

Greeting by Masaaki-sama

“A promised future”

November Monthly Service
World Church of Messiah Headquarters Altar Room
November 1, 2020

Good morning, everyone.

In these last few years, the Church went through a major change, didn't it? Many things have happened, and at one glance, you might feel that this state of confusion continued for a while.

There is no mistake that through it, Meishu-sama has been trying to convey something to us. What does he want us to realize? What is he asking us?

In the early days, we believed that it was the spirit with which Meishu-sama founded World Church of Messiah (*Sekai Meshia Kyo*). We had forgotten this spirit. Even though Meishu-sama named his Church with this name, two years after he ascended—in only two years—it was changed to World Church of Salvation (*Sekai Kyusei Kyo*), and we went forward as such until today. We thought that Meishu-sama was trying to convey this to us. As a result, as all of you know, this year on February 4, we were able to take part in the resurrection of the name World Church of Messiah.

This was, of course, something that Meishu-sama must have been wishing from us. However, when I look back on the development of this divine work for the last nine months or so from the resurrection of World Church of Messiah up until today, when I think about it, the spirit with which World Church of Messiah was founded is of course one part of it, but isn't there one more thing that Meishu-sama is wanting for us to realize, something that he is asking us?

That is Jesus Christ. To us, who exactly is the existence of Jesus Christ? To believe and receive Jesus Christ, to believe and accept that Jesus Christ has been and is being used by God—I now feel that this is what Meishu-sama is asking us about. I feel that he is asking us right now: “Do you believe and accept that Jesus is an existence that is used by God?”

As all of you know, the MOA group secretly followed, wire-tapped and filmed/photographed Kyoshu-sama. And what was the result of that? Well, nothing. He

was meeting with a friend who was Christian. And he was learning about Christianity. Not only that. He felt that the existence of Christianity was essential in seeking Meishu-sama's will and his Sacred Word.

And the MOA group said that to have a Christian friend and to learn about Christianity was a major problem, that this was far removed from Meishu-sama's will. In this way, they criticized Kyoshu-sama. And they one-sidedly asserted that they removed Kyoshu-sama, that they expelled him.

But what if, for example, Kyoshu-sama had been meeting with the kind of people who took a scientific approach to Johrei or with those related to alternative medicine, which MOA is promoting? What if Kyoshu-sama had gone to a study meeting with those kinds of people, and he thought that alternative medicine and suchlike were wonderful, that they were necessary in seeking Meishu-sama's will?

Without a doubt, the people on that side would have said something like the following to Kyoshu-sama: why didn't you say anything to us sooner; how wonderful this is; indeed, Meishu-sama is living and working through you, Kyoshu-sama; this is following Meishu-sama's will; Kyoshu-sama, you are wonderful. They would surely have been in complete agreement with Kyoshu-sama and his actions.

However, because this was about such matters like Christianity, the Bible and Jesus Christ, they criticized Kyoshu-sama. It was like this, wasn't it?

So knowing these issues through the propaganda of the MOA group, what were we going to do about it? I think we were made to choose between walking the path of Meishu-sama on which Kyoshu-sama was guiding us, or walking the path that we had been going on up until then, weren't we?

And knowing that Kyoshu-sama was meeting with a Christian and learning about Christianity, each one of us needed to make a choice. I feel this means that Meishu-sama had been asking us after all, "What are you going to do about existences such as Jesus Christ and Christianity? Will you accept and receive them?"

And another point, in today's age of the internet and such, information like this cannot be contained only within the Church, right? It was through YouTube and other various media on the internet that the disruptions within the Church went out into the world—though it certainly is nothing to be proud of that people came to know that we are having

an internal conflict. It was not only we who are connected to *Sekai Kyusei Kyo* but the many people who have faith in Meishu-sama around the world including Japan that were able to look at these developments over the internet and other media. They were able to check the situation and come to know that Christianity was the issue or that these things were happening.

In thinking about this, I believe Meishu-sama was asking the question “What will you do about Christianity and Jesus?” not only to us members associated with *Sekai Kyusei Kyo* but to all followers who believe in him, including the various other groups that broke away. To all of them, he was asking, “Do you or do you not believe that in the foundation of my work is Jesus? Do you or do you not believe in our working in concert with Christianity?” To this, I believe that Meishu-sama saw the reactions from the hearts of his members.

