

Listen to what Apostle Paul wrote in I Corinthians 2

“When I came to you, my brothers (and sisters), to preach God’s secret truth, I did not use big words and great learning. For a while I was with you, I made up my mind to forget everything except Jesus Christ and especially his death on the cross. So when I came to you, I was weak and trembled all over with fear, and my teaching and message were not delivered with skillful words of human wisdom, but with convincing proof of the power of God’s Spirit. Your faith, then, does not rest on human wisdom but on God’s power.”

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As you all know that the quakers usually don’t quake, like the presbyterians do. I feel that my DNA has recently been modified by the quakers. I don’t talk that much as I used to.

Today it seems to be my turn to quake a little bit.  
I hope you could quake a little bit in support of me.  
Lorraine is sitting there as listener. I hope she could become a quaker today as well.  
My friends Mr and Mrs Takamori, the Kunio/Bio Hwang, Dr. Chiang and Dr. Wang.  
They are quiet persons, as always, but if possible please quake in the quakers’ meeting.

In any event, when we have to talk we should talk, like George Fox.

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“My muscles twitch as they begin to dance uncontrollably causing me to writhe in pain.”  
Stephanie wrote.

You probably have known that the Quakers have had a very good standing in Japanese church history. Niitobe Inazo is a good Quaker. His picture is on the ¥5,000 yens bill on Japanese currency. For beginning, I like to sing a Japanese song “Life is short!” in confer for Stephanie:

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“life is short. the lipstick color will fade soon. the old time love stories are becoming blur and cold. I am searching for tomorrow, but where is tomorrow?”

While we are still chanting “God have mercy on us!” even before we finish the words, we find sickness and weakness right in our body. We find the unreasonable things happening right in front of us.

On the day of March 11, 2011 in the northeast seashore of Japan was hit by a huge earthquake and tsunami. In 30 minutes 20,000 people’s lives along the seashore were wiped out immediately. Even upon to this day, 4 years later after the sudden

devastation, there are still about 200,000 people living in the small contemporary prefabricated houses and thousands of bodies, unfounded.

A young student in Kisenuma City wrote that she has been waken up by the dreams that her father and mother's hands were trying to reach her in the big waves and her hands were trying to reach theirs, but the three hands were not be able to touch with one another. Almost every night she was awakened by the same dreams, crying.

Couple years ago in the Aceh, the eastern peninsula of Indonesia, there was a tsunami. 40,000 lives were drowned. Couple weeks ago in the villages of Nepal there was a huge quake and 5,000 people were buried under the Himalayan mountains.

They and we cannot do anything to help but weep – weep for the innocent lives.

I talked this issue with many gatekeeper-Christian. Many of them think that the Japanese and other such people deserve the catastrophe because it is a punishment for their unbelief in God, or for their belief in the wrong gods.

Sometimes I feel that we are dealing with two gods:

one comes to us with devastating tsunami and earthquake, typhoons and flooding;

the other comes to us with harmonious nature, day in and day out, and good seasons and orders to stop the flooding and brings us rainbow as symbol of peace. He says: "Stop it! Enough is enough!"

one comes to us with unthinkable diseases and sickness as the one on Stephanie;

the other one blesses us an integrity of health of body and spirit;

one is easy to get angry and jealous and capricious; demands numerous dogmas, rules, talmud, sutras, dietary and cleanliness codes, vestments, rituals, circumcision, and other demands from their deities.

the other one is forever forgiving and loving and says that "in the truth and in me, you have freedom, in me there is love." The One on the cross says "you are my friends!";

the one who kicked us out from the garden of Eden and set up a flaming sword in the East Gate of our homeland;

the other one will bring us back to the home sweet home of our original birth place without a fear – for all peoples in the world.

These two concepts of God make confusion to the people of faith. The two gods, if not conflicting, are dialectical. One could be over and above the other; or the other be submissive to the other. They cannot be the same God.

The later One says: "Stop! Enough is enough!"

Here in this country we hear everywhere slogans of peace, love, shalom, benevolence - while in the same time we are living in the hell of the world's biggest builders and manufacturers of all kinds of killing weapons.

Texas state congress just announced that they allow open carry of guns and firearms on college and universities campuses.

The mainline churches say the same thing that our country holds "both truths": the truth of peace and the truth of war, and they preach on this theory day after day. When we decide on wars, they say, we are on the right side because God is on our side.

Our policies shift as time goes.

I feel that we are living in captivity that we cannot break its cocoons. We are living as hostages of our own ambivalence. We are living in confusion.

I am happy to join you in this friends church with my wife. We are happy because here I feel we are spiritually free. We are in a freedom church. We are free from that ugly-faced god. We escape and come into the loving and sacrificial God in Jesus Christ. O, God, Have Mercy on us. O God of Stephanie may you keep us away from attack of the devils and bring us back to integrity. Oh God, you know that it is not only that Stephanie was fighting against, we all are fighting in the same network against the Devil.

I think we shall be able to bring Jesus' cross to break through the barricade of "flaming sword" at the East Gate of Eden. I caught inspiration from Jan Wood's last talk and from Danny's classroom about the flaming sword. We must break up the obstacle of flaming sword. Our God needs no gate-keeper and we don't need the flaming sword either. The place shall we return is our home sweet home - in the garden of Eden where we shall meet Jesus as our "friend".

"In my father's house there are plenty of rooms". As Jesus says "I shall come and take you back there". That is our Eden - our home sweet home of freedom.

There, Jesus says to us that God will wipe away all tears from our eyes. There will be no more death, no more grief or crying or pain. That is the place of our home sweet home of the Eden. We must go back there by holding Jesus cross, go through it and get into it.

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