

Views of the Vision

The Ministry of Gay and Andrew Hongo
and Janete Fujiki

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Christian Vision Expands to Japan



*Enlarge the place of your tent, stretch your tent
curtains wide, do not hold back; lengthen your cords
strengthen your stakes.*

~ Isaiah 54:2

Back in 1982, when we had just founded Christian Vision, the Lord opened doors for Randy, Andrew, and myself to do music ministry in Japan. An organization called LIFE (Language Institute for Evangelism, also known as ELI - English Language Institute) asked us to do a concert tour throughout Japan.

There were very few Christians in Japan — less than 1% of the population — and Japanese believers were struggling to get non-Christians to come to church.

However, when they advertised that Hawaiian musicians (our family) would be singing at their church, many people would come for the first time. We would share our Hawaiian culture, teach them the hula “Pearly Shells,” and then share our testimonies about how Jesus had changed our lives. Then the churches would offer English language classes for these newcomers, which would be a great opportunity for evangelism.

We recognized, however, how great the need for Christian workers in Japan was. We went to many churches, but there were so many invitations we just weren’t able to say yes to, from other pastors we met who would say, “Please come to my church! It would be such a great opportunity to reach out to our community.” Every time we had to leave Japan, Randy would say to me, “Oh, I wish we could move here and do ministry here. The need is so great, and there are so many more opportunities for us to sing.” Some churches would wait as long as four years for us to come. It was always Randy’s vision to expand Christian Vision’s ministry to Japan.

Taylor Pagaragan came on as Christian Vision’s executive director two years ago, but before that, she had been a missionary in Japan with her family. We were so blessed to have her bring her extensive gifts and passion for the Lord to our ministry. But a few months ago, when Taylor told us she felt called to leave Christian Vision and return to full-time missionary work in Japan, we had no doubt this was the Lord’s calling on her life. Christian Vision will be sending Taylor to Japan in partnership with Kalihi Union Church, and we are so excited to see God bringing Randy’s long-time dream to fruition of expanding Jesus’ kingdom in Japan in His perfect time.

Christian Vision Inc. Founded in 1982

*Executive Director: Janete Fujiki • Board of Directors: Gay Hongo, President
Chris Aliipule, Vice President • Kathleen Kawazoe Taua, Secretary • Daniel Miyamoto, Treasurer
Steve Kaji • Nelson Kanemoto • Robert Kishi*

Aloha from Taylor

Let the morning bring me word of your unfailing love, for I have put my trust in you. Show me the way I should go, for to you I entrust my life.
~ Psalm 143:8

Dear friends,

It has been a pleasure to serve as the Hongo Music Center Executive Director for the last few years. Thank you for your continued support of the Hongos, Christian Vision, and of me. I have been so blessed and encouraged by all of the people I have been able to interact with through this opportunity, including YOU! Thank you for being a part of my story - I am so grateful God has brought you into my life. Now, I am so excited to share with you this new chapter that God has opened up.

I moved to Itabashi, Tokyo on November 17th, 2023 to work as a missionary with my family, the Pagaragans, at The Neighborhood Student & Ministry Center. We established The Neighborhood in 2019 to provide a place where people can come to be known, valued, and connected — a place where they can come to know the love of God. There, alongside building relationships, I will assist in teaching English classes, hosting Japanese homestay students and families, and serving in various capacities and ministries such as music, discipleship, hospitality, marketing, and administrative work.

I am excited that although I will no longer be executive director at Christian Vision in Honolulu, I will still be a Christian Vision missionary, and I hope to make The Neighborhood an extension of the Hongo Music Center in Japan. If you are interested in learning more, or would like to partner with me financially or in prayer, please feel free to contact me at taylorasami.p@gmail.com. You may also send donations to Christian Vision with a note on the pledge envelopes "For Taylor Pagaragan". (Please do not write my name directly on checks) Thank you for being willing to prayerfully consider partnering with me to be God's hands and feet in Japan.

God's call on my heart to Japan has never changed, but I know that my time in Hawaii has been a necessary season of learning and development for me. I believe the things I learned in Hawaii and with Gay and Christian Vision will be invaluable to my future ministry, wherever in the world that may be! I cannot express how grateful I am for you, and all the dear family and friends that I have been able to share my life with these past few years.

Gratefully Yours,

Taylor Rae Asami Pagaragan



From Janete Fujiki

*Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for He is good!
For His mercy endures forever!*
~ 1 Chronicles 16:34

I was very excited to go on my first short-term mission trip to Japan this past summer. When I found out that all the members that were going were half of my age, I started wondering and questioning God - had I made the right choice? Would I be able to keep up with them? Was I going to be of any use (because I was not going to lead the team)? Is Japan's summer heat too much to handle? Anyway, I prayed and I ended up going. The trip was a blessing! I learned so many things and here they are:

1-God showed me I need to listen more and talk less; only give advice when asked.

