



THE BRAINS
FORMED
UNDER THE
PEPPER
TREE

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. They 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

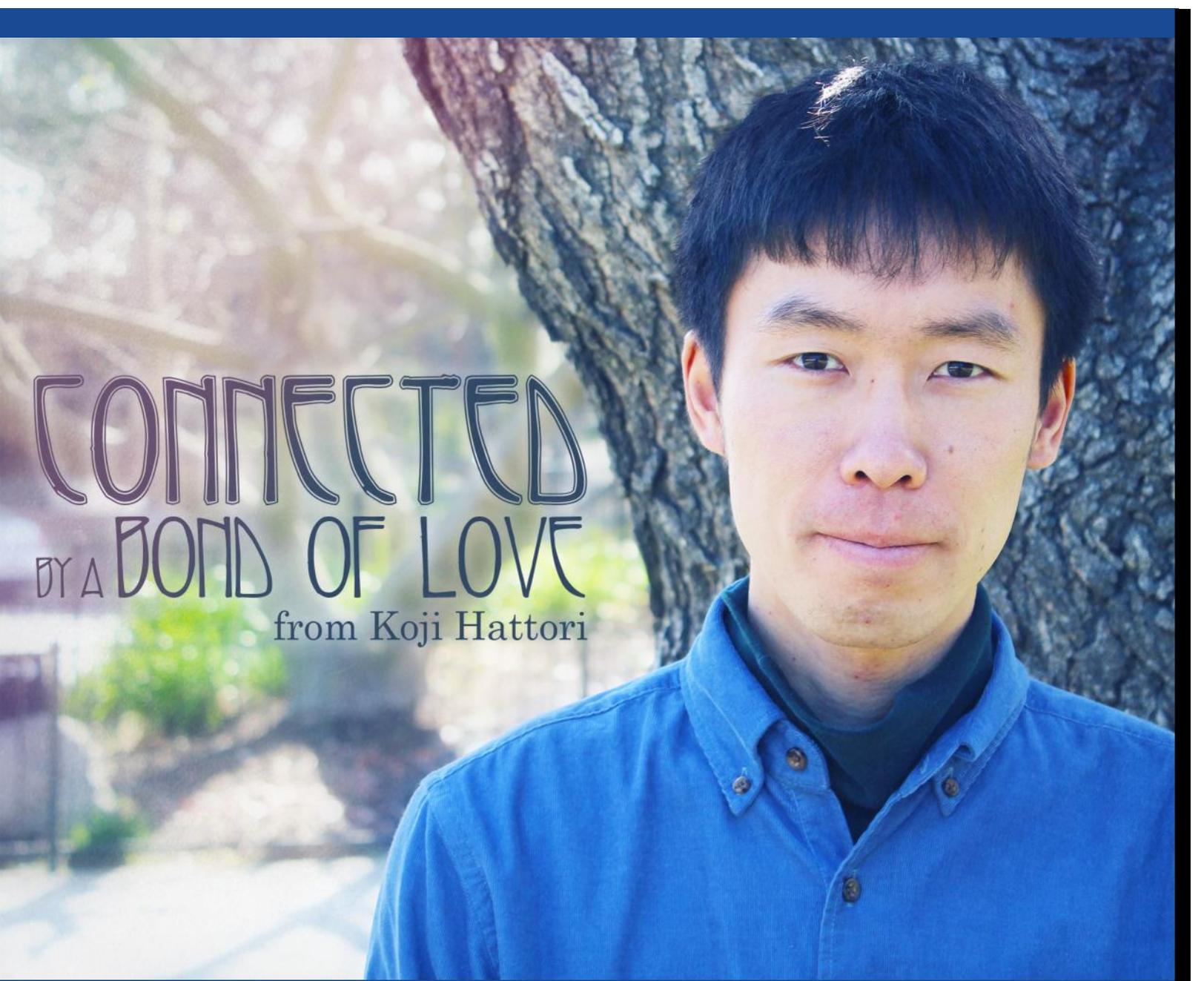
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CONNECTED

BY A BOND OF LOVE
from Koji Hattori

"NOW THE LORD CAME
AND STOOD THERE,
CALLING AS BEFORE
'SAMUEL! SAMUEL!'"

