



April 22, 2014

Dear Friend,

Changed lives. That's what we're after, isn't it?! We've been blessed this past month because so many of our non-Christian friends have visited church for the first time. And they're checking out our small groups, and seem to be really interested in connecting with God. Prayers are working!

In this letter, we wanna introduce you to a sweet lady that Lauren (and her friend Becky) helped to find Christ over this past year. Her name is Naoko, and she is just glowing these days. Check out her story...



Naoko: *I was born and brought up in a typical Japanese Buddhist family. Although I was never religious, I always knew that God existed and was watching over me.*

Last fall, when I was going through a hard time, maybe the hardest thing I've ever faced in my life, I started seeing miracles from God right in front of my eyes. I was desperate. My family was about to fall apart. I had gone through counseling, art therapy, etc, and I ended up at church (YGBC) in an amazing way. I loved the messages, and also joined Lauren's small group, even though I kept saying, "I am not a Christian and I will not be."

I was still at the lowest of the low in my life and one day at home, I was crying out loud to God for help. I also made a promise that if God showed me that he is real and gave me a clear message, I would make up my mind and begin serving him. He answered me a couple of days later in a way that was too clear to deny it. It was just like God was telling me "Now you know I'm real. What else do you have to see to believe me and follow Jesus?" I made up my mind to jump right into God's kingdom.

In these past 8 months, my life has changed dramatically. I still live in the same house and have the same daily routines, but the conversation in the house has changed and real laughter has started, and even a mean neighbor stopped harassing us. Now, my house has started being filled with goodness – more and more – and there is a lot less space for the badness to be. Challenges keep coming, but I know how to face them in a much better way than before. I know I will be ok because Jesus is with me always.

Every once in a while, it's fun to share updates on people we ministered to years ago. Henry was reached and trained by other leaders, for the most part, but Ted had the privilege of coaching him a bit in his early years of fundraising.

Now he's the head fundraising trainer for Every Nation Asia!

Henry: *I was reached, raised and released as a college student on the University of Hawaii campus. I'm currently a missionary in the Philippines equipping missionaries in developing ministry partners for the Great Commission. Every Nation Philippines currently has over 400 missionaries (100+ cross-cultural missionaries in Asia and 300+ campus ministers in the Philippines). Our goal is to equip 1,000 campus and cross-cultural missionaries in the next five years.*



Henry & Rachelle Romero are having a major impact!

Our sorting and packing for the big move home has started. We plan to connect in person (as much as possible!), or by phone (at the very least) with all of our supporters some time in July or August. Looking forward to seeing everyone! We'll be worshiping and training under the leadership of Grace Bible Church Pearlside for 6-12 months, and starting a new Grace Bible church in the Honolulu/UH area some time in 2015.

We are so amazed at God's faithfulness in our lives – and our faithful partners that stand with us. We're hopeful that our partners will continue to support us for the next few years or so. Can't wait to share the details of our plans with you in person, which include reaching Japanese people in Hawaii!

Keep praying for us!

Ted and Lauren

Wanna practice your Japanese skills?

Here's Naoko's story in her own hand writing!



私は典型的な日本の仏教徒の家庭に育ちました。宗教的には生活はしていませんでしたが、神様にいつも見守られ導かれているというのを信じていました。

去年の秋、自分の人生にとって、家庭崩壊寸前という最大の難関に直面していました。その時、神様からの奇跡を目のあたりにし始めました。カウンセリングに通ったり、アートセラピーに通ったり必死でした。そんな時に私は導かれて教会(YGBC)に出会いました。教会でのメッセージに心を打たれ、ローレンのスマールグループにも参加しましたが、「私はクリスチャンではない、はる気もない」と言い続けていました。

私の置かれた状況は、まだ最悪のままで、家庭崩壊は誰の目にも明らかでした。ある日家で私は声をあげて神様に助けを求めていました。神様が、私に分かるように、私とメッセージをくださるのほら、イエスを信じて仕えよう、と約束しました。その2日後、神様は、は、私した方法で、また私が否定でよい方法で、私の祈りに答えてくださいました。その時神様が私に「私が本物であることがわかったらどう、イエスキリストを信じて受け入れるのに他に何を見る必要があるのだ?」と言われたように感じました。そうして私は神様の世界に飛び込んでいく決意をしました。

この8ヶ月間で、私の生活は驚くほど変わりました。同じ家に住み、同じ生活をしています。しかし家での会話が変わり、じから笑いあえるようになりました。今私の家は、「善い事」がどんどん満ちあふれ「悪い事」が沁る余地がなくなっています。試練は引き続きやって来ますが、今の私はどのように直面すればいいか知っています。なぜならイエス様がいつも私と共にいてくださることを信じているからです。