after another, and now was living with a man outside of marriage. She was despised and ostracized by people. She came to the well alone to draw water at noon in the hot sun lest she should meet anyone. There she encountered Jesus. She must have been surprised when she unexpectedly saw a Jewish man sitting beside the well.

Moreover, this man spoke to her, asking, "Give Me a drink." She sullenly answered, "How is it that you, a Jew, ask for a drink from me, a woman of Samaria?" The Jews regarded the Samaritans as contemptible foreigners.

However, Jesus said, "If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water." The woman had no idea what He meant, and their conversation was incongruous. Yet His words poured light on her wounded heart. Jesus said, "Everyone who drinks of this water will thirst again; but whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall never thirst; but the water that I will give him will become in him a well of water springing up to eternal life."

While knowing all her past, Jesus saw what was hidden deep in this woman, her soul's yearning to worship the true God. He perceived the thirst in her spirit which she herself was unaware of. That was why over the course of the incomprehensible conversation with Jesus her inner being became awakened.

Jesus told her about the worship in Spirit and truth. Why did He tell the most important truth in the Bible to such a woman of all people? It was not to her ego but to her inner spirit that He spoke:

"But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers. God is spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

The woman said to Him, "I know that Messiah is coming (He who is called Christ); when that One comes, He will declare all things to us." Jesus said to her, "I who speak to you am He." (John 4:23-26 NAS)

The woman went back to the town and said to the people whom she had avoided, "Come, see a man who told me all the things that I have done; this is not the Christ, is it?" And because of her testimony many Samaritans believed in Jesus as the Savior of the world.

Just as the Lord saw a pure and spotless soul in the Samaritan woman, we can see the divine image in every person.

If you think that your child is hopeless, pray like this: "Lord, please give me Your eyes to see my child." As you scold him, he gets worse and goes in the opposite direction from your wish. So why don't you change your prayer? Ask God to help you see your child with His eyes.

When the cross stands in us, we are given the divine perception to see others. If anyone is in Christ, he is certainly a new person. There is no exception to the newness in Christ. Whether a prostitute or a saint, a good person or a bad person, it matters not. Here is the reality of reconciliation and the truth of redemption.

At the same time, in seeing the image of God, we can also discern what is unnecessary.

Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees "whitewashed tombs" and "brood of vipers." He said such harsh words because He saw the true image in them. He did not fail to see the most beautiful image even in those who tried to kill Him.

How transparent His eyes are! Only Christ can judge people, for He sees not the surface but the inner truth in us, which is the perception in the cross.

Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all these things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation. (2 Corinthians 5:17-18 NAS)

God gave us the ministry of reconciliation, entrusting us with the word of reconciliation. Where Christ is proclaimed, the peace of God is done. Opposing parties no longer try to eliminate but accept each other and praise God together. Divine reconciliation it is.

To see all people through the cross—this is the gospel of reconciliation. The Lord sees in us the image of God more beautiful than diamond. Healed by His eyes, we can face ourselves for the first time. Then we will witness that the light of heaven pours upon all creation, enveloping even our "enemies." This is God's reconciliation.

Time of New Worship* Mitsuko

Last November 2012, Pastor Peter and I visited Hawaii after seven years' absence. Upon arrival and throughout our stay there, I felt unexplainable pain and sorrow covering this beautiful island. It was probably because during that period the earth was damaged by global warming and by man's relentless land development.

Hawaii is the belly button of the earth. When the earth is in pain, the belly button must be most pained. It means that if Hawaii is healed, all the earth will be healed. When Hawaii is filled with praise of the Lord, I believe all the earth will be filled with His praise.

The day before yesterday (April 2013), again arriving in Hawaii, I found the pain and sorrow had been eased. I believe it was not due to the change of seasons or weather but due to our praise and prayer.

Last November in Hawaii, the Lord said to us, "The time has moved." The time of new worship has come, and the door is now open for a new dimension of healing.

