

Agape World



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**Merry
Christmas
and a Happy New
Year 2016. May God
bless you through out
Christmas and the coming
☆year☆**

Dear friend

How was your 2015? Did it give you many precious/ difficult memories? You probably attended many special events commemorating the 70th anniversary of the ending of the Second World War, and met long lost friends and comrades! Unfortunately, I was in Japan during the summer months and was unable to join many of the POW events. However, I was fortunate enough to meet David Hinkins, his wife Maureen, and their son. You may remember that David's father was killed by a Japanese Kamikaze pilot during the war. He was featured on Songs of Praise (which I couldn't watch) and radio.

Keiko Kosuge and I were honoured to be present at the unveiling of the Koyagi Memorial in Nagasaki on 13th September. It was a beautiful sunny day. Many people from Holland, Britain (including Mrs Longbottom, the Deputy British Ambassador), America and local people attended.

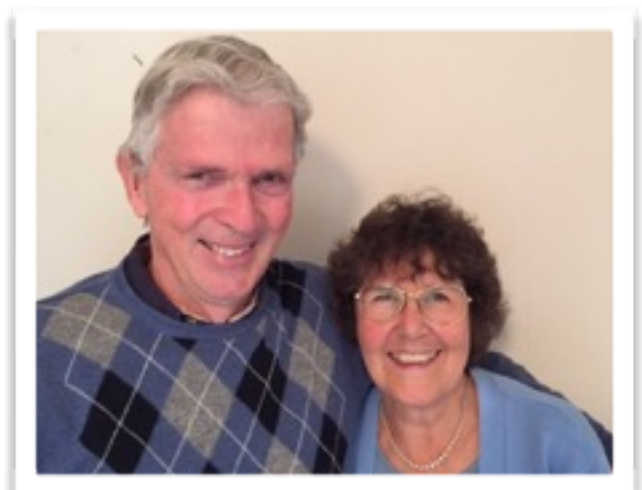
I was very happy to see some POWs and their families at the POW seminar which Phillida Purvis organised in London in October. It was also very good of Ambassador Hayashi to invite POWs and internees for tea and sandwiches at his residence. It was wonderful to be able to chat with friends and the Embassy people in a special way. We are very grateful to the Japanese Embassy for their continued support.

Several people have sent their stories for our newsletter this time and we love to introduce them to you. We are also looking forward to receiving more of your stories for future newsletters. Please share them with us. Thank you. God has been good for us again this year.

Let us introduce Dee and her husband, Geoff, to you. Dee is one of Agape World's trustees.

Geoff is our chairman as many of you would know and have received his phone calls this year. Some people told me that they really enjoyed speaking to him.

Photo: Dee & Geoff



My Encounters With Japan Dee Larcombe

I was born in June, 1941, 6 months before the Japanese army attacked Hong Kong. My Russian mother & I were interned as civilians in Stanley Jail until the war ended. My father, a British Sergeant in the Royal Army Medical Corps, was taken to Japan to work as a prisoner. After the war, my mother & I were flown to Manila to embark on a ship taking former FEPOWS back to the UK. We met my father on board! There followed a couple of years living in Singapore, where my father was stationed. My mother's mental health deteriorated, largely as a consequence of an untreated brain infection she suffered whilst in Stanley.

When she was hospitalised in England, I & my sister were placed in the care of Muller's Children's Homes, where I had a Christian upbringing in Minehead, Somerset. At the age of 17. I moved to Bristol to begin my nursing training. In 1964 I married Geoff, who was also brought up in Minehead, & in 1966 we went to India to serve with the Regions Beyond Missionary Union. By then we had an infant son, & our daughter was

born in our mission hospital on the Nepal border.

We were in India for 5 years. We were unable to return after home leave because I & my son both had medical problems. Geoff became a Baptist Pastor in Torquay for a few years, before we moved to

London, where Geoff became the Executive Director of the RBMU. I became a Family Planning Nurse in Tooting.

Pilgrimage in 2017

We are planning another pilgrimage in November 2017. It's the best time of the year for weather and scenery. Our visit will include Nagasaki, Kumano, Tokyo ,etc.. Please register your interest if you would like to join us.

Keiko's trip

Keiko's been invited to Singapore and Indonesia to do her reconciliation mission over there. She will be away for three months from 7th December.

In 1992 we moved to Godmanchester, Cambridgeshire, where Geoff became a Pastor at Godmanchester Baptist Church & I served in a Huntingdon hospital. Geoff & I went on one of Keiko's Pilgrimages of Reconciliation in 2004, & my sister Jean & I went on another Pilgrimage in 2006. We retired from our working lives that year and moved to West Wickham, Kent, in 2010, to live close to our daughter & her family.

I thank God for His faithfulness during a remarkable life.

Agape World & I Geoff Larcombe

Brought up in a Christian family in Minehead, Somerset, I worked in the Civil Service in London after leaving school. From 1960-1964, I received Christian Ministry training at the London Christian Bible College. After marrying Dee in 1964, we served as missionaries in India in the late '60s and early '70s.

I became a Baptist Pastor in 1972, and, until my retirement, served God as a Pastor and Director of a Christian mission. My interest in Japan began as a result of Dee's experiences, and our friendship with Kiku and Tamiko Horinouchi, when Kiku became a member of our Leadership Team at Godmanchester Baptist Church. They told us about Keiko's calling and work, and so we became involved in her ministry of reconciliation. Dee and I joined one of Keiko's pilgrimages in 2004, and now live just a few miles away from her. I thank God for the privilege of knowing her and working with her.



