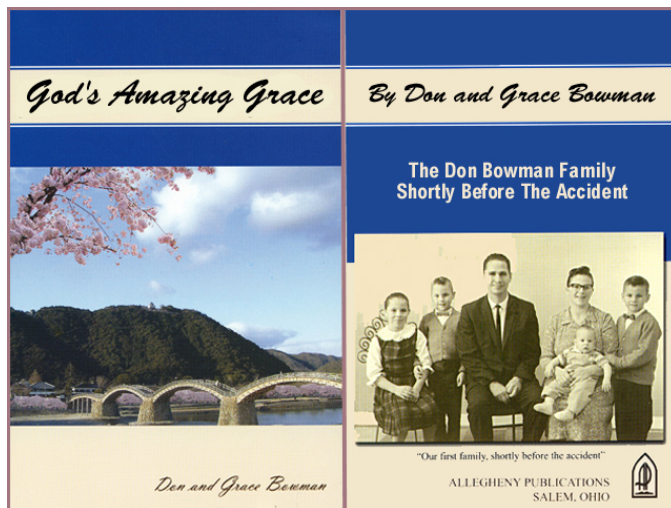


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**GOD'S AMAZING GRACE
By Rev. Don Bowman With Grace Bowman**

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(See hdm3379-01.jpg)

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DEDICATION

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We dedicate this book to the memory of our four precious children who are in heaven: Teresa, Garry, Joel, and Donnie.

This book is also dedicated to the memory of three close friends who also died in the boat accident and are in heaven: Robert Hatcher, Masaru Fujioka and Kyoko Hayashi.

* * * * *

APPRECIATION

We appreciate the many friends who encouraged us to write this book. We knew our own shortcomings as writers, and were hesitant to attempt the task. We deeply appreciate the good help of Sis. Georgia Thompson and our daughter, Kyoko, who typed the manuscript. This was certainly a great blessing to us. We appreciate Brother Spencer Johnson and Brother Rodger Moyer writing the introduction to this book. We appreciate the prayers of God's people.

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION -- by Spencer Johnson

(See hdm2279-03)

In every age, God has had heroic men and women who have jeopardized their lives for the advancement of the Gospel of Christ. We admire and marvel at the faith of J. Hudson Taylor, the courage of John G. Patton, and the sacrifice of Adoniram and Ann Judson. But in this generation, God has called some missionaries who are also expendable in His great cause. This little book, *God's Amazing Grace*, gives us an insight to the faith, courage and sacrifice of Don and Grace Bowman. Like Job, all of their children perished in a single day.

As to why God permitted the tragic boat accident in which the Bowmans lost their children and almost died themselves, we may never know. But Scripture tells us not to think it strange concerning the fiery trials that we may be called upon to endure. Excellence and virtue do not exempt us from earthly ills and adversities. The closer we are to God, the greater the trials are apt to be. The loftiest peaks are most familiar with storms and thunderbolts. We are not to decide that we are saints because we suffer, but neither are we to conclude that our God has forsaken us because our way lies through deep and stormy seas. The progress of Christian missions is by the sacrifice of bodily peace, fortunes, comforts and lives of the righteous. It is a part of God's redemptive plan.

When I attended the funeral of the Bowmans' first four children, I wondered if they would ever have the heart to return to their field of labor. But in a few days, they boarded a plane and went back to Japan. Like the Apostle Paul, None of these things moved them. They must finish the ministry that God had given them among the Japanese people.

I feel confident that the reading of this narrative by the Bowmans will prove to be a spiritual blessing.

Spencer Johnson,
General Moderator Emeritus
Bible Missionary Church

* * * * *

INTRODUCTION -- by Rodger Moyer

(See hdm2279-03)

From the very early days of the Bible Missionary Church, the spirit and influence of Don and Grace Bowman have been wonderfully manifested and felt among us.

God led them to leave family and home--
and they did not shirk the cross.
God placed upon them a burden for the Japanese--

and they did not shirk the cross.
God asked them to sacrifice in a great measure,
giving up their children--
And they did not shirk the cross.

When the tragic news of their boat accident reached this country, our church was shocked almost into disbelief. Why would it happen when they were being so obedient to God? We reeled with unanswered questions.

Then we witnessed the spirit of Bro. and Sis. Bowman. . .

Shocked? -- Yes.

Grief Stricken? -- Yes.

Hurting? -- Yes.

But their faith in God never wavered. They proved to us that even in the most severe test, they had a faith that would not shrink.

The Bible Missionary Church has such confidence in them that six times now Bro. Bowman has been elected General Foreign Missions Secretary. This has brought us into a very close relationship, not only in our work, but also in our personal friendship. Bro. Bowman and I have worked together, traveled together, prayed together. I have never known a man of deeper piety.

The Bowmans have a profound devotion to God; their love for missions is unsurpassed. It is my desire that as you read this book, you will be able to sense the same spirit in them which I have been privileged to know -- and that you will be encouraged to trust in the God Who never fails as you encounter the storms of your life.

Praying for the Harvest,
Rodger L. Moyer
General Moderator
Bible Missionary Church

* * * * *

01 -- BRIEF PERSONAL HISTORY

(See hdm3379-04.jpg)

Amazing grace! How sweet the sound
That saved a wretch like me!
I once was lost, but now am found,

Was blind, but now I see!

B. T. and Minnie Bowman were proud parents when their eighth child, Donnie Leon, joined their family. Both parents were born in Texas, near Pilot Point where the Nazarene Church was first organized in 1908, but were living in Elk City, Oklahoma, when I, their tow-headed son, came on the scene on January 31, 1934.

My father farmed on a small scale while in Oklahoma, but when I was eight months old, pulled up stakes and left for Idaho. It would have been quite a sight to see these "Okies" in their old Model T Ford loaded to the gills with every possession tied on and around it, as they made their way to a place where many hardships and new experiences were to be faced.

Being poor and having just the bare necessities of life, my hardworking mother became a master at managing to keep her family's hungry mouths fed -- though food was quite scarce at times. She lovingly sacrificed for her family, always putting her own needs to the last, even if it meant forfeiting her meager portion of the meal.

Though my father was not a religious man, his grandmother was an "old fashioned shouting Methodist." His mother was a real saint of God, but she passed away when my father was still a small boy. His father backslid, married an unsaved woman, and they lived and died without God. After living a life of sin, drinking and gambling, my father was miraculously saved in the nursing home before passing away. My precious mother also found the Lord later in life. Being the youngest of the children (three of my siblings died in infancy), I guess you could have called me a "mama's boy." She had a stroke and after much patient suffering went to be with the Lord in 1966.

While very young, I had many experiences. Our family, being transient workers, lived in all kinds of places. The poorest and most run-down house in town -- that was usually where the Bowmans lived. Though the inside furnishings were very humble, it was kept "spic and span" by my faithful mother.

We didn't always have the privilege of living in a "house." We lived in tents, and once when in Bakersfield, California, where it gets up to 120 degrees and some say you can fry an egg on the sidewalk in the shade (if you can find any shade), we lived in a one-room tin building. A fan? I seldom remember of having such a luxury as that when a child. Before entering the tin room, we had to hose it off so we could attempt to enter the hot "oven". While in McCall, Idaho, my father did his best to thatch a roof over us made of branches while we "roughed it." A tub was turned upside down with a hole cut in it and that was used for our cooking stove.

To make do for the winter, Dad would buy a sack of potatoes and beans. If he didn't have enough money to buy these, he would borrow enough and then pay it back when spring weather permitted work. There were times when I remember

eating oatmeal with only canned milk and no sugar. There were other times when I ate it with sugar and no milk. One Christmas we had to borrow a quarter from my married sister to buy a loaf of bread.

When I was about five and living in the country between Wilder and Homedale, my brother, Wes, had a lot of rabbits that were running loose and he also had some in cages. We had a tomcat that was killing quite a few of the small rabbits. One day a friend, who was a few years older than I, came to see us. We talked about the cat killing rabbits and my friend made a suggestion.

"Let's put the cat in a gunnysack and throw it in the canal!"

This sounded like a good idea to me and we went to find a gunnysack. My brother, Wes, who was about twelve, saw the sack we were going to use, and, since it was a good one, he warned us to bring it back home. (It would have been quite difficult to drown a cat in the gunnysack and then bring the sack back home! Being young boys, we didn't fully understand this; neither did Wes.) We scurried to the canal and threw the sack in. The cat swam out and the sack started down the canal. As I leaned over to rescue the sack, I fell into the water.

There was a full head of water and it was running swiftly and smoothly. Only a few days before, the ditch rider, who was a Christian man, had looked at the canal and thought, "If someone should fall into this ditch, they'd never have a chance! They would get all tangled up in the weeds and drown." He turned off the water and cleaned out all the thistles and other debris. It was about six feet deep where I fell in and I was swept through a small culvert that passed under the road.

As I fell into the water, I began yelling and as I went under, I swallowed a big mouthful of water. Just before I passed out under the water, my last thoughts were that I would never see my mama and daddy or my puppy and kitty anymore!

When my friend, Arthur, saw me fall into the canal, he hurried a quarter of a mile back to the house for help. My brother, Wes, didn't believe him at first, but when he started crying, Wes hollered for help and took off for the ditch.

They looked for me where I fell in, and then not finding me, went to the other side of the road. About this time, a farmer came by on his tractor, with his dog running alongside. Wes quickly stopped him and they began to search for my body, but could not find it. Then the dog started barking excitedly some ways downstream, and they ran there and saw only a small part of my shirt showing out of the water. They pulled me out, and Wes, who had just learned artificial respiration, began to work on me. Water gushed out of my mouth, nose and ears.

By this time, my mother, father, and sister, Vada, had arrived at the canal. My father was barefoot when he heard Wes give the alarm and ran the quarter of a mile, shouting, "Ouch! Ouch! Ouch!" all the way. It is amusing to remember it now, but

certainly not then! As soon as they arrived, they had to turn around and run back (Father, still barefoot and feeling it!) to get the car. My sister, Wilma, who was eight years old, had run to the neighbors to call the doctor and everyone was praying for me as Wes and the farmer worked on me.

After a short while, I began to breathe again and they put me in the car. I remember how surprised I was when I came to and found myself in the car, when I had thought I was dying! I am sure my survival was a miracle of God's grace, for there was a lot of time involved while I was under the water. I believe God saw into the future and wanted a missionary to Japan, and so spared my life. This was my third near-drowning experience and I was to have one more in later life that truly exhibited the amazing grace of our God.

While living near Homedale, my mother became sick and had to be hospitalized. She had a serious thyroid condition with a goiter and had lost so much weight that when I visited her in the hospital, I would not have recognized her if she had not called out to me. The Doctors gave her very slim chances to live. While her life hung in the balance, she earnestly prayed that God would let her live long enough to see me, her twelve-year-old son, raised to manhood. God miraculously spared her life and she came back home to us after about six months of hospitalization.

During that six months I was much like an orphan, having to fare for myself and sometimes going hungry. Once my married sister, Sybil, came to our house and prepared delicious home-cooked meals. I ate like a starved animal, not knowing when to stop. She had to caution me. At the hospital, my mother would give me her meal if I came at meal time. My father spent long hours gambling the night away and I remember waiting hours and hours for him, lonely and afraid in the night. But Mother finally came home and life returned to what we considered normal.

At about five or six years of age, I was introduced to work in the fields. The entire family worked in the cotton fields and pea patches and whatever else was available. Occasionally I would take my shoe shine box and go out in the street downtown and shine shoes. I shined shoes for a nickel a pair. One day, a man drove up in his pickup and called to me. "Think you can make my boots shine?"

Without seeing his boots, I answered, "Yes, Sir, I sure can!" When he showed them to me, they were the dirtiest, smelliest pair of cowboy boots you ever saw. After using a half can of polish, and a hard hour's labor, the task was finished, but all the man paid me was what I regularly charged, a mere nickel.

That was not the only time a selfish man took advantage of my industriousness. I had started blocking beets when I was eight, and when I was twelve, had gotten into the heavier work of the beet and potato fields. The hard discipline and backbreaking work (so much different than today) had made me strong for my age. Walking most of the day, bent over picking up potatoes and

putting them into a sack hooked to your belt that got heavier with each step until it weighed about 80 pounds would make anyone stronger!

A friend of my father told him he needed some help with his work. My father told him, "Donnie can help you."

"If he'll do a man's job, I'll pay him a man's wage," the friend said. That entire day I stayed right with him, working laboriously. As he pitched a fork of manure, I pitched one -- one for one. Blisters formed on my hands, then broke and new ones formed. At the end of the day, he paid me only half wages. When I took my complaint to Dad, with my blistered, raw hands proving my hard work, he went to his "friend" and asked why he hadn't kept his bargain.

The "friend" replied, "After all, he's only a boy!"

While I was still a very small boy, there was a revival meeting in Wilder, Idaho, and a neighbor lady took all of my family to the services for several nights. One night I went to the altar, prayed through and was saved. I began testifying to people and telling them that I was one of Jesus' disciples. I kept the victory for quite awhile, but eventually lost out since I didn't have the privilege of being in a Christian home or attending Sunday School very often. I certainly regret that I backslid, but although I went out into sin, I could never get away from some of the things I had learned. The memory of having served Jesus kept me from going out into "deep" sin. Thank God, I never drank, smoked, swore or was immoral, since I planned to someday get back to God!

In May of 1951, I graduated from high school in Homedale, Idaho. A week later, I joined the U.S. Navy with two of my buddies. I thought this was my chance to see some of the world! I found that the world brought dissatisfaction and did not fill the void in my heart. Only God can do that!

About the same time that I joined the Navy, my only brother, Wes, joined the ranks of the Lord. He was seven years older than I, and after his conversion God called him to preach. Wes began praying earnestly that God would save me from eternal hell. His prayers put me under conviction! Thank God for praying family members!

Just before joining the Navy, I met an old-fashioned holiness preacher by the name of Bro. E. J. Wilson. He was pastor of the Nazarene Church in my hometown, and he and dear Sis. Wilson used to call on me and deal with me about my soul. I liked the Wilsons and thought to myself, that if I ever got saved, I wanted to join their church. They were praying for me also, and this increased the conviction. During this time, my friends would write and tell me they were praying for me. That would make me mad! I had so much pride on board that when asked if I was ready for Heaven, I would reply, "Well, maybe not Heaven, but I'm sure too good to go to Hell!" I tried to just turn over a new leaf and tell myself that I was a Christian, but

that just didn't work! There was no change in my heart and life. I tried to bargain with God, telling Him that if He'd let me keep the movies, I'd give Him the dance. Perhaps the next week I'd switch terms; I was always looking for a bargain. There are no bargain tables with God. One must sell out, "lock, stock and barrel."

In June of 1953, I returned home to Idaho for two weeks of furlough. I had visited my sister, Vada, and her family in Sacramento, near where I was stationed, only a couple of weeks before that. There I boasted to my nephews, Dwyane, Darrell and Gary, how tough I was and that I had not shed a tear for years. Later that same evening, I attended a church service and when the invitation was given, I found myself weeping profusely. My three nephews stood off at a distance and wondered what had happened to their Uncle Don. When we returned to their home, they said, "We thought you said you never shed tears!" My sister came to my rescue and said, "Well, this was different."

God used my furlough at that time for his own purpose. My brother, Wes, was studying for the ministry at a Bible College near Homedale. One Sunday, he filled in for a pastor who was away and preached at a little Free Methodist Church in Wilder, Idaho. This was the very town that I had given my heart to the Lord in when I was a small boy. That Sunday night, I attended church with him and his family. God deepened conviction until I made my way again to an old-fashioned mourner's bench and prayed my way back to God. God spoke peace to my troubled soul one more time, praise His wonderful Name! I didn't deserve it, but praise God, He did it anyway! How thrilled I was to have peace, joy and satisfaction in my heart again. I have never gotten over that day and I don't ever expect to!

