

Greeting from Masaaki-sama
Grand Spring Service & International Membership Conference – USA
Miami, Florida, April 21, 2019

Good morning, everyone. How are you?

I'd like to first thank Rev. Santos for his kind words of welcome. He thanked me and all of us but I would like to convey my gratitude to him, because without his standing up for Kyoshu-sama to protect the true divine work of Meishu-sama, today would not have happened. So, I'd like to thank him from the bottom of my heart. Thank you, Rev. Santos.

I'd also like to thank the ministers in the United States, Rev. Santos, Rev. Felipe, Rev. Igor and Rev. Marcia, and not only them but also the wives of the ministers, Katia, Mariana and Makiko. I was with them for the last few days since I arrived here and realized that without their help – without the help and support of the wives of the ministers – this divine work would not advance. I'd like to thank not only the ministers but their wives in particular. Thank you.

And of course, I'd like to thank the members in the United States. I hear that it was a difficult year for many of you last year - many rumors spread, many members left. It must have been difficult for you, mentally in particular, but you stood up. You decided to follow this path with Kyoshu-sama, believing that Kyoshu-sama is conveying to us the true message of Meishu-sama. So, I'd like to thank the members of the United States. Thank you very much.

On these occasions, in Japan, I always share what I feel and think from receiving the messages of Kyoshu-sama. Today, I want to share what I recently was made to think on one of the teachings of Kyoshu-sama that he has been conveying to us and that is “God lives within us.”

God lives within us. In English, it is four words. It is very short so it may sound simple, but it is a very profound message. It is a message that can change the world. Personally, for me, it changed my way of life completely.

We have been thinking that God, the Creator, is somewhere high above us, and we humans, the created, are down below, and we separated ourselves from God. We thought that the mission of us humans, as created ones, is to pray to God, dedicate ourselves to

Him, try to do good works and be virtuous. We thought that that was the mission of humans, being different from God.

Of course, all of those acts, praying to God and being virtuous, are important. But gradually, we began to judge ourselves and others thinking such things as, “He’s not good because he’s not doing this action. I’m better than that person because I’m praying more. Because I’m practicing more, I’m better.” And not only that, in the end, we thought, “I’m practicing this. I’m putting in this much for donations. I’m practicing Johrei. I’m guiding this many people to the church – but still, bad things happen to me. Does God not love me? Did he abandon me?” We fell into that kind of state of mind.

By assuming that God is up above, and we humans are down below, we created a gulf, or a gap, between God and humans. We thought that the only way to bridge that gap, the gulf, was by practicing those acts and we tried to practice more and more. But somehow, the bridge to cross the gap, the gulf, did not come to be and we were lost. I believe the last piece we needed to bridge that gap was the name of Messiah.

It was Meishu-sama who greatly treasured the name of Messiah. He named his religious organization with the name Messiah. He named the place we worshipped (in Japan) the Hall of Messiah. He listened to Handel’s oratorio, the *Messiah*, and he also said he was born anew as the Messiah. So, in that sense, we can say that Meishu-sama advanced his divine work with the name Messiah, bridging that gap. Meishu-sama knew that the only way to be one with God and advance the divine work was moving forward with that holy name. That is why he named his religious organization using the name Messiah. And always one with the name Messiah, Meishu-sama advanced his divine work.

I believe that Jesus Christ also played an important part in this divine work. He was the first one to receive the name of Messiah; he embodied the name of Messiah in his life. By atoning for the sins of humanity, he bridged the gap between God and humans through the name of Messiah. Jesus Christ did that first. But this message was not carried through over time. The people of Christianity did not receive the true message on the meaning of the name of Messiah. In the Christian world, they say how much money you donated, how much you repented. It is the same thing that we do. Even though Jesus Christ atoned for the sins of all humanity, somehow the gap between God and humans was still there.

That is why God needed to send Meishu-sama to this world 2,000 years later. God is

telling us, *you forgot the name of Messiah. You can be one with Me. I told you this 2,000 years ago but you forgot it. Remember it.* Meishu-sama is trying to wake us up. Meishu-sama practiced Johrei, Nature Farming, and Art, believing that God lived within himself. Meishu-sama is the person who practiced this message, that God lives within us.

We think that Meishu-sama is a god-like figure. Meishu-sama practiced Johrei, Nature Farming and Art, but, at the same time, he is allowing us to practice the same Johrei that he did, to practice the same Nature Farming as he did, and to do Art, like Ikebana, as he did. Meishu-sama is allowing us to do all the same things as he did. I think what he wanted to tell us is *within you, God is alive, as He is within me.* Meishu-sama knew that God lived within him and he is allowing us to do the same thing as he did. Doesn't it mean that what Meishu-sama wants to tell us is that *within each one of you, the spirit of God lives?*

Even though Meishu-sama left this message for us, after he passed away, gradually, we started to avoid the name of Messiah and we started to say things like how much you are practicing Johrei; how much you are giving donations; how much you are guiding people to the church. Meishu-sama taught us with love that we can be one with God but then we drifted apart from Him again, separated from God and were doing all these practices without the name of Messiah – the only way to bridge the gap between God and humans.

I think that is why now, we have Kyoshu-sama. Receiving the true will of Meishu-sama, Kyoshu-sama is now asking us: Do you remember what the message of Meishu-sama was? What was his true message? Was it just for us to judge others, judge ourselves and live our faith? I do not think so. I think that is why Kyoshu-sama is now trying to teach this message: *God lives within you. The name of Messiah is really important. You can return to heaven.* That is Kyoshu-sama's message. Returning to heaven means that you can be one with God. With the name of Messiah, we humans can return to heaven and be one with God, and do Johrei, do Nature Farming, do art-related practices and do the work of God. Kyoshu-sama is trying to teach us the true essence of what Meishu-sama left for us.

We may think we are a small group but I believe we are living in a crucial time in history. The true message of God first came through Jesus Christ but it was not accomplished. Then it came through Meishu-sama, but we nearly fell short of receiving that message. Now through Kyoshu-sama, we are receiving the true message that God wanted to tell all humanity through Jesus Christ and Meishu-sama and we have the mission to carry on that

message.

With the purification last year, the number of members might have decreased but I think Meishu-sama is saying we have *this much*. He is not saying that it is a little. For Meishu-sama, it is more than enough.

He wrote a book entitled, *Save America*. America is a mixture of all religions, races and cultures and I think even if a small number of people can awaken to this truth in the States, it means not only saving America. I think it will lead to saving the whole world.

So, I'm really excited about how the divine work in the United States is going to advance from now on. I am very lucky to be standing here witnessing this moment when the true divine work of Meishu-sama is starting to spread, really spread to America and to the world.

Thank you very much.