I feel praise has been awaited so much in Hawaii. The praise to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ alone is awaited here. Praise can be adulterated with many things such as selfrighteousness, self-satisfaction and admiration for others' achievement. If our praise is only for our enjoyment, it is not true praise, because we are unable to praise in trouble or pain. Whether we are happy or not, we shall praise the Lord who died for us on the cross.

There is such praise as to be called "pure praise," which harmonizes with the Lord's wish and His prayer.

^{*} Written on April 25, 2013 during the mission trip in Hawaii.

In January 2000, praise suddenly popped out of my mouth, and it was the start of the flood of praise. I then discovered that everything has its own resonating tune within. I hear it when attuning myself. Among all, the scriptures have the most beautiful resonance.

John's Gospel says, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being." (John 1:1-3)

Every person has a resonating tune within, for we are created by the Word. It is the breath of life which God breathed into man's nostrils in creating man out of dust of the ground and with which man became a living being. (Genesis 2:7)

Since we are made of the Word, the divine resonance, we are in essence praise. We exist and live to praise the Creator. When we, who have the resonance deep within, believe in God, and when the inner tune comes out of us to praise, it will be in harmony with the Lord who is praying for us now and forever.

It was in 2002 during the visit to Hiroshima attacked by an atomic bomb. In a car driving through the town, I heard the Lord praying for peace. It became a new praise song:

> In the wind I hear a voice of prayer. It is a voice of the Lord Jesus praying. Blow, wind. Blow, wind of the Lord's prayer. Jesus' prayer of the wind.

Last Thursday, before I left Japan for Hawaii, another new praise was given. I say praises are given, and it is so. The way they are given is so unique that it is hard to explain, but I only catch a tune. I hear it mostly through my ears. Sometimes I find it already in my ears. On that Thursday, while cycling to the shore to fish, I began to hear a tender and beautiful melody. It sounded like prayer. A wind was blowing from the sea, carrying the melody. It was such a strong wind that I was unable to continue pedaling and got off my bike. I called the church office and asked one of the staff to transcribe it into notes. As soon as we finished it, the wind stopped, and I could go to my fishing spot.

This praise is "Heal Our City." It is the prayer of the Lord. He is praying for us, for our city (His city), and for all people (His family). I remember the scripture in Acts:

And the Lord said to Paul in the night by a vision, "Do not be afraid any longer, but go on speaking and do not be silent; for I am with you, and no man will attack you in order to harm you, for I have many people in this city." (Acts 18:9-10 NAS)

The Lord is praying for our city. He wants us to pray for healing of the earth, especially now for healing of cities and people in all countries. Believing so, the next day we started singing it at the Church of the Wind.

Coincidentally, a few days later, a big earthquake hit China. I believe the Lord has entrusted us with His prayer for healing in advance. Had we not sung this praise, an even worse disaster might have occurred.

Now I believe this praise has been given also for our worship in Hawaii. He wants us to praise from Hawaii for healing of the entire earth.

Last year in Hawaii He said, "The time has moved," which I believe means "The time has moved forward." Now is the time for us to praise in harmony with His prayer.

All of us have a resonating tune within, and it will become one with His prayer. When our praise is one with His

prayer, the praise (the prayer) will be done on earth and in heaven.

When our praise becomes one with the Lord, the praise and prayer of those in heaven will join in. As one Body of Christ, we offer praise to God who sits on the throne and the Lamb slain.

This praise is the power itself, indeed the magnificent healing power. It turns everything, even illness, to praise.

In worship, in the middle of praise, His healing often takes place. Healing is manifested because He already died for us on the cross. Among all, there is the most beautiful healing, which I call the healing of healings. I first experienced it a few years ago when I prayed for a woman suffering from severe pain in her knee and unable to walk.

Laying my hand on her knee, I felt the knee bone moving in harmony with praise sung in the sanctuary. With a long phrase of praise, the bone moved slowly. With a short and fast phrase, the bone trembled quickly under my hand. When it stopped moving, she stood up and began to dance, shouting in joy, "All the pain is gone!"

That was the first time I witnessed such healing. I learned that even illness wants to praise the Lord. When illness harmonizes with resonance of praise, it is healed.