The next Sunday morning, true to my earlier desires, I became a member of Bro. E. J. Wilson's church. Praise God for the memory of dear Brother Wilson who has gone to be with the Lord. (Sis. Wilson has now joined her husband.) I remember the many times when we would be in a service where Ruby Wilson was in attendance. She would give a victorious testimony and almost without fail, she would say something like, "Brother Don, do you remember the time when 'Husband' and I picked you up when you were walking home from school and invited you to church? Do you think he is looking down and seeing you are a missionary?"

I returned to San Francisco where I was stationed and began attending the First Church of the Nazarene. I began seeking holiness as I wanted all that God had for me. Some things about theology were not clear to me, but I was hungry and thirsting after righteousness. On September 13, 1953, three months after being saved, I attended the evening evangelistic service. God spoke to my heart during the meeting and told me He was going to sanctify me that night! I was so excited that I don't remember one thing about his message. When he finished preaching, I rushed to the altar and wept and prayed my way through to victory. It seemed to me like God scrubbed my heart down with a scrub-brush and then hosed it out until it was clean. Praise God for purity of heart! Praise the Lord for old-fashioned victory! I

am blessed and my heart is full as I am writing this. Praise God for up-to-date victory!

A few months after being sanctified, I was transferred from San Francisco to the U.S.S. Kenneth Whiting, a seaplane tender that was headed for Iwakuni, Japan. In the human, I did not want to go to Japan. I was afraid I would get seasick and, sure enough, I got so sick that I thought I was going to die and sometimes thought it would be easier if I did die! But, finally, the ship arrived in Yokosuka, Japan. After a couple of days there, we went on down to Iwakuni.

One night, while anchored in Iwakuni, God called me to preach His glorious gospel. As a boy I used to sell newspapers on the street, especially during World War II, and I would watch the newspapers as they came off the press while waiting at the office. While I was praying aboard the ship, I could see a press, but Bibles were coming off of it instead of newspapers. Then I could see hands leafing through pages of a Bible and a voice saying in distinct tones, "Preach my Word!" "Preach my Word!" I felt very inadequate, especially since I stuttered very badly, even to the point that I was unable to say my own name at times! In spite of this handicap, I told the Lord that I would trust Him for the grace and strength. I began preaching a couple of days later to the Protestants aboard the ship. Our ship's chaplain was a Catholic, and he was happy and relieved that I would be preaching during the Protestant services.

One of my first sermons to the men was a rapid-fire, red-hot message on hypocrites. (I had a chapel full of them!) I spoke so rapidly, it is a wonder that I was even understood, and the message lasted only ten minutes or so! (Now I'm doing good to get it all into an hour's time!)

While I was stationed in Iwakuni, for about four months, another serviceman and I began meetings in a Japanese home, taking turns preaching through an interpreter. God blessed our efforts and souls were saved, both on the ship and in the Japanese home. I am sure we had more zeal than knowledge, but God helped us! We rented a shrine and held a week's revival meeting, and quite a number turned to Christ and were saved. We give God the glory for every victory!

After becoming a Christian and while still in the service, God began to shed light on my path. Though I had heard no preaching against them, God showed me that the movies, the dances, the worldly music and entertainment were not for me! I had been a movie-fiend and would watch the same movie over and over, and I loved to dance. I was strongly attached to worldly music, but after being saved, I was very uncomfortable around it. I immediately obeyed and walked eagerly in the light when the Lord convicted me of these things. I did not want anything to rob me of a close relationship with the Lord! It thrills me at how the faithful Holy Spirit led me from one step to another without hearing any preaching on it.

I returned to the States and was discharged from the service on December 9, 1954. Many things have happened on December 9th! My brother, Wes, was discharged nine years earlier on December 9th; our boat accident, which took the lives of seven people, happened on December 9th; and Bobby was born a year later on December 9th. I returned to my home in Idaho and enrolled in a nearby Bible School. While studying at this school, I attended the meetings held in a tent at Midway, Idaho. I also had the privilege of meeting in the old box factory which was a real blessing to my heart, and I am sure I shall never forget the shouts of victory and the precious presence of the Lord. These meetings resulted in the organizing of the Bible Missionary Church.

On April 27, 1956, I married Grace Watson, whom I had known for several years. (See hdm3379--05.jpg) We had been attending the same church in Homedale, Idaho, and she was the eighth child in a family of ten children . . . eight of them boys! Her two younger brothers, Kenneth and David, were called to preach. David and family were missionaries to Mexico for many years, and Kenneth and family pastored in Homedale, Idaho. Grace's parents (See hdm3379-06.jpg) were spiritual, sacrificial praying saints in the Bible Missionary Church and gave generously to the work of the Lord for years. Grace had been raised around the family altar and was saved at an early age. She has been a true companion who has always encouraged me to mind God wherever He might lead us and to stay true to the old-fashioned way of holiness! She has been brave in sorrow and patient during the trials that have come our way. She has been a hard worker, a dear wife and a good mother to our children.

Grace had the privilege of caring for her dear aged parents, the last eight years of their lives. For five of those years, she cared for them in their own homestead, where her mother had lived since a very young lady. Later we moved them into our home in Homedale. Both of them were on hospice care with terminal illnesses, but were with us up to the end, until their glorious homegoings . . . Dad in 1989, at age 95, and Mom in 1990, at the age of 91. God bless their memory!

A few months after our marriage, we began pastoring a small church in Kearney, Nebraska. We then pastored in Washington and in Oregon. One time while living in Kearney, we made a trip to visit relatives. On our way home, our tire blew out and we did not have any money to buy another one! I told my folks who were visiting from Idaho that I wouldn't be surprised if a check was waiting for us when we returned home. Sure enough! A letter from Bro. Griffith was in the mailbox. He said God told him we had a need and he enclosed an offering. We also received other offerings in the mail, so there was enough to buy the tire! Later as the needs became greater, His supply became greater. While still pastoring in Kearney, God allowed us to go through many testing times, with small salaries, often not knowing where the next meal was coming from. The Shrefflers and Paynes will remember the many times they invited us for delicious meals! How we enjoyed them! That was a real treat compared to our usual soup and sandwiches.

In our second pastorate, where we had no regular salary, we pastored the Hulet family. Bro. and Sis. Hulet cared for their four grandchildren, Bob, Sharon, Judy, (now Judy Hastings), and Sheryl, after their father was killed. The Hulets treated us like family and were delighted whenever we came to see them and made us feel welcome (even if it was meal time, which it often was because we had no food at times). I remember one cold winter in Goldendale when we could not afford oil for our heater and often went to bed so cold that it would take about an hour to warm up enough to fall off to sleep.

While there, we had an evangelist, but we were very short of money and were not able to buy meat that would be pleasing to the taste. The evangelist suggested ox-tail soup! It was Gracie's first time to hold a hairy ox tail in her hands and she did not know to skin it, but just washed it thoroughly and boiled it, adding vegetables. How appetizing the soup looked until tiny hairs floated to the top, causing our hungry appetites to rather dwindle away!

* * * * *

02 -- CALL TO JAPAN

'Twas Grace that taught my heart to fear
And Grace my fears relieved;
How precious did that Grace appear
The hour I first believed.

Many times after we began pastoring in the United States, I thought about Japan. While in Bible School, I was president of the Foreign Missions Band, even though I didn't have a definite call to the mission field. After we were first married, I wrote a letter to a Christian Japanese friend of mine in Japan, but he had passed away, and I received no answer. While we were pastoring in Seattle, Washington, I thought about studying the Japanese language at the University there, but then decided against it since I didn't have a definite call. After several years, and still no word from the Lord about going to Japan, I was about ready to quit considering it.

In 1963, we went to Ontario, Oregon, to pastor. It was a nice little city about thirty miles from my parents and thirty-five miles from my wife's parents. They had recently built a nice brick veneer church with a three-bedroom parsonage in the back section. This seemed like an ideal place to work for several years! The people were very kind to us and we enjoyed living in Ontario. There were a lot of Japanese people who lived there and they even had a Japanese church and a Buddhist temple. The Japanese pastor lived only half a block from us and I loved talking to the Japanese people about Japan. I would even try the few Japanese expressions that I had learned. Some of them understood me and this made me happy. Through this, my mind was drawn again to Japan. I began to look to the Lord again concerning a call to Japan.

I began reading a couple of Sis. Billie Holstein's books on India. At that time, they were trying to get a missionary couple into that needy country. My heart really went out to those people as I read about them, and I told the Lord that if they couldn't find anyone else to go, I would be willing to go if it was His will. Daily, I prayed about the mission fields of India and Japan. Even though my pull had always been to Japan, I was willing to go to India if the Lord desired.

One night in March 1964, I felt the time had come for me to tarry before the Lord and find out His will for me concerning a call to the mission field. I wanted my call to be very definite! I had heard other missionaries say, "Don't go, unless you have a definite call, because you won't stay once you get there!" I knew there would be trials and problems that would come, and so a definite call was extremely essential to being a faithful, successful missionary. I went into my study, dropped on my knees and began to seek the face of the Lord. I didn't want my will, but only God's will. I was ready to go or ready to stay. I asked the Lord to silence every voice but His own. I prayed earnestly for two or three hours. I wanted a call so definite that I could stand no matter what might come our way. I asked God for a special promise from His Word if He was calling me to the foreign field. Shortly after midnight, God spoke to me through His Word and told me that He was sending me! Not man, nor the church, but God Himself was sending me. The Scripture He gave me was Romans 10:14-15:

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher? and how shall they preach except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things."

God assured my heart with this scripture that this was His perfect will. I went to bed, but was too excited to get much sleep! When my wife woke up the next morning, I told her about my call. She didn't fight it at all, but went to prayer and God assured her also that this was His divine will. Our three children, Teresa, Garry, and Joel, (See hdm3379-07.jpg) were excited about the prospect of going to a foreign field.

I called our general moderators, Bro. Dodd and Bro. Cook, and told them that God had called me to the mission field. I asked about India and they said someone else had been appointed there. Now I was free to go to the place in which I had been interested for so long, the land of Japan!

Since it was almost Easter, we decided to wait until then to tell the local church. That Easter Sunday morning, when we received our Easter missionary offering, my wife and I, and our three children went to the front of the church and told them we didn't have much money to put in the offering plate, but we were offering five lives for the mission field. Tears flowed freely that morning as I told them about our call. God's presence was very close.

A few weeks later, Bro. George Roberts, the General Foreign Missions Secretary, and Bro. Tracy Knapp, the District Moderator of the Northwest District, came to our house. They told me they were going to have a district foreign mission tour with Sis. Billie Holstein. Both of them could not always be to every service and, since it wouldn't be ethical for only one of them to travel with Sis. Billie, they were wondering who could go along and help on the tour. I kept silent about as long as I could, then I asked them if it would be all right for me to go along with them? They both thought it was a wonderful idea, so we made plans for the tour. I was to help drive the car, lead the singing, and give my testimony of how God had called me to the foreign field of Japan.

I never will forget that tour. My heart was stirred night after night as I listened to that veteran missionary of the cross tell of her many experiences in the land of India. The first night was especially precious to me. We all traveled to Kennewick, Washington, where the Carl Kinzlers were pastoring. That night, I gave my testimony about Japan before Sis. Billie preached. It was a wonderful service and hearts were stirred as she spoke. Pledges were taken for foreign missions. After the service, one dear brother came up to me and told me that when we were ready to go to Japan, he would give \$1,000 to help us! Bless his heart; he kept his promise! This touched my heart deeply. Dear Bro. Tidwell of Chattanooga, Tennessee, heard about our call, and the word got to us that he had \$5,000 for us to help buy property in Japan. Praise God again! By the time the tour was over, \$25,000 had been pledged for General Foreign Missions and approximately \$9,000 had been pledged to help us get to Japan! Certainly God was moving in our behalf to get us to the land of His calling.

Shortly after that, I went to Stillwater, Oklahoma, for a revival meeting and on the last Sunday afternoon, we had a missionary rally. Both Bro. Dodd and I preached. An offering was taken and dear Sis. Randolph gave \$1,000 for Japan; God was still moving in our behalf!

A little while before we were to meet the General Board, we went to a certain place for a revival meeting. I had been praying about the pledges I owed: Bible School pledges, Foreign Mission pledges, etc. We still owed about \$400, and, though it was with much reluctance, we decided not to pledge any more, for we wanted to go debt-free before the General Board. Then at our last camp meeting before going, our children had measles so my wife had to miss a lot of the services. Sunday afternoon, it was decided that she should attend the service. This she did, knowing in her heart she couldn't give toward the campground need that was being presented that afternoon. But God had different plans! At the end of the service, Bro. Cook made this statement, "Whatsoever God saith to you, do it!" Her heart began to pound as God began speaking to her about giving for the first cabin, but she tried to push it aside. Then as they went to prayer, the conviction grew stronger and stronger -- she knew she must give! This was a first-time experience for her, for I had always taken the initiative. Not knowing how much a cabin would cost, she

stood up shaking and weeping, and told the crowd that God wanted us to give the first cabin. Upon inquiring on how much the cabin was, she was told \$300. Bro. Cook said, "Well, we'll make one in memory of the Bowmans and that can be their cabin when they are on furlough." Upon returning home, she hesitantly broke the news to me . . . rather crudely! She said, "You'll croak when you hear what I did today!" I said, "You better not have!" After hearing her story, I apologized and said, "God will supply as He always has!" Now we owed \$700!

During the revival meeting that I spoke of earlier, an elderly lady invited us to her house for dinner. After dinner, she hugged my wife and began to cry. She told us that God had told her to give us a little of her "nest egg." She asked me to meet her the next day to take her to the bank. I didn't know whether to expect \$25 or \$50, but she handed me a check for \$1,000! Needless to say, I was shocked. She wanted it to go directly to us instead of going through the local church, which was the usual procedure. I asked her if she was sure this was God's will and she was convinced it was. She didn't want anyone to know her name, so I am withholding it, but may God bless her richly for her generosity! I asked her what the money was for, and she said it was for whatever need I had. I told her about the pledges and she said it was fine. Following the leading of the Lord, I paid tithe on the money, paid off the pledges and had about \$200 to help us get to Japan! Praise God! He answers prayer and supplies our needs! He cannot fail us!

To go to the foreign field, one must have a visa. To get a visa, you must be recommended by a church board, mission board, or someone that guarantees support. Then usually, you must be recommended by someone who lives in the country where you wish to go. This is usually another missionary of the same group. In our case, we had no church in Japan -- we were going to pioneer a new work. Who could help us from Japan?

Years before, when I was a small boy, I had met a Japanese man by the name of Bro. Yutaka Akichika. He was also a good friend of my wife's folks. He was pastoring a church in Tokyo. I wrote to him and he was able to help us get our visas. It was quite a step for him, as he had to guarantee our behavior while in Japan. Thank God for this Japanese brother! I believe he is a real man of God. Thank God for answering prayer again!

In February of 1965, we went to Rock Island, Illinois, where we met the General Board of the Bible Missionary Church. We are so grateful for this group of godly men and the people they represent who are trying to get the gospel to a needy world. They listened as I told them of our call to Japan. They voted unanimously to send us. When I heard that, the tears flowed as I wept and gave praise to our Lord. God was still on the throne and guiding us in a definite way. I want to reemphasize even now, how much I appreciate the prayers, support, and cooperation of this group of men, along with all our dear faithful preachers and laymen across the church. They have stood by us down through these many years.

God used them to help bless and encourage us as we traveled from place to place doing deputation work, even down to this good hour!

During this time, my wife had what may seem to be a small need, but it was desperate to her. God provided and she received a special blessing when Sis. Erdmann gave her money for a new dress. She bought a lovely blue jersey dress that she wore the first two and a half years in Japan to nearly every church service. It was her one good dress and when it finally came apart at the waist, it was mended and re-mended several times. It proved to be a blessing never to be forgotten. God was still providing!

