

Dave & Bonnie

Serving with Cadence International

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Our April Staff conference you prayed for with Yuki in the middle of the picture.

Dear Friends and Partners in Ministry,

When was the last time you were happy to see someone leave? You may not have expressed it out loud for fear of hurting the person, but you were not inclined to encourage them to stay longer. I have to confess that recently, I was not only happy that someone was leaving but actually excited that they were choosing to move on. Lest you think I am a heartless man, allow me to explain by going back 31 years.

It was the spring of 1994. Bonnie, our three little ones, and I had arrived in Japan to do youth ministry on Yokosuka Navy Base just outside of Tokyo. We were going through major culture shock while learning how to do ministry in Japan and with the Navy. We lived out of suitcases for the first month, beginning with a single hotel room for the five of us, then in someone's house for a time, and then as we attended a conference for a week in another part of Japan. Everything was new to us, and we were finding that living in Japan was much harder than in Germany, where we had been before. We could not read anything or even make out words. Everything was written in Kanji, and of course, this was before Google or even cell phones to help make your way around.

We finally received word that the home we were to be renting was available. Excitedly, we drove out to start moving in, only to find that the owners had deadbolted

the front door and not given us the key to get in. We called them, and they said we had two options: they could put the key in the mail and we would get it in several days, or I could come to them and get it in person. From the look in Bonnie's eyes, I realized that the only option available was to go and get it immediately if I wanted my marriage to survive another day. My issue was that the key was on the other side of Tokyo, a city of nearly 40 million people, and I would have to take the train to retrieve it. Off I went, hoping that I would not only find the office where the key was located but, even more importantly, find my way back home again.

Something happened on that day that forever changed me. Yes, I found the office and navigated my way home again, saving my marriage, but I was also hit with the realization that Tokyo was BIG, with lots of people who also took those trains. I found that I was taller than almost everyone, so as I stood on the tightly packed train, all I could see was a sea of heads around me. I was hit with the sad realization that only about one percent of Japanese people know Jesus. Most of those people I was smashed up against were "lost" in a different way than I was in one of the world's largest cities. My heart began to ache, and it still hurts when I think about so many people who have no relationship with the Lord.

Fast forward to 2005. A young lady named Yuki was working on Yokosuka Navy base when she heard about a place where she could not only practice her English language skills but also learn more about the religion called Christianity. That place was the Lighthouse, Cadence's hospitality house in Yokosuka. She began to attend, and the Lord quickly captured her heart. Yuki accepted Jesus as her Savior in 2006. That started her long relationship with Cadence. She used her Japanese to help several of our new missionaries transition into Japan. She quickly became known as someone who loved others well, especially children whose parents attended the ministry.

In 2014, as she continued to grow in her knowledge of and her relationship with the Lord, she decided to go to seminary to further her education. In 2018, she joined Cadence full-time to do ministry with the U.S. military in Okinawa, with a heart for other Japanese women who had married a military member. For the past seven years, Bonnie and I have had the privilege of seeing Yuki in action, loving people, helping other Cadence staff with translation work, serving the chapel community, and leading Bible studies for women. Her smile is infectious, and she is a delight to be around. But things started to change a few years ago . . .

God started to stir in her a desire to see more Japanese people hear the gospel message. At first, she used this stirring within the local Cadence ministry community, but God continued to cause her heart to break more and more for her own people. As we talked with her and sensed her heart being drawn away from Cadence, we were excited to see where He would lead her. This past spring, Yuki let us know that she would be leaving Cadence to join a ministry focused on the Japanese people. We love Yuki and are sorry to see her go, yet at the same time, we are happy and excited



Reading Yuki's 10 year award.

to see how God will use her in the future. This is one goodbye that I love reporting! Taking the trains in the Tokyo area will remind me that God loves those millions of people with whom I am jostling for space, and He is not done pursuing them. Will you pray for Yuki as she steps out in faith with courage and boldness to share the gospel message? I know she would appreciate it.

With grateful hearts,
Dave and Bonnie



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