

Views of the Vision

The Ministry of Gay and Andrew Hongo
and Taylor Pagaragan

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A New Thing *By Gay Hongo*

Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

~Isaiah 43:19

People ask me, "How do you like living in Modesto?" My answer: "I love it!"

Of course, I do miss Hawaii... my family, my friends, my church, the food, the weather, my apartment. But I can go back to Hawaii every two to three months for two or three weeks.

I have kept my apartment in Hawaii. The mortgage was paid off three months after Randy's passing with the help of Christian Vision. Chey Sanders (who is the sister of Matt Sanders, who is husband of my niece, Cheryl Toma Sanders) has been my housemate ever since she moved to Hawai'i from Texas to direct the play "Glory in His Soul" in 2018. Chey is looking after my apartment. So I have a place to stay whenever I go to Hawai'i.

In May, I went on a cruise from Montreal to Eastern Canada ending in Boston. I was invited by my sister Joy who often travels with her high school classmates. After the cruise we had planned to visit Andrew in California for two weeks. As God would have it, Joy and I were in California when baby Paul was born. I returned to Hawai'i after that, then made my permanent move to Modesto on September 18. Andrew and Meghan went back to work then, and I was the sole babysitter.

My first day as babysitter started with a desperate prayer: "Lord Jesus, help me!" Generally Paul is mellow and a joy to care for. However once in a while, when he is hungry and sleepy and I am slow in warming his bottle, he throws a fit. Then by the time I give him his bottle, he is sobbing uncontrollably and is too upset to drink. So I carry him and sing songs like "Jesus, What a Wonder You Are" (with much prayer) and amazingly he calms down and is able to nurse his bottle. Now I have learned to anticipate and get the bottle ready before he gets too upset. It is a good thing I live with my son's family, because I can't live a day without Paul's smile and laughter. Every day, every moment I have with my precious grandson is a gift from God.



Paul with Grandma

Christian Vision Inc. Founded in 1982

Executive Director: Taylor Pagaragan • Board of Directors: Gay Hongo, President
Chris Aliipule, Vice President • Kathleen Kawazoe Tava, Secretary • Daniel Miyamoto, Treasurer
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A New Thing Continued...

Two major changes I had to make since moving here were:

1. My health care. After a lifetime of being with HMSA or Blue Cross Blue Shield, I had to change to Kaiser Permanente. There is a Kaiser hospital near by and Andrew and his family go there, so for the sake of convenience I switched. As God would have it, I switched right during open enrollment.

2. My church denomination. I was with Kalihi Union Church, which is an Evangelical Free Church, for more than 50 years.

Now I go to St. Matthias Church in Oakdale, California, which is part of the Anglican Church of North America. Although it is very different in the style of worship, the teaching is Biblical and the theology is conservative. I love Pastor John Roberts who is a very good friend as well as a spiritual leader.

So many changes and adjustments had to be made, but I am at peace knowing that God has prepared the way for me and His timing is always perfect. God is doing a new thing in my life. I am confident this is His will, and I am blessed to follow as He leads. Please pray God would sustain me through the cold winter here.

Aloha... JoAnn Shinsato Kaneshiro

Oct. 31, 1934 - Oct. 20, 2022

Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
~Lamentations 3:22, 23

I am the fifth of six children, and my oldest sister was JoAnn Shinsato Kaneshiro. She is thirteen years older than I.

During World War II, JoAnn was in elementary school in Tokyo, Japan. The bombing was so severe that the students and their teachers were sent to live in the countryside of Toyama. During that time God miraculously protected JoAnn so that she was not consumed by the bombing. She also survived despite starvation and sickness. This is why JoAnn loved the scripture verse above from Lamentations 3.

She was 14 years old when she moved to Hawaii. JoAnn received Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior when I invited her to attend the Japanese services at Kalihi Union Church. She was a very dedicated and active member and because she was bilingual, she served on the council of elders representing the Japanese Fellowship.