2-We're never too old or too young to serve the Lord on a mission trip. I thought this trip was going to be my first and last, but maybe not.

3- The importance of prayer in everything we do.

The highlight of my trip was that six of my relatives in Japan were able to come and get to know the Pagaragan family at their outreach ministry, "The Neighborhood" and also attend New Hope Church of Tokyo for the first time.

"The Neighborhood," where we spent the entire week, was nice and air conditioned! I was part of a skit and was able to help in many different ways. As for our second week in Karuizawa, I had an amazing time in a much cooler environment and was able to use my preschool skills to help missionary kids in their everyday activities.

Back at KUC, I started helping with the choir at Kalihi Union Church. It had been many years since I had led a choir. I remember in my old days, how much fun I had, preparing music, rehearsing sectionals, performing, accompanying, etc. God knew I wanted to try one more time.

I still remember the first time I came to KUC and told some of our brothers and sisters about my experience with music and I could see their eyes opening, and I could tell how much they loved to sing. So we started a choir in September 2022 and sang during that Christmas season.

Then we took a long break because I had to go back to Brazil to resolve some important issues since my mom passed away in 2021. As many of you know, I was born and raised in Brazil, and I had to visit my mom every year until she passed away two years ago.

Then Helene Smith, a long time member and former choir director, returned from the mainland and came to

me expressing the desire to lead the choir. We started again in August and prepared a song “Holy Ground” just in time to celebrate the 110th anniversary of KUC. It was a great success.

And right now, the choir is getting ready for the Christmas season with Helene directing and me the pianist.



Chester leads the KUC ukulele choir

I also found out that we have some very talented ukulele players at KUC. They wanted to start playing again, and I thought: this is the time! God brought to us someone very dear to Randy and Gay, a very talented brother named Chester Centino! (His wife, Shantel, helped in the hula ministry.) Chester agreed to start teaching a ukulele class, and we now have twenty students of all ages. Chester is a wonderful teacher, a kind person, and his love for the Lord shines through in all he does. Chester also had the lead role of Henry Opukaha’ia in the musical drama Randy wrote, “Glory in His Soul.”

The ukulele team is preparing to minister at Christmas with two songs: “Go Tell It On the Mountain” and “Silent Night” in both English and Hawaiian. They’ll also be performing for Hawaiian Sunday on February 18, 2024.

Many years ago when I attended music school, I had the opportunity to teach music at a local preschool. It was a disaster and I promised myself I would never do this again... But then, a couple years later, I had another opportunity to do a small Christmas musical with the church children. It turned out very nicely and I was really happy. God had given me another chance! I was young and didn’t know how to teach kids about discipline, which was one of the reasons why I disliked working with them. In the following years I became a pre-school teacher’s assistant, and before I knew it, I had completed five years in that position, always going back and forth, telling myself I didn’t like working with kids!



KUC Children’s Choir: Keane, Kody and Kai Furukawa, Caytlynn, Khloe Zimmermann, Maya Torres, Xaelynn, Xylar Quevido, Jaylene Taua. Not pictured: Suzanna Behler, Aedyn and Cody Ikeda, Jonah, Elina and Maria Barrow.

Fast forward, after working with children in pre-school and church settings for about 40 years, I finally decided to give it another try and now we’re starting the children’s choir at KUC. I praise God that He is a God of second chances!

We now have three music ministries: adult choir, ukulele choir, and children’s choir. Please pray that God will give me the wisdom and the creativity to nurture each of these ministries. Thank you!

With gratitude and Brazilian Hugs

Janete Fujiki

*His love
never fails*



Surprise Parties

I love surprise parties!

I recently attended a wonderful surprise party for the 90th birthday celebration of Vernon and Marion Von, long-time Christian Vision supporters and members of our Kalihi Union Church worship team. The Vons' three daughters had planned this for months in advance, making sure that everyone knew it would be a surprise. They pulled it off and it was a total surprise!

It was the most precious sight to see the total look of surprise and joy, and the tears on their faces when they walked into the party room. Vernon and Marion have been dear friends for over thirty years. After Randy's passing they stepped in to be my music ministry partners. Every other Sunday they faithfully showed up at 6:30am to be on my praise team for Kalihi Union Church's 7:15 service. For their celebration, I wrote new lyrics to "How Great Our Joy," a choral quartet that we sang every Christmas. Marion sang alto, Vernon sang bass, and I was the soprano, but we were missing a tenor. Donna McCoy Evans, a dear friend from Arkansas who flew in for the party, came to our rescue. She is a pianist, choir director, and a talented musician - and she was even able to sing tenor!

