



PazNaz
March 2014

WELCOME



Welcome to *Transformed Under the Pepper Tree*. In this monthly magazine, you will read stories of how God is changing people's lives at PazNaz, transforming them into the image of Jesus Christ by the power of his Spirit!

You might be asking, "Where can I find information about a specific PazNaz event?" Some information about specific events on campus is found within these pages, but each month *Transformed* is focused on relating stories about what PazNaz is really all about. Rather than programs or events, there are stories about changed lives, stories about people coming in contact with the Savior, and people exploring what it means to become a follower of him. It is exciting to hear what God is doing in the lives of people!

Years ago, Pastor Earl Lee and a group of staff members gathered around a pepper tree located on the northern-most point of what was to become the site for First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena and dreamed and prayed that God would provide a place where more people could find power for living through Jesus. What began then has been going on for over thirty years as men and women, boys and girls have come into relationship with Christ in significant ways under the shade of that old pepper tree. The mission of the church hasn't changed. May it continue to flourish as people experience the transforming power of Christ.

Blessings,

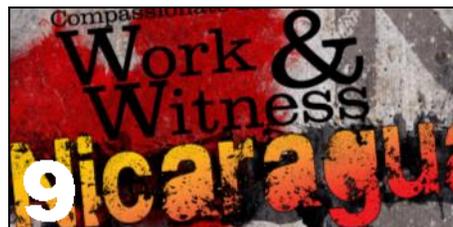
B. Scott Anderson
Executive Pastor

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Transformed is a magazine publication of First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena (PazNaz). It is designed to highlight the Church's stories of personal transformation. For a complete overview of PazNaz, their beliefs, and ministries, please visit the website www.paznaz.org.

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NI DE AQUÍ, NI DE ALLÁ POR ROSA RAMIREZ

WHEN I WAS FIVE YEARS OLD, I EXPERIENCED GOD'S TRANSFORMING PRESENCE WHEN I FIRST SET FOOT IN A SPANISH SPEAKING CHURCH IN REDWOOD CITY, CA. MY AUNT HAD (FOR A WHILE) BEEN ASKING MY FAMILY TO GO TO A CHURCH SERVICE WITH HER, AND ONE DAY MY MOTHER GAVE IN. AS MY SISTERS, MY MOTHER, AND I WERE LED BY MY AUNT INTO THE SANCTUARY, I WAS IN AWE. MY JAW DROPPED AS I STOOD BY MY SEAT. I HAD NEVER SEEN OR HEARD ANYTHING LIKE WHAT I WAS EXPERIENCING. I REMEMBER LISTENING TO THE BEAUTIFUL MUSIC THAT WAS BEING PLAYED BY A GROUP OF PEOPLE STANDING ON A PLATFORM AND KNEW RIGHT THEN AND THERE THAT I WANTED WHAT THEY HAD. I WANTED "THAT." AT THE TIME I DIDN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT "THAT" MEANT, BUT I KNEW I WANTED WHATEVER THE PEOPLE ON THE PLATFORM HAD. THE VERY SAME DAY, IN A SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS, I ACCEPTED JESUS CHRIST AS MY LORD AND SAVIOR.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

Undoubtedly, experiencing God through music impacted my life greatly. Growing up I was always at odds with my ethnic identity. Culturally speaking, I knew I was Salvadorian and that my native language was Spanish because of my parent's heritage, yet I also knew I was American and spoke English because I was born and raised in this country. I felt a deep cultural loss, a deep longing for something else. I felt I was *ni de aquí, ni de allá*, neither from here nor there. However, when I worshipped or sang, I was transported to a place in which none of that mattered. I was at peace. I felt as though none of that mattered to God and in his presence I was always secure.

As years passed and my high school years ended, God opened doors for me to go to Point Loma Nazarene University. I was the first person in my family to go to college. During my first semester, in the midst of my culture shock, loneliness, and missing my family, I learned that my aunt had died. The very aunt who helped take my family to church many years before died due to complications with Lupus. I felt as though my world had shattered. I asked myself, "How could a loving God allow for such a devoted woman, beloved aunt, and mother to die in such a way?" I was angry with God. I felt cheated because I had lost such a dear and important figure in my life.

