

# Beth Mabry

SERVING WITH CADENCE INTERNATIONAL

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Cadence.org/Mabry

This spring marks six years of living in Japan, and wow, how time has flown! There are several unique things about living in Japan, but driving is one of the things which quickly stands out to me. Earning my Japanese driver's license has been, by far, one of my biggest accomplishments!

Cars are driven on the left-hand side of the road and the driver's seat is on the right-hand side. You signal with your right blinker and turn your wipers on with your left hand. You can easily spot new drivers when you see windshield wipers turn on as a car prepares to turn! It's also common to see people get in their cars to drive away, only to discover they're sitting in the passenger seat and find there's no steering column in front of them.

While simple automobile operation takes some getting used to, navigation is a whole different game! English signs can be hit or miss, and any sort of road grid system is non-existent. Roads are congested and streets are narrow, with little to no shoulder. To help drivers, many intersections have mirrors to help see around tight corners, to know what's coming, and recognize when it's safe to pull out. I've come to greatly appreciate and rely on roadside mirrors!

As I've reflected on this season of ministry in Japan, I've thought how nice it would've been to have a few mirrors at the start of my journey, to see what God had in store for me during this season.

I moved to Yokosuka in April 2016 to begin a student ministry in conjunction with a Cadence hospitality house. It was a season of many firsts: moving to mainland Japan, living in a big, congested city where I took trains more than I drove, working with a Navy community, learning to do things on the Japanese economy instead of on base, partnering with a Cadence Adult Ministry, and starting and building a student ministry . . . to name a few. (Oh, I could also include a car breakdown in a very long tunnel several hours from home which lead to my first ride in a tow truck; and I can't forget to include my two surgeries and hospital stays with non-English speaking hospital staff on the list of firsts!).

My time in Yokosuka was certainly stretching as I had to exercise some faith muscles I hadn't anticipated, but it was a rich season of experiencing God in new ways. The students, families, and volunteers that God brought to the ministry were worth the challenge, and I was blessed to share the gospel and my life with that community.

In October 2018, I moved from Yokosuka to help to relieve co-workers in need of a home assignment and to help the student ministry at Kadena Air Base through a season of transition. While the move was a bit unexpected, it was fun to return to the ministry where I first served



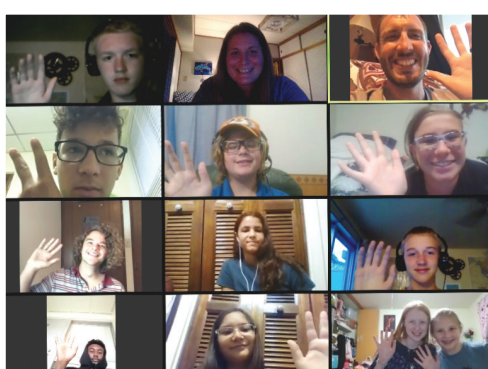
and interned with Cadence many years ago. COVID-19 certainly impacted every aspect of life and ministry in the past few years in ways I never anticipated, but it allowed me to step back, evaluate ministry, and hit reset on some things. Restrictions pushed us back to the basics of simply gathering for teaching and focusing on relationships, and it has resulted in an incredibly healthy ministry in which students and families are actively participating. A year ago, we welcomed new Cadence staff to our community, and it's been fun to serve alongside Zach and Kara Kelly as they've settled into life on Okinawa.

In God's providence, my best friend and former Cadence roommate in Germany moved to Okinawa around the same time I did with her family! Weathering the pandemic and its many lockdowns and closures has been wearisome, and I'm so thankful to have had "family" to navigate the last few years with. My "Aunt Beffy" time has been such an unexpected gift to my heart!

Over the past year, I began mentoring Ashley, a Cadence Field Associate Staff (CAFS). CAFS is a new program within Cadence that equips and mobilizes active-duty military personnel and their spouses for ministry while they serve at their duty station. Ashley is currently leading the youth ministry at Yokota Air Base on mainland Japan, on the western outskirts of Tokyo. It's been fun to come alongside Ashley and encourage her as she dives in with students and builds a volunteer team. She's doing a great job!

Ashley and her husband will be leaving Yokota in February, and my leadership has asked if I would make the move to continue the ministry after they leave. I'm excited to share that I've accepted the assignment and look forward to a new chapter and to being part of what God is doing!

Like Yokosuka, Yokota is in the Tokyo Metro; however, the bases are about two hours apart from each other. Yokota is an Air Base to the west of Tokyo, about an hour's train ride from Shinjuku Station, the world's busiest train station. Yokota is home to approximately 14,000 Americans and has four schools: two elementary, one middle school, and one high school. Unlike Okinawa which is home





to the bulk of the American military in Japan (13 bases, 100,000+ Americans, and host to over a dozen schools for dependents spread throughout the little tropical island), Yokota is a smaller, tight-knit community, tucked into a large, congested city.

While I’m sad to say goodbye to the Kadena community and the students and families I so enjoy, I’m excited for what’s to come. Zach and Kara will continue to invest well in the Kadena community and I’m glad to still be in the region to be able to partner with them for some ministry gatherings down the road. I’m thankful for the flexibility and ability to relocate and to see ministry in Yokota continue.


Before moving to Yokota this fall, I will spend some time this summer in the States. It’s been four years since I’ve visited, and I’m really looking forward to it. Japan has had—and continues in some ways to have—some of the harshest COVID-19 travel restrictions, which has made trips very difficult. I’m thankful for the opportunity to soak in some much-needed family time this summer.

When I arrived in Japan six years ago, I was confident of God’s faithfulness and His call on my life to invest in military students. That this season of ministry would include multiple moves, several hospital visits, and a global pandemic, was certainly not on my radar. But as I look in the rearview mirror, I see His fingerprints and remain confident that God is in control and continues to be in the business of drawing hearts to Himself, shaping and molding His followers to rest in and reflect the hope of the gospel.

Thank you for your partnership in ministering to students and their families in Japan—in Yokosuka, Okinawa and soon to be Yokota. I’m so honored to be on the front lines and couldn’t be here without the prayer and financial support of so many people all around the world.

Because of Christ,  
**Beth**

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