

NOT A SINGLE BAPTISM

By Ryan Squire

My grandfather believed that on his mission he had never brought anyone into the Church—until I found out differently.

I served in the São Paulo Brazil Mission. While I was there, I met an elderly Japanese couple who served in various capacities in the mission. Brother and Sister Tsuya were well known for two things. First was the haircuts Brother Tsuya would give the missionaries.

The other thing the Tsuyas were known for was their incredible love and mission spirit. They spoke no Portuguese and spoke English with a thick accent. But they would take a box of copies of the Book of Mormon they bought with their own money to the fruit fair on the street each week and would always come back empty-handed. Their spirit was incredibly powerful.

One transfer day I had the chance to talk to Brother Tsuya. I found out that he had joined the Church in Hawaii. I told him that my grandfather had served a mission in Hawaii and was there during the attack on Pearl Harbor. Brother Tsuya was very surprised and said he had joined the Church then but didn't remember an Elder Squire. I told him that it was my mom's father, Elder Thurgood, who had served in Hawaii.

Brother Tsuya almost fell out of his chair and yelled out "Elder Thurgood is your grandpa?" He related the story of their meeting. He said while he was eating a meal in the Hawaiian community style, he was being inappropriate and was taking the Lord's name in vain among other things. A

missionary, my grandfather, had spoken up and asked him to stop. Brother Tsuya said he took the name of the Lord in vain again. He said that my grandpa had come over to him, hit him on the shoulder, and lectured him about how little he knew about life, how he wasn't as smart as he thought, how he needed to quit smoking and do a bunch of things differently or he wouldn't ever amount to anything.

Brother Tsuya told me that when he went home that night, he knew my grandpa was right. He thought about it and decided he wanted to make some changes. He ran into two similarly dressed missionaries a couple of weeks later and listened to the discussions with a sincere desire to change. Brother Tsuya gave much of the credit for his decision to listen to the missionaries to my grandpa.

I quickly wrote home telling my family I had huge news and that Grandpa Thurgood needed to be there when I made my telephone call at Christmas. When I called home, I finally told him that I had met somebody he brought into the Church. I will always remember how quiet he became as he said, "Ryan, you are mistaken. I never brought anybody into the Church on my mission."

I asked him if he remembered hitting a smart-aleck Japanese kid at dinner in Hawaii and then lecturing him on how much he needed to change his life. He became



YOU NEVER CAN FORETELL THE CONSEQUENCES

"You never can foretell the consequences of your work as a missionary in this Church. You don't know what will come of it. You may be turned down, you may have the door slammed in your face, you may have all of these things that happen so frequently and think that you've accomplished absolutely nothing, but miracles come out of these very, very small beginnings."

President Gordon B. Hinckley (1910–2008), seminar for new mission presidents, June 23, 2000.

Because of the seed my grandfather planted, Brother Tsuya was baptized, married in the temple, and served as a mission president. He blessed many lives.

instantly curious and said that he did remember the incident well. He was transferred away shortly after that and hadn't heard more.

I told him that two weeks later that boy had decided to listen to the discussions because of what you said to him that night. He had later married in the temple in Hawaii. He had served in various callings in the Church and blessed many, many lives. He served as a mission president in Japan for three years. He also served as president of the MTC in Japan. He had served multiple missions with his wife.

My Grandpa Thurgood was in tears and couldn't talk to me after that. He had spent over 50 years thinking his mission hadn't made a difference to anybody. When the Tsuyas completed their mission in Brazil, my grandpa and his wife went to the temple with them and had a tearful reunion.

My grandfather's experience reminded me of Abinadi, my favorite Book of Mormon prophet. Abinadi had come before the wicked priests of King Noah and shared the gospel with great power and authority. He testified boldly and was burned to death because of what he taught. The only fruit he had the chance to see was one of the priests, whose name he may not have even known, who asked the king to let Abinadi go and then was chased out of the court. That priest (Alma the Elder) then became a great prophet himself.

We never know the effect our testimony will have on those around us. How could my grandpa have known the difference his testimony at dinner would have on a young man?

We learn that it is not ours to judge those around us when sharing the gospel. It is so easy to look at others and assume they are not interested in the gospel. We think the soil is rocky and that nothing would grow if we tried. Our responsibility is to cast seeds. We are called to share. We are called to invite. We are called to include. The gospel is a gospel of repentance, a gospel of change. In Christ is the power to change. Christ has the power to heal. There is nothing so exquisitely sweet as seeing a soul come unto Christ. **NE**