So they criticized Kyoshu-sama and said that Christianity and Jesus Christ are not part of Meishu-sama’s will. But is that true? No, it’s not. As I have quoted many times, in an interview from the church publication when World Church of Messiah was founded in 1950, Meishu-sama was asked, “What is the global significance of the birth of World Church of Messiah?” To that, Meishu-sama said that Jesus Christ’s divine power is great; the teachings of Jesus and his teachings are extremely close; his new religion will work in concert with Christianity, and he will strive to save humanity and lead it in the right direction using all his heart and soul. He said with absolute certainty that he will work in concert with Christianity in order to save humanity and use all his heart and soul to advance that—this is Meishu-sama, and this is we of World Church of Messiah.

Or in Meishu-sama’s hymn, he says:

“Know this, everyone. / What I am trying to convey is this: / The gospel of heaven that Jesus Christ proclaimed!”

This is a hymn where Meishu-sama says *I am conveying the gospel of heaven that Jesus proclaimed*. Until now, didn’t we think that Meishu-sama’s “construction of heaven on earth” or the “construction of heaven,” had nothing to do with Jesus, even though Meishu-sama said that he was conveying the gospel of heaven that Jesus spoke about? Didn’t we simply think that we were going to construct the heaven that Meishu-sama spoke about?

Or there is the hymn,

“Jesus Christ preached God the Father. / I preach the Lord God. / My followers, know this as I do: / Jesus and I are preaching the same God!”

Meishu-sama is saying that Christianity’s God the Father or Heavenly Father and whom he calls Lord God are the same. He is telling us to know this. He says, “My followers, *know* this as I do: Jesus and I are preaching the *same* God!” Isn’t he ordering us to “know” because we are not thinking like this?

When we prayed to God or thought about God, did we actually ever think until now, “O Father” or “My true Father”? Did we ever think that the God of Meishu-sama was the same as whom Christ called Heavenly Father or God the Father? Did we ever think that this true Father is whom we have faith in?

Also within the Sacred Word “Materialization of the prophecy of the kingdom of heaven,” Meishu-sama says that *we will construct heaven, and by our doing so, Jesus’s prophecy proves to be true. But it is not something to particularly boast about because God, Jehovah (Yahweh), uses Jesus and I out of necessity. And one who has been assigned the mission of carrying out Jesus’s prophecy is we of Church of Messiah.* This is how Meishu-sama says it.

When we look at these Sacred Word, going well beyond the level of believing and receiving, Meishu-sama regards Jesus as the very foundation of his divine work, doesn’t he? He is saying that the ones who will carry out this prophecy left by Jesus is us, Church of Messiah.

And then there is Handel’s “Hallelujah” chorus. We have been singing it. It was sung not too long ago at Meishu-sama’s Birthday Service.

Meishu-sama said that he liked all of Handel’s *Messiah*, not just the “Hallelujah” chorus part. He said that the whole of it was great, that it was prepared by God for World Church of Messiah, and he wanted to have the members sing it.

At the time, Meishu-sama did not say that the music, the melody is good. He said that it is the words to the composition, the lyrics, that are good; the lyrics to Handel’s *Messiah* are wonderful.

So what are the lyrics to Handel’s *Messiah*? The entire work, all the words are from the Bible. I repeat, all the lyrics of *Messiah* are from the Bible. Meishu-sama wanted his members to sing them—the words from the Bible. This is not something that can usually be done, is it? A founder of a religion to say that the lyrics from *Messiah*, all of which praise Jesus and

come from the Bible, are good and to want for his followers to sing it.

Now, Handel's *Messiah* is about two to three hours long. The lyrics begin with the birth of Jesus, and midway comes the "Hallelujah" chorus. Then in the last part, the end lyrics are, "the Lamb that was slain." This slain Lamb is referring to Jesus, and by the blood of that slain Lamb, we were redeemed to God—this means our sins were atoned for. And it is this very slain Lamb who is worthy of receiving God's blessing, power and glory. And to God and this Lamb, be glory and power forever and ever—these lyrics come at the end of Handel's *Messiah*.

It is *this* Handel's *Messiah* that Meishu-sama said that the lyrics are good and wanted his members to sing.

The lyrics I mentioned just now is a big section in the last part. After that is the "Amen" chorus, known to be a counterpart to the "Hallelujah" chorus. The very end of *Messiah* is finished by this grand chorus of "amen."

The "Amen" chorus lasts only for a few minutes, but the one word "amen" is sung dozens of times, over and over again. It is that kind of final chorus. And in Christian terminology, "amen" means "so be it." Concerning the lyrical content of *Messiah* that praises Jesus Christ throughout, a final "amen"—so be it—is sung out, closing the oratorio.