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03 -- ARRIVAL IN JAPAN AS MISSIONARIES

The day of our departure drew near! We met the board in February of 1965 and were scheduled to leave April 15, 1965. As April came and our deadline neared, we found ourselves in a time of mixed emotions: anxious to go to Japan, but not looking forward to leaving relatives and friends. We went to see my parents to tell them good-bye. As my father was not a Christian, he had been against us going so far away to another country. My mother had told us to be sure and then mind God. My mother was a semi-invalid, as her stroke had left her right arm and hand useless, and she had to slowly drag her right leg. She also had a cancer operation and was in poor health. When we told her good-bye, she told us we would probably never see her again in this life. I will never forget her standing there in front of their little home, by the gate, waving to us. It was very hard to leave her in that condition, but God had called us and we wanted to obey. He told us that He would reward us if we left houses, lands, and family for His sake. (True to Mother's statement, we never saw her alive again. She passed away a little over one year later. I was privileged to be able to return to the States for her funeral. Dear, precious Mom, how I loved her! I still cherish the wonderful memories I have of her.)

We then went to Seattle, where we were to depart for Japan. We took my wife's parents with us. They were not only her parents, but our closest bosom companions. My wife's youngest brother, Kenneth, and his family took all of us to Seattle where he lived. We spent a few days there together in the place where we had pastored for about four years. We visited friends and relatives and had a wonderful time, but we were still filled with mixed emotions about it all.

Would you believe our departure date was advertised on big billboards everywhere, right there in Seattle where we had pastored? Remember April 15! Surely no one would connect this with the income tax deadline, would they? Anyway, the day of our departure, April 15, 1965, arrived!

A host of relatives and friends gathered at the airport to see us off. However, our plane was having mechanical difficulties, and we were five hours late in

departure. We sang and had prayer together. Bro. Taylor, pastor of the church there, prayed for us. (Later, the Taylors spent a term in New Guinea as missionaries themselves.) Tears flowed again as we bade our loved ones good-bye. We walked down the ramp, boarded our plane, and in a few minutes were up in the air, headed for the Land of the Rising Sun!

We were an excited group on the plane. It was hard to settle down to relax, but since it was past midnight, we finally fell asleep. About ten hours later, the stewardess was telling us to fasten our seat belts and prepare for landing in Tokyo, the capital of Japan and the largest city in the world, as far as population is concerned. As we looked out the window and saw the lights of Tokyo, our hearts welled up in praise to God who had brought us to the land of our calling. We were thankful to be serving the true God who could hear and answer prayer!

We were soon on the ground and headed for the passenger terminal. All of us, even the children, were carrying luggage. Dear Bro. Akichika was waiting for us. We were certainly glad to see him again. It was cherry blossom season in Japan and it was difficult to find a hotel because of the many foreign tourists. We had to depend on Bro. Akichika, who knew the language and all that was involved, to guide us to a hotel. After calling several, we found one that could accommodate us, the "Palace Hotel." Our Japanese brother led us to it and we found that it was right across the street from the emperor's palace! You can imagine the price! When we paid the bill, we felt like we were nearly wiped out after that first short stay in Japan!

We checked in about 3:00 A.M., and although it was late, I was too excited to sleep! After lying there for a couple of hours, I got up, dressed, and went out. There were only a few people on the streets, but I began to greet them in Japanese. I didn't know enough of the language to talk to them, so I just went from one to another telling them "Good Morning" and "Good Bye!"

After awhile, I returned to our rooms to arrange for breakfast. We had been told by a travel agent before going to Japan, to make sure we didn't drink a drop of water or we would get real sick. We went to a nearby restaurant and bought some doughnuts and milk. They gave each of us a glass of water, too. We had told the children not to drink the water, but our three-year old, Joel, forgot and drank the whole glass full! After we got back to our hotel room, we wondered what to do about drinking water. We were in a nice hotel and they had ice cold water in our room. My wife decided to get out the electric frying pan that we were carrying with us and boil some water. When it cooled, we would have safe water to drink. While she was in the process of doing this, I stepped out into the hall and met another American there. I asked him if he drank the hotel water without any ill effects, and he answered in the affirmative. I happily entered our room and took a big drink of good, cold water! My family all followed my example!

The next day was Sunday, Easter Sunday! Bro. Akichika came and escorted us to his church, which was quite an experience in itself. Maneuvering in and out

among throngs of people, who were busily rushing to and fro, it was a miracle that we could even keep up with Bro. Akichika, a short, little man. We walked as fast as we could, even running to keep up! We had to make it to the scheduled train or wait for perhaps another hour! Into the subway we went, with doors closing quickly behind us. In and out we went, rushing to different trains, just barely making connections. It was quite a first experience!

I preached that morning, and Bro. Akichika interpreted for me. It was a joy to be with them in their church and especially to be in Japan on Easter Sunday! We praised the Lord over and over for helping us to get to Japan.

The next step of our journey was to travel to Iwakuni. Not realizing how important it was to make train reservations and purchase tickets beforehand, we were in a predicament now. All the trains appeared to be full! Bro. Akichika was finally able to get us seats on a local (SLOW!) train that would probably stop at every little village all the way to Iwakuni, which was about six hundred miles in distance. We hurriedly followed him to our car and with a few last minute instructions, he was gone! We were now on our own!

The seats on that train were about like park benches, hard and uncomfortable, and we sat facing each other. We were glad, though, to be on our way to Iwakuni, even in a train like that! Here, too, we figured it would be equally dangerous to drink the water, thinking that the only reason we could drink the hotel water was because of so many foreigners staying there. So, even though our throats felt parched, we abstained. When little carts came wheeling by with odd looking lunches and a supply of soft drinks, we bought some orange drinks. To our disappointment, they were warm!

All the people on the train were making over our three children and trying to talk to them. Some of them could speak a few words of English, so we were able to understand a little of what was said. The train was already very crowded and we had to keep trying to make room for more on our cramped bench! Along the way, a drunken man boarded the train. Leaning over us, he tried to talk to our children, but of course, they didn't understand him. Before long, he vomited all over the aisle, splattering on almost everyone's shoes, and my wife's legs. Excitement picked up even more when he pulled a pistol out of his pocket! Being drunk was enough, but this really alarmed everyone! We were praying that the Lord would protect all of us, and hoping that I would not have to kick the gun out of his hand! A few stops later, much to our relief, he got off the train.

(See hdm3379-07.jpg, hdm3379-08.jpg, hdm3379-09.jpg, and hdm3379-10.jpg)

After spending a nearly sleepless night, we arrived in Iwakuni early the next morning. We found a nearby hotel room where the children and their mother, who were worn out from the sixteen-hour-long, hard train ride, fell into bed to get caught up on their rest. I went out right away to try to find a house to rent. Without the

Lord's help, this would have been very difficult, but I found two prospects and back to the hotel to tell the family. The next day, we all went and chose one of the houses, which was in a Japanese rental housing project where several Americans from the Marine Base lived. A neighbor lady took us to a small second-hand furniture store where we were able to buy a two-burner hotplate, a desk, one bed, one chair, and a couple of mats for the children to sleep on the floor.

We moved the furniture into the house and began housekeeping. It was three months before we were able to purchase a refrigerator, stove and washing machine. We experienced many "new" ways of doing things! We did our laundry by hand in our newly tiled, high-sided bathtub, which supplied only cold water. If we wanted warm water, we had to build a fire under a big water tank outside, next to the house. A pipe brought the water into the house, and we could use warm water to bathe in and to wash dishes.

Although we had to overcome many other obstacles, such as knowing how to shop in their food markets, etc., we felt like we had accomplished our first big step, which was settling in to our own house in Japan. The next step was to learn the language!

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04 -- EARLY OBSTACLES AND TRIALS

The first obstacle that most missionaries encounter is the language barrier. Some of our missionaries are fortunate enough to be able to speak English in their field of labor. Learning any new language is a difficult task, but in Japan it is extremely difficult!! The Japanese language is said to be the hardest major language in the world. It has three different alphabets, two of which are comparatively easy to learn, but the third one, consisting of at least ten thousand characters, is terribly difficult to learn. Every character has from two to as many as eight or more different meanings. It is more like learning to draw than it is learning to write.

Some missionaries to Japan have given up and returned to the homeland, while others decided just to use an interpreter while they were there. Most new missionaries spend two years in a language school, and I thought there was one in Hiroshima, only about twenty-five miles away. Later, I found out the nearest one was three hundred miles away, and I was greatly disappointed. A young college student, Kazuko Iwami, volunteered to come to our house once or twice a week to help us get started on the language. She was a real big help to us. We shall never forget her kindness to us. Sometimes pastors in the States talk about starting a home mission work from "scratch." They have one thing in their favor: they know the language of the people! A foreign missionary really starts from scratch, since he cannot even communicate with the people whom he wants to reach with the saving knowledge of the gospel of our wonderful Lord.

While undertaking what seemed to be the insurmountable task of a lifetime, learning the Japanese language, the Lord worked in our lives. We began helping the housing project manager, a Japanese man, teach English to the Japanese children. In return, he let us use, free of charge, one of the rental houses for services. It was perfect! Located in the project where we lived, it was out in front, close to the main road, and being the only white one, looked more like a church building than any of the rest. We stood back amazed at the wonderful working of the Lord as He provided this place, exactly suited to our needs.

The manager let me remodel it, taking out one main partition, making it into an auditorium, and putting up a cross on the top of the building. This could be seen as the city buses and traffic passed by, which we found out later was quite an advertisement for our church.

One very hot day while I was up in the attic, strengthening the ceiling where the partition had been, the manager paid me a visit. Climbing up into that "cool" attic, with both of us in that most "comfortable" position, he began to ask me questions.

"Why are you up here working so hard on such a hot day? Why aren't you sitting back like most all the other Americans, drinking beer, while the Japanese do the work?"

With sweat pouring down my face, I told him that I counted it a privilege to do so for the opportunity to have a building in which to hold services and be able to tell the Japanese about the Lord. Then I began testifying of the great grace of God that had reached my proud, self-righteous heart. He then told me that he had at one time believed in religion, but went on to say, "If I had an experience like that, I'd believe in God, too."

During those first three months, while getting the building ready, we found a nearby Christian and Missionary Alliance church and attended regularly until our building was ready. We took our children, having them sit attentively, though they didn't understand a word. My wife played the organ in "Japanese"! (Ha!) They were grateful as they had no organist. We sat in the services and listened in case by chance we might catch a word or two. When they smiled, we smiled. When they were serious, we were serious. Before the three months were up, it was almost more than we could handle, this not being able to understand!

When our church was ready, we went door to door, passing out the advertisements for our newly-scheduled services. On the first Sunday, our interpreter came and announced she could no longer come. She had become a class president and was too busily involved in her school to help us. (Later she did, however, very kindly translate into "Romaji," a short message I would write out.) Now, what were we to do? The advertising was out . . . the building ready . . . there

was nothing left to do but dive into it with my little knowledge, completely dependent upon God!

I was able to borrow a missionary language handbook that had Bible lessons already written in Romaji (the Japanese language written in Roman letters). I read these Bible lessons for a few months with sentences like this: "Tsumi to wa nan desu Ka? What is sin? Tsumi wa Kami sama no meirei o yaburu koto desu. Sin is the transgression of God's law." When I read this, the Japanese people could understand me, IF I read it correctly and with the right pronunciation!

I don't believe I could have made it without my hands those first few services. Not knowing how to say stand up, or sit down, I gestured with my hands. Then, knowing how to say "God," I would pray, Kami Sama and then go off into English, throw in a couple of Domo Arigato's (thank you's) and end up in "Jesus' Name, Amen." We had quite a number visit our services, either to hear English spoken or to see this dumb American attempting to have church without knowing the language. After a few months, our Japanese friend began helping me translate short messages and I would read them in services until I was able to write my own short messages some months later.

Like most missionaries, if I had used an interpreter all this time, I would not have learned the language as quickly. Though it was cumbersome having to do it on my own, it was a blessing in disguise and it was helping me to become more fluent all the time.

People began to talk to me about being handicapped. "You mean you have no national pastor, no interpreter, and no more knowledge of the language than you do? What are you doing for a pastor?" I replied, "Well, I guess I'm the closest thing to a pastor they've got!"

At first, I didn't seem to sense my handicap for the thrill and excitement of being able to fulfill the call God had given. As time went on, I really did begin to feel it and it became a burden to go to church, because I would have to read another one of my written sermons in Romaji. I couldn't look up to see how the people were taking what I was reading, because if I did, I would lose my place. This was very difficult for me, as I have never used many notes in my preaching. This went on for over a year, and if I hadn't received the definite assurance from God that it was His will for us to come to Japan, we probably would have given up and returned to the States.

We had been in Japan less than six months, when one night I had a strong battle with the enemy. I was sick with the flu and lying in bed when a teenage boy from the church came over to our house and started talking to my wife. In his broken English, he complained about how long it was taking me to learn the Japanese language. My wife asked him how long he had been studying English, and he told her it was a little over five years. She then very kindly, but firmly told him

that his English was still not proficient after that long of a period. He seemed to understand her comparison and went home shortly after that, quite embarrassed. He returned later and apologized to my wife for his critical spirit, and he paid me one of the greatest compliments I could have been given by saying, "Bowman Sensei (Teacher Bowman) really loves the Japanese people."

Unfortunately, I had overheard the complaint, and the devil asked me why I had not stayed in the States where the people could understand me when I preached. He told me to give it all up and go home. I told him I was standing on God's Word and was going to obey God, regardless! Thank God for a definite call and the precious Word of God!

One night after church, I was very discouraged again with my biggest obstacle -- the language! After the family went to bed, I stayed up to pray. I brought three needs to the Lord: first, the need of revival; secondly, the need of a Japanese worker; and thirdly, the need of being able to speak in the language. God promised me all three of these! When I asked him for a promise that I could stand on, he gave me Numbers 23:19, "God is not a man, that he should lie, neither the son of man, that he should repent; hath he said, and shall he not do it? Or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good?" Hallelujah! From that night forth, God began to bless, as I let the Lord take care of the "handicap." My language ability began to improve very noticeably. Many of the Japanese complimented me, and it was a wonderful opportunity to testify about the promise of God and to give Him the glory!

Bro. and Sis. J. E. Cook came to visit us in December of 1966. I was scheduled to preach Sunday morning, and Bro. Cook was to preach Sunday night. On Saturday night, I felt God challenging me to preach in the Japanese language without reading my message! I was willing to obey, but I wanted to be sure this impression was from God. I asked my wife and the Cooks to pray for God's guidance concerning this. Sunday morning arrived, and I felt it was God's will for me to attempt this difficult task. I knew the nationals would be so polite, that even if I did poorly, they would tell me that I did very well. Therefore, I went to a neighbor friend, a Japanese lady from Hawaii, and asked her to please come and listen and give me the true verdict afterwards!

That morning there were more in church than usual because of the Cooks' visit. When it was time to preach, I was very nervous and scared. The thoughts kept coming, "Preach! . . . Not in English!" "Preach! . . . Don't read! . . . Preach in Japanese!" I prayed desperately, asking God to help me, and I preached about thirty minutes. Afterwards, Brother Cook rushed up to me and exclaimed, "You did just wonderful!" Sister Cook laughed and asked him how he knew, since he couldn't understand Japanese! He replied, "I could just tell that he did!" (We have laughed about that different times since then.)

Personally, I wasn't feeling very encouraged about the whole matter, though. I thought maybe I had done very poorly. The Japanese told me that I had done very

well, but I had expected them to say that just to be polite. After lunch, I went over to my neighbor's and asked her how I did. She told me that I had made some grammatical errors and sometimes my pronunciation was a little poor, but that my meaning was clear enough for anyone to understand. She told me I should never again read my sermons, and I have never read a message since then! All praise goes to God for His marvelous help! Even now, though my Japanese still needs much improvement, I praise God that I can preach to the people in their own language and they can understand me!

