

Why do we Celebrate the Completion of the New Chapel?¹

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The first reason is to thank the Lord God, who has been protecting us and leading us until this day. I would also like to express my heartfelt gratitude to the staff of Keiso Kensetsu Construction Company for their hard work during the construction of this building as well as the members of Kankyō Kenchiku Sekkei Incorporation who took the responsibility of designing and construction control.

1. What is the purpose of the Lord God of giving us this building?

First of all, this place is to be used by the Lord God to reveal Himself. Our God is not dead but is still alive and He manifests Himself to us. Our God is not blind but knows what we need and He is urging us to...

Malachi 3:10

....see if I won't throw open the windows of heaven for you and pour out on you blessing without measure.

When the author of the Psalms encountered the true God three thousand years ago, he was compelled to testify this way;

Psalms 96:4,5,10

For the Lord is great, and greatly to be praised; he is awesome above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Declare among the nations, "The Lord reigns!" Indeed, he established the world so that it will not falter. He will judge people fairly.

The Lord God desires to manifest Himself. However, it requires our reliance upon the Lord God and obedience to the Bible. The Lord God reveals Himself to us through His words recorded in the Bible. Thus, words from the Bible must be placed in the center of this new building. Without the inspiration from our Lord God, without words of the Lord, we have such a miserable existence and will never be able to accomplish anything.

Lamentation 3:22-26

Because of the Lord's gracious love we are not consumed, since his compassions never end. They are new every morning— great is your faithfulness! "The Lord is all I have," says my soul, "Therefore I will trust in him." The Lord is

good to those who wait for him, to the person who searches for him. It is good to hope and wait patiently for the Lord's salvation.

The most important purpose of our lives is to understand "the salvation of the Lord God" from our own experience. It is to know "the Lord Jesus Himself." However, true awareness and understanding of these matters can only be obtained through inspiration from the Lord God. Inspiration from the Lord God is required to know the Lord Jesus experientially.

Galatians 1:12,16

For I did not receive it from a man, nor was I taught it, but it was revealed to me by Jesus the Messiah. to reveal his Son to me....

It is only possible through the light from above, through the inspiration of God, for us to realize our true status and the status of our sins. And through such experiences, we will come to know Jesus who forgives our sins. To know Jesus Christ refers neither to belonging to so-called 'Christianity' nor to being baptized. To know Jesus Christ is to obtain forgiveness for sins and attain peace of mind and eternal life. Wherever the Bible is placed at the center and the power of the Lord's words is experienced, worship spontaneously follows. So it is imperative above all else for this building to be a place to worship the Lord.

2. It has to become the place to worship the True Living God.

The true God is seeking the true worshipers. The author of the Psalms worshiped the Lord God from the bottom of his heart with these words;

Psalms 95:1-3,6,7

Come! Let us sing joyfully to the Lord! Let us shout for joy to the rock of our salvation. Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us shout with songs of praise to him. For the Lord is an awesome God; a great king above all divine beings. Come! Let us worship and bow down; let us kneel in the presence of the Lord, who made us. For he is our God, and we are the people of his pasture and the flock in his care.

What is worship? It is neither a formality nor is it an empty ritual. True worship is a privilege granted to only those who have experienced the true living God and understood the magnificence of Jesus; they alone are privileged to worship the Lord with gratitude.

True worshipers refer to those who have the conviction that they were raised out of the morass of sins by the Lord when they were saved and the shameful sins from their past life were totally washed

¹ 『献堂式のお祝いをする意味はどこにあるのですか?』、主は生きておられる 18 号、2010 年、ゴットホルド・ベック

away by the blood the Lord Jesus shed. True worshipers know that the Lord God is no longer their enemy, but He is their father who loves them. True worshipers place importance on giving glory to the Lord Jesus alone. True worshipers are those who are filled with the desire to please Jesus and love Him from the depth of their hearts.

This building has to be a place for the Lord God to manifest Himself and consequently, a place for us to worship the Lord God. Those who listen to the words of God together and worship together will have true fellowship with one another.

3. Thus, this Building must be a Place for Fellowship of Believers.

The foundation of true fellowship between believers is to “keep walking in the light.”

1 John 1:7

But if we keep living in the light as he himself is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin.

The secret of true fellowship is to have an earnest desire to be examined by the Lord Jesus. 3000 years ago, David, the king of Israel, prayed this way;

Psalms 139:23-24

Examine me, God, and know my mind, test me, and know my thoughts. See if there is any offensive tendency in me, and lead me in the eternal way

There are also these verses in the Lamentation, from the Old Testament;

Lamentation 3:40-41

Let us examine our lifestyles, putting them to the test, and turn back to the Lord. Let us lift up our hearts and our hands to God in heaven.