I had forgotten about it, but last November when we had worship in Hawaii, I again witnessed it. One person's cancer moved in harmony with the praise, "Amen for Healing."*

Praise heals not only illness but also land, sea and all things. The Lord Himself is praying for healing of the earth. When we believe it and become one with the resonance of His prayer, His healing will be done.

April 25, 2013, in Hawaii

^{*} See Hiroshi Matsubara's testimony, "I am Now in Complete Remission."

I Am Now in Complete Remission*

Hiroshi Matsubara

In the early 20th century my maternal grandfather became Christian in Seattle as a college student. And my paternal great grandfather became a Christian minister in Japan in the late 19th century and evangelized Japanese immigrants in Hawaii and Los Angeles.

Influenced by them, my parents were very devout Christians. All my life I had regarded myself as Christian, but Christianity was not part of my life at all.

I moved to the United States and attended an architecture graduate school in Los Angeles in 1980s. Then I got married and started my career as an architect there. When our first son was born, my wife and I decided to move to Seattle for a better environment.

In 2003, I met Mrs. Michie Zinserling as my client who is a house church leader of Kohitsuji no Mure in Bellevue, Washington. After the renovation project meetings, Michie told me about Jesus and how she had met Him.

Honestly I was not comfortable with stories of Kohitsuji no Mure Church that Michie told me. I was more used to conventional church services, where the main activity is to listen to a minister's sermon, and church members do not have any direct contact with God.

Michie insistently invited me to her house gathering. So I soon started attending it on Sundays. At first, I was resistant to unfamiliar praise songs and the service without a minister's sermon. However, gradually I came to know that there is a truth in Kohitsuji no Mure Church's vision—Who guides me is Jesus, the real Shepherd, and not a minister.

^{*} From the worship in New York Retreat, May 26, 2016.

In December 2004, I finally received baptism at a Kohitsuji no Mure house gathering. After that, I started to pray every morning to thank Jesus about everything—my work, my family and so on. However, in retrospect I did not focus on the will of Jesus for me but on my work and other things more interesting to me. I was still living my life self-centeredly.

In November 2012, I was diagnosed with stage 3 lymphoma. The more I researched the nature of this type of cancer, the more grim my future looked.

At the same time, I kept remembering the essential vision of Kohitsuji no Mure Church, "Everything is completed in praise." I had hope in Jesus that He might touch me with His healing hand in praise.

With desperation I decided to fly to Honolulu at the end of the month to attend a worship service by Mitsuko and Pastor Peter who are the founders of Kohitsuji no Mure Church. The service was full of grace, overflowing with His praises.

After the service, Mitsuko and Pastor Peter prayed for me. As they started praying, I could feel peacefulness surrounding me. Other Kohitsuji no Mure members next to me were singing a beautiful praise song "Amen for Healing" repeatedly.

I heard Pastor Peter speaking in tongues behind me, and Mitsuko was also praying in front of me. When Mitsuko was about to say, "In the name of Jesus Christ, cancer cells, leave the body of Mr. Matsubara," she paused and said to me, "I could feel your lymphoma vibrating and singing 'Amen' together with the praise. Mr. Matsubara, can't you feel it?"

I first did not understand what Mitsuko was talking about. But a revelation came to me when she said, "As you strived to live in the United States (a foreign country), all your hardship and stress was built up in your belly (where cancer was). I feel it."

Since I started my own architectural firm in 2000,

certainly I had been blessed by the grace of God. Yet perhaps I put myself under pressure thinking that I was not yet reaching a satisfying result for my business and for my family. I often asked Jesus to help me not to fail.

Without noticing it, I was actually very stressed out and tired. I realized that Jesus planned to bring me to the service in Hawaii and heal me there. The swollen lymph node that was as big as a large sausage was a symbol of my stress and waited to be recognized by me.

After I returned from Hawaii, one day when I was riding a bicycle, a strong thought visited me, "Take the second chance." It became clear that Jesus gave me the cancer as His final call to me.