I have made mistakes many times. Let me tell you about the very worst mistake that I know that I made! (There are probably many more that I don't know about!) I was visiting a fellow missionary's summer camp. One morning we broke up into small groups to discuss different aspects of the Christian's life. I wanted to make the statement that I felt like Christians ought to fast quite often, but instead of using the word for "fast," I used the word for "suicide." Everyone looked shocked, and though I realized my mistake immediately, my mind went blank and I could not think of the right word. Bro. Shelhorn, my missionary friend, came out of shock before I did and said, "You mean fast, don't you?" I told Bro. Shelhorn later that if anyone in his congregation committed suicide, he'd know who to blame!

One missionary was earnestly trying to preach an evangelistic message, trying to tell them how to prepare for heaven. First he told them they needed to get rid of their dirty sin, only he used tsuma (wife), instead of tsumi (sin), and told them that they needed to get rid of their dirty wives! Next he told them that after they got rid of their dirty sin (wife), they would have hope in their heart and be ready for heaven, only instead of using nozomi (hope), he used nezumi (rats) and so told them that after they got rid of their dirty wives, they would have rats in their hearts and be ready for heaven. Can you imagine what kind of heaven his hearers were thinking of? This is just a little of what a missionary faces trying to use a foreign language.

Earlier I mentioned my problem of stuttering and stammering when I got excited. When that happened, people would laugh at me at times, because it sounded funny. I got used to it and learned to laugh with them. Having this experience was a blessing in disguise, for when I made a mistake in Japanese and people would laugh at me, I could just laugh along with them and try again.

Another obstacle a missionary faces in a foreign land is the big difference in foods! In Japan, a favorite is raw fish, raw shrimp, or raw octopus, which an American finds difficult to eat. Someone in our family had to be brave enough to try it, so I became the "guinea pig"! Needless to say, I didn't enjoy it very much. It took my wife close to a year before she was brave enough to attempt it. Her first attempt was a failure, as she was not able to keep it down. We are both able to eat it now, though it is still not one of our favorite foods. Our second family, born in Japan, learned to love it! After getting well enough acquainted with the people, I would illustrate to them how raw fish appealed to the American senses. When we ate

together, I would get a bowl of their hot rice and then ask my wife to bring me the sugar, cinnamon, milk and butter. While they looked on with shrieks of distaste, I, with delight and a smiling face, would commence to fix me a delicious bowl of rice and milk.

"Oh, Bowman Sensei, (Teacher Bowman), how can you stand that? It makes us sick to our stomachs!" they would say.

"Well, that is the exact way it hits an American when they hear about raw fish," I replied.

Just a short time after being in Japan, we visited the remodeled home where I had held Japanese services previously while in the military. Here we had our first encounter with sushi, a cold vinegar flavored rice ball with small pieces of pickle, vegetables, fish, etc., in the middle and then wrapped in sea weed. We didn't make too good of a showing and were very glad for the fried chicken that was served with it.

Our second encounter with sushi came shortly after, when we were invited to a Japanese home for supper. At the door of a beautiful, newly built, Japanese home, we called out, "Gomen Kudasai," which means, "I beg your pardon for intruding, but we're here!" The lady of the home, wearing a lovely kimono, met us, and bowing down on her knees, welcomed us in a polite manner. After removing our shoes upon her invitation to enter, we accepted the slippers she offered us and stepped up onto the main floor, which was like a raised wooden platform. Just beyond this stood sliding doors covered with a lovely paper, which we were to enter. We all started in with our slippers on, but with a quick gesture and words which we didn't understand, we realized that we were not allowed to wear the slippers on the "tatami" mat floor! So, only a few steps from where we had put them on, we had to take them off! We were then offered "zabuton" cushions and were seated on the floor, around a low table. Our hostess left and returned in a short time with her daughter, who was very pleased to be serving her guests a big platter of sushi. We all thought to ourselves, "Oh no! Not again!" Conveniently, they left us alone and went to put the final touches on the second course. (Except we didn't know that!) Thinking this was all that we were going to eat, I tried to make a pretty good showing. Though I didn't like it any better than my family, I ate several, even helping my children and wife with theirs. It is surprising how quickly one can become full on food they are not accustomed to! I had eaten my FILL, when they brought in the second course. She gave us a pleased look and what seemed to be a favorable remark to show that we had done well on the sushi. (The truth was that only I had done well!)

Mmmmmm! The next dish looked pretty good! In lovely containers with lids, which looked like cups without handles, was this custard-like fish paste with pieces of chicken in it. To say the least, it looked much better than it tasted! I could barely force mine down -- and on top of that I ate quite a bit of my children's and my wife's.

All of this for the sake of the gospel, but by this time, my stomach was beginning to rebel. I thought, "Well, at least I got it down and that's it," but we weren't that fortunate! In came another dish, this time a fish soup. Though we tried our best, we didn't make a good showing -- it was the most offensive to our taste buds yet! (Yet, to think that now we love and enjoy all those foods!) By the time we got home, my stomach did not know what had hit it!

The most difficult thing I ever ate was the insides of a snail offered to us by Kyoko Hayashi. When I put it in my mouth, I wished I hadn't! I couldn't swallow it, and I couldn't spit it out with her watching me. I finally swallowed it and asked God to help me keep it down. If I had removed the green substance which I later found to be bile, it would not have been quite so bitter, and, perhaps, even tolerable. Just before leaving Japan, my family ate a farewell dinner with the wife of the pediatrician at the National Hospital. The food was a first for them, and the little white creatures seemed very tasty as they dipped them into a sauce. On the way home, my wife said, "Bobby, we are going to look up in the dictionary and see what we ate tonight." They did so and found that the creatures were sea slugs!

One more obstacle, or at least a big trial, for the missionaries in Japan is the school system. The school year there starts in April and ends in March. In the spring, they have about two weeks off, and in the summer, they have about forty days vacation. They are required to do much homework during this summer "vacation." The regular school week is from Monday till Saturday. Often they have to go to school on Sundays also, for special tests or instructions. Many times they have club activities on Sunday and almost every day of their vacations. Even the grade school children have special schooling on Sunday. This makes it difficult for the children and young people to attend Sunday School and church services regularly. There is no concept of the Lord's Day whatsoever!

When there wasn't some big activity on Sunday, it was a sight to behold all the shoes left at the entrance way of the church. We have had as many as 100 Sunday School children, which represented a lot of calling and work rounding them up on Sunday morning. The first few years we used our station wagon, crowding as many as 15-17 children in at one time. Of course, this required several trips, but was rewarding to have such a thriving Sunday School. (Most Sunday Schools in Japan average only a handful.) Later, God miraculously provided a minibus, and we were able to use it on Saturdays to transport our young people home after Young Peoples' Meeting (where a good group gathered) and again on Sundays to take the children home after Sunday School and pick up adults for the morning worship service. We thanked God for this wonderful provision, which was a tremendous help in the work.

Students in Japan have to take entrance exams for entering high school. Some who have failed these exams have "lost face" and been so humiliated that they have committed suicide. There is too much stress and emphasis on learning. Education is almost a god that is worshipped. We have been praying that God

would intervene in some way and help in this situation. Humanly, it looks hopeless, but God is able!

* * * * *

05 -- A NIGHT OF HORROR

Written By Grace Bowman

**Through many dangers, toils, and snares,
I have already come.**

**'Tis grace hath brought me safe thus far,
And grace will lead me home.**

On that cold night of December 9, 1967, we suffered the awful horror and nightmare of a ten-hour ordeal in the cold Sea of Japan which resulted in the tragic loss of seven lives. Only the day before, three eager voices and the sweet laughing of a baby could be heard, but now, stillness and such loneliness!

We were all so excited and thrilled as the Friday finally came when we could go in our new boat to the nearby island of Atatajima and proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ. Just seven days before, the 22 feet, 12-adult passenger boat, with cabin, for which we had so anxiously waited, was completed and launched. The following week, my husband, Don, took the boat out every day, testing it and practicing driving it. On Thursday, December 7th, Teresa, nine and a half, Garry, almost eight, and Joel, six and a half, went with their daddy to Atatajima (about five miles off the mainland) to make plans and find a building in which to hold services. The water was a bit choppy, but what a time they had, laughing, singing, and enjoying their first trip to the island.

At the sight of Don, as he came onto the island, a small Japanese boy jumped up and down and yelled, "He's come back!" Don had gone to the island four months previously with another missionary in his nice big boat. When Don saw the response of the many people that gathered and the eagerness to hear and accept the gospel, his great missionary heart was touched. He said to himself and the people, "If God helps me get a boat, I'll be back." His friend encouraged him, as his own boat ministry was spread so thin to the many islands that he was only able to reach each island once or twice a year. So, after locating a building and promising to be back the next night for our first service, Don and the children started out for home. The Japanese children shouted, "Please bring your children back tomorrow night!"

The next morning excitement filled the house. "Oh, today we get to have our first service on the island." As I pulled the curtains back, with much disappointment we saw that it was snowing . . . our first really cold day so far.

Daddy said, "It doesn't look like we'll get to go."

"Oh, Daddy, but we promised! We want to go," came the echoes of the children.

"Not unless the weather clears. The people will understand," answered Daddy disappointedly.

That day was an exceptionally busy one, along with the schooling of the three older children, but they all studied well and helped, hoping for the day to clear. About 3 o'clock the sun began to shine. Don thought, "There is a possibility that we might get to go." He took the boat out for a twenty-minute trial run in order to test the water. After finding the water smooth, he went into the boat-house and asked for the weather report for the night.

One of the crewmen read two instruments and said, "You'll have no trouble at all as far as the weather is concerned."

About 5 o'clock, in the door walked Kyoko, home from the factory where she worked as a secretary. Kyoko, 22, had lived with us for about a year and a half and had become very close to us; we considered her as one of the family and loved her as our own. How she and our six-month old baby loved each other! A very favorite time for the older three was at bed time, when she would tell them a story, all in Japanese. She was our faithful Sunday School teacher and very strong in her Christian faith.

Bob Hatcher and Herb Christianson, two servicemen who had become our good friends, soon made their appearance, as they planned to go with us. Masaru Fujioka, a most faithful worker and a very dear friend of my husband, soon joined us for the trip to the island.

I had lived for this moment, when I could take my accordion and help teach the children choruses. Throughout the day, I had thought of a baby sitter, but we were never ones to leave our children and went everywhere as a family, except on rare occasions. This would be no exception. It was cold, but with the baby and the children dressed warmly, and plenty of blankets, we would all be warm in the cabin.

It was nearly dark as we started and in a few moments after we were out in the water, it became very dark. But how happy our hearts were as we sang choruses and felt the thrill of taking the gospel to the island people!

Bob, who had much experience in boating, had just made the comment, "It's really riding nice, isn't it?" when my husband in the engine room felt water spraying on his feet. When he snapped on the light, he saw that we were in trouble. After further investigation, he headed the boat for the nearest point of the island as the three men began bailing the water out. (We later found out that the boat builder had

done a poor job of building the rudder section, which caused the water to come in through the exhaust pipe.)

Bob's advice and experience as a Navy Pilot became invaluable. He shouted, "Get your life jackets on!" I hurriedly helped the children with theirs. Then the orders were, "Knock out the front windows! Everyone head for the front of the boat! The back is already under water!" By this time, the engine was nearly covered with water and was soon flooded out. The men were still bailing water, but it was now up to their waists.

Bob crawled on top of the cabin, took the big spotlight and directed it on a big Japanese freighter that was approximately 200 yards away. In the cabin, Herb was using the light switch and sending the international S.O.S. To our dismay, we saw that the freighter was going on past us!

Someone hollered, "Does everyone have on their life jackets?" I realized that I did not! We were all clinging to the front of the boat, and I was trying to hold the children from falling off into the water as the boat was so full, it was rocking from side to side. I managed to push the boys back into the cabin and got my jacket on just seconds before the boat capsized. I could see the boys still in the cabin, so with the baby in one arm, I used the other to pull Garry out, who was being drawn in by the suction. It took great effort, but I finally succeeded. (I did not realize until later, that Don was pushing from the inside.)

We had only one life preserver, and we all frantically grasped it. Almost immediately, Bob was at my side, and took the baby. Don was still in the cabin, which was now completely under water. Thinking this was the end, he managed with one last struggle, to crawl through a window, and within minutes was at our side. We were all there but Joel, our six-year old! I screamed, "Joel is still in the boat!"

Bob quickly gave me the baby and he and Herb, both excellent swimmers, swam back into the boat. Bob found Joel and handed him to Herb who was then on the bottom side of the boat that was sticking out of the water. He applied artificial respiration, and in a few minutes I heard Joel cry, "Mommy! Mommy!" What a relief to hear those words! Now surely somehow . . . someway . . . help would come!

The baby was crying and the children were hysterical, and I knew that unless they quieted down, they would end up swallowing water. So I firmly said, "Don't you cry! You pray!" Immediately, they grew quiet and the remainder of the time, not one complaint was heard.

Again, Bob advised us not to swallow one drop of water, and that we should stay with the boat. The reason was that if another boat passed by, they would possibly see the part of our boat that was sticking up out of the water. Bob noticed that Bro. Fujjoka was gone. Courageously, he had asked Don if he should go for

help. Knowing he was an excellent swimmer, Don had felt he could make it. To our deep regret, he never did! They found his body later, afloat in the sea.

We stayed with the boat for about two hours. During this time, boats came so very close that we felt help was surely coming, but with the roar of their engines, they couldn't hear our screams for help! Our hearts sank within us as they passed out of sight.

We were able to see the dark outline of the Island and could see that the boat was drifting away from the island. We all decided to leave the boat, and holding on to the preserver, try to swim our way to the island.

Don was now holding the baby, Garry was by my side, Joel was laid up over the top of the preserver, and the rest of us were holding on to the rope from the preserver. Herb at the head, pulling, Bob in the back, pushing. Don and I never stopped pedaling with our feet. We started toward the island, and Bob remarked, "We ought to be able to make it in 2 or 3 hours." We were once again encouraged and held high every hope. We could . . . we would make it!

As we struggled, we all noticed that the outline of the island was getting bigger, but in a few minutes it seemed to be farther away. This happened time and time again, until it looked hopeless. We never learned until later that there was a current which we fought all night long.

Finally, at about 1 o'clock, courageous Herb said he felt he should swim ahead and bring help, as he could see that we were making little, if any progress. It was a hard decision, but we felt this would be best. This left almost the complete load on faithful Bob, as all the rest of us could only use our legs.

Being assured that I could hear the boys' breathing (they were now asleep), and with Teresa very alert and bravely helping, I held my courage high. Somewhere in the morning hours, only an hour or two before reaching shore, our precious baby failed to respond to mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. Don's arms were so exhausted that every moment he felt he couldn't hold the baby's head up out of the water any longer.

Don said to our sweet daughter, "Teresa, Daddy is so proud of you! You have been such a big girl and helped so much."

She replied, "Well, I'm just trying to help save everybody." Then in a short while, for the first time, she laid her head back. I said, "Honey, don't go to sleep."

"I'm not, Mommy, I'm just looking at the stars," she said as she looked smilingly up into the sky. Those were her last sensible words. She had gone into

shock. Kyoko was so weak that I was actually holding three besides myself to the preserver then.

I remember praying one last prayer, "Oh, God I can't go on. Please send some waves or something to send us past this current." It had pushed us back so many times. In less than 5 minutes, for the first time all night, I felt gentle waves which caused the cold, cold water to come into our ears. It had been so smooth until then for which we had been so thankful, because none of us had swallowed water. In minutes, I could see the white background of the shore appear. A new courage came to my heart.

Don was the first to feel bottom and yelled, "We've made it!"

