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A Publication of the San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church  
"Growing together and reaching out in the love of Christ"

# Firmly Rooted

"Just as you received Christ Jesus as Lord, continue to live in Him, rooted and built up in Him." Col. 2:6a

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## Learning and Living – for God

I remember times when I was living at home, where my mom would pull me into the kitchen and attempt to show me some of her tips and tricks in cooking. You can imagine the resistance I put up and the scant attention I gave her as I thought, "what is mom up to?" It wasn't until I had moved out that I realized what she was trying to provide -- kitchen skills that would last a lifetime! Of course I could not remember any of her bits of wisdom and chagrined, I would call, asking her what was her technique for washing rice, cooking various meats and of course baking chocolate cookies! Each and every time she would patiently and gladly recount the advice for me...

I know that the Lord works in my life every day, providing valuable lessons about what it means to live as a Christian. Just as it was with my mom, there are times when I just don't get what God was trying to teach me. I remember three years ago our university IT department decided to create department awards for excellence in customer service, technical expertise and so on. After almost seven years of hard work at our Help Desk, of course, I had felt that I deserved one of those awards. I could almost imagine the applause as my name was announced...of course I did not win and in that moment I felt disappointed and yes, perhaps a little bitter. I was a sorry sight indeed!

As I sat on BART on the way home, God gently reminded me of the blessings I had experienced there at the university. It was by God's grace I was able to get the job at all without any real experience. God provided a great work environment and employment stability. There was great comfort, realizing what He had provided for me. A verse came to mind from Romans: "*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship.*" Romans 12:1.

I then realized what God had been trying to reveal to me on that day, that I needed to give myself fully to Him, and to live and serve God at church, at home, *and at work*. I had to ask myself, am I there at the university to serve for the accolades of man and my own ego, or was it for God? In that BART seat, I asked God to forgive me for such selfishness and to help me serve Him fully.

I pray each day that I can come to work knowing that there are opportunities to serve and to reveal God through my words and actions. I know that each day God will find a way to teach me, and if I forget, will patiently and graciously remind me.

-- Ken Yoshioka

# Growing in Christ

By: *Kevin Masuda*

On June 15, 1988, in Berkeley California, I was born into this world. I grew up going to church and Sunday School at San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church. I also went to Redwood Christian School from kindergarten until my senior year in high school, going to chapel during the middle of the week, participating in Christmas plays and memorizing Bible verses. I grew up with many of the same people, some of them from k-12! My school and church life played a big part in me accepting Christ. I cannot remember specifically but that is where I believed in the story of Jesus and labeled myself as a "Christian."

As I hit high school, I began to resent the church and did not want anything to do with church, although I kept going by the urging of my mother. After graduating high school it was time to say goodbye to the small school I had grown up in and say hello to the University of the Pacific. I began my freshman year incredibly nervous, not knowing what to expect. I became involved in Intervarsity, one of the only Christian ministries on campus. I attended on and off my freshman year. I eventually stopped going to Intervarsity and church altogether.

All my life I knew the basic story of Jesus, I knew the memory verses and knew how to give Christian answers, but I honestly struggled with a lot growing up that made me bitter. I grew up with circumstances that were difficult for me to deal with as a child. I started to become bitter and didn't understand why church people always seemed happy, it almost seemed fake to me. Many times because of my bitterness I started to judge everyone that I would know and run into. I became reclusive and almost anti-social as a result.

As I grew up I suppressed and struggled with being bitter and it became concentrated on my family and Christians that I knew. With this bitterness and anger, I lost my love for the church as well as for God. I never really had that relationship with God and as a result I was never quite happy with what God had for me in this life. As I hit college, separating myself from what I grew up in, the church and Christian customs, I turned to live life in the worldly sense. I fully embraced my bitterness, I almost became like a Pharisee, judging Christians and non-Christians. As a result, my grades, family life and career path went to shambles. With all of this happening, spring break hit and I visited my cousin in New York in order to shadow her at work. She gave me the advice of finding a mentor in my profession. As I got back from New York that year I went on the search for a mentor in business.

