

## MY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCES

Whether it is a handicap to be a minister's son, or the son of some other man with a more or less puritanic and pious environment, is still a debatable question in some circles, but unfortunately, I had no choice in this matter. My father's ways of bringing up the children, <sup>the</sup> seven of us, must have been influenced by his Presbyterian background and the influence of the seminary and missionaries in Japan. In 1921, the family of four, moved to the Hawaiian Islands, when my father had a call to serve as a missionary among the Japanese people there. It was through the auspices of the Central Union Church of Honolulu, that my father came to Hawaii. For over fifteen years, my father worked as a minister on the Island of Kauai, for the Hawaiian Evangelical Association, the off-spring of the American Board. My mother, on the other hand, came with a nominal Buddhist background, but after her marriage to my father, she became a sincere and a devout Christian. After being <sup>in</sup> contact with my family for over 26 years, I have come to the conclusion that there are many advantages <sup>for which</sup> a minister's sons could be thankful, and ~~that~~ I am hoping that the career I have chosen for myself will be of advantage to man and God.

What little religious experiences I have had, I shall try to enumerate them to the best of my knowledge and memory. One of my earliest recollections of my mother's faith in prayer and in its efficacy was in my early childhood, when I was about ten years old. She would always pray for the safe journey and return of my father whenever he went to distant towns for his evangelical work, or to visit his many friends.

Also about that age, I vividly remember the time when I appropriated some "loose changes" from my father's own personal treasury in order to buy me a toy gun and several rounds of cap ammunition like the rest of my playmates. When the coins were suddenly missed, and a beautiful shining toy revolver was in my possession, I was made to confess my unchristian deed. My mother in tears made me kneel, and we both prayed to God to forgive this guilty son who transgressed the Lord. I think there were two such incidents in my life, and after that I was cured indefinitely about touching my father's pecuniary possessions, or anyone else's, except my own.

My mother's method of invoking the help of God whenever she was inadequate to handle the situation has given me a deep impression of her deep faith and trust in the power of God. Even in later years when I left home to attend college, and seminary, the knowledge of my mother's constant prayer for everyone of us helped to keep me especially from going wrong. I, too, have learned to trust in God when human power was no longer adequate to meet the situation.

I don't remember any sudden conversion in my life because I have had the present-day influence of Christian education. Ever since I was conscious, I was attending the church school each Sunday morning, whether I cherished the idea or not. My mother insisted that it was the real Christian practice, and that I had to be a model for the other boys in the community. I often wondered like the <sup>minister's</sup> three children in the book "One Foot In Heaven," why our fathers had to be ministers.

My grammar school and high school years were quite uneventful, although we held occasional family prayer meetings, with father leading the prayers and scripture lessons, whenever we were together. The family was much closer knit as we gathered together and heard the Word of the Lord, as well as exhortations to live a clean and a virtuous life. We were often told to be the living examples of Jesus Christ because we were the sons and daughter of a minister who was a respected man in the town. Although we rebelled at this enforced idealism, we nevertheless kept ourselves morally clean throughout the years.

Another experience I also remembered in my youth was that of my father's constant morning meditation for about half an hour to a full hour, before the rest of the family got up. He was in his study early and remained quiet all by himself. We were told by mother, that he was not to be disturbed, except for emergency and when breakfast was ready. In spite of his busy life, acting as a language school teacher and principal, six days a week, while at the same supervising the kindergarten and acting as a full minister and pastor, did not deter my father from holding communion every-day with his Heavenly Father. It was such an influence that gradually enriched my own religious life. To live a devout and pious life, and <sup>to</sup> trusting God above all else, as well as serving mankind were some of the immediate influences of my family, and for them, I am grateful.

A definite crisis appeared in my life when I was a senior in high school. My father became dangerously ill with an incurable disease. His suffering continued for about a year, and then in my freshman year in college, I suddenly received word of my father's

death. It was quite a shock, but I was able to remain firm and calm because I trusted in the Lord Jesus Christ who came to show us the way of life, and that there was eternal life for all his believers. In fact, death was only the beginning of another life, and my father's passing was just an episode. He was going to meet his Savior in the Heavens above. The whole family missed the physical presence of our father, but the ever-present idea of the immortality of the Christian and resurrection of the spirit of the individual kept us from going to "pieces". We believed that the spirit of our father was always with us, like that of Jesus Christ. Thus we had no fear about death on earth.