It is *these lyrics* that Meishu-sama said were good and wanted us to sing.

The word "amen" is said at the end of Christian prayers, including the Lord's Prayer. If thoughts well up within us that the word "amen" is different from Meishu-sama's will or resistance wells up to say the word "amen," how do we intend to sing Handel's *Messiah*—the *Messiah* that Meishu-sama told us to sing? Isn't to feel that way in itself already out of alignment with Meishu-sama's will? This word "amen" is said dozens of times at the very end. If Meishu-sama were still alive today, I'm sure we would be told to sing this song.

And did you know this? In the Messiah Hall that Meishu-sama constructed during his time, he built an orchestra pit to play Handel's *Messiah*—specifically *for* its performance. Unfortunately, when it became Hall of Worship after Meishu-sama's ascension, this pit was removed.

At the time Messiah Hall was built, Meishu-sama said we were going to perform Handel's *Messiah* for services. So we were supposed to have been singing this piece of music. If that had been so, do you think we would have been surprised by Kyoshu-sama's relations

to Christianity? No. It would have been just natural to act in concert with Christianity. It would have been just natural for Jesus to be our foundation. It would have been a normal part of the Church.

So when I think about this, we really lost our way for a long time, but I believe Kyoshu-sama is now making us remember Meishu-sama's true will.

But normally, to make members sing *Messiah*, in itself, would be really difficult for a founder of a non-Christian religion. To say that the lyrics praising Jesus—then “amen” to it all—are good, then to have their own followers sing it would normally be difficult.

And it is understandable that we members feel resistance to all these things because Meishu-sama is now not with us. To accept the oratorio *Messiah* would basically be as if Meishu-sama and Jesus were placed on the same level, but for us, we want to think that Meishu-sama is above, don't we?

Then how was it possible for Meishu-sama to tell his followers to sing Handel's *Messiah* that praises Jesus? I believe it was possible because Meishu-sama saw himself and the existence of Jesus as two but one.

Jesus and Meishu-sama are two but work as one. Christianity and Church of Messiah are two but one. I think this is what Meishu-sama felt.

I often quote the following from an interview for the church publication when World Church of Messiah was inaugurated: Meishu-sama was asked, “Is it possible to realize world peace with the power of religion?” To that, he replied, “I believe that it is absolutely possible.” He said, “In the West, there is Christ. In the East, there is Messiah. If these two major forces work in concert with each other—one in the East, the other in the West, and if all members of the two powers diligently fight for peace, eternal peace will surely be brought about.”

He says Church of Messiah and Christianity—East and West—will work in concert with each other, and he says *all members*, that is, Meishu-sama saw the followers of Christianity and the followers of Church of Messiah as one and the same followers under the same God, which is why he was able to say these things.

In the same period, Meishu-sama was also asked about the definition of Messiah. At the time, Meishu-sama said that the definition of Messiah was still not clear; it was in the 20th century that it became increasingly clearer; God will manifest His power at last; in the

West, Christ will certainly demonstrate his true potential; and in the East, it would certainly be Messiah. And he said that “this cannot be understood with the kinds of religious notions we have had until today.”

Should you ask what “Messiah” means based on “the kinds of religious notions we have had until today,” that would normally be the belief in one Messiah: Jesus is the only one, or Meishu-sama is the only one.

But Meishu-sama says that God will manifest His power, that Christ will certainly demonstrate his power, and at the same time, Messiah, too, will demonstrate its power. So even though Christ and Messiah are different names and have a difference in *kototama* (spirit of words), God is advancing divine work deeming the two as one. If Meishu-sama had not believed this, it naturally would not have been possible for him to have his followers sing the words from Handel’s *Messiah* like the ones just mentioned.

And as Meishu-sama says that this cannot be understood with the kinds of religious notions we have had until today, to understand what I am talking about now, in itself, would have been totally beyond our imagination.

Words and expressions like Messiah, Christ, East and West working in concert with each other—what on earth do these matters mean? The lyrics to Handel’s *Messiah*—what do they mean? These various matters are difficult to understand; this is different from how we saw Meishu-sama up until now—I believe we have various kinds of thoughts like these within us.

But when we look at every Sacred Word like the ones I just mentioned, Meishu-sama clearly receives and accepts Jesus, and not only that, he understands Jesus as the foundation of his divine work.