1 SAMUEL 3:10

When I accepted Jesus Christ, I understood that he had called me even before I knew it. I was born and raised in Tokyo, Japan. In my adolescence, I studied in a Catholic school where I was given a copy of the Bible. I seldom had a chance to read it, but the story of Creation impressed me for some reason. Maybe I was looking for an answer to my questions: "Where do I come from?" and "Where do I go after I die?" I was always curious about God, so I tried reading some books on world religions and philosophy only to get more confused. Eventually, I became discouraged in my "spiritual journey" because there was no one in my family or among my friends who were religious, and also because I became heavily involved in my school work. After graduating from high school, I entered a Christian University in Tokyo. I chose that school because I wanted to learn English and study literature. But, when I took an introductory class on Christianity, which was mandatory for all the students,

I discovered the depth and richness of the world of Christianity.

Soon I decided to major in theology and religion for my undergraduate degree. Looking back now, I find it strange that, while I carried on with my studies, I almost never entered the University's chapel. I never seriously thought of becoming a Christian even though I spent a year in England as an exchange student studying about theology and visiting many churches there! Having a faith in Christ seemed something distant to me.

After finishing my undergraduate degree, I decided to work in a seafood company in Japan, as many of my friends did. After starting to work for that company, I moved to an apartment near the office. On my way to the office from my apartment, I passed by a Baptist church every day. Jesus called me again and again, every time I passed this building. One Sunday, as I passed by that church, I really wanted to enter and see what it was like inside. When I entered the church and heard the pastor preach, I felt like I was caught by what God was saying to me. Finally, everything made sense to me, and I felt that Jesus came close to me in a way I had not sensed before. So, about one year later, I decided to be baptized.

However, just one month after my baptism (Easter 2011), I had to leave my home church and my hometown because I was assigned by my company to a new position in Santiago, Chile. I was very surprised with this change, but I found peace in my mind with the change because of this passage: "'Am I only a God nearby,' declares the Lord, 'and not a God far away? Who can hide in secret places so that I cannot see them?' declares the Lord. 'Do not I fill heaven and earth?' declares the Lord." (Jeremiah 23:23-24)

When I arrived in Chile, my boss at the office let me study in a language school for three months because I did not know any Spanish. In those three months, I

stayed with a Chilean host family, who helped me to learn the language. One day, I asked the host mother if she knew of any protestant churches in town. She suggested going to a Lutheran church not far from our house.

So, the next Sunday I went to that church by myself, and again I was caught by the sermon preached from the pulpit. The most amazing thing for me was that even though I was in a place on the opposite side of the world, away from my hometown and my family, and I could not understand half of what the pastor was preaching in Spanish, God spoke the same message that I had heard at my local church in Japan. I started participating in the church's activities, such as their Bible studies, choir, and spiritual retreats. Then little by little, as I lived in Santiago, I came to feel that God was even closer to me than before. I realized that God was calling me in a special way. After two years, I decided to quit my company in order to pursue seminary studies. When I started thinking of studying theology abroad, California seemed to be the best place for me to live and study, considering the cultural diversity here. I started studying at Fuller Theological Seminary in Pasadena in January 2014.

When I first came to PazNaz, I sensed genuine love among the people. In the Hispanic Ministries led by Pastor Marcos Canales, I felt that I was accepted warmly despite my cultural uniqueness "japonés-chileno" (Japanese-Chilean). In fact, I realized that all the people of PazNaz who were culturally diverse were connected by a strong bond of love. Nothing can connect people in this way other than the love of God. I was reminded of the passage found in 1 John 4:12: "No one has ever

seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us." In my life, I have traveled to many places and countries, but now I am convinced that wherever I go, the only bond which can be sustained is the one rooted in the love of God. These loving relationships will help me mature as a Christian. As I think back to my adolescent years, I could have never imagined living abroad and serving in a multicultural church. But now I know that the Lord my God has "enlarged my territory" (1 Chronicles 4:10) and is leading me to an even greater place.

I thank God for this opportunity to write about my spiritual journey, praying that each one of us at PazNaz will be guided by God's mighty hand to represent his glory.