The foundation of true fellowship is the willingness to sacrifice yourself for others. We all need genuine companionship. It is also true for believers of Jesus that they need fellowship with each other. Where there is true fellowship, people share all their joys and sorrows.

This is my heartfelt desire; “May this building be the place for the Lord God to reveal Himself. May God Himself be worshiped in here. And may this place be used to inspire fellowship between believers.” At the ceremony of the completion of the temple in Jerusalem, David made this confession;

1 Chronicles 29:10-13

How blessed you are, Lord, the God of our ancestor Israel, from eternity to eternity! To you,

Lord, belongs the greatness, and the valor, and the splendor, and the endurance, and the majesty because all that is in heaven and on earth is yours. To you belongs the kingdom, Lord, and you are exalted as head over all. Both wealth and honor proceed from you, and you are ruling over them all. You control power— you control who is made great, and how everyone becomes strong. And so, our God, we are giving you thanks, and we are praising your wonderful name!

King Solomon, the son of King David prayed likewise.

1 Kings 8:29

Let your eyes always look toward this Temple night and day, toward the location where you have said ‘My name will reside there.’ Listen to the prayer that your servant prays in this direction.

A few years ago, I received a letter requesting prayers from a friend of mine, who works as a missionary in Zambia, Africa. The letter astonished me. I could not believe that the accident described in the letter really happened and wished it was a bad dream. But unfortunately, it was real.

On April 27th of that year, an airplane crashed on the route from Zambia to Senegal and all members of Zambia's national football team were killed. A national funeral was held the next day, in which the Prime Minister of Zambia, Mr. Chiluba, began to talk before praying to the Lord;

“Please let me pray before I start my speech. Because we want to dedicate this entire country to the Lord God. My fellow citizens of this nation, please pray with me.”

“Oh, Lord. You are the Lord of the people who fear you. This morning, we kneel down at your feet. This country belongs to you. May you lead us and may your will alone be carried out. You are the one who gives, and you are the one who takes away. May only your holy name be praised. We are all just strangers and foreigners in this world. We are born naked, and we will return to God naked. Blessed be the name of God.”

“Our beloved young people would never even have imagined that their time to be called up to heaven would come so early. They were never more sinful than others. Lord, we praise your precious name. We do not know when we will be drawn up to heaven.”

John 3:16

For this is how God loved the world: He gave his unique Son so that everyone who believes in him might not be lost but have eternal life.

“On hearing about this tragedy, we are totally dismayed and do not know how to come to terms with it. We cannot understand why this has happened. But we are sure that you are standing by us. Lord, we lost our loved ones. But, you are the one who never fails to provide us with the help we need. Lord, please grant now the peace of mind that only you can give us. Your peace is far better than any peace that man can imagine. Now, in this country, it is your peace alone that all people need. Lord, I praise and admire you. I surrender all we have to you.”

The prime minister was choked with tears several times, but he continued his prayers.

“Lord, we praise you. We praise your name. No matter what happens, we belong to you and we will continue to proclaim our trust in you to the whole world. We praise you as our Lord. This is not the first time for us to experience your guidance which is beyond our comprehension. Once upon a time, your beloved Job lost his ten children in one day along with all of his wealth and property. Even in the total darkness of this moment, our Lord, we trust you. I confess with all people of this country. The Lord Jesus, you are our only God, our Lord and you are the one to govern this country. We will win the victory one day. The Lord will make us victors. By the name of the Lord, I devote my prayer to you. Amen.”

I can't imagine any other prime ministers praying this way. He cried out with his fellow citizens and devoted this sincere prayer in the midst of the bafflement and tears. It is exactly the expression of true worship, true faith and true praise that the Lord seeks from us. I hope that this new building will be filled with a faith like this as well as affection for the Lord, love, prayer and praise.

I would like to conclude this sermon with the words that the famous German composer, John Sebastian Bach cried out from the bottom of his heart.

“Oh Lord, you have done so many great deeds in my life. One thousand tongues are not enough to praise all the wonderful things you have done for me. How great are you? You are filled with glory. You are so graceful and benevolent. I am overwhelmed at how rich and deep your love is! So, again today, I am compelled to sing a song to praise and glorify you.”

Note: This is a summary of what Mr. Beck spoke at the ceremony to celebrate the completion of the chapel of the Christian Assembly on September 12th, 2010.