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Morning Prayer Message (The 16th International Handbell Symposium, the 4th day)

By Nozomu ABE

We tend to be tempted by Satan to stray from the right path. This is why there is no end to conflicts around the world.

But I do not think people fight each other just because they are different.

Even if nationalities, languages or features are different, we also have something good in common that enable us to love one another. Therefore, we should turn our attention not to what is different, but what we have in common.

We are made to love our children or parents. We all love our families, great nature, beautiful things such as music, fine art, or kind hearts. God made us love one another, and this is very important.

In 1971, at the concert on United Nations Day, the cellist Pablo Casals performed a Catalan folklore 'Song of the Birds' for encore. Before he played the tune, he addressed to the audience that birds in Catalonia (his home) sang 'peace, peace.'

Recorded video shows that Casals repeated 'peace, peace,' as if he was praying for peace and started to play the tune. It also shows he was deeply engaged in the performance, moaning to his homeland melody.

On seeing (listening to) it, we are touched by his emotion towards his home where this song had been fostered, as well as his prayer for peace. Also we feel his passion and love to not only his people, but to the world God had made and peoples lived there. Love to birds that sang 'peace,' love to people, were gushed out and those who hear it are moved beyond words.

Like this, music can instantly communicate what thousands of words cannot. God prepared this wonderful gift, music, as a tool of instantaneous communication so that we can understand each other wherever we go.

So let us share joy and comfort we feel through God's wonderful gift, 'handbells.'

And for this aim we ring. We ring to share joy and comfort with more people. We ring not for ourselves, not to show off excellent technique or to receive applause. While we, who know this wonderful gift as true love, share genuinely fine things, we feel sheer joy and comfort to be shared. This is what a musician should be. And a true missionary is. No matter if you have faith in God or not, those who believe in the truly beautiful can heal the wounded, comfort the hurt people and deliver hearty joy. I believe this is what a messenger of Peace is.

As I close my message, I would like to introduce the ending sentences of the message sent for this symposium by HRJ President, Shigeaki Hinohara: "World Peace can only be acquired through love. Let us ring love and make this symposium a prayer for peace."