

# Views of the Vision

The Ministry of Gay and Andrew Hongo

## June 2021

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### Chula Vista Worship Service

By Andrew Hongo



The Bishop family now serves at Grace Covenant Church in Chula Vista, San Diego. Left to right: Kennis, Charis, Gay, Andrew, Greg, and Noah.

I'm so grateful that my mom was able to come to Northern California, where my wife, Meaghan, and I live, to visit for a couple weeks. We had so much fun as a family – eating at the Japanese restaurant nearby, taking Mom shopping (her favorite leisure activity), and playing with our dog, Boaz, who at 70 lbs. is almost as big as my mom.

I appreciate that even though my mom came to California for a vacation, she's always ministry-minded, too. She asked me and Meaghan to travel with her to Southern California for a few days, particularly to minister at the church of Greg and Kennis Bishop. The Bishops are long-time friends (Kennis' parents are Harriet and Kenny Furuya, who organized our Southern California concert tours for many years) and

are now serving at Grace Covenant Church in San Diego. The Bishops have a thriving ministry, with an English-language service on Sunday mornings and a Spanish-language service in the afternoon.

Mom and I led worship at the morning service, and when Pastor Greg introduced us, he made sure to tell a funny story about my father. He said that when he and Kennis went on their honeymoon to the Big Island, they were in their hotel room and heard a knock on their door. Who could it be, they wondered, on our honeymoon? Well, there at the door was Randy, my dad. He was there to give them a tour of the Big Island. He grew up there, so who better to be their tour guide? Pastor Greg said that only Randy could do something like that – crash a young couple's honeymoon and get away with it – because he was so full of aloha.

When I had a chance to share in that morning service, I had to tell a story of my own about Kennis and Greg. I shared that I remembered their wedding, now decades ago, and how Greg planned something I'd never seen before, and haven't seen since. As Kennis was walking down the aisle, a recording played of Greg reading his journal. He said something like, "My mom always told me that the woman I marry should be someone who lights up a room when she walks into it. I want to be in rooms that Kennis walks into for the rest of my life." I shared how I remembered thinking, "Wow, I want to meet a woman who makes me want to be in rooms she walks into for the rest of my life, too!" And eventually, in God's perfect time, I did. Meaghan lights up any room, and she lights up my life.

It was such a privilege to be able to share our songs and testimonies and to usher in the Spirit of God as we led in worship. It was also a blessing to see Kennis and Greg ministering so powerfully in their gifting, exactly where God ordained them to be. Although we hadn't planned it initially, we ended up staying for part of the afternoon Spanish-language service as well. I shared (through Greg's translation since he's fluent in Spanish) that when missionaries first came to Hawai'i, they found one of the best ways to share the Gospel was through music – and an example of this was Kanaka Waiwai, a Hawaiian-language song that tells the story of the Rich Young Ruler from the Gospel of Mark. The congregation enjoyed seeing how we worship God in our Hawaiian culture, just as we were moved to hear their songs of praises in Spanish. It was a reminder of how even now, we anticipate that Great Worship Service that will take place in heaven:

*There before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb." Revelation 7:9-10*

## TAYLOR ON BOARD



*Christian Vision's new staff member, Taylor Pagaragan, and her sisters helped lead worship at Kalihi Union Church. Left to right: Taylor at piano, Kendyl on bass, Reagan on cajon.*

I am so thankful to our Lord for providing Taylor Pagaragan to assist me in the ministry of Christian Vision. Since joining our team just this past April, Taylor has already provided valuable help in so many projects. She is such a God-send! I am in awe of how tech-savvy this young generation is – and Taylor epitomizes that. She is able to search and download any song in any key and even splice together modulations; and she does beautiful graphic design for our brochures and cards. Beyond those tech skills, she's a wonderful musician and has accompanied me and sung with me in church services. Best of all, she can take over my ministry duties so I can have extended vacation days. It is a blessing to see her connecting with seniors, youth, and children in the various ministries here at Kalihi Union Church.

On June 13, Taylor and I will have the opportunity to minister together at West Oahu Christian Church. We also look to the future with eager anticipation as Taylor trusts God to lead her in exploring His will for her ministry through Christian Vision. While I was focused on working with seniors, Taylor has a passion for youth ministry. I am so thankful for Taylor's servant heart – always willing to jump in and help wherever needed, always for the Lord's glory.

Our overseas ministry has come to a halt because of the pandemic, but we trust in the words of Ecclesiastes 3:11: "He has made everything beautiful in

His time." We trust that in His time, God will allow Covid travel restrictions to be lifted so we can continue our missions work. Andrew, Meaghan, and I are planning to go to Japan to minister with the Pagaragans in their outreach to students at The Neighborhood Sunrise Cafe. We will be doing a Hawaiian concert with music and dance to share our culture and, most importantly, our love for Jesus Christ. In the past we have had much success presenting evangelistic concerts in large venues in hopes of attracting non-Christians to hear Hawaiian music. This time the venue for our concert might be different because of Covid restrictions, but we will minister wherever the Lord opens opportunities. Andrew and Meaghan will continue on to Southeast Asia to do ministry projects in documentary film and medical outreach.