Because this was a surprise for Vernon and Marion, there was no time to rehearse. I just handed them the music sheet, and they asked, "Is this for Sunday service?" I said, "Surprise! We're singing this... now!" They did an excellent job and brought the house down.



Donna Evans, Gay, Marion, Vernon



..the two shall become one flesh; so then they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let not man separate.

~ Mark 10:8

Another surprise took place on Maui. Pastor Barbara Tengan from Wailuku Faith in Jesus Church had called me and said, "We would like to fly you to Maui to sing for a 59th wedding anniversary for a special couple. It will be a surprise for them."

Randy and I met Pastor Barbara about thirty years ago and began doing concerts at her church. Whenever we ministered there, Pastor Barbara would say, "Since I am a single woman I need you to minister especially to couples in our congregation. Talk about what a Christian marriage should be." At first we were very hesitant to do so, because we were so far from being the perfect Christian couple. I thought, "Who are we to give advice? We're the ones who need advice!" But we asked the Lord to help us and did our best. Randy and I sang a song he wrote called "When Two Become One." We shared how this song is based on Proverbs 3:5-6: *Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him and he will direct your way.*

Randy shared how we need to ask God to help us to love one another and love God so that we can glorify the Lord through our marriages. When we have disagreements we need to realize that it is Satan that seeks to destroy and cause division. We are on the same team and must stand against the enemy. It doesn't do any good to punch out our own teammates.

At that time Manny and Cathy Aruda had been married for 20 years and had three children in their teens. Cathy was a faithful Christian at Pastor Barbara's church, but Manny had left the family and was living with another woman. Cathy never gave up on their marriage and with the help of Pastor Barbara prayed for Manny's

salvation and for him to come to repentance. To Cathy's surprise, Manny agreed to come to our concert, but remained seated way in the back even though Cathy was in the front.

During the service, as we were singing "When Two Become One," the Holy Spirit touched Manny's heart, and he was moved to come forward and sit with Cathy, putting his arms around her. Since then the Lord worked a miraculous healing in their marriage. Today they have a thriving ministry for troubled teens. Every Friday night they have a bus load of young people coming to their house church. Testimonies are shared and the youth are leading their friends to the Lord.

On July 17, I flew to Maui and Pastor Barbara picked me up and drove me to the Aruda's house church for their 59th anniversary party. She told me to hide under a blanket in the backseat of her car since I was the surprise for them. When we arrived, I emerged from under the blanket and burst into song, singing "When two become one in the Lord..."

Cathy burst into tears and couldn't believe that it was me singing to them. Later, when all the guests were gathered, I sang the full version of the song with karaoke track also featuring Randy's voice on the chorus. I was so grateful that God used us to bless them all those years ago and is still using me now. You can see it all on video by going to Barbara Tengan on Facebook and search July 17.



Pastor Barbara, Manny and Cathy Aruda, Gay



Celebration of Life for Dr. Jack Tsuji

*Well done, good and faithful servant!
~ Matthew 25:23*

On August 12, Andrew and I were privileged to sing for the celebration of life service for our dear friend, Dr. Jack Tsuji. The service was held at the Laguna Woods Community Center in Southern California. Andrew and I sang "Aloha May You Know His Peace/Aloha 'Oe" at the conclusion of the service. At the reception following, Pat's hula team from her church danced to a couple of songs including "The Prayer" by Ho'okena and "Ka Mele." We asked Harriet and Kenny Furuya, good friends from Los Angeles, to sing and play ukulele with us for "People Need the Lord" and "Kanaka Wai Wai," with Andrew dancing the hula.

During the service, Jack's friends, family, and pastors gave remembrances in his honor. They spoke of his dedication to the Lord and the way he encouraged other men through Bible studies and men's ministry groups. They also shared how Jack had overcome various tragedies throughout his life, almost like the biblical character of Job, and yet always remained steadfast in his faith. We are grateful for Jack and Pat's incredible support of Christian Vision for many, many years.

Even though it was very sad to say farewell to Jack, we nevertheless rejoiced that he is now with Jesus, face to face. It was also a joy to be reunited with many of our mutual friends: Gary and Judy Yamashita, supporters from San Lorenzo Japanese Christian Church; Sam Tonomura, one of the leaders of Japanese Evangelical Missionary Society.



Karen and her dad, George Yonemoto (Pat's brother), Kenny and Harriet Furuya, Judy and Clyde Okazaki, Sylvia and Jim Yamamoto, Gay and Andrew

Concert at West Oahu Christian Church Specially Dedicated to the Memory of Meiko Nakano

On July 16, the Pagaragan family and I ministered at West Oahu Christian Church (WOCC) at the invitation of Daniel Miyamoto, treasurer of Christian Vision. In addition to being an excellent bookkeeper and nationally ranked bowler, Daniel is also a gifted musician.