However, we have not thought about this very deeply until now, have we? So, as I said at the start of my talk, if we believe that Meishu-sama is asking us now, “will you or will you not receive the existence of Jesus Christ?” I think we should say to Meishu-sama, “I believe in Jesus Christ and receive him.” “I will receive the word ‘hallelujah.’” “I will believe in and receive the word ‘amen.’” “I will believe in and receive the God named Jehovah, Heavenly Father.”

Until today, regarding these matters, we may have thought that they were not related to Meishu-sama, or perhaps we understood them from an outsider’s perspective. But Meishu-

sama clearly regards these matters as being one with himself, so we can reply to Meishu-sama with the before-mentioned words.

Also in today's hymn, Meishu-sama says that without the atonement of the god *Tokotachi*, this whole universe would have already perished. The final words in *Messiah* also say that by the blood of the slain Lamb, we were redeemed to God, our sins were atoned for.

As such, Meishu-sama received the blood of atonement. After all, he sought to have his followers sing those words. It would have been impossible for him to have his followers sing words that he did not believe in. So we can think, "I will receive the blood of atonement, too."

Also, it was said in today's Sacred Word: the Bible. The existence of the Bible. Regarding this, too, Meishu-sama says that among all the religious books in the whole world, there is no other book more powerful than the Bible to lead people to repentance, so Bibles should be placed in jails.

At the very least, I can understand if Meishu-sama would want to place his own writings, for example, *Gospel of Heaven*, *Miscellany on Faith* or *Medicine for Tomorrow*. But Meishu-sama says that the Bible is the most powerful book for leading people to repentance. That is what he wants to place in jails. And he says that he is envious about every household having a Bible like in the United States. At the time of the US President's inauguration—it just so happens that the election is approaching—Meishu-sama felt something inexplicable when he saw President Eisenhower place his hand on the Bible and make an oath. At the very least, this is not negating the Bible. He is not denying it. Rather, he has received it as something important that leads to God.

So isn't it important to think, "I will receive Jesus Christ. I will receive the word 'amen.' I will receive the word 'hallelujah.' I will receive Jehovah. And I will receive the Bible"? That is because, for a long time, we never thought like that.

And there is the blood of atonement. By the blood of the Lamb, we were redeemed to God, so "I will receive the blood of atonement"—we can reply in this way to Meishu-sama. Though it may seem the Church has had a tough turn these last few years, if you respond in this way, Meishu-sama would say, "Well done. You understood." And right now, even though we may carry with us all kinds of troubles or are experiencing various physical

problems, if we were to profess like this to Meishu-sama, and he becomes joyful, then we will become full of that joy—because the joy of Meishu-sama is our joy, isn't it?—and perhaps all those various burdens that we carry will actually resolve.

So you can think you were fooled—think you were fooled by me—and say, “I will receive. I will receive the blood of atonement. I will receive Jesus. I will receive the Bible. I will receive Jehovah.” I believe it would not hurt to try saying these. As this is something that I have been made to think about recently as this monthly service drew near, I would like to think in this way together with all of you, too. And it would be good if Meishu-sama became truly happy about this.

Meishu-sama founded the Church in 1935, didn't he? He founded it in 1935 with the name Great Japan *Kannon* Association (*Dai Nihon Kannon Kai*), but it was suppressed soon after in relation to *Omoto* Church. Not being able to do anything for some time, the post-war period came as did the establishment of religious freedom. Meishu-sama could finally carry out religious activities. First, Japan *Kannon* Church (*Nihon Kannon Kyodan*) was established in 1947. The next year, Japan *Miroku* Church (*Nihon Miroku Kyokai*) was established. Before they knew it, this is only another one or two years after, he took down the signage of *Kannon* and *Miroku* and raised up World Church of Messiah as the identity of his Church.

I think the members at the time were really surprised. They believed that their object of faith was a Buddhist god called *Kannon* or *Miroku*, but it suddenly became one with a Christian name, Messiah. Moreover, what was “Japan” became “World.” Meishu-sama said, *We are World Church of Messiah!* The members at the time must have been very surprised when he announced this.

We see this looking back at history now and feel that this was the natural course of development. But the members at the time actually lived it. We may think that many things rapidly changed in our past year or two, but I think what they experienced is beyond comparison, don't you think?

The members at that time thought, at last, the freedom of religion was established, and they finally formed Japan *Kannon* Church; they finally formed Japan *Miroku* Church; their moment had arrived—but that soon changed to World Church of Messiah. Still more, it

was during the turmoil of the post-war period. It would have been normal to seek as much stability as possible and go forward, but Meishu-sama went ahead, further and further, at a rapid pace. Furthermore, it was not only the name change. At the time, Church of Messiah was a very small religious group when compared to Christianity. But Meishu-sama said that these two major forces—Christ in the West and Messiah in the East—will work in concert with each other, and world peace will be realized through them. What great conviction and spirit!