In Hispanic culture, family is an important part of life. My *tía* (aunt) Ines was a mother to many. She taught me how to make certain Salvadorian dishes, like *buñuelos* (fritters). She taught me how to bake Salvadorian cookies called *salporas de arroz*, and how to crochet. Most importantly, my *tía* Ines showed me Jesus. If she wasn't cooking, she was telling everyone she knew about Jesus Christ and how he transformed her life. She was someone who truly lived out the meaning of what it meant to be a follower of Christ. My aunt did not care that I was "neither from here nor there." She loved me unconditionally. She lived her life with such

intentionality and purpose and always praised God no matter what her situation was. When she died, I felt as though the glue that held my family together was gone. I felt a big hole and I was numb. For a while I did not allow myself to grieve properly. As I mentioned before, I was so angry with God. I was so hurt that he had taken my beloved *tía* Ines.

It was during this time that I came across a song called *My Life Is in Your Hands*, by Kirk Franklin. A particular part in the song that struck a chord within my very being was the part that says, "With Jesus I can take it, with Him, I know I can stand. No matter what may come my way. My life is in Your hands." It was then that I had a transformative moment in which I realized that even though I didn't understand the reason behind my loss, God was ultimately in control. He would never leave me, despite my anger, bitterness, and brokenness.

Years later, after I had graduated from Point Loma and began my graduate studies at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena, I felt stuck at a crossroads. I was glad God had again opened the doors for me to pursue an education, yet I felt as though God was gently nudging me out of my comfort zone through the tireless hours of reading and writing papers. I began to wonder and grapple with what it meant to be a second generation Latina within the church.

During the course of my studies at Fuller, I began to foster various relationships within the campus. I also ran into Marcos and Andrea Canales, whom I had known from previous years. I talked to them about how I was still grappling with what it meant to be a second generation Latina within the

church. They listened and understood my sense of feeling that I was "neither from here nor there." They too were concerned about what faith looks like not only for first generation Latinos, but also for second generation Latinos. When Andrea and Marcos invited me to go to PazNaz's new Hispanic Ministry's luncheon, I agreed and met them in the Sanctuary that Sunday morning. During the service I was very much reminded of the first time I had entered a church. I was in awe of the intentionality I saw throughout the service. I felt God's presence in a beautiful way, much like I did when I was five-years-old. I felt "that" again. I felt God's presence in such a unique way. I'm very grateful for the PazNaz Hispanic Ministry. I'm thankful for the intentionality set forth by the people of the ministry. I am thankful this growing ministry feels like *familia*, family. Together, we can all strive to connect, grow, and serve as a people of God.

- Rosa Ramirez

DURING MY FIRST SEMESTER, IN THE MIDST OF MY CULTURE SHOCK, LONELINESS, AND MISSING MY FAMILY, I LEARNED THAT MY AUNT HAD DIED. THE VERY AUNT WHO HELPED TAKE MY FAMILY TO CHURCH MANY YEARS BEFORE DIED DUE TO COMPLICATIONS WITH LUPUS. I FELT AS THOUGH MY WORLD HAD SHATTERED. I ASKED MYSELF, "HOW COULD A LOVING GOD ALLOW FOR SUCH A DEVOTED WOMAN, BELOVED AUNT, AND MOTHER TO DIE IN SUCH A WAY?"

NOCHE

de Adoración & Oración

Sábado, 1 de Marzo
5:00 pm en Salón 249, Reed Hall



Para más información, contacte al Pastor Marcos Canales a mcanales@paznaz.org o al 626.351.2415.

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Remembering Ridge

by Barbara Ireland

from the Eulogy at Pastor Ridge Ireland's Funeral Service

Ridge would be overwhelmed to know that you were here today. I've never known a more selfless and humble man who really didn't need to be sought out. He wasn't a person that needed to know that people thought he was good. He didn't really care about awards; he just wanted to do the job that God had called him to do.

I honestly don't have words to express how these last two months brought such stress and tension our way because of what was going on. However, it was your cards, and prayers, and words of encouragement, and stories of how Ridge touched your lives that brought us through and meant so much to us. There are no words in the English language to let you know what your support meant to us. I would share each message with Ridge, and I could tell he would understand most of the time. There were so many stories from people of how Ridge affected their lives and I just thought, "He would not have known that." He didn't know any of it. He just did what he did quietly and faithfully.

I want to share with you some things that God laid on my heart about four weeks ago. It was in the middle of the night when God woke me up and issued me the responsibility of sharing who Ridge is, the man that I know. This was during a period of time when we didn't know what was going to happen with regards to Ridge's health. You see, you knew Ridge one way, but I knew him in a different way, because he was a very private man who really didn't let people know what went on inside of him. It's that private side, that I knew, that I want to share with each of you today.

