

HEART-TO-HEART

We are reminded that Christ is in our hearts and we are in His and that love connects us all in unity.

"The giving of gifts is not something man invented. God started the giving spree when He gave a gift beyond words, the unspeakable gift of His Son."

Robert Flatt

The Spirit of Giving

In www.Christianity.com the meaning of Christmas is explained as:

"Christmas is a time of spiritual reflection on the important foundations of the Christian faith. It's also a celebration. It's when Christians celebrate God's love for the world through the birth of the Christ child: Jesus."

As we reflect at the end of 2023, let us keep our hearts and minds on the vision of WOCC - **"God's divine love transforming us to love God and love others."**

When we allow God to love us, and we feel his love for us, we begin our

transformation to want to be more like Jesus - expressing our love to him and others.

As followers of Christ, the world should see our love for others in our actions and speech. This is what sets us apart from the world and brings non-believers to Christ. May we be bold enough to share Christ's gift of love with others.

*"We are one in the Spirit,
we are one in the Lord
We are one in the Spirit,
we are one in the Lord
And we pray that all unity
may one day be restored
And they'll know we are Christians
by our love, by our love
Yes, they'll know we are Christians
by our love."*

by Peter Scholte

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It Only Takes a Spark!

by Joan Doi

Perhaps it was a tiny spark in the heart of Reverend Toshio Hirano back in 1926 that led him to begin a work of evangelism in Hawaii. Fanned into flame by the Holy Spirit, multiple sparks ignited, touching the hearts of others—pastors and laymen alike—who began mission churches throughout the Island.

His ministry set the groundwork for an inspiring story of three young men: Sidney Hirao, David Nakata, and Anthony Park, who were confined to Leahi Tuberculosis Sanitarium as terminal patients. Although enduring physical limitations, they were spiritually uplifted while being mentored by Reverend Hirano. Their hearts, too, were set afire, giving them the courage to leave the sanitarium. They found a place of refuge at the summit of Tantalus, where they prayed for three days and three nights. Miraculously, they were healed and a spark of revival ignited. Mission churches were started in Kakaako, Waialae, South King Street and Wahiawa. (The latter under the leadership of Hideo Tanji, Sam's dad.)

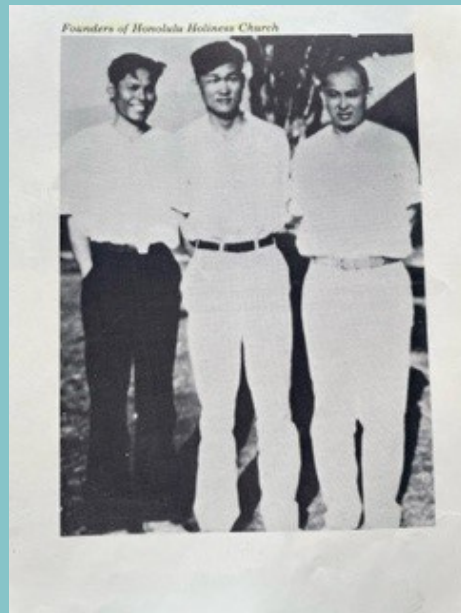
That spark ignited a Young People's Endeavor Group, which became the beginning of an English-speaking ministry headed by Reverend Earnest Kilbourne. What a blessing that was that bridged the gap between generations. Invited to Sunday School by a member of the Japanese speaking department, I began a joyful journey of faith which has spanned over seven decades. Work that began in a small wooden chapel in Moiliili, moved to Alexander Street, then to Makiki; and, finally, a permanent site in Manoa was found, which is now the Honolulu Christian Church.

Population growth in West Oahu ignited a spark to plant a church in Pearl City. In the summer of 1974, what started as a Vacation Bible School utilizing the facilities of Pearl Highlands Elementary School, West Oahu Christian Church took root. Now here we are firmly planted in Waipahu, a rich and fertile mission ground.

Reflecting back, it has been almost a century since the spark of evangelism stirred the hearts of Reverend Toshio Hirano and all who kept it burning. It behooves us now to claim the promise in the Psalms and to keep that spark alive. "May the Lord's plan stand forever; what he intends to do will last from one generation to the next. (Psalm 33:11)." So be it!

The words of a song "Pass It On" by Kurt Kaiser motivated the sharing of this brief history of WOCC.