JoAnn was a hairdresser and married to her beloved husband, Wallace "Gitcho" Kaneshiro. Together they had four sons and nine grandchildren. My childhood and formative years were so much richer because of her presence in my life. She cut my hair and gave me perms and did my hair for me every morning when I was in elementary school. She sewed beautiful dresses for me. The best birthday present I ever got was a ruby ring that she wrapped in an egg carton. She was God's gift to me in supporting and encouraging me in everything I did. She loved and appreciated Randy for his musical and spiritual guidance while serving at KUC. She was kind and generous and supported Christian Vision. Her last days were filled with thanksgiving, joy, and anticipation of entering her heavenly home and seeing her beloved Jesus.



Shinsato Sisters: Joy Nakamura, Gay, and Pearl Toma celebrate the life of eldest sister, JoAnn Kaneshiro

Memorial Service for Rev. Yoko Asada



Punahou parents Mabel Suzuki, Gay, and Kazuko Love (with daughter Nikki) attended Rev. Yoko Asada's memorial service.

I became friends with Kazuko Love because her daughter, Nikki, and my son, Andrew, were classmates at Punahou School. Kazuko invited Randy and me to sing for "Hinamatsuri" Girls Day celebrations at the Japanese Consulate for several years.

This past August, Kazuko asked me to sing at the memorial service for her cousin, Rev. Yoko Asada, who had served for many years as pastor of Nu'uuanu Congregational Church Japanese Fellowship. Yoko had written a book titled, "Rainbows," bridging cultures and faiths. Besides Christian hymns it was my joy to sing "Hawaiian Lullaby" and "Somewhere Over the Rainbow" with my niece, Cheryl Toma Sanders, accompanying me.

The Lord said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."

Genesis 12:1

Rev. Asada was called to serve God and left Japan and served the Japanese community in New York, Chicago, and in Hawai'i. In Hawai'i she loved the Hawaiian rainbows which appeared frequently, reminding her of God's faithfulness.

I am grateful for God's perfect timing in that Rev. Asada's memorial service was before I was scheduled to leave Hawai'i. I was blessed to have been a part of this beautiful service for a beautiful servant of God.



Mahalo for your continued support of Christian Vision. Through your generosity I have been receiving a pension. I serve as President of the Christian Vision Board of Directors so I will be returning to Hawai'i in February for our annual meeting. In July 2020, Andrew, Meaghan and I were planning to go on a missions trip to Japan. However covid restrictions put our plans on hold. Thank you, Lord, for answering prayers that Japan would open its borders once again. We plan on going to Japan (with baby Paul) in June 2023. So both Taylor and the Hongo family plan on making mission trips to Japan in the coming year. Gifts toward our mission trips can be earmarked "missions" on your check. Your continued support of Taylor and the Hongo Music Center is also much appreciated.

Tentative Japan Schedule:

June 10 - Sonrise Cafe in Ikebukurobo (venue TBD). For info: teamkibou7@gmail.com.

June 11 - Kita Ageo Chapel, 9:30am & 1pm.

Kami 6-13 Ageo City, Saitama Ken, 362-0001.

For info: Naoenoguchi@hb.tp1.jp.

Email us at 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.

Thank you for your support, prayers, and partnership as we serve the Lord through Christian Vision.

In His Praise,
Gay Hongo

Japan Summer Mission Trip 2022

By Taylor Pagaragan

But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere.

~2 Corinthians 2:14

Thank you so much for your prayers and financial support for me and my team's mission trip to Japan this past summer!



JAPAN SUMMER MISSIONS TEAM: Ryo Takemura, Ben Shimomura, Lisa-Ann Ching, Caitlyn Kobata, Taylor Pagaragan, Sarah Weible, Hannah Araki



ALOHA ENGLISH CAMP

We started off our trip at the TEAM Japan annual conference where we led the children & youth program for around 25 missionary kids. We were so blessed to be able to pour into these young people and to let them know that they are seen, they are known, they are valued, and they are loved by the mission, by the adults, by us, and most importantly by God! Whether it be playing in the



HOMESTAY FAMILIES IN JAPAN

sandbox in the park, grabbing some gelato, or riding bikes around the lake, our team was able to create a program specifically for their age group, and adapt to the kids' personalities. I am so proud of this team and all that they were able to accomplish in such a short time.