The Lord has allowed us to continue our ministry here in Hawaii and California through small gatherings, socially-distanced worship services, and online concerts. In 2017, Andrew won an Emmy Award as part of a team with NBC News. God is now using this gifted journalist to produce videos for Christian Vision. To view some of our recent videos go to our website: [www.rghongo.com](http://www.rghongo.com).



*Missions Fair at KUC. Posterboard and flyers reflect Taylor's skills in graphic arts.*



## WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP



*Our women's fellowship meets partially on Zoom, partially in person. Photo on right shows the YWAM missionaries our fellowship hosted, Jackson and Anneke Ndecheck and their children. Jackson is holding newborn baby, Miracle.*

I am blessed to be an 'ohana leader for the Women's Fellowship at Kalihi Union Church. Each week we meet to study God's Word, learn from each other, and grow as prayer warriors. Of course, there have been challenges meeting during this pandemic – but we've overcome them with the help of Taylor Pagaragan and Sarah Williams, who help with the technical part. (Some of our members attend in-person, and some on Zoom).

Recently, our women's group had the wonderful opportunity to minister to a missionary family who was visiting Honolulu, Jackson and Anneke Ndecheck and their children. Jackson is originally from Cameroon and does missionary work in Africa, and Anneke is originally from Norway and now is the personal secretary to Loren Cunningham, the founder of Youth With a Mission, in Kona. The Ndechecks were staying at Kalihi Union Church's guesthouse so that Anneke, who was having a complicated pregnancy, could receive the medical care she needed. I led the women's fellowship in providing all the things the Ndechecks needed so they could have a comfortable stay: cleaning the guest house for them, stocking the fridge with groceries, and watching the children so that Jackson and Anneke could minister to the congregation.

I told Anneke that I was a missionary with my husband for more than 40 years, so I know how exhausting it can be delivering a sermon and then ministering to the people. All those years I helped Randy prepared me to help Anneke and Jackson.

We're happy to report that Anneke safely delivered their fifth baby here in Honolulu, whom they named Miracle!

## FROM TAYLOR



*Taylor Pagaragan (second from left) has brought so many gifts to our ministry; pictured here serving with the Kalihi Union Church worship team.*

*"In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, so that everyone will praise your heavenly Father." Matthew 5:16 (NLT)*

Making people on the outside, feel on the inside. This has been the call of my heart for the past few years as I worked with my family in Tokyo, Japan to establish The Neighborhood Student & Ministry Center. Our goal was to help raise up the next generation of leaders by creating joy-filled, healthy communities backed by a culture of growth and development. I transitioned into my current position with Christian Vision this April, hoping to encourage that same culture and community here in my home state of Hawai'i.

Being home-schooled and the oldest of five kids, I have been blessed with many chances to interact with and learn from many people of all ages and backgrounds and perspectives. I am so grateful to my parents

for all they have done for me; I'm happy to have inherited my mom's bubbly personality, my dad's penchant for sarcasm, and their passion to love and serve God and the people around them. Immediately after graduating high school, I dove straight into pursuing leadership through serving in Japan as a missionary, alongside my family. I earned my bachelor's degree in Liberal Studies through Thomas Edison State University by the age of 20, all the while teaching music, dance and English; leading worship and ministering through university outreaches; and even coordinating a seminar on personal core values. However, more than just teaching people, I am excited to find opportunities to continue educating myself and showing that if I can do it, they can too!

There is still so much for me to learn, but I thank and praise God for providing a mentor for me in Gay Hongo, as well as support through Andrew, the Board of Directors, and Kalihi Union Church. We are currently working with Kalihi Union Church to continue building up the team and resources, the foundation, of the Hongo Music Center. We are passionate about using the performing arts to promote the dignity and self-worth of the people of Hawai'i and especially the residents of Kalihi, one of the lowest-income neighborhoods in the United States, by providing life-enhancing creative experiences. As I train with Gay and "learn the ropes" of this, and all the many other wonderful ministries that she and Christian Vision are involved with, such as Sunday worship & Women's Fellowship, I am so humbled for the opportunity to carry on the Hongo legacy of music, missions, and sharing the aloha spirit. Thank you so much for your continued partnership and support of the Hongo Music Center & Christian Vision, and I look forward to meeting you soon!

**CHRISTIAN  
VISION**

## EXPERIENCING GOD THROUGH THE ARTS



*Lisa Lee joined me to play piano and sing with me.*



*Shelly Ige shared her passion for worshipping through various arts.*

Shelly Ige led a Sunday School class at Kalihi Union Church called "Experiencing God through the Arts." Shelly taught on worshipping God through sign dance, and I taught on worshipping God through music.

I invited Lisa Lee to help me on the music portion, and I also invited Chey Sanders to teach on worshipping through drama. We look forward to a second round of teaching these classes as this class was extended for another semester.





