

WHAT PRICE THE GOSPEL?

Paul G. and Frances Hiebert. Case Studies in Missions. Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1987. pp. 186-187.

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What Price the Gospel? Carl K. Kinoshita

At exactly the appointed hour, Second Lieutenant Seichi Miyazaki knocked on the office door of Carter Jackson, pastor of the Kalakaua Baptist Church. With military discharge only eight months away, Seichi needed the pastor's advice on a decision crucial to his future.

In the over thirty years he had been a pastor and missionary in China and Hawaii, Jackson had counseled many men about entering the Christian ministry. From what he had learned about Seichi since they first met three years ago, Jackson did not think the decision would be difficult to make. After all, the twenty-two-year-old air-force officer had made good grades in college, was popular as a Sunday-school teacher and counselor of junior-age boys, and was an active leader in the young people's department of the church. And although Seichi had been a Christian and church member for just two and a half years, more than a few members had expressed their feeling that he should consider the ministry as a vocation.

Seichi and Jackson had talked about all of these things two months earlier. But today the more information Seichi shared about his family, the more Jackson understood the reason for the worried look on the young man's face. These were some of the data Seichi gave his pastor. . . . He was the first of seven children born to Kazuo and Matsue Miyazaki and was raised on Molaka, a small island of predominantly Japanese and Filipino people who worked for the most part as laborers for the Del Monte Pineapple Company on the island of Oahu. He was taken to the Buddhist temple most Sundays until his years at the high school he attended in Honolulu on the island of Oahu. At this point in

his story, Seichi stressed the fact that his mother started working in the pineapple fields to help pay for his education at Lolani School, a private, college-prep, boarding institution. Upon finishing there, Seichi had enrolled at the University of Hawaii and lived with an aunt in Honolulu. In the meantime, his family moved to Kahjaluu, a rural community on Oahu, and leased five acres of land for truck farming. But when heavy rains ruined the crops on two consecutive years and put Mr. Miyazaki near bankruptcy, Seichi decided to drop out of college, find a full-time job, and help his family financially. But Mr. Miyazaki insisted that Seichi remain in school in pursuit of a business-administration degree, an order impossible to disobey after being reminded of three facts: (1) for a quarter of a century Seichi's father (whose own parents had died while he was still in his teens) had dreamed of running a family-owned store; (2) the second son, Fumio, who was a year younger than Seichi, was born mentally retarded; and (3) the last son and youngest child, Hitoshi, was also showing signs of mental retardation.

Relating the incident of two weeks ago was most painful for Seichi. His mother's father had died, and a Buddhist funeral service was held at the Kukui Mortuary. At the part of the service when family members and, later, everyone else in attendance were asked to light the incense sticks, Seichi had refused to participate. What he did out of a strongly felt loyalty to Christ resulted in severe criticism of his parents by relatives. And that, Seichi said, had hurt him deeply.

Until today, Pastor Jackson had known very few of these details. Now he realized that no longer was Seichi's dilemma just a matter of discovering God's call to a Christian vocation. How could he help the young man sort out the conflicting demands on his loyalty in a way that would be true to his Christian commitment?