Bob, a much taller man, was still swimming as he had gone into shock. God gave me supernatural strength, and thinking only that we had all made it, and knowing I must get help, I cut loose from everyone. Seeing a light off in the distance, I ran, falling and stumbling toward it until I reached a drop off and screamed in Japanese, "Help! Help!" Then, returning to the others, I found the tide coming in. Don had fallen on his knees with the baby in his arms. His legs failed to cooperate, and I helped him to shore and he crawled off. Next I pulled the boys in, then Teresa, and last Kyoko. With my teeth chattering and shivering uncontrollably, I took off their jackets and gave each one mouth-to-mouth resuscitation. I felt Teresa and Kyoko respond, but I wasn't sure about the boys. There was Bob, now in water up to his waist, kneeling in shock. With my last strength, I beat him in the back, screaming, "Bob! Bob!" He crawled out and away until I could not see him.

I was freezing and my teeth were chattering until I thought they would break, and I knew I must get some warmth or I could help no one. I found my way to Don and asked him to cover me up. Even though he was in shock, he went through the motions of covering me up. Just as I laid back, ready to give up, I saw a flashlight.

Herb had reached shore. Many times he had thought it impossible to go on and thought of giving up, but then remembered, "They're depending on me!"

A miracle had happened! Where we had reached shore, there was only one house in the whole area, but at least there was one! The village was on the other side of the island. Herb got to the house and somehow made the Japanese man understand that there was trouble, and when we arrived he was coming to see what it was. I stood up and blurted out our plight to the farmer. He called his wife. She came and took the baby into the house. Then Herb and the farmer carried Don. When they laid him down on the mat, they said, "Well, he's gone!" They put us in a hot Japanese bath, gave us warm clothes, laid us on the floor and covered us up. I took off the baby's wet clothing and worked over him, but it was in vain. Then they brought Kyoko. I did my best to revive her.

"Why aren't you bringing the children?" I asked Herb. "They're all gone!" he replied solemnly. I turned unbelievably, not grasping the truth, and told my poor husband who had just come to consciousness. With an "Oh, No!" he laid his head back down and wished to go with them.

I remembered Bob and hurriedly made my way down the winding trail. As I reached the spot, I saw Bob, who had just fallen over. I quickly gave him mouth-to-mouth resuscitation, but it was too late! What a real hero he had been!

At that time, a military helicopter could be seen flying in. It had been notified of our trouble, but not understanding the message, thought it to be a hoax. They waited a half-hour before deciding to check out the strange report. The helicopter arrived without any equipment and they were shocked to see the plight awaiting them! Half-stunned, they put Kyoko, Herb, Don and me into the helicopter and flew us to the base hospital. Our dear Kyoko soon breathed her last breath. Out of the ten that had headed for the island in that boat, there were only three survivors . . . Herb, (another true hero!), Don and myself.

The military was so kind to provide our four children with pretty white caskets to be flown to the States for the funeral. If it weren't for the hope of heaven and our faith in an Almighty God who makes no mistakes, we could never have faced the lonely hours that swept upon us like ocean waves.

One year later, on the very day . . . December 9th God gave us a precious son with brown eyes and curly hair, who has helped the lonely hours pass. What a joy and blessing he is!

(See [hdm3379-11.jpg](#), [hdm3379-12.jpg](#), [hdm3379-13.jpg](#), and [hdm3379-14.jpg](#))

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06 -- RETURN TO THE 5TARES DUE TO ILL HEALTH

When we returned to Japan after having gone back to the States for the children's funeral, we tried to take up the work here again, even though we were in poor physical condition. The first thing we did was to have Mrs. Fujioka and her two children, Maki and Toru, move in with us. Maki was a sweet little girl of eight, and Toru was a slim, rather shy boy of six. Mrs. Fujioka worked days at a hospital, and so my wife had a big share of the responsibility of taking care of these children. (Oh, the memories as my wife washed and hung their clothes and fixed their meals!)

Bro. (Timothy) Masao Himei, a new Bible School graduate, came to help us in our church work, and moved into our house also. Sister Fujioka and the two children had one bedroom, Bro. Himei a bedroom, and we had the third bedroom. This gave us a house full, and a busy schedule. Some days we would fall across the bed exhausted, thinking perhaps that was the end . . . that maybe we would never

rise again. God kept giving us His abundant, miraculous grace and kept us going. We praise Him for the strength He supplied!

After we all lived together like this for a year, the E. L. Hesselstine family came to Japan to help us. They had been close friends of ours in the States. They had even named their youngest daughter Teresa Dawn after our daughter, Teresa Dawn. To prepare for the Hesselstines to move into our house, the Fujiokas moved into an apartment nearby, and Bro. Himei moved into an apartment in the church building.

About two months after the Hesselstines arrived in Japan, we returned to the States on furlough. We rested for a couple of weeks, and then I began to hold revival meetings in different churches. When summer came, we visited half of our camps. I was getting a full schedule of revival meetings for the fall and winter. Bro. and Sis. Elbert Dodd and Bro. and Sis. Reese were going to visit some of the mission fields, and Japan was one of them. We cut our furlough time in half, staying only six months in the States, and came back to Japan with the Dodds and Reeses. We immediately jumped back into our full schedule. We actually had taken very little time to rest. Different friends cautioned me about this while we were in the States, but it didn't seem like we could find a stopping place or even a place to slow down.

After returning to Japan, we moved to Hirose, where we had started our second church some time prior to that. It is a beautiful country town surrounded by mountains with a river running right down the middle of it. Houses for rent were very scarce there, so finally we moved into a place that was so small that the whole thing wouldn't have made a good-sized American living room. At our entrance was a flight of narrow steps that led up to our tiny living quarters. On the right at the bottom of the steps was a door which opened to a toilet. It was like an outdoor toilet, only it was inside the house structure. Of course, there was no flushing! A private business came with a truck, when called, and vacuumed it out. We had to leave for most of that day, as the smell was more than we could take!

Connected to this room, still on the right, but partitioned from it by a wall, was a tiny room without a door. This contained a Japanese bathtub. Taking a bath involved some work and time. You first filled the tub with water (cold); when it was full you turned on some sort of heat on the outside of the house that heated the water from underneath to a very hot temperature. Before getting into the bath, you soaped all over and then splashed basins of water over your head to rinse your body. You had to be very clean to enter the water of the bath. After this process, you would ease down into the water and soak as long as you wished. How cold it was in the winter to leave the warmth of the heated rooms and go down the cold stairs to use the bathroom or take a bath. It was especially "shocking" to get out of the hot tub and go into the cold and back upstairs. We used a small kerosene stove to heat the small room that served as our tiny kitchen and dining room combined.

Our tiny bedroom was big enough for a bed, a desk, and space enough in front of the bed to get to the closet. It was divided from the kitchen/dinette by a sliding "cloth-paper" door. At night the walking space to the closet was where we pulled out Bobby's bed that was folded and stored under our bed during the day.

At the top of the steps was a small open space built up over the bathroom, where there was a sink. This is where we washed our dishes. Needless to say, this open space was not the most comfortable place to wash your dishes. We usually made it a once-a-day ordeal, to brave the cold and to wash the piled up dishes. Finally, to help protect it from the snow and cold, we put up some veneer siding, which did help after a fashion. Our little baby boy, Bobby, of whom I will be writing more later, had to play under my desk or under the kitchen table because the room was so small.

Things went along quite well until little Bobby got the measles. One night he was very sick with a high temperature. When my wife took his temperature and then in alarm told me how high it was, my whole body began to shake uncontrollably. I told her not to mind me, but to take care of Bobby. I began to pray, asking God to help me. I got up and knelt down thinking that would help me, but I continued shaking. I lay back down and began pleading the promises of God.

One of the promises that came to me was Isaiah 26:3, "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee, because he trusteth in thee." As I stood on this promise, the shaking gradually subsided. The Lord gave me a message on trust as I lay there, dwelling on that promise.

The letter T in the word trust stands for Thanksgiving. If we really trust the Lord, there are many things that we will be thankful for.

The letter R stands for rest. When we trust the Lord completely, we can rest our case with Him. This gives us rest of heart.

The letter U stands for understanding. Our heavenly Father understands our present situation.

The letter S stands for submission. We are to submit ourselves unto the Lord. "Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass." Ps. 37:5

The last T in the word trust represents triumph. As I kept dwelling on the promises and meditating on the thought of trusting, the shaking slowly subsided and completely stopped. The following Sunday morning I preached this little message on TRUST (even though I had to sit down because of my great weakness), and the Lord blessed as I gave my experience.

My nervous condition continued to get worse. I would wake up out of a deep sleep, just shaking all over. I lost my appetite and couldn't eat properly. About all that I could eat was toast with peanut butter on it. I was nauseated and weak all the time. I couldn't sit still very long at a time; I had to keep moving or I would get very nervous. I found it hard to go to sleep at night. Everything seemed to go to sleep except my mind. Often, I couldn't go to sleep until four or five o'clock in the morning. All of this time I was praying and looking to the Lord. I was willing to stay there and try to continue on with the work, but I kept getting worse. I finally went to the hospital on the base there in Iwakuni for a physical examination, but they just said it was hypertension and would improve with time.

Since we had stayed in the States for only six months on furlough, instead of our allotted year, I began to think about the possibility of returning to the U.S. for the six months left on our furlough time. A medical doctor on the U.S. base advised us to return, so we wrote home for permission to return for more rest and it was approved.

The morning we were to leave for the States it was very foggy, but we started out early to go to the Hiroshima airport which was about a two-hour journey. When we reached the airport, we were told that the planes couldn't land there because of the fog, and everyone was to go to the U.S. base in Iwakuni. We had to back track to Iwakuni. Bro. Hesseltine and Bro. Himei escorted us both to Hiroshima and then back to Iwakuni! After we arrived in Iwakuni, we still had to wait a few hours for the fog to lift. Finally we were told that we could board the plane. We hurried to the plane and got on board.

The plane taxied out to the runway and picked up speed to take off, and then suddenly it came to a screeching halt! The base fire trucks came driving furiously up to the plane and we were all told to deplane and return to the waiting room of the airport. Of course, this wasn't helping someone who had bad nerves, and my wife was about five or six months expectant. We were told that the fire alarm had gone off on the plane and they had to check all over to see if there was a fire starting anywhere. After waiting a couple more hours, we were told it had been a false alarm and we could board the plane again.

By now, because of our waiting, we had another concern, and that was whether we would get to Tokyo in time to make our connecting flight on to the United States. It was going to be very close, and when we arrived in Tokyo and rushed to our next plane, it had just departed, and, of course, we weren't on board. Sometimes it is impossible to get another flight out the same day, but the Lord helped us, and after about six more hours of waiting, we got on a plane to Seattle, Washington. There were enough vacant seats so it was possible for me to lie down most of the way to Seattle.

No one in Seattle knew that we were coming for sure and so no one was there to meet us. We called my wife's brother's house, but no one was there. We called

other friends, but couldn't contact anyone. Finally we got a taxi to my brother-in-law's house, and although no one was there yet, his wife's grandmother lived next door and we went there to rest awhile. I had been going on nervous energy, and when I finally got to bed at my brother-in-law's house, I almost completely collapsed. After resting a few days, we flew from Seattle to Boise, Idaho, and went to my wife's parents' home where we stayed for several months while I recuperated.

After resting a few more days, I then went to the V.A. hospital in Boise for a physical examination. They again said it was hypertension, something like shell-shock, and it would probably take a long time for me to get any better. I began to improve some, so I held a few missionary meetings to test out my strength. I could see I didn't have my normal strength back yet. I went to Denver, and Dr. Waldon Kurtz gave me a thorough physical exam and found out that I had ulcerative colitis, low blood sugar, high cholesterol, and a nervous problem, too. He told me that unless God intervened in my behalf, I would probably never return to the mission field. During this time Kyoko came to bless our home, and this was a real joy.

We prayed and felt led to go to the Seattle area. We thought that we might be able to work with the Japanese people in that area, since about 10,000 Japanese people live there. The night we arrived in Seattle, I had an experience I shall long remember. My brother-in-law received a phone call from a friend who was drunk. This friend was a backslider and his wife was a Christian who went to our church there in that city. The man was trying to take care of his small boy, while his wife was at work. My brother-in-law could tell that this man needed help immediately, so I went with him over to the man's house. When we got there, he was sitting on the floor in the bathroom with his head almost in the stool as he was vomiting. He began to roll around on the dining room floor. We tried to get him into bed, but we were having a very difficult time. We finally called his wife and told her that her husband was in very bad shape and that she had probably better return home to help take care of him and their boy. After she arrived home, we managed to get him into bed, but we couldn't get him to go to sleep. We had to keep wrestling with him and holding him in bed by force. He would laugh in such a way that it made chills run up your spine. We kept this up until about three in the morning. We didn't want to, but we finally called an ambulance and they came, put him in a straight-jacket, and took him to the hospital. They admitted him and he was there for a short time. I am thankful that I can end this on a note of praise. This friend got saved and sanctified, and has been pastoring in the BMC for several years. Praise God for His power that can transform a life like this! When I saw him at a general conference, I said from the bottom of my heart, "Praise God!"

The pastor of the Tacoma, Washington church resigned about this time, and the church wanted me to help them out. I prayed about it and felt led to help them until they could get a pastor. We were there about four months and the Lord blessed our efforts.

While living in Tacoma, our little Kyoko became very sick. She had a very high fever and we could not get it down with baby aspirins or any other way we tried. We finally had to take her to the hospital and they admitted her. They put her on a cold bed with ice around her and the fever finally broke. We were certainly thrilled to bring her home again.

Because of the other four children passing away, it was very hard on me when Bobby or Kyoko became sick. It seemed like the Lord allowed this at different times to increase my faith and trust in that area. It seemed kind of like exercising a weak muscle to make it strong.

The pastor of our Homedale, Idaho church resigned, and the church wanted us to come and pastor them. As soon as we got our health back, we wanted to go back to Japan, so we declined the call. We told them we would fill in until they could get a pastor, so we went back to Idaho and filled in there until a pastor arrived. Again, the Lord helped us, even though we didn't have our normal strength.

Just before the general conference that year, I went to Denver early to take another thorough physical examination. Just before leaving for Denver, I had the folks in Homedale anoint me and pray for my healing again. I felt led of the Lord to claim Him as my healer. I went to Denver, took the examination, passed it and received a clear bill of health. What a thrill it was to know that we could again return to the land of our calling! The entire Church had been praying for us, and God had answered our prayers. Praise His wonderful name! After the conference was over, we made the necessary preparation and in a very brief time we were boarding the plane in Seattle, Washington, again and flying to the Land of the Rising Sun.

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07 -- PRECIOUS CHILDREN ADDED TO OUR FAMILY

(See hdm3379-14.jpg, hdm3379-15.jpg, hdm3379-16.jpg, and hdm3379-17.jpg)

After our first four children went to be with the Lord in the accident, we didn't know whether the Lord would give us any more children or not. We had mixed emotions about it for a short period of time. As the days went by, though, we began to yearn for someone we could hold in our arms again and know that this child was our own flesh and blood. As we looked around at the other children, we were constantly reminded of our children that were in Heaven. My wife gave vent to her sorrow and cried every day. I wouldn't let myself do that, for I was afraid that I would never stop crying once I started! Our hearts were broken and bleeding, and our arms literally ached to hold one of our own again! Needless to say, we were happy with the news that another little one was being sent from God to help fill up this awful void in our aching hearts.

As the time of arrival drew near, we began to think that there might be a chance of the baby being born close to the same day that the others had gone to be with the Lord. We thought that we couldn't bear it to be born on the very same day. My wife was ten days overdue, when the baby was born, and you guessed it! It was born on the very same day, December 9th. Just think, exactly one year later! God in His omniscience knew just exactly the best time for this precious bundle to arrive. When the Japanese doctor at the Iwakuni National Hospital learned this, he said in amazement, that this baby was a special baby from God. Many who have heard about this agree with the Japanese doctor, that this baby was truly sent from God. A lady even wrote us saying that God kissed us right on the sore spot.