So I believe that the members at the time were beyond confused. Rather, I believe they were stunned, and remaining in that stunned state, decades passed. To seek Meishu-sama's true will is of course difficult, but it was especially so after Meishu-sama's ascension. Jesus Christ and Meishu-sama—it was only natural for the members to simply believe that Meishu-sama was higher and end up proceeding with religious activities in that way. But now, we are allowed to recall Meishu-sama's true will through Kyoshu-sama—what a joy this is!

Truly, Meishu-sama is someone who changes rapidly like that. I am sure all of you are hearing a lot about this recently, but the year before his ascension, regarding Johrei, the heart and soul of our church—and it could still be called the heart and soul—he suddenly said, “Johrei is not so important anymore,” and that “from now on, we enter the world of *sonen*.” In this way, Meishu-sama moved forward, further and further—his speed, this quickness is a quickness that truly defies imagination.

In my eyes, I imagine Meishu-sama always dashing at full speed in order to accomplish God's will. If that is so, after forgetting Meishu-sama's will for 60, 70 years, I wonder just how far Meishu-sama has gone ahead of us. Even if we used binoculars, he would be so far away we probably would not be able to see him at all. But now, being guided by Kyoshu-sama, aren't we trying to get closer to Meishu-sama, even if just a little?

Meishu-sama is, as I imagined, someone who is running. Don't you think so, everyone? For every possible situation, he put in his utmost effort and was always running. So I believe that we, too, should imagine him running and, though not physically, go after him. I think we need to run after and follow Meishu-sama.

But even though I say run, this does not mean running blindly, actually. That is, we know that there is a goal, right? Meishu-sama's goal to be born anew as the Messiah—this

is our goal. And to reach this goal, we are now running this race called the “race of life.”

If it were a regular marathon, there would be requirements for participation, or if we drop out, it is completely over. But in this “race of life,” no matter how many times we drop out—and back in those days, 70 years ago, we dropped out, so to speak—even if we drop out, God will say to us, “You can run again.” Also, in this race, anyone can take part. Regardless of whether the body is impaired, or if you committed this or that kind of sin, or we are this or that—regardless of all that—anyone can take part in this “race of life.” And actually, we are running that race right now!

And when Meishu-sama said “to be born anew as the Messiah,” he said this is the highest rank in the whole world. King of kings, he said. This is about “king,” meaning that if we reach the final goal running the race of life, there is the crown of life for each one of us. A crown. A crown of life. A king’s crown. This is what is prepared and awaits you at the goal—for each one of you!

So truly, what an honor this is, a privilege that cannot even be imagined. If this were a normal marathon, you might run, win first place and become happy, or because you got such-and-such place, you feel this or that. But in this race of life, there is no ranking from the start. At the end, we all become children of God, all brothers and sisters, truly equal existences. There is no difference.

And if this were a normal race, once you reach the goal, that is the end. But our race is different. When you reach this goal and receive a crown, there is more. There is a greater joy—the wonderful joy of being a child of God—and with that, this time, together with Meishu-sama, Jesus and many other magnificent figures, in the greatest jubilation, we can serve God for eternity. That kind of future is waiting for us. That future has been promised to us!

Even though we may say, “I might not be able to reach the goal” or “this is totally impossible for me,” it is already promised! God has already determined that each and every one of us will attain that future. He has promised this to us.

Indeed, receiving a crown or running that kind of wonderful race may feel far removed from the various details of our everyday lives. In our daily lives, we are made to feel all kinds of thoughts and emotions from morning until night, or we are restricted physically—I have to do this, I have to do that, I have to work, there is housework—we are restricted. But in

there, even if for just a moment, I believe we must not forget to think, “Ah, I am running the race of life that promises this future,” “I am taking part in the race where I receive the king’s crown.” That is how great a blessing we are receiving from God. If you are able to remember this within your daily life even if just a little, I think it would be good.

For us, an immeasurable joy that far exceeds the joy we humans normally feel is waiting for us. And now we are running the race of life to reach that joy. But there is no doubt that this joy has not yet come. We cannot see it nor has it come. We cannot see it nor has it come, but it has been promised to come. In believing it lies the value of our faith. So let us have conviction in this wonderful future that is to come, and with great hope, let us go forward together.

Thank you very much.