I had only recently gotten to know this guy, Harrison Yoshioka. We played tennis and then I kept running

**Kevin Masuda was baptized on Sun., April 25, testifying of his new life in Christ.**



into him. Harrison and I spent a lot of time on the tennis courts and we began to talk a lot. I enjoyed our conversations and we had a lot in common as far as our Japanese American culture. I ended up telling him about how I grew up and I shared about my personal struggles. He pointed out some of what I was doing and how my circumstances growing up shouldn't cause me to judge others. Harrison turned out to be a strong Christian. From some of our talks, I wanted to seek God out, because I was tired of being burdened by my bitterness.

Since that time I have gotten to know Jesus Christ in so many ways. This started this last summer, when I sought to build back my relationship with Christ and the church. My biggest fear was if the church would accept me again. To my surprise and excitement, they did! I remember seeking out fellowship. I attended the College+ Bible study and after three weeks, I remember I was very happy and excited to be going to church again and finally being involved in fellowship more.

Shortly after attending church again, I can remember the news of my mother possibly having breast cancer. Through this experience, I took what I was learning which was the importance of fellowship and community and I asked for prayer. Usually something that I would normally not do, showing vulnerability and sorrow, I sought out support from my Christian brothers and sisters. God showed Himself to me this last summer in that after so much prayer, my mother did not end up having cancer. Since then I have gotten to know so many people from our church.

With God revealing Himself to me, I have gotten to learn and grow so much more. I have gotten more involved with Intervarsity at UOP as well as really studying the Bible more. Roy Cormier is one of the many that I have gotten to know, that has gone through scripture with me to help me grow. On April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2010, my walk as a Christ-follower begins in a new way as I get baptized and declare my faith in Christ to our whole church body.

# Art of Gaman

Thank you to all who came on Fri., March 19, 2010, for the 55+ monthly potluck lunch and viewing of Rick Quan, Video Productions DVD, "Art of Gaman," which was done in collaboration with author, Delphine Hirasuna's, book: "Art of Gaman, Arts and Crafts from



Rick and Delphine shared their experience in creating the DVD and her book, followed by a question and answer period. *We ran out of time for everyone to share their experiences, so we will have a follow up meeting on May 28.* The book and DVD are now on exhibit at the Smithsonian Institute until January 2011.

While interned, the Japanese Nisei's made the best of a desperate situation by using the gifts that God gave them in the spirit of Gaman (perseverance) and created beautiful works of art and crafts from materials found in camp such as: shells, wood, bone, spoon, paper, etc. Thank you to: Cowl Adachi, Marilyn Kadomatsu, Alice Kam, Midori Konno, Kay Mayeda, Ruth Naruo, Irene Nishimura, Michi Nishimura, Phil Wong, Pat Toda, and Emi Tabuchi who brought beautiful works of art to share.

God truly orchestrated every detail and provided for all our needs for this event. As the young and old in the audience watched the moving DVD which encapsulates camp memories; mixed emotions resurfaced as we remembered World War II when U.S. Executive Order 9066 was implemented in 1942 incarcerating 120,000 Japanese



the Japanese American Internment Camps, 1942-1946." We had about 80 people sign-up and 116+ people showed up. Thank you to all who helped in the kitchen, registration, table decorations, artifact contributors, floral arrangement, and food.

Rev. George Toda gave an introductory message sharing his internment memories and paralleling the story of Joseph and how God brought good out of a sad and unjust situation and that God makes no mistakes.



Americans. We are so thankful for God's great love which has sustained us and continues to strengthen our faith. "Truly His ways are higher than our ways, and His thoughts nobler than our thoughts." *Isaiah 55:9*

Praise God for a memorable day!

-- Submitted by Emi Tabuchi



The National Day of Prayer is an annual observance held on the first Thursday of May, inviting people of all faiths to pray for the nation. It was created in 1952 by a joint resolution of the U.S. Congress and signed into law by President Harry Truman.

The day is set aside for a time of personal repentance and prayer as well as a time for the Christian community to come together to pray corporately for American's leaders and families. We value this national observance because it is based on our understanding that God desires for His people to humble themselves, to repent and to pray.

**Join us on May 6 at 7:30 p.m.** at our church as we pray for America. On this special day, look for opportunities to join in prayer with others at work, at public meeting places such as libraries, city halls, public parks. See out information by looking at the National Day of Prayer website: [NationalDayofPrayer.org](http://NationalDayofPrayer.org).

Respond to God's call to pray for God's blessing on America. Our theme verse for this year is Nahum 1:7, "The Lord is good, a refuge in times of trouble. He cares for those who trust in Him."

-- Eiko Kanzaki