

The English Page with Excerpts

Handicapped But Joyful

Rev. Mutsuo Watanabe



Pastor and Mrs Mutsuo Watanabe's second child and son Daiki was born with No-Spleen Syndrome, heart defects, and other complications. The doctor

concluded he was unlikely to live longer than 2 or 3 years at most. Daiki would never walk or even eat normally; but God had plans to bless and care for him, and to teach the family that life has meaning though it lasted only 16 years.

The Watanabe's moved to Vancouver, Canada while Daiki was still two years old, so Mutsuo could attend seminary. However, having a special needs child, the move to Canada turned out to be one of the greatest blessings to the family. As residents they were able to get top quality attention and help from the well-staffed and comprehensive medical care as well as welfare infrastructure.

Upon returning to Japan, the Watanabe's pastored a church in Aichi Prefecture and Daiki was an integral part of it. Daiki passed away in 2001 and his father writes: "I sometimes have dreams of Daiki and in the dream he is walking... I feel heaven is closer now, like it's right there. There are tears of sadness, but most of my tears are those of joy and we are filled with hope that we'll meet again."

Unexpected Encounter



Bungo & Yuko Sasaki

This story is about two co-workers who came to know each other through a cycling trip with friends and decided to pursue marriage.

Bungo and Yuko got married in April of this year. They seemed an unlikely pair since Yuko was 10 years older than Bungo, who was not a Christian when the two first met.

In the beginning, Bungo had no intention in receiving Christ; that wall eventually came down as he became interested in what made Yuko different and was curious to find out why she was not like others. Another stumbling block to his scientific mind was the creation account in the Bible, but Yuko's pastor helped to explain the scriptures and to answer his questions.

Yuko waited patiently and eventually Bungo decided to accept Jesus Christ. He asked for Yuko's hand in marriage on the same day he was baptized and the two received their families' blessing.

When asked about the age difference between them, Bungo says that it is not an issue between them at all, though Yuko

admits that her husband has a lot more physical energy. Since there are so many unmarried Christian women in their 30's in the church today, their story may give hope to some for finding a spouse.



Discovering My Own Sinfulness through Family Feud

Michitaka Kanenari

Michitaka Kanenari in Los Angeles, married in 1990 to Leslie from Missouri, shares about the battles and victory which he experienced early in marriage. He writes:

"Beginning in 1993 after our first child Grace was born, our lifestyle changed and our relationship started going downhill..."

"One day, our anger escalated, we yelled, and we started saying terrible things which we never should. This particular time, it became so bad that I started to shake all over in anger. I couldn't just bring my hand down on the table, throw things, or punch a hole through the door as before. This was too much. And not knowing what to do, I ran out of the house..."

"In the heat of my anger and thoughts of wanting to even kill my wife, God spoke: 'Michitaka, this is why Jesus died on the cross. He died for those sins which reside in your heart...' It was then for the first time that I truly understood the real meaning of the cross and I began to cry out in repentance. Oh God, I'm so sorry. I'm so sorry..."

This was the turning point in their marriage...

Raising Boys Part 2



The problem with many of us fathers is that we walk roughshod over our son's feelings in the name of 'preparing them for life', and end up making them angry and alienating them. We must be careful that we don't push 'being a man' in such a way that it closes their hearts off. I believe that's why in Ephesians 6:4 it specifically addresses us fathers and says, 'Fathers, do not provoke you children to anger...' We see that Jesus had a very close relationship with the Father which was never severed even when he was required to say and do extremely difficult things. It was based on a complete trusting relationship. Rather than angering our sons, we fathers need to be building trust.

"When it comes to education of our children, there is a strong temptation in our culture to just aim for the highest education rather than helping our children to discover their personal skills, gifting, and calling. Are we pushing OUR agenda or are we pursuing GOD'S plan for their lives?"

Katie Cole's Tidiness Technique



Many Christians would love to be able to tell people about Jesus, but say that they don't know what to say or how to bring up the subject. One of the easiest ways to share your faith is by what people see when they enter your home. If you've taken the time to make your home a place where people want to come, and they feel comfortable being there then you have taken the first step in being able to share your faith naturally. If you have a Christian calendar on the wall or an interesting decoration on a table, it can become a conversation starter about what it means or where it came from or who made it.

I try to make our home a place where people feel comfortable to come and stay. I have decorations on the walls and sitting out that are interesting and good conversation starters. I'm not one who changes my decorations very often, though. Life is pretty busy so I concentrate on keeping my home organized and clean!

One time that I do change our decorations however, is at Christmas. I love to celebrate Christmas! It's a perfect time to tell others about Jesus since it's the day we celebrate His birth. There is probably no better time of year to be able to talk about Jesus with your family and friends. Christmas is celebrated in Japan with music, lights, decorations, Santa, eating fried chicken and Christmas cake. It's a holiday that most people know about although many people don't know about the real meaning.

Homosexuality and Me No. 2

"I Wanted to Die" Anonymous

In the previous issue I talked about my up-bringing and how I struggled with my homosexual attraction. This time I would like to share about how God poured out His immeasurable love upon me and led me to salvation.

I wanted to talk to someone about my struggles with homosexuality and my being HIV positive but, to my dismay, the few that I opened my heart to did not identify with me nor help me carry this burden on my heart.

In desperation, I remember crying out, "If there really is a God, why is it that I have to suffer such?"

"Am I going to stick to my old self and die, or will I cast aside the old homosexual self and follow God? The choice was mine."

No matter how hard I tried in my own strength I could not get rid of the old self, the homosexual nature. But when I faced the choice of living or dying, I decided I wanted to give myself another chance to live, and so I gave myself to God and said "I believe in you." That was March 2006.



Movie Review

The Blind Side (2009)

This is not just your average sports movie about a young man who rises from poverty into football stardom.

Based on the true story of a white Christian family who takes in an African-American boy off the streets, this movie is a refreshing change from the usual Hollywood fare of worldly role models. It offers a fair look at this family's beliefs while not being overly preachy in its spiritual message. While it is not without faults, the Tuohy family is a positive portrayal of genuine Christians for the most part and celebrates the power of compassion and perseverance.

Despite these good themes, the movie does have some questionable content that gave it a PG-13 rating. It contains some violence (such as fist fights or flashbacks to an abusive childhood) and an implied sexual scene (between Mr. & Mrs. Tuohy) as well as crude language and swearing.

Ask Rev. Hori



Q. What are the benefits of reading books to your children? You mentioned in your last answer that you used to read to your children and have discussions before going to bed. Could you tell us more about that and how that has influenced your children?

A. One of our favorite books was C.S. Lewis' series, Chronicles of Narnia, which my wife read to the girls over and over again. One thing I have discovered about reading good books to the children from the time they are small is that it exercises and stretches their imagination. When their imagination is used, it helps them imagine the results of their action, such as, "If I do this, it will possibly lead to that." or "If I do this, it may hurt the other person."

It gives them the ability to project ahead and helps make a better foundation for developing good relationships.

Book Review

Kodomo ga Kowareru Ie (Homes Where Children Break Down)

Author, Atsuko Kusanagi, after retiring from her job in the Tokyo Juvenile classification office of the Ministry of Justice, became a journalist on juvenile crime. Among other issues, she analyzes the social environment of criminal youth today and delinquency found among "normal" kids which she attributes to the weakening of the family and the limitations of the educational institution to curb the trend.

The author concludes, 'Children need to hear 'You are important to me.' from a genuine heart of love and care and then 'Because I care, I am disciplining you.'