Father Killed By Kamikaze Pilot
David Hinkins

December 25th 1944. 17-05 (Pacific time) 9th May 1945. Two memorable dates! December 25th, my birthday; 9th May, 1945, the day my father was killed during an attack by a Kamikaze pilot on HMS Formidable.

I never knew my father and never really thought about him until I became a teenager. Even then it was really just wondering what it would have been like to have had a father. I joined the Royal Navy in 1962 and left after a medical discharge in 1967. Time and life moved on. Maureen and I married in 1967 and had two sons Mark and Andrew.

One day, my mother and I were unexpectedly invited to a reunion of men who had served on HMS Formidable. it was there I heard the full story. Apparently my father was in charge of a P3 anti-aircraft gun. When he realised that the plane was going to strike close to the gun's position, he sent the other crew into shelter and kept firing the gun single-handedly.



The plane crashed killing both him and the pilot, Yoshinari Kurose.

I met and talked with the four men whose lives my father had saved and went through a number of emotions from jealousy, "*Why are they alive and not my father?*", to pride in my father's actions.

One man, Taff Evans, told me how he had tried unsuccessfully for years to get my father an award for his bravery. I came away with a different and deeper understanding of

my father and wondered if the pilot had left a son, a family as my dad had.

A few years later, Taff pressed me to keep on trying for an award for my father as he felt he had only a short time left. I promised I would continue where he left off.

The years passed until one day at church they started singing

"Father God I wonder How I Managed to Exist Without the Knowledge of Your Parenthood without your loving care and now I am adopted a member of your Family and Father God your'e there beside me forever more"

and then I knew that although I did not have an earthly father, I did have one in Heaven and wondered again if the pilot had left a son. When I retired, I remembered what Taff had asked me to do.

By this time I had no hatred or bitterness towards the Japanese partly from the teachings of our Lord Jesus and the realisation that hatred only affects the hater and can destroy only the person who



hates. I am too old for that now. After writing to the Royal Navy and to our own Government with negative results, I wrote to the Japanese Government in Tokyo to see if they could tell me if the pilot had left any family. After the rejection from our own people, I never expected a reply. Then, on 14th October 2014, His Excellency, Keiichi Hayashi, the Japanese Ambassador to London, invited my wife and myself to a long meeting in London. His Excellency was genuinely interested and asked Yasuo

Naito, the London Bureau Chief for Sankei Shimbun Communications to follow up the story. They did. Naito came to our house and we did an interview for the newspaper. Then a TV crew arrived and we did another interview for Japanese TV. All went quiet for a while. We did the filming for BBC Songs of Praise which went out on the Sunday after VJ Day. Next the TV people phoned asking to do some more filming. They had located the pilot's brother, M u n e y o s h i Kurose, who lives just outside Tokyo, and had sent me a very moving video in which he asked if we could meet at some stage, in peace, friendship and forgiveness. I really wanted to go but it was financially impossible. Muneyoshi was unwell and could not fly to the UK. That too seemed impossible, I forgot about our Lord.

A short time later I appeared on BBC Breakfast to tell them about the video



from Muneyoshi Kurose. Whilst I was there, I was asked if I would go on Radio 5 Live. I did, and on air talked about the video and my wish to go to Japan and meet Muneyoshi, regretting it was financially impossible and that soon we would both be too old anyway.

After the interview, the director excitedly told me that a business man from London had offered to send myself and my wife, all expenses paid, to Tokyo to meet Muneyoshi.

A few weeks later, Maureen and I met Muneyoshi in a very beautiful, tranquil Tea garden in Tokyo. So much shared

history, sorrow and pain disappeared as we embraced each other's need for reconciliation, forgiveness and peace.

Will Muneyoshi and I ever meet again? I don't know, but we all dream of meeting again when the Cherry blossom blooms in Japan.

Keiko's Postscript: On 24th August 2015, I met Mr Kurose and his beautiful daughter, Naoko, at a traditional tea house garden in the centre of Tokyo while waiting for David and his family to arrive. The Fuji TV crews were kind and helpful. Mr Kurose told me that his brother was the leader of the 7 Kamikaze pilots who were to attack HMS Formidable. However, Kurose ordered the other pilots to return. He plunged alone into David's father's ship. Kurose was single, aged twenty two.

Attending the Last Reconciliation Memorial Service Harue

I attended the Choral Evensong/Memorial Service at Canterbury Cathedral, one of many held in the UK this year, with June, whose partner, George Housego passed away recently, and Kaz Mihara. The Service had long been organised by Chris Chalk, Chairman of the International Friendship and Reconciliation Trust supported by Phillida Purvis. Unfortunately, this service

was the final one because of the difficulties for the decreasing number of veterans.

After the Service, an act of Reconciliation took place in the garden of the Cathedral, Senbazuru (1,000 origami folded cranes, a Japanese symbol of peace), were placed on the 'Peace Tree' by young Japanese students. Readings and prayers were said by the High Commissioner of India, the Ambassador of Myanmar, Rev Kenmyo Taira Sato of the Three Wheels Buddhist Temple in London, and the Vice Dean of Canterbury.