It only takes a spark to get a fire going,
And soon all those around
Can warm up to its glowing;
That's how it is with God's love
Once you've experienced it,
You spread His love to everyone
You want to pass it on.



Founders of Honolulu
Holiness Church



First Church in Moiliili

A Gift From Above

by Linda Kunimitsu

Amazingly, this December 2023 issue of Heart-to-Heart commemorates Julie Morita's and my one-year anniversary as co-editors. With this issue, we start our second year. We hope you have enjoyed reading them as much as we have enjoyed writing and producing them. We give all glory and thanks to our Lord Jesus Christ!

It was around this time last year that Julie approached me shortly after the last transitional church meeting. She said Charlie Nako had mentioned in her group how he missed the newsletters they once had. She said it should be started again and she thought I was the one to do it. Excuse me? Why me? I hardly knew Julie. (I did notice how well she performed as she color-coded the groups and wrote all the details of the meetings on the board.) Her answer was, "Because of what you said at the meetings."

To this day, I have no idea what I said that prompted her to approach me. I do want to mention here that we have made an amazing team. Julie does most of the work each month. All I do is write one or two articles, which I thoroughly enjoy. Really, that's it. Julie has done everything else—the designing, the color coordination, the quotes and quips and anecdotes and filling in the pages each month.

I asked her once, "Have you done newsletters before?" Her answer was no. It is one of many gifts Julie has.

What is your gift? You may not think much of what you love to do. However, no matter how insignificant you may think it is, when you use it to glorify God, He will increase it many times over.

As a young child born and raised in the coffee fields of Kona, my father took us to the big city of Hilo just before Christmas. Shortly after Thanksgiving the Hilo Tribune Herald would announce the stringing of Christmas lights across the main street of Hilo. Dad paid me \$1 for each bag of 100 lbs of coffee I picked. That was big money in those days!! He would pay me the night before we were to go to Hilo.

It was soooo exciting! I would dream about how I would spend my money at the Hilo Kress Store. In the 40s and 50s, we had very little to do. There were no TVs or cell phones so I did a lot of reading. I loved to read; so, the first thing on my list was to buy books. I'm not sure how old I was when I saw diaries next to the books so I bought one. I then kept a diary all through my life up to the year I got married at age 23. See, God had planted the seed of writing way back then.

With a busy life of raising two children and working full-time, I never did any writing. However, when I accepted Jesus at age 43, my friend who had been praying for my salvation sent me Billy Graham's magazines. In one issue, there was an announcement of a Christian writers' conference in Minneapolis. To this day, I can't believe I hopped on the plane to attend that conference. God was fertilizing the seed he had planted years ago.

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"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us."

Romans 12:6

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Shortly thereafter I sent an article to the Guidepost, a Christian magazine similar to the Readers Digest. I received a personal letter from the editor saying she couldn't use this particular article, but she encouraged me to keep writing because I had a "flare" for writing.

I then worked on a few newsletters for the first church I attended. Then, I submitted a few articles to the Star Bulletin/Advertiser, now Star Advertiser. It was the most exciting thing in my life to see something I wrote published in the newspaper! I made it a point to glorify God in some little way in a secular newspaper. It was never left out.

The point I want to make is: God planted the seed very early in my life. Going to the writers' conference was a step in the right direction. I didn't know at the time but I was saying, "Here I am, Lord, use me!"

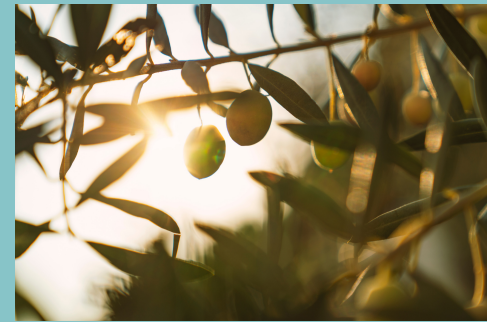
If you have a desire to serve our Lord Jesus Christ, ask yourself, "What do I like to do? What gift has God given me so I can glorify Him?" Then step up and use your gift. You will be blessing others and, most important, blessing God!!

May you have a very Merry Christmas together with your loved ones!!



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"But I am like an olive tree flourishing in the house of God: I trust in God's unfailing love for ever and ever."

Psalm 52:8

*Please feel free to contact:
Linda Kunimitsu or Julie
Morita about this newsletter
or to submit an article.*