- Koji Hattori

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MONDAY PRAYER **MEE** **TINGS**

with Pastor Darwin Ng

The 4th Monday of Each Month
Noon-1:00 pm in Lee Chapel

*A time to praise, pray, and meditate
on the goodness of God and intercede
for the needs of his people.*

The next meeting will be
Monday, March 23

For more information, contact Sylva Hekimian at shekimian@paznaz.org or 626.351.2426.

First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena | 3700 East Sierra Madre Boulevard | Pasadena, California 91107 | www.paznaz.org | 626.351.9631

COVER STORY



STUDENT STORIES

WITH PATRICIA FOTTO

NAZARENE YOUTH CONFERENCE SPOTLIGHT

Every four years the Nazarene denomination has an event specifically targeted towards teenagers. Nazarene Youth Conference (NYC) has gone through a few name changes over the years since its inception in 1958 as International Institute. While it has historically been held in different parts of the world, with the growth of the denomination, NYC now serves mainly the US and Canada regions. This year it will be in Louisville, Kentucky. NYC has proved to be a life-changing trip for many students in the past. Many former students who attended NYC have received callings into ministry or missions and often describe NYC as a moment at which they felt God's presence in a new way. When asked about his experience at NYC, Pastor Scott Daniels remarked that it affirmed his calling into preaching ministry. This powerful experience is made possible through the support of local congregations that come together as districts or regions of the denomination to pray for and fund students to go to this once-in-a-lifetime event. NYC is not like any other summer youth trip. Preparing for NYC involves applying to go and then being chosen by your district to be a representative. PazNaz is taking 31 students and 4 adult sponsors this year. The students have been preparing for the summer trip since November through fundraising, regular meetings, and growing in their desire to attend. The PazNaz community has been, and continues to be, an integral part of each student's preparation.

These 31 students represent 29 families who come from diverse backgrounds and cultures but who all choose to call the PazNaz community their home. Knowing that this is such a life-changing and faith developing experience, I asked one of our students about their story; why they want to attend the event and how they came to call PazNaz home. While looking at the list of students attending NYC, one of the students that stood out to me was Patricia Fotto. You may see her smiling face on a Sunday morning in the nursery rocking babies, or on the patio trying to corral her younger siblings, Pishon, Praise, and James. Her parents, Florimond and Gisele Nkanu, are generous with their words and kind in their hospitality to

everyone they meet. While, as a family, they have faced some difficult situations, they have always displayed a Christian holiness that is truly beautiful. So I sat down with Patricia and asked her about her story.

Introduce yourself. What do you do for a living? What do you like doing?

I go to school for a living and I like singing, dancing, as well as playing sports.

How long have you been coming to PazNaz?

Two years. After we moved from Wesley to Hastings Ranch, we were looking for a church. My dad saw this church along with the many others up and down the street. He chose this one and we stayed.

What do you love about the PazNaz community?

I like that everyone is sweet and nice and that we all get along.

Tell me your story?

I came to America from The Republic of Congo in Africa when I was seven. We weren't poor in Africa; we had a house and lived a pretty comfortable life, but it was hard. When we came to America, some people didn't think my mom was my mom because she was so young looking. My mom won an airline ticket lottery to come to America. She could only take one person and she chose me. We left for a better future and some of our family were already over here. We went through a lot in the Congo. For us, coming to America meant new memories. My mom wanted a new beginning for herself and for me. It was hard to get used to living here. We stayed with my great aunt for a while in San Diego while my mom worked trying to stand on her own. She met my dad at an African church near where we used to live. He was really awesome to us; then they got married and we moved here because my dad lived in Los Angeles. We lived in Wesley for a

while, but it was a blessing when we moved to Hastings Ranch. I started middle school by going to Blair but had a hard time so my parents helped me change schools and I went to Wilson Middle School. I graduated from Wilson with a 4.0 and this helped me get into LaSalle High School.

How do you know that God is working in your life?

I feel like it is really weird how I got into LaSalle. That's something that is really big for me and God. I never thought I would get into that school. I always thought I was just applying because my parents wanted me to. After my entrance exam, I started praying about it and asked God to help me get into the school. Now that I attend LaSalle, I know that God is still working with me and helping me to do well academically so I can go to a good college.