Thank you so much for helping us to provide this special experience for these precious missionary kids, and thank you from me personally for giving me the opportunity to not only encourage the missionary parents as a former missionary kid myself, but to also love on my little TEAMJapan brothers and sisters.

On the second leg of our trip, we hosted an English Day Camp for Japanese elementary students, teaching them English through stories of the Bible. Our camp was Hawaiian-themed, and we had a wonderful time sharing about "Joseph and his Aloha Shirt of Many Colors"!

There were so many opportunities to share our stories and be God's hands and feet in Japan, and I look forward to making this a regular trip! My team and I could not have done this without your prayers and support, and I just wanted to say THANK YOU! Because of you, my team and I were able to interact with and impact:

- **25** Missionary Kids, 1-18 years old at TEAMJapan's annual conference
- **18** Japanese elementary students at English Camp
- **100** Japanese children at an international sharing event
- **2** families through a homestay program
- **15** individual reconnections and new friends

Welcome, Janete!



JANETE FUJIKI

I am so excited to introduce you to the newest addition to the Hongo Music Center, Janete Fujiki! Janete and her husband recently moved to O'ahu. She is originally from Brazil, where she served as part of the music ministry at her church. More recently, Janete and her family lived in Northern California and visited several churches including San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church. She is warm, generous, and speaks Portuguese and Japanese as well as English. Janete has been an absolute joy to work with, and we are so grateful to God for bringing her to us. Along with taking on the role of piano teacher at the center, she jumped in at Kalihi Union Church to minister in various capacities. She is currently directing our Christmas Choir at KUC and doing a fantastic job!

Music Ministry



I have continued to help lead worship at all three of Kalihi Union Church's English services, as well as monthly at the Japanese Fellowship as well. It has been a time of growing and learning, but I am so grateful and blessed to be a part of the KUC worship team. As I have started to lead more on Sundays, I am so thankful for the support and mentorship of KUC's Associate Director of Worship, Laine Furukawa, as well as the other worship leaders on our team, Aya Kwong and Krystle-Ashley Ulep.

In October, I also had the opportunity to sing alongside Faith Dubke at her vocal recital, which was also held at Kalihi Union Church. Although I have been performing for many years in various worship teams, ministry outreaches, and support-raising activities, this was the first time in many years I performed more theatrically. We sang a couple songs from the musical "Wicked," as well as a few hymns. It was a challenge for me vocally, but both Faith and I are so happy with how the recital turned out. I look forward to more collaborations and performances, and hope to see you at one of them someday!



Faith Duke & Taylor - Vocal Recital

Thank You!

Thank you again for your continued support of me as I am figuring out all that is Christian Vision, and how to honor the legacy of our dear Hongo Family. It has been a journey for sure, but I am trusting in God that He will continue to direct our paths. It truly has been so exciting to see how God continues to work in and through Christian Vision! To Him be all the glory!

The Lord is my strength and my shield; in him my heart trusts, and I am helped; my heart exults, and with my song I give thanks to him.
Psalm 28:7



KUC Christmas Choir - First Performance



Aloha party with dear friends before Gay moved to California. Clockwise from lower left: Irma Miller, Marion and Vernon Von, Ray and Ellen Suhl, Kathy Hirai, June Tokuda, Charlotte and Alvin Kawazoe.



Meaghan, Andrew, Paul and Gay at The Pumpkin Patch in Oakdale, CA.



Reunion of co-directors of "Glory In His Soul." Left to right: Cheryl Toma Sanders, Aileen Chinen, Gay Hongo, Jon Leong, Corrine Uehara, Chey Sanders, Jody Chun.



Ministry at Excel Church (Mililani Missionary) with accompanist Lois Pannabecker, Jojo and Fiona



During my two weeks in Hawaii in November I was able to sing for the Okinawan Geneological Society of Hawai'i's annual Bonenkai. I sang Okinawan songs accompanied by Cheryl Toma Sanders on piano and cousin Fred Shinsato on sanshin.