We named this new, precious baby boy, Robert Masaru. "Robert" was in memory of Robert Hatcher who gave his life in the boat accident. He could have probably left our little group and saved his own life, but he chose to help bring our group to shore, and thereby lost his own life in the brave endeavor. Also, Robert was named after my wife's brother, Robert Watson, who had been killed in an accident while working in Alaska, building radio towers. "Masaru" was, of course, after Masaru Fujioka, our dear friend who also gave his life trying to get to shore to get help for the rest of us who were still holding on to the life preserver in the Inland Sea. The name Masaru means "victory" in English.

Words cannot express the great joy it brought to our aching hearts to again hold a "bundle of joy" and know it was our very own! Isn't God gracious! Isn't God wonderful! Can we ever express it like we desire to? Someday we will be able to do it properly when we reach our eternal home.

I am writing these words on Bobby's 12th birthday. We are in the States on furlough. He has surely proven to be a boy that any parent could be proud of. He is a good Christian boy who desires to be a missionary when he grows up. Praise God for our "Bobby!"

When we had to return to the States because of my poor health, my wife was about five months along. On July 5th, 1970, while we were still in the States, Grace Kyoko was born. Grace was named after my wife and also after the grace of God. Kyoko was after Kyoko Hayashi, our faithful Sunday School teacher and helper, who had gone to be with the Lord as a result of our boat accident. At the time of this writing, Kyoko is a bright, lively girl, ten years old. She is a real blessing to her mother as she helps a lot with the housework.

Kyoko was born on Sunday morning, and I shall never forget the experience I had on the way home from the doctor's office. Teresa, our oldest daughter had always wanted a little sister. Before our fourth child, Donnie, was born in Japan, Teresa had voiced this desire several times. She was a little disappointed when another brother was born, but she said that as long as the baby was healthy it would be okay. As I was riding along in our car with Bobby after Kyoko was born, it seemed like I could almost feel the presence of Teresa in the car with us, and I felt

like I could hear her say how happy she was that she finally had her baby sister. Tears flowed freely as I drove down the highway back to my wife's parents' home where we were staying. Thank the Lord for our Kyoko. We have always called her by her Japanese name instead of her first name, Grace. In Japanese, Kyoko means "Apricot Blossom." Our dear daughter talks about becoming a missionary, too.

After we returned to work in the harvest field of Japan, on October 20th, 1973, another precious daughter was added to our family. She was born in the Iwakuni National Hospital where her brothers, Donnie and Bobby, were born. She is our seventh child. In the Bible, "seven" is the perfect number. We named her Margaret Annette. Margaret is after my wife's mother, and Annette is after Annette Keene, our good friend from Lake Charles, Louisiana. She has always gone by her middle name, Annette. She is also a precious daughter who has brought joy to our hearts. She is seven years old at this time. She always wants to go everywhere I go! She tells me that she is my little "shadow." The Japanese say that she looks like me, and, of course, this puffs me up some. Ha!

We will always be thankful to God and praise Him throughout eternity for giving us our "second family!" What a gracious, loving, kind, considerate Father He is!

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08 -- BACK TO JAPAN

(See hdm3379-18.jpg)

In September of 1971, after getting a clean "bill of health" from Dr. Waldon Kurtz, we headed back to Japan. We had been in the States over a year recuperating. We were excited again to be on our way back to our "second home." We had missed the Japanese people while we were absent from them; they had grown very dear to our hearts.

When we arrived at the Hiroshima airport, a good crowd was waiting for us, and they began to cheer as we got off the airplane. There were tears in their eyes, yet smiles on their faces as they welcomed us back to their country to again work for the Lord. We were praising God for His physical touch upon us and His marvelous grace that had brought us back to this beautiful country of cherry blossoms, mountains, seas, and multitudes who didn't know our wonderful Lord and Saviour.

That very night, we went to Hirose, a small town in the mountains, for a meeting. We went with the Himeis and some of the church folks from Iwakuni. It seemed wonderful to be back in Japan. Even though we were tired, we enjoyed ourselves immensely. We praised God for the privilege of worshipping a God that could hear and answer prayer.

The next night they had a welcome party for us. A good number of our friends gathered at one of the restaurants in Iwakuni where we enjoyed a wonderful time of fellowship. We were treated very royally. Our hearts were touched by their kindness to us.

Sunday morning arrived and again we were thrilled to be back in our Iwakuni church. Bro. and Sis. Himei had labored faithfully while we were in the States. The E. L. Hesseltines had also been faithful to help out there before they went to Okinawa to help carry on the work there. We enjoyed worshipping the Lord with our brothers and sisters in the Lord.

After the noon meal, since we were tired from traveling, we decided to get a little rest before the evening service. When I awoke, I wasn't feeling well, and I felt quite nervous. The devil took advantage of this and began to whisper in my ear that I had been very foolish to ever come back to Japan. It seemed like a dark, dismal cloud had settled down over our bright happy surroundings. I guess we had been going on nervous energy and were just exhausted. I was still feeling worn out when we went to the meeting that night.

It actually took us a few months to get adjusted again in Japan. The devil told us many times that we ought to return to the States and never come back to Japan. One day as I was lying down not feeling too well, our little son, Bobby, who was about three years old, came up to the bed where I was lying and began to sing the song, "Christ is the Answer." God used this to help encourage me to keep pressing on. I kept getting stronger physically and this helped me to enjoy working for the Lord in the land where He had called us to labor.

One day a man came to our house, told us that he was a Buddhist priest and that he had heard about our boat accident. He told us that his heart had been touched and that he wanted to help us in any way that he could. He told us that he lived in the country in another prefecture. He invited us there to preach to the people and said he would let us use his temple for this purpose. He was supposed to be a distant relative of the emperor of Japan. He seemed so very earnest and sincere in wanting to help us. He came to our home several times and even went to a few meetings with us. He told us he had traveled to a few foreign countries and had met Christian missionaries in Viet Nam. He seemed to know a lot about Christianity. He said he wanted to help us get another boat so we could go to the islands as we had desired.

One day he came to our house again and told us that he was in the process of getting us a boat from a man who was a doctor. This doctor had used this boat to go to the islands to take care of the sick people. This doctor was greatly indebted to this priest, and so he was going to give it to him, to give to us. It was a large enough boat that it required a special license to drive it, and since I did not have this license, he volunteered to work with us for awhile until I could get this special

license. We all thought this was so strange for him to do this, but he seemed very sincere.

Again he came to our house and told us that someone was bringing the boat to Hiroshima and that we were supposed to go with him the next day to pick it up and come back to Iwakuni. He stayed all night with us, and the next morning he seemed very nervous and restless. He finally told me that he would have to go to Hiroshima first to make some last minute arrangements and that he would meet us there at the port at a specified time. We thought this was strange, and yet still didn't doubt his word. We were becoming a little suspicious, though.

We went to Hiroshima, went to the designated area at the specified time and waited all afternoon. He didn't show up, and we have never seen him again, either. We don't know for sure whether it is true or not, but we have heard that he tried to go around telling people that he was taking up offerings to help get us another boat. If he did, he pocketed the money himself, as we never received any of it.

We are still puzzled as to why he tried to deceive us in this manner. Maybe he thought we might have received insurance money from the death of our children. We didn't, of course, but maybe he was going to try to deceive us and get the money from us. We just had to commit it all to the Lord and go on our way preaching the gospel as we had been doing. We requested prayer for him at that time, and maybe someday, somewhere, he will seek the Lord and repent of his sinful life. We surely trust he will. He might have been a professional crook, but we don't know for sure.

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09 -- SOULS SAVED IN JAPAN

Part I

I will not be able to tell about everyone in Japan who has been saved, so I will write about a few of them. We surely praise God for everyone who has come to know Him. May God alone be praised!

One of the first ones that were saved was a young lady by the name of Yukiko Kanaguchi. She was nineteen years old at the time. She had been sick for quite a long time, and the doctors didn't give her much chance of getting well. She was told that she probably only had about a year and a half to live. She had been going to temples and shrines to pray for her healing, but, of course, she didn't get any better. One day she received a small tract telling her about a Bible study in a home near where she lived. She came to the meeting one night. She had never been to church in her life. Everything was completely new to her. I wasn't able to communicate very well in Japanese at all, but the Lord overruled and the Holy Spirit dealt faithfully with her troubled heart.

After the Bible study was over, we approached her and asked her if she wanted to pray. She was surely ready, and as we knelt and began to pray, she began to weep and pray also. Before we got off of our knees, she had prayed through and had been saved. The Lord had forgiven her sins and placed them in His special sea of forgetfulness, never to remember them against her anymore. The Lord also touched her physically and strengthened her weak, sick body. She grabbed my wife around the neck, hugging her as she wept for joy. She became one of our faithful ones, later becoming one of our main Sunday School teachers, and eventually married a preacher, Rev. Masao Himei.

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Part II -- Three Precious Souls Who Went To Heaven With Our Children

(See hdm3379-19.jpg, hdm3379-20.jpg, and hdm3379-21.jpg)

A short time after the above incident, another young lady came to our meetings. She had attended another church's meetings a time or two. She had heard a "missionary" speak, but he didn't tell them about the wonderful salvation of our Lord, but instead told them that he didn't know for sure if God existed!

This new young lady was rather quiet and reserved. Her name was Kyoko Hayashi. I remember that after she had come to our meetings a few times, I approached her and dealt with her about her eternal soul's condition. When we prayed with her, she had very little emotion. When she said that the Lord had forgiven her, I had some misgivings. The days that followed proved to us, though, that she truly had been born again of the Spirit of God. She became our main Sunday School teacher and was very faithful to teach the children about our blessed Lord.

She worked at one of the factories in our city and lived quite close to us. Since we were wanting to study Japanese, we thought it would be a good opportunity to learn to speak and understand better, if we had a Japanese to live in with us. We invited Kyoko to move into our house and in her spare time she could help us to improve our language ability. She proved to be a real blessing to our home.

Kyoko couldn't seem to grasp the real meaning of being sanctified holy. I remember giving her this simple illustration to help her understanding:

An unsaved man with an awful temper had an old wood heating stove. Sometimes the old stove didn't work very well, and the man would become very angry. He would pick up a stick of wood and beat the old stove with it. He gave vent to his temper in this manner. One day this man got saved. After he was saved, the heating stove acted up again one day. The old root of anger in his heart wanted him

to pick up the stick and hit the stove again, but he suppressed this tendency of his unsanctified heart, and he didn't give vent to his anger like he did before he was saved.

A short time afterward, this man was sanctified holy. The old stove hadn't got religion, of course, and so had another bad spell. This time the man's reaction was different again. There was no depraved nature, or "Old Man" in his heart now. The devil tempted him by telling him to pick up a stick of wood and hit the stove like he used to do. Though he felt the temptation, yet there was nothing in his heart that wanted to hit the old stove anymore.

This homely, simple illustration helped her, and as we prayed in our home, the Lord met her need and sanctified her holy. After she was sanctified, we would sometimes hear weeping in the night after we had gone to bed, and we didn't know where it was coming from. We eventually found out that it was coming from Kyoko's room. She was praying and also praising God. This is a blessed memory of her.

Shortly after this, one Sunday night in our evening meeting, as we all were kneeling in prayer, Kyoko began to weep profusely. She had never acted like that before, so we didn't know just exactly what was wrong with her. After we finished praying, she testified and told us that God had told her to quit her job and become a full time worker in His harvest field. She told the Lord that she would obey Him. We had been praying earnestly for workers, and so we all rejoiced in the Lord because of this definite answer to prayer. The next day when she went to work, she gave them notice that she would be resigning her job. They asked her to give them one month to train a person to take her place, since her job was very important. Two or three girls tried out for her position before one showed the necessary ability to take her place.

We had two afternoon Sunday Schools for awhile. This kept us busy, especially Kyoko. Sometimes she went when she wasn't feeling well, but she wasn't one to complain. She was a faithful worker for the Lord.

We were deeply saddened by her death in our boat accident. She had become part of our family. I went to her funeral at the home of her parents, even though I was still half dead myself. It was an hour's drive in the country. A friend of mine, Mr. Fujimoto, who was head of Yohane Construction Company, took me in his car. When we arrived, I went up by the casket where the family was sitting. I asked them to give me an opportunity to testify in behalf of Kyoko.

It was a Buddhist funeral, because that was the religion of her parents. She would not have wanted a Buddhist funeral, but a Christian one, if the choice had been hers. When the Buddhist priest finished going through his ritual, I stood to my feet and told the crowd of relatives and friends that Kyoko's body was there in the casket, but her spirit was in Heaven. I testified how she had become a Christian and

that she had made plans to become a worker in our church. I was crying as I told them how she loved the Lord. The Buddhist priest seemed absolutely astonished at the assurance I had that Kyoko was in Heaven with the Lord for eternity! (One year later, when we went back for a memorial service, the same priest was there again, along with a younger priest. He shared with him my testimony in behalf of Kyoko.)

After I finished testifying for Kyoko at the funeral, I looked at her still form in the casket and told her that I had done my best to make her funeral a Christian one. We are looking forward to seeing her someday in that eternal city where there is no pain or death.

* * *

The story of a second special person began one Sunday morning, when two new ladies with their children, came to our church. They had gone first that morning to another church, but hadn't felt assured that they ought to enter. The two ladies were Mrs. Kumiko Fujioka, and her friend, Mrs. Inui. Mrs. Fukioka brought her two children, Maki, a seven-year-old daughter, and Toru, her five-year-old son. Mrs. Inui had her two sons, Kazuto and Koji, with her. We were having special services with Bro. Matsuda, a pastor from Yamaguchi city. It was a good time for new people to attend our meetings. The two ladies came out again that afternoon and again that night. The following Wednesday night, they were out to our prayer meeting and both of them prayed to the Lord to be saved. I don't know for sure whether they received a clear assurance of salvation or not that night, but they began to attend quite regularly and soon after that both of them began to testify to an experience of grace in their hearts.

One night, about a month after his wife had prayed, Mr. Masaru Fujioka came to one of our Bible studies. That night I mentioned that without the Lord we can do nothing. Mr. Fujioka was a proud young man and he let me know afterwards that he didn't agree with my statement. He assured me that there were several things that he could do in his own strength. He kept coming to our Bible studies, though, and even began to attend the Sunday morning meetings.

A few weeks later, Mr. Fujioka's wife and two children went to visit her parents on the island of Shikoku. While they were gone, he came to our meetings by himself. One day he approached me and told me that after his family got home that he wanted his entire family to be baptized. He wasn't even saved yet, and since I didn't know exactly what to say, I told him I would pray and think about it. I could tell by this that he was thinking seriously about salvation.

Shortly after that, one Wednesday night, he came to prayer meeting for the first time. When he stepped inside the door, God seemed to tell me that Mr. Fujioka was going to get saved that night. During our closing season of prayers I asked everyone to come forward and all pray together. I wasn't kneeling too close to him, but I could hear him praying. I stopped and listened intently, and I could hear that

he was praying to be saved. I went over to where he was, knelt by his side, and began to pray earnestly for him. That night he prayed his way clear through to definite victory! He became a new creature in Christ Jesus; old things passed away and, behold, all things became new! Surely heaven rejoiced that night as a new name was written down in the Lamb's Book of Life. We were all very encouraged as we returned to our homes.

Very shortly after that, he, his wife, and his two children who had been saved, were all baptized together in the Inland Sea. What a wonderful scene that was as an entire family waded out into the water to follow their Lord and Saviour in the act of baptism. That night the whole family came to the front of the church and testified. It was a touching sight.

Bro. Fujioka began to grow in grace by leaps and bounds. About two weeks after he was saved, he was sanctified holy. He earnestly studied the Bible and read other Christian books. We became close friends. One time we went to a meeting in Tokyo together. When we returned home, I asked him to give a report of the meeting, and he readily did so. A couple of weeks after that, I asked him to speak for our prayer meeting and he spoke on prayer. God was blessing him abundantly!! He told his wife that he wanted to become a pastor and help me in our work.

