

T *estify*

Choosing JOY IN JAPAN *By De'Etta Goecker*

On March 11, 2011, I was driving from our home in Misawa, Japan, to Tokyo for the Protestant Women of the Chapel International (PWOCI) Tokyo Area Retreat. We had left Sendai 40 to 60 minutes before, and were on a suspension bridge when the earth began to shake. I finally made it to Tokyo, but it was 20 long hours before I heard from my family. It took eight days for me to get home to them. Our children were alone when the quake hit. The destruction left devastation up and down the eastern coast. The tsunami destroyed houses and buildings less than two miles from our home.

I have had two unspoken lingering fears in my life: knowing my kids were in danger and being helpless to aid them, and being on a bridge in an earthquake. God certainly is bigger than my fears! It is not a time I want to relive, yet I wouldn't trade the lessons I'm learning for the world.

Part of my ministry in the military has been to serve as the Asia Region PWOCI President. Our theme this year is, "Shine in the Light of His Glory." Women of PWOCI Asia (along with many other ministries) have spent a year praying for revival and open doors in Japan. We've been intentional about being "in" our communities.

Light shines brightest in darkness. Our God can bring great good from terrible disasters. He is in the business of redemptive restoration. God guided my prayers in a clear direction. Please join me in praying for the cultural narrative in Japan to change. It is considered dishonorable to accept a gift which you cannot repay in kind. I believe

as Japan begins to understand there is no dishonor in accepting a free gift, it will create a new bridge for the gospel to speak into this culture. Pray for missionaries and Christians who will invest their lives in crossing that cultural bridge to bring the hope of Jesus to Japan. We dare not miss this opportunity. I eagerly anticipate the Kingdom business God is in the midst of accomplishing.



Michael and son Jared helped clear wreckage from this pig farm, less than two miles from the Goeckers' home.



A boat rammed beneath a bridge in Miyako City

We pray for at least one Japanese soul to come to hope in Jesus for each person lost through this tragedy. God has been setting things in motion for revival in Japan. I know this.

Our family chose to stay in Japan when the kids and I were offered the chance to return to the States. We feel God is doing something big – in our lives and in Japan. We can think of no place we'd rather be. We are blessed to be able to visit with Japanese friends, participate in work trips to assist local homeowners and farmers, help deliver loads of food to stricken villages away from Sendai, and organize our chapel's relief efforts. We've been busy doing all we can to step into the terrible ruin with His love and light.

These lyrics from Steven Curtis Chapman's song, "Beauty Will Rise"¹ sum up my heart for Japan.

*Out of these ashes...beauty will rise
And we will dance among the ruins
We will see Him with our own eyes*

May a host of Japanese citizens be introduced to the love and care of Jesus in action through believers who dance with Him in these difficult times.

We continue to choose joy in Misawa, Japan!



De'Etta is a wife, mom, and the Asia Region PWOC President. She is stationed along with her husband, Michael, in Misawa, Japan, the closest base to the quake and tsunami. Michael is the Senior Protestant Chaplain at the Air Force base. The Goeckers have nine children. To learn more about their ministry visit www.not2many.blogspot.com

¹From the album, *Beauty for Ashes*, Sparrow Records (2009).