What is one memory you have of when you knew God showed up and was present?

Back in the Congo when I was six I got Malaria. It was really bad and my parents were very worried. They prayed about it and then I got better, I was fine. I was really, really sick and God helped me through it.

What are three things you thank God for?

I thank God for my family and for giving me my talents: my singing and being athletic, and for creating me and everyone around me.

What are you planning on doing this summer?

Going to NYC! I feel like I will learn more on this trip than the other trips because we go on many smaller trips and learn stuff while at NYC. But sometimes it's the same and it doesn't really change things. When I come back I'm just me and nothing really changes. NYC is going to change me and how I see God. I don't know how, but I feel God telling me that.

What are you hoping to experience through this trip?

I am excited to ride in an airplane. I am also excited because God will tell me more about himself and we will get to know each other better. He will understand me more through that trip. I know he understands me already, but I haven't always been able to tell him what has been going on. I'm nervous about so many people going, but I want others to get to know God, too. It's not just about me. It's about other people, too; so if more people go, it's helping more kids than just me.

How do you hope to be changed by NYC?

I hope to understand people better. God can help me learn to love those that I have hard feelings against and help me to get along with my parents. I hope to grow more like God, even though it can be hard.

How has PazNaz helped your family?

I feel like PazNaz has helped us a lot. PazNaz is supporting and helping me raise the \$1,850 for the trip. It is just great how we all love each other. I want to say thank you to the PazNaz community for being there and for letting my family be known.

Why am I your favorite youth pastor?

Oh my gosh.

I was just kidding; you don't have to answer that!

Patricia represents just one story amidst 31 students going. As the preparation for NYC continues, Student Ministries is asking for your support. The support of the PazNaz community is what makes a trip like NYC so formative in the spiritual lives of teenagers. We are asking that you not only pray for the students going and the families they represent, but that you get to know them. Feel free to ask the students you know what their story is and what they hope to get out of NYC.

- Pastor Heather Rickert

MANY FORMER STUDENTS WHO ATTENDED NYC HAVE RECEIVED CALLINGS INTO MINISTRY OR MISSIONS AND OFTEN DESCRIBE NYC AS A MOMENT WHERE THEY FELT GOD'S PRESENCE IN A NEW WAY. WHEN ASKED ABOUT HIS EXPERIENCE AT NYC, PASTOR SCOTT DANIELS REMARKED THAT IT AFFIRMED HIS CALLING INTO PREACHING MINISTRY.

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOP

Tips for Using Your iPad

SATURDAY, MARCH 7

8:30–10:30 AM

ROOM 249, REED HALL

If you are age 55 or better, discover some new tips on how to use your iPad. Learn how to watch a movie, talk to your grandchildren on FaceTime, and so much more. The cost is \$12.00 and includes breakfast. There is only room for 30 people so sign up early!

Reserve your spot at HeBrews on Sunday or contact Sylva Hekimian at 626.351.2426.

Please Pray for the Work & Witness Team

Auckland, New Zealand

April 8-22, 2015

**Warren Rood
Anne Rood
Tom Jones
Sharyn Jones
Steve Blosser
Eleanor Blosser
Mike Blosser
Bob Morwood
Marg Morwood
Ed Schoelz
Mimi Schoelz
Bill Covey Jr.
Barbara Covey
Bob Brock
Pat Brock
Tom Weaver
Judy Morrissey
Janet Lindsey
Peggy Zabel
Frank Eastis**





From a World of
Hurt & Grief
to a Life of
Hope & Peace
FROM GINNY PEDROTTI

My days as a child were filled with confusion, fears, disappointments, endless questions, and what seemed to be never ending tears. Would the abuse ever stop? Is there anyone who would love me? Feed me? Protect me? Days at a time were spent being locked in a dark closet, not knowing when the door would open. Even as a child, grief was real and very painful.