Randy's uncle, Masanori Hongo, is 102 years old! Andrew introduced him to baby Paul, who is carrying on the Hongo name.



Celebrating Violet Yasutomi's 100th birthday with grandson Clifton and great-grandsons Ty and Cole. Clifton is Financial Advisor for Christian Vision.

My Advent Discipline *By Andrew Hongo*



December is the season of Advent, when we look towards Jesus' birth and prepare our hearts for His arrival. I love Advent; I try to keep my heart open to Him all through the year, but there's something special about having a particular season to make that our priority. One discipline I'm implementing this Advent is *lectio divina*, an ancient practice of meditating on a short portion of Scripture and listening to what God is saying through His word. I use an app called "Ritual" that leads me through the various steps of *lectio divina*: "lectio," listening to the reading of God's word; "meditatio," meditating on what God is saying to us through that passage; "oratio," in which we raise up a prayer to God in response; and "contemplatio," entering stillness and silence in contemplation before God. During Advent, we are focusing on passages leading up to the birth of Jesus.

I do my *lectio divina* in our backyard each morning with Paul, our son, and Bobo, our dog. I strap my son to my chest in a wrap, drape a big blanket over both of us to keep us warm, and sit on a purple exercise ball. (Paul loves to bounce up and down, and the exercise ball good for my back, too!) Bobo comes outside with us, since he loves the chilly Northern California weather.

Before beginning my *lectio divina*, I take a few minutes to center and still myself in God's presence. I appreciate the beauty of God's creation in our backyard: the green leaves fluttering in the breeze, the pink blossoms of the crepe myrtle, the bright blue of sky and the bracing chill of morning air. I feel my son warm against my chest, and look at his adorable face,

his deep brown eyes, and I realize he may be the most beautiful thing God has created. And sometimes Bobo interrupts this reverie by bringing me one of his toys to play tug of war.

Then I begin the process of *lectio divina*. A recent reading was from Luke 1:17-20, in which the angel Gabriel tells Zechariah that he and his wife will have a son, John. Zechariah asks the angel how this will be possible, given his and his wife's old age, and the angel replies: "But now you will be speechless and unable to talk until the day these things take place, because you did not believe my words, which will be fulfilled at their proper time."

What jumped out to me was the phrase "fulfilled at their proper time." For Zechariah, this meant that yes, he and his wife were well-advanced in years, but that God could do anything, in His perfect time. I thought about how Zechariah and his wife had probably wanted children long before this, how they had possibly experienced years of heartbreak and sadness. But now, the time had come for the fulfillment of this long-cherished dream.

I meditated on how this applies to my own life. For much of my 30s I remained single – unhappily single. I had watched most of my high-school and college friends fall in love, get married, buy houses, and start families, and in my aloneness and loneliness, I would ask the Lord, "When is it my turn? Can't You hurry up and get me a wife?" Finally, at age 37, I met Meaghan at a church Bible study, and from our first date, believed she was the one God had chosen for me. She is 11 years younger than I am, and we realized that if we met when I had wanted to get married, say when I was 28 years old, she would have been 17 years old – an inappropriate age gap. But God allowed us to get married at the proper time, when I was 39 and she was 28. Every day I see that God chose exactly the woman I needed, and every day I fall more and more in love with her. As Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, "He hath made everything beautiful in its time" – including my becoming a father at 44 years young.

Then, as the "oratio" step, I lifted up a prayer to the Lord. I thanked God for His perfect timing in bringing me a wife, and our son, and I asked Him to help me trust Him for the things I am still waiting for. And finally, as the "contemplatio" step, I just sat in silence in our backyard, enjoying the peace of the morning, the warmth of my son, and Bobo's slobber on my leg. I heard the Lord telling me, "Son, it is a joy to give you all good things in My perfect time. Thank you for being patient and trusting in Me."

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Merry Christmas



& A Blessed New Year!