But first, I want to read something to you. I don't know if you are familiar with *Jesus Calling*, a devotional book by Sarah Young, but I opened it up this morning and, after reading the first paragraph, I thought, "Woah, this is just for me today." And it's something I know I must share with each of you:

Let me prepare you for the day that stretches out before you. I know exactly what this day will contain, whereas you only have vague ideas about it. You would like to see a map showing all the twists and turns of your journey. You'd feel more prepared if you could somehow visualize what is on the road ahead. However, there is a better way to be prepared for whatever you will encounter today. Spend quality time with me.

On June 21, 1970, Ridge lost a big part of his world, when his first wife and son were both killed in a terrible

automobile accident. It was devastating to him. In fact, it was so devastating that he basically packed up the memories and never spoke about it to anyone. It wasn't until we had been married a full year that he finally shared some of the details with me, but only to a certain extent. Our daughter, Nancy, was a senior in high school before she heard the story for the first time. It took 15 years for him to be able to share the pain that he had suffered. But in the meantime, God used that life event in such an incredible way to develop him as a man, to develop his ministry, and to develop him into the compassionate pastor that he became. I honestly believe God could have intervened that day, but chose not to. God had a different plan for Ridge that day. And it had nothing to do with me, but had everything to do with the kind of ministry Ridge was destined for and, in turn, the countless people he would affect through his newfound compassion.

It was a Sunday morning in September of 1970 when I had been invited to come to Sunday School to meet this guy who "had lost his family." I knew the story. I was sitting at a table in the classroom, looked at this guy, and was so impressed with the fact that he could keep himself together just two and a half months later.

Then in March of 1971, I was sitting in a crusade at the Salem Armory. I don't remember who was preaching, but God spoke to me. I was way up at the top of the bleachers with some students and God spoke to me one single word. *Minister.*

It wasn't until April 19, 1971, that I got a phone call from Ridge. He was so nervous that he could hardly spit out his own name, but managed to say the name of the church. That's how I knew who was calling me. He invited me to a hockey game on the 23rd, which was the day before his birthday. We had a great time and saw some people there that knew us. I kind of figured that I would never see him again, but he called me the following Sunday night and wanted me to come over. It turned out that he lived a block and a half

from me and I had no idea. During those first few days, I would catch a glimpse of his car here and there and would occasionally get a phone call, but by the end of that first week, I knew he was the one for me.

On June 22, I went to pick him up for lunch at the church. He came out to the car and said, "There was only one date left on the calendar in August. I put us down. We're getting married on the 28th!" I said, "Ummm...okay." He quickly continued, "And we need to go pick out a ring really fast. I've got half an hour. We need to go get a ring and then have some lunch." So we went to the jewelry store, picked out a ring with a little tiny diamond because he didn't want it to be too flashy, ate lunch, and then got him back to church. That was the beginning. We were married on August 20, 1971, and started ministry together. That's how our life began together, and what a journey it has been. God blessed us with two children: Ross, in November of 1972, and Nancy, in June of 1974.

In ministry, Ridge's experience covered everything from pre-school, to children, to youth, and then to senior adults. He dealt with business, with facilities, and even bought vans. In ministry, his experience covered the whole gamut. I especially love it that he worked with the youngest and the oldest, because some of the things that were most important to him at PazNaz were children and senior adults. I will give you an example of some of those in a few moments, but first I need to tell you what happened to me this last year.

Ridge did something he had never done before, at least, not in our married years. He told me, "I'm going to go out to the desert and stay out there for the month of May." I said, "Well, what are you going to do?" "Well, I'm not telling you. I will tell you when I get back." So he and the staff went out for retreat, but then he stayed and they came home. He still wouldn't tell them what was going on, and I just wondered. What I eventually found out was that he decided that he needed time to renew himself. He needed time with just the Lord and

himself. He needed to figure out some things that needed to happen in his life. He would walk every morning, which was a big deal, and he would eat oatmeal every morning, which was also a big deal. He ended up reading his Bible from front cover to back cover in 10 days, and then he began again. When he came home from that month of renewal, this discipline continued. Every morning he'd take a walk, eat his oatmeal, and read the Scripture. He didn't miss a day until November 3. It became his way of life, and I know, without a doubt, it was preparation for our November and December and, ultimately, for his entrance into Heaven. I have no doubt about that at all. And only God would have known that this was the right timing for him.