His life was so changed that it was a real testimony at the company where he worked. Everyone noticed this marvelous transformation! He kept a Bible on his desk and read it when he had free time.

When we were going for our first service on the island, Bro. Fujioka wanted to go with us. When our boat capsized, he volunteered to try to go back to the mainland to get help. Since he was a strong swimmer and had a life jacket, I gave him permission to go. I thought he could make it. He didn't make it though, but gave his life in the attempt. What a precious brother he was! We sorely miss him. No one knows why God took him home in this manner, but God never makes a mistake, so we can trust Him in this matter, too. Since I went to the country for Kyoko Hayashi's funeral, I couldn't attend Bro. Fujioka's funeral. My wife did attend it, though. We are assured that someday we will see this beloved brother again.

* * *

Robert Hatcher was a lieutenant in the United States Navy. He was with a squadron stationed at Iwakuni. One day he came to our house and we met him for the first time. He was a new convert who had recently been saved. He began coming to our home to study the Bible. We were having Bible studies once a week for the U.S. servicemen, trying to help them spiritually, too.

When Bob heard that we were having a boat built to go to the nearby islands, he told us that he wanted to go with us. The night we went, he was right there with us, ready to go. When our boat capsized, he could have left us and probably saved

his own life, since he was an expert swimmer. He stayed behind, though, and helped to bring the little group to shore. He laid down his life in this brave endeavor. His wife, Barbara, received a medal from the United States Navy that was given to honor Bob. We shall never forget this big, husky, kind young man. Someday when we get to heaven, we will thank him personally for his brave effort.

Bob's wife and parents, Mr. and Mrs. Maurice Hatcher of Dallas, Texas, sent money to Japan to be used as a memorial for him. With the money we bought a minibus to use in bringing children to Sunday School and adults to our other meetings. It was a wonderful blessing to our work.

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Part III -- Other Souls

(See hdm3379-22.jpg

One day Bro. Himei, who had come to help us in Iwakuni, brought a young married lady, Mrs. Reiko Samoto, to our house. She had come to our church asking for help. She had gone to a dentist and he had told her, while he was working on her teeth, that she ought to go to church. He had noticed how very troubled she seemed. She knew of our church, so she came to see us. She was very depressed and despondent. She began to tell us about her problems. It had started in childhood when her mother had passed away. She grew up with an inferiority complex. She had married a nice man and had two beautiful daughters, but she was still discouraged with life. She lived with her husband, two daughters, mother-in-law, and a sister-in-law in a small crowded apartment. When the others were sitting around the table or enjoying themselves, she would sit off somewhere by herself and wouldn't enter in. She loved her family, but she was so despondent that life seemed miserable to her.

After she had told us her problems for awhile, I told her that I couldn't help her, but I knew One that could. I encouraged her to tell the Lord Jesus Christ just what she had been telling me. We all got down on our knees in our living room and began to pray to God in earnest. We could sense the Divine Presence of the Lord as we pleaded the case of this young lady. After awhile she stood to her feet, straightened her shoulders, took a couple of deep sighs and told us that the awful, heavy burden was gone.

Before we prayed, we had read Matthew 11:28 to her. She had prayed earnestly, desperately, and the Lord had answered her prayer. She went home rejoicing in her new-found salvation. When she got home she was so changed that they knew something must have happened. They asked her where she had gone and she told them she had gone to Missionary Bowman's house, and that she had been saved. Her husband said that is what he needed, too!

A few days later, I went to their house to meet her husband, Masao. His wife and his mother had told him he needed to quit his smoking and become a Christian. He had tried to quit before and hadn't been successful, so he didn't think he could ever quit. When I talked to him, I could see that the tobacco problem loomed like a mountain before him. I advised him to look to the Lord who could meet every need. He didn't get saved that night, but about a week later the Lord led me to go to their house to pray with him again. That time he prayed through. God also delivered him from the tobacco habit. He was a happy individual. In fact, they were now a happy family! His mother began to attend our church, and the Lord gave her victory also!

This quiet, timid, young wife became a wonderful, spiritual Christian. In spite of her timidity, she became a good personal worker. She brought a lot of her friends to church. She had a sweet solo voice and began to sing specials in our meetings. Sometimes she and her husband sang duets. She was probably the most spiritual of all of our members in the Iwakuni church. When we came back to the States for furlough in 1975, she was the main helper for the Bill Lesters. She taught Sunday School, went each week to Hirose for the meetings, and helped in many ways.

When we went to Japan again in 1976, she was still a faithful helper in the church. A few months later, her neck got stiff and sore. She went to a couple of chiropractors, but it kept getting worse. She finally was admitted to the Iwakuni National hospital for tests. She hadn't been there very long, when one day a nurse came in with a pair of scissors to cut off her pretty long hair. She asked the nurse not to, and a doctor stepped into the room just then and told the nurse that she didn't need to after all! We thanked God for intervening!

Her physical condition kept getting worse, but she remained victorious in her soul. She was full of thanksgiving and praise to God! She began to lose the use of her legs, but she was thankful that she could still use her hands. She was in severe pain most of the time. One day we found out what her real sickness was. She was full of cancer! We had special prayer meetings at the church for her, and we felt like God was going to heal her. My wife and I, and some others, felt like God had given us the assurance of her healing. As she got worse, we thought that the Lord would get more glory when He healed her. We never entertained the thought that she wouldn't get better.

Her husband spent many hours with her at the hospital. My wife also spent many hours at the hospital helping her in many ways, including combing and braiding her long hair, giving her massages, etc. Others in the church, including myself, her mother-in-law, and her teenage daughters all did what they could for her.

After she had been in the hospital almost a year, I got a telephone call one day telling me that Sister Samoto had passed away. I refused to believe it. I just knew something had to be wrong . . . someone was mistaken! I went to the hospital, and it was no mistake. I carried her body myself to our car, then drove to her house.

We kept thinking that the Lord would raise her from the dead. Even at the funeral in our church, we kept wondering just when the Lord was going to do it. My wife stepped to my side and asked me if we should pray over her body, but I didn't feel clear in doing this. After the funeral was over, we took her to the crematorium. After praying with the family and some of the friends, the man in charge pushed her casket into the furnace, locked the door, and lit the fire. We realized then that somehow we had misunderstood about her healing. It was a very severe trial for us. We didn't understand, but we could still trust God. Brother Bill Lester called from Okinawa, and he told us that she wasn't dead, that she was alive for evermore! This was encouraging to us. God knows why he took her on home early!

Sis. Samoto's influence still lives on in the church. Different ones speak of her often. Her family is trying to adjust to her absence. She will never be forgotten. Someday we shall join her again on the streets of gold in the New Jerusalem. Praise God for this blessed hope!

A Japanese girl, about nine or ten years old, and her brother, about eleven, were among our large group of Sunday School children. Her name was Rieko Takaichi, and his name was Akira. They faithfully attended our Sunday School for quite a long time. She had a skin problem that she had been born with. Her skin would get dry, crack, and then bleed, especially on her hands and feet. When the children started coming to Sunday School, the parents hoped that Rieko might be healed of this skin problem.

Their mother, Chieko, and father, Kuniaki, began to attend our church meetings also. I believe the first time the mother came was when we were having a special revival meeting. She seemed to be rather skeptical and had a real problem with unbelief. She began to come regularly, though, and after awhile began to seek the Lord. She sought in earnest, and the Lord met her need, saving her from her sins. Her husband didn't have as much trouble with unbelief, and after he had attended a few times, he went forward to the altar and was also saved. The whole family was baptized together in the Inland Sea along with several others.

The parents became faithful believers in our church. When Rieko and Akira got into Junior High School, they dropped out of church. (Most children drop out of Sunday School when they enter Junior High.) They would come occasionally, but not very often, maybe when we had a special meeting of some kind. When Rieko was in her last year of high school, her mother became very burdened for her. She began to fast and pray that the Lord would save her daughter by her eighteenth birthday. The night before her birthday, Rieko came to church with her parents. That night God spoke to her heart, and she wept and prayed her way to victory. Her parents were extremely happy, especially the mother who had been praying and fasting.

Rieko began to attend all of our meetings faithfully. When she graduated from high school, she came to our small Bible School there and studied with us for about

two years. When we returned to the States this year for furlough, she came with our family. The Lord is really helping her, both physically and spiritually. She is like a daughter to us.

Nine-year old Masaharu Asabayashi brought his younger brother, Yasuteru, to Sunday School with him. His parents didn't attend our meetings at all. They really didn't know anything about the Lord and His wonderful salvation. One day while riding his bicycle, a car ran into him, knocked him from his bicycle and his head struck the pavement. He was rushed to the hospital in a coma with a brain concussion. Since he was a Sunday School boy, someone contacted Bro. Himei, and he then told me about the accident. We rushed to the hospital where he had been admitted. This was the first time I had ever met Masaharu's parents. His father seemed to be a very stern man, who wasn't overly friendly toward us. We told him that we would like to come into the room and pray for his son. He agreed, but told us not to take very long because his son was in serious condition. Masaharu's mother was a nurse, and she knew how serious her son's condition was. We stepped into the room, had prayer in behalf of the injured boy, and then returned home. The doctors didn't really expect Masaharu to live, but if he should possibly live, they expected his mind to be affected and he would be just an imbecile.

We went to the hospital every day, sometimes even twice a day, to pray for his healing. We also prayed for him in our Sunday School and church meetings. One day I was strongly impressed by the scripture where the four friends took their friend who was sick of the palsy to Jesus to be healed. I had my wife, Bro. Himei, and Sis. Yukiko Kanaguchi (Sis. Himei now) to join with me in prayer for Masaharu. After we had prayed, the Lord gave me the assurance that he was going to heal him. He had been in a coma for two weeks already. I remember how I rushed to the hospital expecting him to be out of the coma and much improved. When I arrived, he was the very same, still in the coma. The devil began to taunt me, but by faith in God's promise, I told Mrs. Asabayashi that God had given me the assurance that her son was not going to die, but get better. She couldn't quite believe me as I told her, but she wept as she listened to me. She was still an unbeliever, so it was hard for her to believe in the promise of God.

My faith was tried, as day after day, I went to the hospital, and there was still no change in his condition. I kept clinging to God's word in spite of all the outward signs to the contrary. On the fifty-first day after the accident, when I went to the hospital, Masaharu opened his eyes and looked at me. His mother spoke to him and asked if he knew who I was. He answered in the affirmative. God had answered prayer and brought him out of the coma. He kept steadily improving and finally was dismissed from the hospital. Because of the brain concussion, the doctors had been concerned about his mental condition, but these fears were soon alleviated. When he came back to Sunday School, although on crutches, he was usually the first to answer the teacher's questions. His left arm and leg is still weaker than his right side, but he has graduated from high school and begun working in a factory.

Because of God answering our prayers in behalf of Masaharu, his mother got saved and a little later his father got saved, too. His father is now the treasurer of the Iwakuni church. One day Masaharu told his parents that God allowed him to have the accident so his parents could get saved. God truly works in wondrous ways, His wonders to perform!

One day when Masaharu was still in Junior High School, he gave a revival advertisement to a classmate, Miyuki Yanagihara. Miyuki was the third child in their family. She had two older sisters, a younger brother, and three younger sisters. It is unusual in Japan now to have that large a family. Miyuki had something wrong with her hip joints and it made her a little crippled. She took the advertisement to her home and showed it to her parents, and asked them if they would take her to the meeting. I remember well the Sunday morning when they came. They just drank in every word! The mother had been quite active in another religion, but the family was not interested in it. They were so impressed with the way they were received and the love that was shown to them. They were even surprised that I was there in the vestibule to welcome the people as they came. They began to attend regularly on Sunday morning, bringing their seven children and even their elderly mothers.

After they had been coming for a few weeks, we went to their home for the purpose of dealing with them about their souls. I explained the way of salvation to them and told them how a person had to repent of their sins. They just kept nodding their heads at everything I said. I couldn't sense any conviction at all, and it had me puzzled. Finally, I just asked them if they had already prayed on their own. They answered in the affirmative with big smiles. They had come home from church a few nights before, prayed to the Lord and He had saved them! I asked them if they had any idols in their home, and they told me that they had already thrown it away! We rejoiced how God had helped them in such a wonderful way!

Bro. Yanagihara bought a small bus and began to help me pick up children for Sunday School. This family has had a lot of trials, problems and tests, especially with some of their children, but they have continued to faithfully attend the meetings, and have been a wonderful help and blessing to the church in so many different ways. We are so thankful for them!

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10 -- PROPERTY, BUILDINGS, ETC.

The price of property in Japan is terribly high. Japan, area wise, is a small country, only about the size of the state of California, but the population is one-half of the United States. Land is at a premium, which accounts for the continually rising price.

Before going to Japan, Bro. W. M. Tidwell gave us \$5,000 toward the purchase of property. I thought we could buy the property for about \$1,000 and then

build a chapel for the remaining \$4,000. Sad to say, the property alone cost about twice this amount. I searched for property for about four years, trying to find a convenient location for a reasonable price. I would find an empty lot, find out who the owner was and where he lived, and then usually found out it wasn't for sale. Many times I would return home discouraged because I couldn't find a suitable place.

We finally bought property in a new housing area, but it cost \$10,400, and all we had was the \$5,000 from Bro. Tidwell. The small group of believers in Iwakuni gave around \$2,000, and the rest came from headquarters. I wasn't completely satisfied afterwards, though, as the location didn't seem too suitable for a church, even though it would be fine for a house. I looked again for a better place, but I couldn't seem to find one, so I decided we might as well go ahead and build where we had property. When I contacted our headquarters, they asked me to send our plan again for the board to review. This seemed unnecessary to me, but the Lord was in it. While I was waiting on the plan to be approved, I thought I would check again to see if I could find a more convenient location. We finally located the property that the Lord wanted. It is about seventy yards off of a national highway, very close to the bus stop, and also near a train station. Nearby is the national hospital and also two grade schools, one junior high school, and a new senior high school.

We sold our other property for about \$22,000 and bought the property at this better location for \$19,000. We paid the real estate office \$500 for selling our other property and used the remainder toward building. Our building project was also helped by a gift from Bro. W. M. Tidwell who, when he died had money that he wanted to go to foreign missions. He had wanted to help build our building in Japan, so we received \$11,000 for this purpose. Okinawa received \$7,000 to help on their building project. We were helped also by a contractor friend of mine whom I had met when I was in Japan in the U.S. Navy. He had come to our meetings then, and when we began to build, he gave us a reduced rate on the construction costs. Then the headquarters came through with the remaining money because of the faithfulness of the general church. Thank God for a faithful group at home and for their sacrificial giving! Praise God again for answered prayer! The church was built in memory of the seven who lost their lives in the boat accident, and also in memory of Bro. W. M. Tidwell. At this writing it is valued at around \$300,000!

A few years later we realized that we needed to add on to our building. We didn't have any money in our Iwakuni church, so we thought we might be able to borrow about \$10,000 from the church in the States and then pay them back a certain amount each month until the total amount was paid back. The church didn't have the money to loan us, and this was all in the plan of God. I contacted my contractor friend again to give us an appraisal or estimate of what our new addition would cost. It would cost approximately \$14,000. I asked my friend if we could pay one-third in the beginning, one-third six months later, and the remaining one-third six months after that. This would give us a year to get the entire \$14,000 paid off.

We prayed and looked to the Lord for guidance. We felt led to sell part of our Hirose property to some of our neighbors who were already using it to park their cars. We received \$5,000 for this. The Iwakuni church people gave a pledge offering to be paid in about a year. God undertook for us and helped us in a marvelous way. When the time came to make the second payment, and again the last payment, the needed money was there. Praise God again for answered prayer!