Jesus had been with me all the time since I was born. However, I refused to seek Him and took it for granted almost like an air in the sky. In 2003, God led me to Kohitsuji no Mure Church, and finally I started to praise Jesus, but I was praising Him as a part-timer. I prioritized my needs, putting aside God's needs. I realized that Jesus was asking me to step forward, saying, "Hiroshi, are you ready to be with Me? Or would you like to remain where you feel comfortable?"

It was about time to step closer to Him. This would be the last chance to do it. I made up my mind to get closer to Jesus.

After the prayer by Mitsuko and Pastor Peter in Hawaii, I knew my stress was completely taken away, but unfortunately my swollen lymph node did not disappear.

I started chemotherapy in January 2013. Actually, I felt really happy with my life every day despite the fact that I had cancer. I had a good sleep every night, and side effects of the treatment were surprisingly small. I never stopped working during the treatment period. All the swollen lymph nodes turned into the normal size.

To tell the truth, after coming back from Hawaii, I was

wondering why the cancer did not disappear when Mitsuko and Pastor Peter prayed for me. After the treatment I undoubtedly realized that Jesus had intentionally given me the six-month period as my valuable time.

During the chemo treatment, I decided to sing the praise "Isaiah 53" in Latin every morning. Each time I felt very peaceful and protected by the sound of this praise song. I believe that my whole body and soul were harmonizing with the resonating tune of the Holy Cross just as my cancer cells were vibrating with praise during the healing prayer in Hawaii.

The six months of chemo treatment were very important for me because God gave me a chance to praise and love Him. He knew I needed that period to find out what my spirit really wanted. He has made everything beautiful in its time.

After the chemotherapy my doctor said to me, "You are in complete remission." Medically speaking, this means that all the signs and symptoms of cancer have disappeared, but there is another meaning to the word "remission," which is forgiveness of sins.

I realized that I was completely forgiven. I used to live my life setting my mind only to the things of my own, putting aside God's will, and worshipping Him as a part-timer. However, He encouraged me to turn over a new leaf and live for Christ. I am now in complete remission.

Through the healing of my cancer, I have discovered the sincere desire of my soul, which is to worship the Lord in spirit and truth. It is my uttermost joy. I believe that my life is given to resonate with the will of God. That is why even my cancer vibrated and sang with the heavenly praise in Hawaii!

He shall see the labor of His soul, and be satisfied. (Isaiah 53:11 NKJ)

May 26, 2016, in New York Retreat

On the Same Way with You*

Mitsuko

Thirty years ago, I met God. Before meeting God, I was so-so happy, but I was not as happy as I wished. I was looking for something real, something to make me feel truly happy. I did not know what it was, or whether it existed or not.

On December 3, 1987, the Holy Spirit hit me in New Jersey and struck me down onto the ground. Right at that moment, the word "forgiven" pierced through my body, and I realized I was forgiven.

Yet intellectually I had no idea what it meant. What in me was forgiven? Why should I be forgiven, and who forgave me? Although I did not understand forgiveness intellectually, I was filled with overwhelming joy, which I had never experienced before in my life.

On that day, my new life started. One of the most amazing things that happened to me was healing. First it came to me. The pain in my lower back, which I had suffered for more than ten years, soon disappeared, and all other physical problems were gone. I was healed. Then healing went to my children, my family, my friends and many others. I could no longer doubt the love of Jesus. Having encountered God and witnessed healing, I realized that God wants everyone to believe in Him, and that He wishes everyone to be truly happy.

I am happy because I can now say that I have found the true joy of life. I was healed of not only my physical problems but also my uneasiness, sorrow and loneliness. Sometimes they come back, but no longer bother me. I can say it is okay even if they are still in me.

(I wrote my encounter with Jesus in a four-volume book

^{*} From the English worship in Hawaii on February 25, 2017.

"The White Dove," which has been translated into English.)

This is the 30th year of my encounter with the Lord. It was such great joy to encounter Him and to realize His love and His wish, which is for us to receive the joy of being forgiven and healed. He has also given us the way not to lose the joy but to increase it in our life. That is worship.