At age five, hope came as I was placed in the arms of a very loving foster mother. She was willing to answer my many questions and willing to hold me, allowing the tears to flow. She showed me bountiful love, introduced me to Jesus, told me how much he loved me, sang songs of his love, and read stories to me about this Jesus who loves little children. I became a peaceful little girl in love with Jesus, giving my heart to him at age five. My confusion, fears, and disappointment vanished, and my tears ceased. Jesus filled my life with delight. In time, I learned my foster mother was actually my grandmother, the mother of my father whom I did not meet until I was 21-years-old.

As an adult, I married a wonderful, God loving man. My life was everything I had ever dreamt it would be. My in-laws were the parents I had never experienced. What more could I want? — A husband, in-laws, and a grandmother who all loved me, and above *all*, a savior who loved me! Now, all I needed to complete this dream world was a baby to love.

My joy bubbled over on learning I was pregnant. Everything went well until two weeks before my due date. At that point, no heart beat was found. It was passed off by my doctor as nothing to worry about, "The baby was probably turned in a peculiar position." The heartbeat was sure to be heard the next visit. My little girl was stillborn. The next day, my father-in-law was diagnosed with cancer. My world was shattered.

Once again, my life was filled with confusion, fear, disappointment, endless questions, and never-ending tears. I stood at the graveside, telling my little girl goodbye, wondering if I, too, would die of heartbreak and secretly hoping that maybe I would. Dying might be less painful.

A short time later, I stood at the graveside of my spiritual father, Pop Reese, saying goodbye to the only father I had ever known. The three years of knowing him and loving him had been filled with such love and joy. I could not

imagine how life could go on. My arms would not hold my baby and I would never sit with Pop again. He had taught me the Word. He had taught me to laugh. He, too, had taught me to love God. He had loved me as his daughter. He had two sons so I was truly his daughter. I knew he loved and adored me. My heart was broken.

The next Sunday after the two funerals, we stood and sang, "It Is Well With My Soul." Tears broke loose and I could not stop crying. It did not feel well with my soul. Once again, I was filled with never-ending questions. Thanks be to God that he never rejects us and is ever-patient without question.

At that point, I felt a strong need to spend time with my precious grandmother. I traveled to visit her, full of fear that my emotional state would tremendously disappoint her. As I walked up to her front porch, there she sat, rocking in her chair with her Bible open in her lap. She wrapped her arms around me and began singing softly in my ear, "Yes, Jesus loves you." She sang "you" in place of "me." Over and over she sang the very words she sang to me the day she received me as a foster child, "Yes, Jesus loves you." The more she sang, the more I cried. The more I cried, the more I felt his love. The more I felt his love, the more the grief lifted. As she spoke ever so softly to me about this Jesus who knew my pain, I began to understand that God was with me as my Father and that he would be my hope. He was the only one who truly understood my sorrow. When I left that day, I had the assurance that God somehow would see me to the other side of my grief.

Little did I know that much more grief was yet to come. Both my mother-in-law and brother-in-law died of cancer. I had 8 pregnancies; I lost one baby by miscarriage and buried five others. My husband went through ten years of cancer and passed away six weeks after our 50th wedding anniversary. At the time of my widowhood, I said to God, "I have no idea what you are doing! *But*, according to your Word, you

are doing! And, according to your Word, *you do all things well!*" As that confession came out of my mouth, buckets of tears began to flow. I lay flat on my face, crying out for him to reveal himself to me in the midst of my grief. *That he did!* When I got up, I did not know whether to laugh or cry. I did both. A revelation had come!

*I am the daughter
of the most high God!*

I am the Bride of Christ!

I am loved!

I realize Christianity does not in any way lessen suffering. It does empower you to take it, to face it, to work through it, and eventually convert it. There is no quick fix, no secret sudden cures, and no easy steps. It is an arduous journey to find hope. Each one of us will walk our own journey. Our Shepherd is there with us and he gives us others who will be there with us. Thank you, God!

Later this year, a class will begin for those who are grieving. It is a class for those in sorrow for whatever has caused your loss. It may be death, divorce, loss of a friend, loss of a job, or loss of a home. God wants to give each one hope. If you are in need of healing in these areas, watch for the information to come.

- Ginny Pedrotti

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** has decided to run with World Vision in the LA Marathon on March 15. 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/An3dBu