My years in college and seminary were enriching ones because of the associations with men of fine character, training, and education. The men at the Pacific School of Religion certainly gave me a new perspective and philosophy of life. The various courses in the Old and New Testaments, Missions, Homiletics, Religious Education and Philosophy of Religion, helped me discover the rich inheritance of the present day Church and of the individual Christian. <sup>P</sup>The influence of my minister, the Reverend Robert Inglis, under whom I worked for the past two years also verified my faith in <sup>the</sup> Christian leaders, especially among my white brethren. His sincerity and sensitivity to the injustices meted out to people of other races have started this minister to social action, not only in words, but in deeds, too. Inter-racial programs have been one of the favorite subjects at the Plymouth Congregational Church, and the members there have made the relationship between the various races amiable and friendly through <sup>the</sup> Christian fellowship.

My present experience at Tanforan has proved that religion, especially the religion of Jesus Christ is the only means of our salvation. The belief in the teachings of Jesus Christ, and his ever-present spirit of God have made my life full of overflowing love and happiness. This spirit has been reflected in my own personality. I am hoping to live the life of a real Christian, and persuade others to my way by being a living example, and at the same time as a leader in the young people's fellowship and instructor in the church school.

SOME CONSIDERATIONS LEADING ME INTO THE  
MINISTRY

To choose a life work, especially for me, was quite a difficult one because of the personal prejudices I held, because I was living in a parsonage, and that my parents who were quite puritanic, made my life miserable and dull at times because I couldn't enjoy the freedom and socials, children of other parents indulged harmlessly.

Nevertheless, I have been considering the work of a minister for several years, mainly because of the sterling character of my father and his desire to serve man. I was not able to make up my mind until a few months after I finished my college education from the University of Hawaii in 1939. While at college, I was interested in social welfare work and YMCA activities, and decided to enter one of them. The hopes of continuing graduate studies were rather dim, but after walking the streets of Honolulu for jobs, and not finding any, I consulted my mother, my minister friend and the director of the Hawaii School of Religion. We came to the happy conclusion, that for my own sake, I should enter a seminary and train for a life work. The Pacific School of Religion was chosen because of the liberal and scholarly reputation of the men there. Through the influence of Dr. John C. Bennett, and the kindness of Dr. James Mullenburg, I was able to enroll for a brief three-year training.

My immediate aim, three years ago was to be trained as a full-fledged minister and pastor, and I think I have been adequately prepared for that work. Now I feel that my purpose is to serve man and God by bringing the message of Jesus Christ to all people.

Although the salary of the minister is small, I firmly believe and know that the satisfaction I can obtain from serving others will enrich <sup>en</sup> my life and bring me far ~~more~~ <sup>more</sup> satisfaction than any other profession I know. I want to bring a message of hope, confidence and assurance through the personality and teachings of Jesus Christ.

#### SOME CONTRIBUTIONS I CAN MAKE

Some of the contributions I feel I am prepared to ~~make~~ are still in the "blue-print" stage, but I have been contributing my services to the Church School and <sup>to the</sup> Young People's Fellowship and <sup>to my</sup> associates.

If I should have a church of my own, I could start a program of religious education and train leaders and teachers by giving them a clear understanding of the Bible, methods in teaching, the use of materials, the organization of the church and its related functions. There will be courses in the administration of the church and the policies of the denomination, the Christian belief and the work of the Christian member. I would also organize study groups that could go more deeply <sup>into the</sup> into the Bible and the Church, as well as <sup>moral</sup> moral and social problems that come up in the community in which I am the pastor.

To be contemporaneous, I am trying to be cheerful and smiling at all times in this camp because life as it is, is quite trying for most of us, especially for the first generation who have been suddenly uprooted from their homes and communities. I usually say "hello", or talk with <sup>the</sup> people I meet here and there, especially while on my official rounds of the camp as the assistant field-foreman in the Housing Department, or while on my own leisure time. Many of the

Japanese people, young and old, are shocked and surprised at my cordiality, but I have an interesting time in my own working philosophy at camp of brightening up the spirits of the people here.

My work on Sundays with the young people will be another opportunity of expressing my Christian belief and experience and education. I confidently believe that I can really contribute something worthwhile as a minister to my people in attaining a stronger conviction, a personal resource for living, an ever-striving <sup>zeal</sup> for perfection and a working philosophy of life at Tanforan, <sup>at the same time</sup> and making it a Christian camp.

Whenever I have a chance to give sermons and speeches, I can always contribute something concrete to the betterment of lives by permeating the addresses with my Christian attitude and spirit. I will make God above all other interests and goals, <sup>and</sup> in living righteously and proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

A STATEMENT OF MY CHRISTIAN BELIEF

In regard to my statement of my Christian belief, I shall deal briefly with the following subjects: God, Jesus Christ, Resurrection, Immortality, the Holy Spirit, the Bible, the Church, Christian members, Prayer, the Holy Communion, Baptism, the Kingdom of God, and Miracles.