At first I did not know what worship is, but now I believe that God's ultimate plan is worship as is written in Ephesians 1:10.

As a plan for the fulness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.

(Ephesians 1:10 RSV)

God's plan is to unite heaven and earth as one in Jesus Christ. That means all creation become one in worship, and it is when the love of God is perfected on the earth. The worship of "all creation" is described in the Revelation chapter 5:

And I heard every creature in heaven and on earth and under the earth and in the sea, and all therein, saying, "To him who sits upon the throne and to the Lamb be blessing and honor and glory and might for ever and ever!" (Revelation 5:13 RSV)

All things visible and invisible in heaven, on earth, under the earth and in the sea praise the One who sits on the throne and the Lamb slain. This Lamb is Jesus.

In 2012 we had worship in Hawaii after an absence of seven years. During that worship I heard a *voice*, "The time has moved." Five months prior to it at the Church of the Wind in Japan, Pastor Peter declared the arrival of the time of Cosmic Worship.

Now I understand those words indicate that we have entered a new time of worship. "Cosmic Worship" is the worship of all created things. It is the very worship planned and desired by God.

Even before then, mysterious things had been happening in worship. Some saw deceased loved ones joining worship, and some felt an invisible warm hand touch their sick part. We believed people from heaven were with us in worship. However, we were not as sure as now. After the declaration of Cosmic Worship and after the *voice* that the time had moved, it became clearer and clearer.

As I said, when the Holy Spirit struck me, I felt I was forgiven, and at that time I did not understand what it was. Three years later I realized it was forgiveness of sin. Sin does not mean to do wrong things; sin is not to know God and not to put God first in all situations. So, having been forgiven, healed and given the joy of life, I believe I was renewed and restored.

Starting from individual healing and joy, Cosmic Worship advances to healing and joy of the whole Body. As we worship God in one Spirit and truth with one accord (I cannot find proper words to express), His wish will be done both in heaven and on earth.

I would like to share with you what happened after Sunday worship in the Church of the Wind last month. After worship we had a prayer time as always. Pastor Peter and I prayed for newcomers and those who had not yet believed in Jesus Christ. One woman came to us to ask for prayer. We prayed for her, and she confessed, "I believe in Jesus Christ."

While praying, I felt someone standing beside her, and it was a gentleman in a blue jacket with very affectionate eyes. "Oh, he must be her father," I thought, and asked her, "Your father is in heaven?" She responded, "Yes, I lost my father, and at the same time I lost all my hope to live." She was crying. Pastor Peter said, "Your father is worshipping God here with you." Then I heard the gentleman saying to her, "I am on the way. I am with you."

In that Sunday worship one scripture was read. It was Jesus' word, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. (John 14:6 RSV)" I understood that her father was on the same way with her. And when she was baptized, I found there were many people around the gentleman in a blue jacket.

"On the way" has another meaning, and I understood that her father was going to join worship with his friends and people he brought with him. "We are heading toward worship together with you."

Now that Cosmic Worship has been opened, those in heaven and those on earth can worship together. Those who returned to heaven are with us now in praise.

In that worship last month I heard the Lord saying to those in pain, having lost parents or friends:

Wounded ones are entrusted with binding prayer. I will give you binding prayer. I have given binding prayer to wounded ones.

When the Lord says He will give or have given binding prayer, both means the same, because that is His desire. So we, people on the earth, are entrusted with the task to bind people to people, people to the Lord, and heaven to the earth.

Those who bind and those who are bound are both in His healing. They both are healed, and I believe they are together in His salvation.

Lord Jesus Christ, thank You. We are truly grateful to You. Amen.

February 25, 2017

For He Himself is our peace, who made both groups into one and broke down the barrier of the dividing wall, by abolishing in His flesh the enmity, which is the Law of commandments contained in ordinances, so that in Himself He might make the two into one new man, thus establishing peace, and might reconcile them both in one body to God through the cross, by it having put to death the enmity. And He came and preached peace to you who were far away, and peace to those who were near; for through Him we both have our access in one Spirit to the Father.

Ephesians 2:14-18 NAS