Now I have just two more quick stories to share. The first is about four-year-old Fiona. This little girl moved to Salem, Oregon, early last year, but she was making sure her parents were praying for Ridge every night. One morning, she said she saw Ridge come to her in a dream, and he was in heaven. Fiona talked about it for several days and her mother said, "I think maybe he visited her in her sleep, and now I think of him as her guardian angel."

The second story comes from then five-year-old, Reid, whose grandmother, Karen Burruss, was Ridge's secretary. He told his mom that Pastor Ridge spoke to him. Ridge told him that, "He wouldn't be seeing me anymore in his office, but he would see me when I come to heaven." Who's to doubt the innocent truth of children? Certainly not me.

I have led a blessed and full life being married to Ridge... aka Pastor Ridge, aka Ridgely Parsons, aka Ridgely P. To God be the glory, great things he has done. Thank you for being here. You have no idea what it means to us and the family.

- Barbara Ireland

*From the Eulogy at
Pastor Ridge Ireland's Funeral Service
January 12, 2014*

SUPPORT

Team PazNaz & Team World Vision in the LA MARATHON

Did You Know?

- More people have access to cell phones than to toilets!
- 783 million people do not have access to safe water globally!
- Access to World Vision WA.S.H. programs can prevent 2.2 million child deaths per year... that's almost 6,000 per day!

Team World Vision is a diverse group that runs for Water, Sanitation, & Hygiene programs in Africa. This year, **Team PazNaz** (a group of 13) has decided to run with World Vision in the LA Marathon on March 9, 2014. You can participate by donating money to support this amazing program that provides clean water and other life-saving basics.

Just \$50 provides one person with water for life.

DONATE TODAY!

VISIT: www.goo.gl/DdTuC5



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Witness

Nicaragua

Sign Up Today!

You are invited to participate in the Nicaragua mission effort on June 23 - July 3. It's going to be an amazing trip and this team needs you.

Spaces Are Limited and Will Go Fast!

Contact Pastor Joe Halbert with questions at jhalbert@paznaz.org or 626.351.2421.



THE JOY OF AMAZING GRACE

BY PASTOR DARWIN NG

KAI-CHI WAS BORN AND RAISED IN A CHRISTIAN FAMILY AND ACCEPTED JESUS AT AGE 12. JIN-WEN'S GRANDMOTHER WAS THE FIRST CHRISTIAN IN THE FAMILY AND TOOK JIN-WEN TO CHURCH WHEN SHE WAS YOUNG. SHE ACCEPTED THE LORD AT AGE 19. BOTH OF THEM CAME TO THE US FROM TAIWAN TO STUDY IN GRADUATE SCHOOLS. THEY MET IN THE US AND WERE MARRIED IN 1990. IN 1993 THEY MOVED TO FLORIDA AND WORKED IN A COLLEGE TOWN.

Jin-wen prayed to God to give them a son and, like Hannah in the Old Testament, she would dedicate him to the Lord's service. Seven years into their marriage, God had not answered her prayers. Finally, she was pregnant at age 38. As a statistician, she knew all the risks involved in the pregnancy and the probability of a Down Syndrome baby. They struggled whether to have screening and diagnostic tests for Down Syndrome. After lots of discussions, prayers, and genetic counseling, God granted them faith and they decided not to go through with the invasive amniocentesis. A recent article in Christianity Today captured their sentiment:

"Having a child with Down syndrome is not a burden. It is not a cross I have to bear. It is not a consequence of

ignorance or misinformation or 'it-could-never-happen-to-me' attitudes. Even though I didn't know our daughter had Down syndrome before she was born, I chose her as soon as I said no to an amniocentesis. ... I am eternally grateful for ... the daughter I have. And I am not alone." (Amy Julia Becker, *Cathy McMorris Rodgers and the Politics of Down Syndrome*, Christianity Today, Jan., 2014)

When Kai-chi and Jin-wen's baby was born, she had Down Syndrome. Despite the unknown before them they experienced peace and God's presence, and decided to name her Grace. They were grateful that God granted them the privilege to take care of Grace.

Jin-wen asked for the best so that she could give the best back to God, but God had other plans. A verse came to her mind when Grace was born. "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not know him, God was pleased through the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe." (1 Corinthians 1:21) It was a very humbling process. While other young mothers complained of their babies crying too much, for months, Grace would not cry, would not move, did not know how to suck milk, and had very low muscle tone.