I believe in God as the Maker of this Universe and of all living creature thereof. He is also like a Father unto us, as Jesus vividly portrayed to us. The relationship between this unseen Being <sup>and man</sup> gives us sense of a religious attitude, of aweness and of reverence. We want to worship that "Something" that is divine, sacred, great and powerful. But the best illustration is that of the loving Father, who is specially interested in the welfare of his children. We are his children, and God is our Heavenly Father. He punished us when we do wrong, and brings judgment when we fail to heed his warnings. By acknowledging our sins and repenting before God, we receive redemption. When persuasion fails, God takes some drastic action and makes us suffer. We Japanese people might be the result of God's wrath and judgment, who knows? God is also spirit and love. He is ever-present in our lives, in our thoughts and in our daily activities. The real Christian God is the one Jesus Christ taught us, and it is He whom we worship, revere and sing praises. The conception of God develops slowly, by means of meditation, prayer and consecration to His will. Each new Christian experience brings us closer to the spirit of God. Our lives are shaped and destined by our will as well as that of God, and especially when we follow the teachings of Jesus Christ, who truly represented his Heavenly Father on earth.

Jesus, the man of Galilee, was born of a young mother ( a woman of deep religious faith and purity), <sup>He</sup> who was destined to become the Messiah and Savior, and bring hope love and salvation to all mankind. Jesus was born of humble parents, but quickly acquired the deep piety of his Jewish parents. Before Jesus answered the call to minister unto his people, he helped his father and mother at home, while at the same time accumulated a wealth of experience in preparing for the work ahead. When the time was ready, Jesus went out to preach the Word of God to his people. God was in Jesus ever since he was a child, and The Holy Spirit became more manifest as he increased in wisdom and in stature. Jesus was such a perfect man, that he truly represented the spirit of God on earth. The godliness of Jesus became quite evident when he suffered on the cross for the sins of man. He did not have to die, but he gladly sacrificed his life so that man might come to know him and love him for his unselfish sacrifice. He showed the lovely that only a God could display. Jesus also forgave his persecutors because they did not know what they were doing to the Son of Man.

Jesus knew that he was the Christ or the Messiah, and the passage in the Gospel of St. Luke 4:17, describes Jesus opening and reading from the Book of Isaiah: Chapt. 61:1f.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; he hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty them that are bruised, (v.19)...and...To preach the acceptable year of the Lord.

Luke 4:21, tells of Jesus speaking to the people in the synagogue:

This day is this scripture fulfilled in your years.

He tells who he is in the Gospel of St. John 5:36:

But I have greater witness than that of John; for the works which the Father hath given me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of me, that the Father hath sent me.

I believe that Jesus was truly the man who had the greatest understanding of God, and of his commission on earth which was to proclaim the "imminence of the kingdom of God." Jesus is our Christ and the Savior of all mankind today and forevermore.

Jesus Christ was the Son of Man who died and rose again. His resurrection and immortality of his soul bring to us the hope that all those who believe on him "will not perish, but have everlasting life." Since Jesus Christ fulfilled the requirements of a godly man, we, too, who have been made in the image of God, can strive and look forward to an immortal life like our Savior.

The Holy Spirit, I believe is the divine nature of God, pervading in us and in all our activities. It is that force that actually works amongst us all by instilling in us <sup>to</sup> action, <sup>to</sup> conversion, and <sup>to</sup> proclaiming <sup>e</sup> the Gospel. It is the power that sustains us and brings us <sup>a</sup> new light and <sup>a</sup> happier outlook in life.

The Bible, I believe is the record of religious men in the Old and New Testament times who had actual experiences with God and made them known to us in a document we have today. All the writings are not to be regarded as infallible, but should be regarded as a source of inspiration, teaching material, for moral and religious living, and to find out about the Word of God. The Word of God is revealed in the writings of the Bible, and especially those written by the Great Prophets like Jeremiah, Isaiah, Elijah and Hosea.

The New Testament includes several accounts of the life and times of Jesus, the letters of Paul and the writings of men who were interested in establishing churches and in the functions of

that institution. We also find the evidences of Godly men who were interested in propagating the Gospel to all peoples and all lands.