## THE KANNO FAMILY



*Gay, Brandon, Sherri, and baby Elaina, who was dedicated at Kalihi Union Church.*

Richard and Chieko Kanno are fondly remembered for being faithful supporters of Christian Vision since the 1980's. Chieko made beautiful violet carnation leis every week for Sunday services at KUC. Richard was a mechanic and rescued us many times when our second-hand cars would break down. Before Richard's passing, Randy and I had the privilege of singing for him when he was at the Plaza at Moanalua. His favorite song was "Jesus Loves Me."

We got to know Richard's son, Mike, and his wife, Lynn, when they invited us to sing at their church in Santa Barbara, CA. They, too, are faithful supporters. Recently, on one of their many trips to Hawai'i, they attended Kalihi Union Church for the dedication of their grandchild, Elaina, born to their daughter Sherri Kanno Lee, and her husband, Brandon.

## ALEX MCANGUS



*Leaders of the Waikiki Beach Chaplaincy. Left to right: Bob Turnbull, Alex McAngus, and Gene Ozbun.*

## A HUI HOU, UNTIL WE MEET AGAIN

### STANLEY TOGIKAWA



*Gay with dear friends, Stanley and Joan Togikawa, at the 2019 Pau Hana Fellowship Valentine Luncheon.*

We bid a fond farewell to our dear friend Stanley Togikawa, who passed on March 6, 2020 at the age of 87. Stanley was a faithful supporter of our ministry and took us on several missions trips to Cambodia, the Philippines, and China, where he had many philanthropic outreaches. Stanley was active in service to Olivet Baptist Church, Hawai'i Baptist Academy, and the Hawai'i Pacific Baptist Convention. He had also served as president of the Shiraki Memorial Foundation and president of the Hawai'i Rotary Youth Foundation.

You can view a video clip from Stanley's memorial service featuring Gay on our website: [www.rghongo.com](http://www.rghongo.com).

We also mourn the passing of a great friend and loving pastor, Alex McAngus, who went home to be with the Lord on May 27, 2021. Alex not only pastored at Waikiki Beach Chaplaincy for many years, he was also a brilliant entertainer, a talented singer, and a well-known actor who appeared on the original Hawaii 5-0. I was so privileged to sing with Alex at Waikiki Beach Chaplaincy's 50th Anniversary Celebration last year. We look forward to singing again together in heaven someday.

# HAU'OLI LA HANAU, HAPPY BIRTHDAY!



Missionary Ada Lum celebrated her 95th birthday at the Plaza at Moanalua with a virtual party.



Andrew and Gay visited Pastor Stan Johnson and his wife, Mary, in Los Gatos, CA. It was an early birthday celebration for Pastor Stan, who turned 93 on May 23rd.



Alan Nakamura, Patty Ching, and U'ilani Ciacci holding happy birthday signs for Ada – safely social distanced.



Elaine Williams at Grace Covenant Church on her 90th birthday. Elaine had been a member of First Presbyterian Church in Honolulu for many years before retiring at Covenant Living in San Diego.



A visit with Randy's uncle, Masanori Hongo, and his wife, Florence, in San Mateo. Uncle Masa is a WWII veteran and turned 101 on April 7th. He's still sharp as a tack.



# PHOTO GALLERY



Pastor John Barrow, his wife, Mayumi, and their children were decked with leis at his ordination service on February 7<sup>th</sup>.



On a visit home over spring break, Andrew joined Gay to share at Kalihi Union Church. They sang Shine, Jesus, Shine. A version of that song, recorded for the 10th anniversary remembrance of the Sendai disaster, is posted at [www.rghongo.com](http://www.rghongo.com)



My sister Joy Nakamura and her husband, Alan, went to Florida to visit their daughter, Kristie, her husband, David, and their first grandchild, Tobias.



Gay led worship for Pastor Barrow's ordination in English and Japanese.



A special praise team for Easter service at Kalihi Union Church. Front row, left to right: Marion Von, Gay, Lisa & Joelle Lee. Second row, left to right: Ellen & Ray Suhl, Vernon Von, Jon Leong, and Kent Takazawa.



Christmas Eve ensemble. Left to right: Vernon and Marion Von, Gay, Jenny Urbano, and Gary Myers, missionary to the Philippines. I'm grateful to Gary for helping to lead worship whenever I need to take a Sunday off.



Gay recruited a special choir to minister on Hawaiian Sunday, February 21, 2021. Left to right: Marion Von, Ellen Suhl, Vernon Von, Gay, Ray Suhl, Janice Dankel, and Carol Kamalu. Janice and Carol are sisters of Hawaiian ancestry.

**Christian Vision**  
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*Announcement:*

We are grateful for your donations to the general fund which help with our daily ministry expenses. Donations to the Hongo Music Center are now being used for programs and scholarships.

Feel free to email us at [rghongo@hotmail.com](mailto:rghongo@hotmail.com) if you would like to transition from the hard copy of this newsletter to our e-newsletter.

You can also donate online at [www.rghongo.com](http://www.rghongo.com). Thank you for your support, prayers, and partnership as we serve the Lord through Christian Vision – to the ends of the earth!