"But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong." (1 Corinthians 1:27)

Joy and Charity were born when Jin-wen was 40 and 42. Again, trusting that God is faithful, they did not go for any testing, against the advice of family, doctors, and even many Christian friends. After Joy was born, Jin-wen quitted her teaching job and became a stay-at-home mom. With three children under age four, and with the oldest being of special needs, home life was stressful and messy. Out of desperation, they decided to move back to California where they had family and friends. That was in

2002, soon after 9/11 and the dot-com collapse. The economy was in bad shape. However, God provided and Kai-chi found a programmer job at Kaiser in Pasadena quickly. So the family packed up and moved to Los Angeles.

They found a place to live in Pasadena, joined a Chinese church in the area, and sent Joy and Charity to Sunrise Preschool. They were soon introduced to Positive Parenting, taught Jan Morris, and PazNaz's Special Needs Ministries under the leadership of Pastor Steve Bundy.

These ministries blessed their family in many ways, even as the family continued to worship in the Chinese church. Meanwhile, Grace grew and became a blessing to many. She learned to love God. She loves to read the Bible. She prays to God every day. She is a happy person and likes to comfort and encourage people. She cares for and likes to pray for others. To the surprise of many, she can read, write, and do a little math. Many people consider having a child with Down Syndrome a burden. Yet, to the Hsu's, Grace has become a blessing. Her joy and simple faith touch so many lives. She keeps surprising Kai-chi and Jin-wen in her development.

Unfortunately, more challenges were to come!

In early 2012, Kai-chi and Grace were both diagnosed with cancer within a three-month timespan. Kai-chi was diagnosed with thyroid cancer in January and Grace was diagnosed with brain cancer in April. While Kai-chi was receiving radiation treatment in isolation in Baldwin Park Kaiser, Grace started in-patient chemotherapy at Sunset Kaiser in Los Angeles. After eighteen weeks of chemotherapy, Grace underwent a self-infused bone marrow transplant at the Children's Hospital of Los Angeles followed by another four weeks of radiation therapy. Jin-wen spent most of the time in Kaiser Sunset and later CHLA to accompany Grace. She also

managed to take care of their home and visit Kai-chi whenever possible. Saying Jin-wen was exhausted would be an understatement! Yet, the love and support they received from the Lord through the body of Christ was amazing. That carried them through the darkest of valleys. They were shored up on all sides and that made it almost impossible for them to fall.

Because of Grace, the Hsu's remained connected to PazNaz's Special Needs Ministries. When Pastor Julie Keith heard of their situation, she organized a dinner run. Many PazNaz families that did not know the Hsu's volunteered to prepare dinner and delivered it to their house. Dinner would be sent to their door, rain or shine! The staff of PazNaz's Special Needs Ministries would also take Joy and Charity out on weekends for fun activities. The Hsu's were deeply touched that these total strangers would reach out to them in Christ's love. Later, Joy and Charity started to participate in the PazNaz youth and children's programs, and the whole family started coming to PazNaz on Sundays. All five of them fell in love with the church. They became regular attenders and the parents joined the church last year. Kai-chi now attends the Faithbuilders Sunday School class while Jin-wen attends the Mandarin Sunday School class. Grace, Joy, and Charity, the three teenagers, all go to the youth group. Joy was baptized last year by Pastor Keegan Lenker, and Grace was baptized in the hospital in 2012.

They have found a spiritual home where everyone is loved, cared for, and growing spiritually!

As Kai-chi and Jin-wen are approaching their retirement, they say, "Although our own wine is almost used up, we hope and trust that we can still serve the Lord as he continues to change our meager resources into the best wine. Our earthen vessels are of no value but for the treasure that is stored in them. May God continue to use us for his Glory!"

"For the foolishness of God is wiser than human wisdom, and the weakness of God is stronger than human strength." (1 Corinthians 1:25)

- Pastor Darwin Ng

IN EARLY 2012, KAI-CHI AND GRACE WERE BOTH DIAGNOSED WITH CANCER WITHIN A THREE-MONTH TIMESPAN. KAI-CHI WAS DIAGNOSED WITH THYROID CANCER IN JANUARY AND GRACE WAS DIAGNOSED WITH BRAIN CANCER IN APRIL ... YET, THE LOVE AND SUPPORT THEY RECEIVED FROM THE LORD THROUGH THE BODY OF CHRIST WAS AMAZING. THAT CARRIED THEM THROUGH THE DARKEST OF VALLEYS.

W Ash Wednesday

**March 5 at 7:00 pm
in the Sanctuary**

