

Essay from the bold pastor

#95 - Old Men's Kamikaze Mission -

"Just pour in water? Do you think it's that simple? We work right there at the site. If that caused an explosion, we would suffer more deaths!" Masao Yoshida exclaimed. He was the Chief Manager at Fukushima Daiichi Plant when the 2011 earthquake and tsunami hit Japan and known for his leadership and handling of the disaster. He was not afraid of disobeying the central government or the Tokyo Electric Power Company (Tepco) headquarters when the situation called for different measures from their orders. Yoshida died of esophageal cancer on July 9, 2013 at the age of 58. The news quickly spread all over the world, and people mourned over the Fukushima hero's death.

His global recognition came as a result of an event that happened on the day after the nuclear accident occurred. The chief ignored an order from top-level officials to stop injecting seawater into one of the reactors. This particular incident accentuated the difference in the level of risk awareness between on-site workers in Fukushima and the government as well as the Tepco officials in Tokyo. While the headquarters ordered to stop pumping seawater into the reactor because "they haven't received the Prime Minister's approval," Yoshida ignored the order and continued the injection, preventing the situation from getting much worse. In fact, without his proactive response, "Tohoku and Kanto region would have been a no-man's land," said Haruki Madarame, the then-Chairman of the Nuclear Safety Commission.

More memorably, he remarked that "In order to secure seawater injection in reactor 2, we've decided to form 'Old Men's Kamikaze,'" offering a suicide mission at the subsequent TV conference held at Tepco headquarters. Still, he doesn't deserve to be hailed as a hero because he is after all a Tepco worker and was involved in the construction of the reactor 1. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that he stood out for his risk-taking manner in the current Japanese society where pointing fingers is a commonplace occurrence.

You can actually find many "old men" who risk their lives for work in the Bible. Among them are Moses, Abraham, John and others. The Bible encourage the elders as the following.

Gray hair is a crown of splendor; it is attained by a righteous life.

Proverbs 16:31

There are things only aged people can see and responsibilities only they should take. Therefore, God gives them a pep talk. Although our society tends to alienate seniors, God treats them as active players. As Jesus Christ walked up to the Cross fully prepared for the worst, we shall live our lives being conscious of risks.

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