

As all of you know, Page and Ema met at Sunday school where Page was one of the leaders. Although Ema had been in the church for over 10 years, she was a newcomer to the regular program having been away at college for 4 years.

We ask, "What attracted Page to Ema?" Although we know that God provide them for each other, we can still ask how?

Obviously, as a normal man, Page certainly would have been attracted by her beauty. However as a wise man, he would have looked beyond that. He must have seen her faith in our Lord God and our savior Jesus Christ. He must have heard her knowledge of the Bible and Christian theology in discussions. He likely noticed her maturity and calm demeanor. He would have seen her care for others, especially reaching out to new visitors and foreign students. In addition to all this, I propose that there was an another element.

First, let's switch to Page. Page is seen as solid. He is calm, intelligent, talented, stable, a steady business man, a Bible teacher; the man people turn to for advice with life problems. However, underneath this, I think there is a spirit yearning for adventure, but a yearning which is not being fully satisfied in his current roles.

Back to Ema. What was that additional attribute that I think attracted Page to Ema? I propose that he was attracted to the exotic, that is, his yearning attracted him to the exotic. What makes Ema exotic in an multiethnic, multicultural East Bay suburban community?

The obvious is race. Racially, Ema is half Japanese and half European Caucasian. Medically, race is important because the statistical distribution of certain conditions varies by race. Otherwise, race is unimportant. I think that both Page and Ema agree. On the other hand, culture is important, but that's a later subject. Our government is obsessed with race. For years, government institutions and any institution dealing with the government have been required to collect racial data. All forms which students must fill out include a racial profile. In the past, the racial and ethnic identity section started with "choose one of the following." Then it would have a long list, including White, non Hispanic, Hispanic, Chinese, Japanese, Filipino, etc. At the bottom would be Other. Our children and their Half friends would look at that and say, "I'm not just White, but I'm not just Japanese; that just leaves "Other." It is infuriating to have the government label you "Other." Some students would just mark anything. This week I'll be Samoan; next week I'll be Tongan. Anything but "Other." Now many of the forms say, "choose all that apply." It's like a buffet. However, there is really something more exotic about being an "Other." Perhaps Page was attracted to the "Other" - someone who didn't fit into any one category.

Page may have thought that he was simply attracted to an exotic appearing product of East Bay middle class suburban culture. But, when getting to know Ema, he would have soon discovered that Ema is truly half - half Japanese culture and half American culture.

Specifically, Ema is half American East Bay suburban culture and half Japanese Tokyo urban culture. Ikuko worked very hard to foster her Japanese culture in her children. As I mentioned before, culture is important. Ikuko and I came from very different cultures. However, we've found that underneath those cultures, we have remarkably similar values. Moreover, on top, we now share our faith in our Lord God and our savior Jesus Christ. Now, Page finds that in order to understand Ema, he must understand Japanese culture. There are Japanophiles who spend a lifetime studying Japanese language, culture, literature and art. Japanese language helps because Japanese thinking and responses are tied to the structure of the language. Page needs the crash course and continuing education. It's even more complicated though. For Ema herself may not know which culture is dominant in any given response. Thus, Page must understand both cultures well to figure out which culture Ema's response is from, even if Ema doesn't know, in order to guide his response. It's a daunting task. It requires both study and experience. I'm certainly glad that Page is up to the challenge, although he is just beginning.

To help Page, I have a gift. A woman in a Japanese kimono is very beautiful. However, a kimono is quite difficult to put on. Many Japanese women learn how to put one on by themselves with regular practice, but still have someone help for special occasions. Before we were married, Ikuko didn't put on a kimono herself because she always had someone at home to help. After marriage, I was the only one at home to help, so I bought this book at a Japanese bookstore. It was published just before we were married, so it's rather old now. However, it is still the best book I've seen in English on how to put on a kimono. It is especially useful for showing how to tie the obi in the back. Tying an obi requires great concentration and the ability to manipulate a 2-dimensional object in 3-dimensions in your brain to achieve the proper result. I don't think Page played with dolls when he was young, but now he'll have the chance. Dressing a Japanese woman in a kimono is like dressing a doll, but more rewarding in the final result. Page will find out. Congratulation on your new role.

Finally, I propose that there is a third element in the exotic. This is harder to see without knowing Ema well and harder to express, but I do see a wild side in Ema. We certainly don't see this wild side expressed as the destructive behavior so much seen in our society. She does not engage in such behaviors because she knows they are not pleasing to God. She also takes to heart the 5th commandment "Honor your father and your mother that it may go well with you." However, even before Ema's faith increased, she innately followed this commandment from the time she was little. We are very grateful to her for that. However, Ema's close friends may testify to seeing the hidden wild side in her personality. I think some friends, who she has really loved, have been hurt, not by intent, but more by neglect when she has been self-absorbed. Ema will admit to that. So how is her wild side expressed. I think it is expressed in her art. She has a mind and talent which can picture a creation of art. She has just enough obsessive nature to implement what she sees in her mind. In addition, I think that the expression of her wild side gives her art that added dynamic to make it great. Her senior project is an example. It was multiple studies of Christian martyrs of 17th century Japan done in Japanese style brush and black ink on paper. She spent much time

exhaustively studying the history of the time, studying brush and ink Japanese art and studying Western depictions of Christian and other martyr figures. The sculpture, "The Burghers of Calais" by Auguste Rodin is an example. She then conceived each piece in her mind and practiced each figure repeatedly. In the final production, she had one chance to get each of many, many sweeping brush strokes of black ink on large, expensive Japanese paper just perfect to depict the emotion of each scene. Some of you saw the show at Biola and even helped with the opening. I think her wild side contributed to getting the emotion on paper. Page likely has sensed Ema's wild side and his adventurous side has, even unknowingly, been attracted to her wild side. However, I don't think he yet understands it. I think he is still back working on culture. This realization is yet to come.

What does all this mean for Page and Ema? The Bible says, "Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh." That is one in body, mind and soul. By this we see that the two are to fully complement each other so that the two become one whole which is greater than the separate persons. With Page as the calm, solid, stable head, Ema's wild side is allowed even fuller expression in the safety of his protection and support. As Ema's wild side is allowed more expression in that safety, Page's yearning for adventure will thereby be more satisfied allowing him to steadily remain the stable, solid, go-to man. Thus we have the perfect match; perfectly complementing each other.

If Page and Ema need advice, they can find it in the Bible. It covers all - if they know where to look. However, there is a tiny antique book that my mother kept in her dresser drawer. It was handed down to her by a relative. Growing up, I would periodically take it out to read. The book is titled "The Bridal Wreath: A Wedding Souvenir" published in 1845. It went through many printings and was often given to a bride on her wedding day in the 19th century. The poem I especially liked is titled "A Little Word" by Daniel Clement Colesworthy. I can say that I have always liked the simple poem, but I can't say that I have properly heeded its advice over the years. The poem reads

A little word in kindness spoken,
A motion or a tear,
Has often healed a heart that's broken,
And made a friend sincere.

A word, a look, has crushed to earth
Full many a budding flower,
Which had a smile but owned its birth,
Would bless life's darkest hour.

Then deem it not an idle thing,
A pleasant word to speak;
The face you wear, the thoughts you bring,
A heart may heal or break.

My mother gave me the book when they moved because she knew that I liked it. I gave it to our oldest daughter Mina on her wedding day. However, I was able to get another antique copy to give to Ema on her wedding day to start a new family tradition.

Congratulations on your marriage. Your mother and I are very proud of you. We think that God has provided the right man for you and the right woman for him. We look forward to watching this marriage blossom in love and understanding over the years.