When Daniel invited me to do a service there, I felt the Lord leading me to dedicate the service to His servant, Meiko Nakano, who had recently passed away. She and her husband, Yuuichiro Nakano, were our partners in music evangelism in Japan for many years, and her daughter, Sayaka, was on the leadership team at WOCC. In fact, the last time I sang for Meiko before her passing was at WOCC, when Sayaka brought her to hear me sing.

I asked Daniel to sing a duet with me: "Aloha Ke Akua," a song Randy had written in English and Hawaiian based on John 3:16, which Meiko had translated into Japanese. Audrey Adachi (Randy's cousin) and Kathy Watarai danced a beautiful hula to this song. The Pagaragans shared about their ministry in Japan. Taylor sang a song in Japanese while her siblings, Colson and Reagan did a beautiful sign dance.

I also had invited another musical team who had been mentored by Meiko Nakano, a group called "Cornerstone." Tad Matsunaga, Steve Kaji, Malcom Mau, Robert Young, and Diana Teruya were the original members. Tad, Steve, and Robert were reunited to participate in the service, singing a song with Japanese translation by Meiko. They also ministered on the praise team with John Wong.

Cornerstone credits Randy for inspiring and encouraging them to start a concert ministry. Rev. Yuuichiro and Meiko Nakano took them on ministry tours to Japan, inspiring Steve and Tad to become missionaries in Japan. Steve is now vice principal of Kaimuki Christian Church and serves on the board of directors for Christian Vision.

Tad shared two memories of Meiko. The first: once while ministering with the Nakanos at a church in Japan, Tad woke up early (they all slept at the church) to use the restroom. He was surprised that someone was already there cleaning the toilets. Assuming it was the custodian he looked in and saw that it was Meiko. She said "I want the toilets to be nice and clean when the guests arrive." This was so typical of Meiko's servant heart.

Second: when leaving Japan to return to Hawaii, Tad saw Meiko looking out the window as the lights of Tokyo faded away with tears streaming down her face. When asked why she was crying she said "So many people in Japan don't know Jesus." We are so inspired by her example of being a servant for the Lord to people who need to know Him.



Row 1: Kathy Watarai, Colson, Reagan, Gay
Row 2 : Janete Fujiki, Audrey Adachi, Kelly, Taylor
Row 3: Jeff, Steve Kaji, Tad Matsunaga



A New Church Home

When I first moved to Modesto, Andrew encouraged me to visit different churches and find one that suited me. I did not feel confident driving on my own and did not want to trouble others to drive me. So for the first year I attended St. Matthias, an Anglican Church with Andrew and his family. It was new style of worship but a good learning experience for me.

After a year I gained confidence in driving short distances, so I began to attend a senior ministry of Big Valley Grace Community Church called "Prime Time." It is a non-denominational mega-church with a Christian school (which Meaghan had attended from 6th to 12th grade).

Thirty years ago, whenever we visited Jack and Pat Tsuji in Modesto, they would ask us to sing for Prime Time. We became friends with many of them. One friend was Sylvia, a vivacious Filipina married to a retired dentist named Jim Yamamoto. Sylvia invited me to attend a weekly Bible study at her home, followed by card games - our favorite being one called "Hand and Foot." I met more of their Prime Time friends, and decided to begin attending Prime Time services on Sunday mornings. I enjoy their worship time with familiar hymns and found their speakers (they alternate teachers and pastors from their church) to be inspirational and helpful to my spiritual growth.

One practical thing I learned from Pastor Lonnie Skiles was to categorize my prayer list onto index cards for each day of the week. So for example on Mondays I pray for missionaries, Tuesdays for people needing healing or salvation, etc.



At a Chinese restaurant after church. Donna, Betty, Alice, Lourdes, Gay (my Shanghai card game gang)



At Prime Time with Sandy and Sylvia (part of my Hand and Foot card game gang)

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Merry Christmas

Paul Hongo
18 months old



To view our newsletters in color go to **www.rghongo.com**. Let us know if you would like to transition to e-newsletter by emailing us at **gayhongo47@gmail.com**.

We would appreciate a year-end donation.

1. General Fund. This will go towards the operational expenses of the ministry (salaries, technical support, office administration) as well as a pension for me.
2. Hongo Music Center. We have completed raising funds for the building, so further gifts are now being used for programs and scholarships.
3. Japan outreach by Taylor Pagaragan

Thank you so much for your support and prayers. It is a joy partnering with you in serving our Lord through Christian Vision.

Warmest Aloha, Gay Hongo

& A Blessed New Year!