

(4) Reaching Out

Like the polar ocean currents that move toward the equator and return, and the ebb and flow of the tides, any idea stagnates without circulation, growth, or progressive movement. The Adventist message that Elder Kiyabu's fledgling congregation now embraced found root in repentant souls and outward movement in the pulse of the Holy Spirit and on the wings of childlike faith. Soon Kiyabu and his group took on the task of launching their own evangelistic effort in the small plantation camp of Koalipea (somewhere in the greater Mililani area today).

A small clubhouse centered amongst the living quarters of the camp was used as the meeting place. The young people of Aiea aided Elder Kiyabu, the principal speaker, with music, legwork, and in hosting the guests. In this age prior to TV, cell phones, and cars in every garage, meetings were a real come on. The evangelistic series was attended by quite a few, and the end result was that several strong members were added to the Aiea congregation.

The Koalipea effort added such names as Gerald Ishihara, Helen Iha Yoshida, Dr. James Miyashiro, Dr. Shigenobu Arakaki, and Betty Arakaki Emoto. In time, several of the parents of these young people joined Aiea's *issei* group. An example of this was the mother of James Miyashiro. She later gave her heart to the Lord after seeing a marked change in her son. James himself admits that he started attending church in that little army building because of the "friendship, volleyball, and girls." He even admits that he really didn't care for the personal Bible studies that Elder Kiyabu was giving him. But one day before they started, Dr. Miyashiro recalled, "He (Kiyabu) asked me to pray. . . I refused, but he kept insisting, and so I prayed something. . . but after that the Bible became meaningful. And that's how I became a changed person."

The power of God's Spirit didn't just add numbers to Aiea. Eventually the Koalipea converts would take God's message to the world. Helen Iha Yoshida would later become an Adventist educator and work on the mainland. Dr. Miyashiro and his wife Heidi would serve as medical missionaries in Trinidad-Tobago, Africa, Kosovo-Macedonia, and Okinawa. Dr. Shigenobu Arakaki and his wife Lily would serve God in Japan, the mainland, and here locally. Dr. Arakaki is credited for being God's hand in turning around Sacramento Adventist Academy, bringing Japan Missionary College to what it has become today, developing Kahili Mt. Park into what it is today, and for taking the Hawaii Conference to new heights as the first local conference president. Aunty Betty Emoto can be found greeting people even today at Aiea on sabbath mornings; and we must never forget that it was her diligence in bringing her nieces and nephews to church that led to the conversion of Pastor Lyle Arakaki. Isn't it just amazing what God did with just a handful of children from the cane fields.

As the little Aiea church was beginning to surge with the wave of God's spirit, the dream of a larger sanctuary was born. A larger used navy parish hall was found and trucked onto the current site. The property and hall could be secured for \$1500. The young members

of Aiea began the task of raising the necessary funds. They gave all they could. And then they went door to door ingathering, knowing they could use any money earned beyond their stated goal for their project. When all the money was turned in and counted, and the ingathering overflow dollars were returned by the mission, the group had raised \$1400. Though in reality this was remarkable considering the wealth of the members, it was a dreary sabbath when the group learned of its shortfall. They had knocked on every door in their ingathering district, and they had given all they could possibly give.

It wasn't a high sabbath afternoon as their dream appeared to be fading into thoughts of despair. While the group was contemplating their dilemma almost in silence, Elder Kiyabu jumped up and said, "Minoru, come with me." The young man followed as fast as he could. The group remained puzzled. Later Minoru would tell them that Elder Kiyabu took him into Aiea town to visit the contractor who had placed the parish hall on the current site. "He promised to help us with our purchase," Kiyabu had said.

In a matter of minutes Elder Kiyabu was almost running back to the group. He was waving a piece of paper in his hand. As he came closer, the group realized he had a check in his hand. He told them to look at the check. As each member glanced at the check amount, they realized it was for exactly \$100.

When the group realized what had just happened, without any cue, "we stood together and sang the doxology," recalled Ken Kakazu.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise Him all creatures here below
Praise Him above ye heavenly host
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost
Amen

As the last note resonated across the termite infested hall, as if heaven had heard, the sky opened up and showered the traditional Hawaiian blessing as a huge downpour of rain came cascading down upon the makeshift choir in this impromptu praise service. "But we didn't care," Kakazu recalled, "we were so happy."

As the little Aiea congregation had grasped the pulse of God's Spirit, they began to realize dreams and to reach out to the world. The passing of time has shown us a little bit of God's working, but only in eternity will we be able to see what the living gospel has accomplished from the seeds planted in the cane fields of Aiea. Great dreams will continue to be realized as we tie in to the current and cycle of God's Holy Spirit and allow Him to lead beyond the island horizons.