I believe in the Church Universal as the living institution, embodying all the teachings of Jesus Christ and the Word of God. It is the means of bringing all Christian believers together, who believe in God Almighty, and in Jesus Christ the Savior and Redeemer of all. The Church is to bring men back to God and to the way of life taught by Jesus Christ. Among the Christian members, we find universal brotherhood, fellowship, love and peace. They are working towards the kingdom of God on earth. The church (Cong. Manual, Article III, p. 74, on Polity of a Church):

acknowledges Jesus Christ as its head and finds in the Holy Scriptures, interpreted by the Divine Spirit through reason, faith and conscience, its guidance in matters of faith and discipline.

In regard to the church doctrine, it: (Cong. Man. Art. IV Doctrine p.75) recognizes the Bible as the sufficient rule of faith and practice, holds that living in accordance with the teachings of Jesus Christ is the true test of fellowship."

The membership to this Christian fellowship is opened to all who will observe and believe the teachings of Jesus Christ and believe in God as the true object of our worship, and to all those who will abide with the rules and regulations of the Congregational and Christian Churches.

Baptism is to me the religious ceremony signifying the spiritual purification of the baptised, so that he may join into the Christian fellowship in the Church Universal. In this act, the sins of the individual are supposedly cleansed and purified, so that he may be born again and lead a new spiritual life. In the cases of infant

baptism, the sponsors and parents must profess the Christian faith.

I believe in the Holy Communion as the symbol of the Christian brotherhood and membership in a Christian Church where each partaker of the element and wine, and spiritually share with Jesus Christ his flesh and blood. The Lord's Supper was formerly a memorial service of the death of Jesus Christ, and the bread and wine formed the staple food of the primitive Christians, but now it has become a sacrament and an ecclesiastical ceremony for the purpose of uniting members professing the same belief, in Jesus Christ as our Savior and Redeemer. This act is like reaffirming our covenant with Jesus Christ, and can <sup>be</sup> celebrated at such times as the church may determine." (Cong. Manual p. 79).

I believe in the Christian marriage as the binding together of a man and a woman, for the purpose of building a home and raising of children, and fulfilling the responsibilities that belong to a father and a mother, and instilling in the children the virtues and ideals worthy of a religious, moral and a cultured individual. The marriage rites definitely make a man and a woman, legally and religiously, husband and wife. It is a public act before God and man, under the auspices of a Christian Church to consecrate the ties of these two people involved in the marriage ceremony. This will make the couple far more secure, loyal and religious, than a legal act. A marriage founded on such a stable foundation will <sup>be</sup> able to withstand the storms and trials of mankind.

I believe in prayer as the communion between God and man, for the sole purpose of consecrating our lives to a more worthy Being than any being we know of on earth. It is a means of experiencing the presence of God, His love, fellowship and grace and salvation. The man who is devout in his prayers with God will naturally show it in his attitude in life, his thoughts and actions. A God-fearing

*a misanthropic person*

man cannot be <sup>o</sup> pious, and at the same time be a misanthrope. It is difficult to be inconsistent when one is wholly in harmony with God's ways. Prayer do changes lives. It has given comfort, peace of mind, courage, strength, and a will to do good for the welfare of man. Jesus Christ is an example of a praying man. Here in our own world among the Japanese people, we find Toyohiko Kagawa, a living example of a devout and praying man. The ledger will show in the end the difference between a praying and a non-praying man.

Prayer also includes adoration, praise, thanksgiving, confession, aspiration and petition. To utilize all these, the individual must learn to shut out all external disturbances and concentrate upon one subject at a time. The pastor in his public worship includes all these elements in his prayer. This pastoral prayer should lift the spirits of the worshiper above this mundane world to <sup>the</sup> heavenly heights where the presence of the Divine Being becomes manifest.

I believe in the Kingdom as the Spiritual Kingdom where we all enter if we believe in Jesus Christ and let his spirit guide us. Man by repentance prepares for the Kingdom and hastens it, too, *by repentance*. Miracles, I believe as "extraordinary events in our lives for which we can give only religious explanation and in which our faith reveals the <sup>presence of the</sup> divine activity. The activities of Jesus show miraculous powers. God also shows his spirit in the natural phenomenon, earthquakes, fires, epidemics, wars and starvation. The miracles as portrayed in the Bible are not to be regarded as authentic in their entirety, but certainly reveals certain unknown power or powers behind them, for which we can have no adequate explanation. God must be working in the world.

These are some of my statements of Christian belief, ~~to~~ which I am trying to live up to and <sup>to</sup> enrichen my experience with God and man,

while learning the life and teachings of Jesus Christ through the  
Holy Scriptures.

Respectfully submitted,

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