Hirose is a little country town about twenty-five miles from Iwakuni. We started holding weekly meetings there several years ago. Just before I got sick and had to return to the States, we had moved to Hirose to try to establish a work there. A family had a piece of property for sale, and they were selling it for a low price, to help their daughter in college. I asked a close friend if she would loan me the money to buy the property and to put up a small chapel. She agreed to loan me the money, and afterwards she just gave it instead of loaning it! We had a prefabricated chapel built there on the property.

The county was building a new road that would bypass the narrow, main street of Hirose. They took just a very small portion of our property and gave us \$1,000 for it. This new road made the value of our property increase tremendously. We paid originally only about \$3,000 for the land. I already mentioned about selling part of it to help out the Iwakuni church and receiving \$5,000 for that. The Naha church in Okinawa needed quite a sum of money to buy the property on which they had their building. There is a long story behind that situation; I won't go into all of that, but unless we had around \$27,000, we stood a good chance of losing our church in Naha. The field council met and felt like the future possibilities of Naha were much greater than Hirose, so we agreed to sell the rest of the property in Hirose and use it for Naha. This was also approved by the States. We sold the remaining property for about \$20,000. The Naha church had been praying desperately, and this was the way God answered their prayers! The man who bought the Hirose property said that we could leave our little chapel there, and use it, as is, free of charge for two or three years. What a great God we serve!

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11 -- FELLOW LABORERS IN JAPAN

(See hdm3379-23.jpg, hdm3379-24.jpg, and hdm3379-25.jpg)

I have mentioned Bro. Masao Himei, but I would like to write a little more about him. He was a Bible School student when we went to Japan. While in school, he came to see us at different times and wrote to us often. Even though he was a member of another organization, he had a desire to help us in our work. When we had our boat accident, he rushed down to Iwakuni to see us, and the Bible School allowed him to stay there and help our church while we returned to the United States for our children's funeral. After graduation, the school showed a wonderful, magnanimous spirit and allowed him to come to Iwakuni to help us again in our

work. He finally felt led of the Lord to join our group. When we had to return to the States because of my ill health, he helped the Hesseltines to keep the work going there, and when the Hesseltines moved to Okinawa, he and his wife worked faithfully in Iwakuni. Sad to say, they aren't with our group anymore, but we try to remember them in prayer every day.

While we were home for our children's funeral, our good friends, Bro. and Sis. E. L. Hesseltine, came out to Idaho for the funeral. We went to Rock Island to speak at our Bible School and also for a rally in that area. Bro. and Sis. Hesseltine felt like God spoke to their hearts and asked them to share their Teresa Dawn (named after our oldest daughter) with us. God used this means to call them to the country of Japan. They came to Japan as soon as they could and spent one and one-half years in Iwakuni, and then they went to Okinawa for the rest of their term. We have some fond memories of good times together in Japan. We thank them for their labors in behalf of the land of Japan!

Bro. and Sis. Bill Thorn and girls went to Okinawa while he was still serving in the U.S. Air Force. While there, they began having meetings in their home with the desire to reach some of the people around them. God began to bless their efforts in a wonderful way. Young people began to come to their house, some began to seek the Lord, and there were quite a few happy finders. I visited them twice while they were there in that capacity.

After being discharged from the Air Force, God put a call upon the Thorns to return to Okinawa as missionaries. God has blessed the labors of the Thorns. They have been faithful to carry on the work there. Not only the Okinawans, but a good number of servicemen and their families have received help through the Thorns' ministry. The church in Naha seems to be doing the best it has ever done. They have also given many hours going to Henza to preach the gospel there, too. The Thorns worked very hard, remodeling the Sunday School rooms into an attractive apartment to live in. They are finishing their second term on the field at the time of this writing. "Gokuro sama deshita." "Thank you for your labors!"

At the same time the Thorns were in Okinawa in the service, a young sailor, Bro. Bill Lester, was stationed in Iwakuni. He became a close friend of ours. In the providence of God, the Thorns and Bro. Lester went to the same church after all of them returned to the States. After Bill was discharged from the Navy and married to the Thorn's daughter, Patty, they went to Bible Missionary Institute to prepare to work in God's vast harvest field. After going to school and pastoring for awhile in the States, they came to Iwakuni to help us spread the gospel there. We were together for a year, and then we returned to the States for furlough. The Lesters carried on faithfully during our absence, even though they had quite a time with the language. (Just like all the rest of us!) God helped Sis. Lester to make marvelous progress in a short time, and before the year was up, she was interpreting for her husband. After we went back to Japan, they went to Okinawa to replace the Thorns

while they went on furlough. They labored in both Naha and Henza and again God blessed their labors.

When time came for us to return to the homeland this year on furlough, we didn't have any replacement. We didn't know whether we would be able to return or not. The Lesters were living in Otake, which is about ten miles from our Iwakuni church. They volunteered to help out in any way that they could, and in spite of Bro. Lester's physical problems, little Becky's ill health (their youngest daughter), and a very busy schedule for their entire family, they have been faithful to carry on the work in Otake, besides helping out in Iwakuni, Hirose, and Oshima. "Otsukare sama deshita." Thank you for your labors that have been so tiring!

A few years ago we were praying for someone to go to Okinawa to help in the work there. We didn't know at the time, that the "someone" would be Bro. John Anderson and his family. They had come with our group from another good conservative holiness church. Their call seemed to be to help out wherever they were needed. They were in Naha until the Thorns returned there, and then they went to Henza and stayed until her father's poor health caused them to return to the States a few months early for furlough. They have labored faithfully there, and God has helped them. We love them dearly. Sometimes I call him "John the beloved." They are preparing now to go back to Okinawa for another tour of duty. God bless you, and thank you for your hard work!

* * * * *

12 -- THE BLESSED HOPE

When we've been there ten thousand years,
Bright shining as the sun;
We've no less days, to sing God's praise,
Than when we first begun!

When our accident occurred in Japan, different unbelievers wrote to us and wondered how we could continue to live when our four children had passed away. Of course, they knew nothing about the grace of God, neither did they know anything about the "blessed hope" that every true Christian possesses.

First and foremost, the "blessed hope" is when Christ shall return to catch away His bride, the true Church. Both Old and New Testament prophets have foretold this great event. Preachers have preached about this for almost two thousand years. Songs have been written about this precious event, and saints of God have sung about it as they continued the fight of faith. Untold millions of Christians have watched, prayed, and waited for this prophecy to be fulfilled. Suffering saints have looked forward to the time when their suffering would all be over. Lonely, bereaved followers of the Lord have looked forward with anticipation to the great reunion in the skies. Those who are tempted to grow weary in well

doing have been encouraged to press on because of this marvelous "blessed hope." Someday it will be a reality!

As the song writer wrote in a song that was special to our first family:

There is coming a day when no heart aches will come;
No more clouds in the sky, No more tears to dim the eye.
All is peace forever more, on that happy golden shore;
What a day! Glorious day! That will be!

What a day that will be, when my Jesus I shall see;
When I look upon His face,
The One who saved me by His grace!
When He takes me by the hand,
And leads me through the Promised Land;
What a day! Glorious day! That will be!

There'll be no sorrow there, no more burdens to bear;
No more sickness, no pain, no more parting over there!
But, forever I will be, with the One who died for me!
What a day! Glorious day! That will be!

That day is approaching swiftly, so let us take courage and continue to press the battle against sin and ungodliness. We can't really grasp with our finite minds what it will actually be like when faith becomes sight, when we actually see the One we have served by faith. "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him." Let us say with the Apostle John, "Even so, come Lord Jesus." I am eagerly anticipating that glorious day! I want to fall at His feet and tell Him how much I love Him, and how I appreciate how He died for me. "Now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known." I want to thank the Lord for saving my soul from hell and for sanctifying me wholly. I want to praise Him for keeping me, when the devil has done his best to ensnare my soul. I want to praise Him for victory through His precious, shed blood. Just think, we will have all eternity before us to praise the Lord! We won't be hindered by infirmities then.

Also included in this "blessed hope" is the reunion with loved ones who have gone on before us. All of us remember too well that sad day of departing. Words are inadequate to express the broken hearts. There is no way to explain that terrible loneliness that seemed to engulf us. Everywhere we looked we saw reminders, something to tear at our hearts that were already bleeding. Sometimes it is their birthday that reminds us. I don't know about others, but many times in prayer I have told the Lord, that if it was permissible, to greet them and tell them "Happy birthday!" for me. Somehow I think that they are nearer to us than we realize.

Once, when I was in the Philippines trying to help get the work started there, I had an unusual dream. I dreamed that I was riding along on a train when the rapture occurred. The train left the tracks and started flying through the sky to heaven. (Of course, I know that when the rapture takes place, I won't go to heaven on a train!) The train stopped in heaven and I got off. It took a few moments for me to realize that I was actually in heaven. I began to shout with a loud voice and praise the Lord that I had finally made it to heaven. Two of my boys, Garry and Joel, ran to me and I happily embraced them, hugging them close to my heart. I remember asking them where their big sister, Teresa, and baby brother, Donnie, were, and just then I awoke. I was disappointed when I realized that it was just a dream. One of these days, soon, it won't be a dream; it will be a wonderful reality. Just think, reunited forever! Never to be parted again!

I have told this in my preaching, but when our three older children were small, I used to pick up all three of them in my arms at one time. I would hold Teresa, the oldest, in my right arm, Garry, the older boy, in my left arm, and then I would reach out and get a hold of Joel with my hands and carry them. Now we have seven children, altogether. Someday in heaven maybe I can pick all seven of them up at one time. I am anxious to at least try!

Not only do we desire to be reunited with our children, but other precious loved ones, too. The last time I saw my mother alive, she was a semi-invalid, but not when I see her with her new, glorified body. I have precious memories of my little mother. The last time I saw my father alive, he was in a nursing home. He was very feeble and frail. It will be different in heaven! I have many other relatives that I am anxious to see again.

What a thrill it will be to see Bob Hatcher, Kyoko Hayashi, and Masaru Fujioka again! My Japanese language ability was so poor that I couldn't talk to them like I desired, but, thank the Lord! it won't be that way in heaven. There will be unbroken fellowship for eternity! This just staggers my mind, and I am sure that I can't fully grasp it. I am sure that dear, precious Sis. Reiko Samoto won't have that thin, diseased, cancerous body; but a perfect, glorified body! Others have gone from the shores of Japan, too, that I will rejoice to see again.

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EPILOGUE

(See [hdm3379-26.jpg](#), [hdm3379-27.jpg](#), [hdm3379-28.jpg](#), [hdm3379-29.jpg](#), [hdm3379-30.jpg](#), and [hdm3379-31.jpg](#))

We continued serving in Japan until August of 1982. About a year previous to this, I began to have problems with my health again. The weather in Japan is damp and cold in the winter, and hot and humid in the summer. I had been in an automobile accident in 1958, and injured my neck and back. In the boat accident, I

injured both hips. The weather caused these injuries to bother me greatly. It became very difficult for me to rest at night because of the pain. I began to pray in earnest about this need. I told the Lord that I believed He had the power to heal me, and I asked him to do it, if it was according to His will. If he did not see fit to heal me, I knew he could give me grace to endure. If for some reason that I did not understand, He wanted me to return to the States, I would be willing to do that also. I was not my own; I belonged to Him! I only desired His perfect will for my life.

I prayed about this for several months. The Lord had given me a Scripture to go to Japan, and I felt like I also needed a Scripture to return home, if that was indeed His will. One day, while in prayer, the Scripture, John 17:4, came to my mind very forcibly. "I have finished the work thou gavest me to do." I asked the Lord if He was using this verse to direct us back to the States. The next verse came, "This is the way, walk ye in it." (Isaiah 30:21). I definitely felt the Lord's guidance, and although we had mixed emotions, we began to make plans to return to the United States. We certainly hated to leave our beloved Japanese people, but we knew that we needed to follow the leadership of the Lord.

I contacted Bro. Foy Bullock, who was our General Foreign Missions Secretary at that time, and informed the other missionaries and native friends in Japan. It was a difficult time for all of us. I had no idea what I would be doing after returning to the States, but I was leaving it in the Lord's hands.

We returned to the States in August of 1982. I began holding revivals as an evangelist. I had eighteen revival meetings in the next eleven months. I was very busy, but my health improved right along.

In August of 1983, we attended the General Conference in Rock Island, Illinois. Our beloved Bro. Foy Bullock had passed away the month before, and he was missed greatly! I was elected as the General Foreign Missions Secretary. I have been doing my best to shoulder this responsibility for over twenty-two years now. I have deeply appreciated the prayers and support of our precious church family.

Our son, Robert Masaru, graduated from Bible Missionary Institute in Rock Island, Illinois, in May of 1990. He was married to a fine young lady, Chella Hillsberry, in June of 1989. They began pastoring in July of 1990 and continued in the pastorate until they flew to Japan on December 9th, 2003, to serve as missionaries. (As you may recall, the boat accident occurred on Dec. 9th, and Robert (Bobby) was born on Dec. 9th, one year later. Now, their departure for Japan happened to fall on Dec. 9th!) Bob and Chella, along with their four lovely, blond-headed daughters, Dawn, Danielle, Danae and Danice are excited to be in Iwakuni, Japan . . . living in the very same church parsonage that Bobby was raised in! God is blessing their work there!

Our daughter, Grace Kyoko, graduated from Bible Missionary Institute in May of 1991. Two days later, on May 17, 1991, she married her tall sweetheart, Aaron

Miller, the son of John Miller who was president of B.M.I. Aaron and Kyoko pastored in Spokane, Washington, until leaving for Okinawa, Japan, in 1996. They were accompanied by two lively sons, Justin and Joel. A darling daughter, Charity Joy, was added to their family in 1998. They have labored faithfully for eight years and are on furlough now, planning to return to the land of their calling in June, 2006.

Our youngest daughter, Margaret Annette, graduated from Homedale Christian School in May of 1990. She fell in love with Paul McLeod at Bible Missionary Institute and they were married in 1993. God has given them three precious children, Jonathan, Alyssa and Trevor, and they are presently pastoring in Mt. Pleasant, Iowa.

Bro. Kuniaki Takaichi, one of our godly men in Japan, answered the call to preach in his middle-aged years and has pastored faithfully for many years. He now has Parkinson's disease, which has hindered his ability to preach, but he and his wife are still a tremendous blessing to the Japanese BMC!

Their daughter, Rieko Takiachi, married Noboru Isaka, a very talented young man, and they have made wonderful pastors over these years. They have two sons, Tomo and Jun. Tomo is attending BMI presently. We love this family dearly . . . like our own children.

Masaharu Asabayashi felt led of the Lord to enter the ministry and pastored in Okinawa for a few years. He married a spiritual lady, Yukiko, and they have two sweet children, Makoto (Truth) and Nozomi (Hope). They have labored faithfully in Otake for many years now, and God is blessing and giving them souls!

Many missionary warriors have come and gone, each leaving a special place in the hearts of the Japanese. Bro. Bill Lester has been called home to heaven and is greatly missed! The Bill Thorns returned to the U.S. due to health problems. The John Andersons went on from Okinawa to New Guinea and are now back in the States. The E. L. Hesseltines are retired and living in Tennessee. The Randy Lucas family are presently pastoring in the States. We appreciate the many years each one invested in spreading the gospel to Okinawa and Japan!

Many changes have taken place since we first started writing this book. Some of our Japanese Christians have already entered that eternal city, and others have fallen by the wayside. Several of our own relatives and loved ones have also gone on to heaven. We are still here in this life, doing our best to fight the "good fight of faith." Many trials and tests have come our way, but we are determined to make heaven our eternal home! We cannot give in to lukewarmness, indifference, compromise, or unconcern! We must not get ensnared by materialism! At times we get weary, but there is no place to slow down or quit. Our children, our parents, and a host of friends are waiting for us there! Sometimes I can almost feel them urging us on! We can make the landing safely! Our God is going to see us through. His grace is still sufficient! God's grace is still amazing!

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THE END