



## The man who shouldn't be here hopes to be heard

By Gene Beley, CVBT Correspondent

- *He lived through Hiroshima bombing as an infant*
- *“How lucky for the ones who got killed instantly”*
- *WITH VIDEO*

There were many speakers at the 73rd anniversary of the Hiroshima bomb rally, held August 6 near the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory where scientists create and test bombs. One stood out: He is a survivor of the most devastating bomb ever used in warfare.

The Rev. Nobuaki Hanaoka, an infant on that day the bomb was dropped in 1945, said his family was shielded by a mountain but radiation later caused the death of his mother, sister, and 30 years later, his brother.

“I’m here with a sense of urgency,” Mr. Hanaoka began, “now more than ever because we are going back to the Cold War era of the nuclear arms race. For a while we were moving in the right direction. Slowly but steadily we were disarming. But now we have a president who ordered the Pentagon to reestablish our nuclear superiority.

**Watch his remarks here:**

<https://vimeo.com/284483265>

The ordained United Methodist minister now lives in the pleasant San Francisco suburb of Daly City. Nearly three-quarters of a century ago, his family was in a much different place.

“Seventy three years ago at 8:15 a.m., the first nuclear bomb detonated in mid-air over the city of Hiroshima and three days later, Nagasaki, Japan. The death toll from these two bombs reached a quarter million people by the end of that year.”

He told the audience the bomb was dropped on a parachute so that the pilots and crew would not be killed by the blast.

Then Mr. Hanaoka told how his fellow citizens died in three different ways. “First the blast knocked down almost every building in a two mile radius. People were crushed under the falling buildings and hit by flying debris.

“The blast was followed by an immense fireball. It kept growing and growing until it engulfed the whole city. The surface temperature of that fireball was 10,000 degrees Fahrenheit. This is twice as hot as the surface of the sun. People touched by the fireball were vaporized.

“The nuclear radiation fallout of small, invisible particles spread

into the atmosphere over the wider area, then came down with the rain.

“Do you know what that meant?” the minister asked the audience of more than 100 people gathered on a corner near the national laboratory.

“The air was contaminated. Water was contaminated. People who survived the initial impacts still had to breathe and drink. There was no way to escape the radiation.

“Fortunately, our family was living outside of the city miles away from the city limits. There were a couple of mountains in-between that shielded us from the blast and fire. But within a few years radiation began to affect my family.

**“People say it’s like holding a time bomb inside them because you never know when you will get sick or die.”**

“When I was in the first grade, my mother died. As far back as I can recall she was in bed looking pale and weak. I knew she was my mother but I couldn’t even talk to her. I was scared.

“After that my sister died. She suffered from leukemia. Then 30 years later my brother died of ‘unknown causes.’ When they performed an autopsy on him, the doctor was shocked because his internal organs were those of an 80-year-old man. We suspected it had something to do with radiation.

“Nuclear bombs kept people suffering long after the end of the war. We still have friends who are still suffering. Once radiation is inside the body, it goes to the bone marrow. It destroys the immune system and makes people sick all the time just like with AIDS patients having HIV.

“People say it’s like holding a time bomb inside them because you never know when you will get sick or die.” He added,

“Survivors call their lives ‘a process of dying a slow, painful

death.”

“Every time we get together, they say, ‘How lucky for the ones who got killed instantly because they were spared the long, miserable, painful suffering.’

“I’m fortunate to be here but a lot of people are not as fortunate as I am. After my sister died, my father was concerned about his loved ones dying one after another. He asked my sister’s doctor what is going to happen to his family? He was told, if I was exposed to the radiation like my mother and sister, ‘He may not live to see his 10th birthday.’

“I didn’t know how to process that information that I only had three years to live. I was just in the second grade. I was depressed, withdrawn and I lost my speech. I didn’t speak a word for two months. When my 10th birthday came, thank God, I was finally relieved.

“But then came the fit of survivors’ guilt. Why did such a loving

mother, such a loving sister, have to die so painfully? And I, a good for nothing kid, am still alive?

“For a long time, I felt I had no right to be alive. I didn’t want anyone to live like this. Nuclear bombs are the most inhumane, immoral weapons of mass destruction — the most painful way to die.

### *Some Statistics About Nuclear Death*

Mr. Hanaoka said the Hiroshima bomb was equal to a blast of about 15,000 tons of TNT. The largest, most powerful weapon today is a Russian bomb that is 15 megatons or 3,300 times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb, he said.

“Imagine what these new weapons can do to us. It would be global suffering,” he said.

The exact number of nuclear weapons in the world is an educated guess, since countries are loath to detail their

inventories. But recently the cable news channel CNBC estimated the total at 14,500 held by nine countries. By Country:

- North Korea, between 10 and 20
- Israel, about 80
- India, between 120 and 130
- Pakistan, from 130 to 140
- United Kingdom, about 215
- China, perhaps 270
- France, about 300
- United States, around 6,550
- Russia, about 6,800

“If you are holding so much weapons, where your weapons are superior to the rest of the world, you have no right to demand other states such as Iran and North Korea to disarm. The only way to convince them to disarm is for all of us — all nuclear states — to disarm together,” the minister said.

“Ever since the end of the cold war we’ve been a bit complacent. But now we should start raising our voices as loud

as we can,” Mr. Hanaoka said. “No more A-bombs. No more nuclear bombs. No more wars. Abolish these illegal weapons.

“50-megaton bombs will circle the earth 3.5 times spreading radiation all over the world. We can’t do that. So, my friends start demanding. Start raising your voices. Start acting. No more nuclear weapons.”