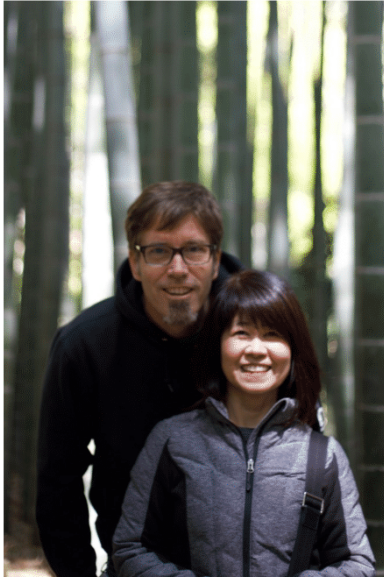


## Complete Devastation or Simple Peace



We will start with the good news!

Right about now we are in Vienna. The main reason? Sophia has a two month internship, serving the graphic design needs of Cru Austria's Gospel campaign. God has been using her graphic skills for many ministries, including our own, for some time now, she even has to turn jobs down because she is still a busy student at Liberty Online. And though, still a student, she joined our mission team here in Japan!

The future looks bright! But not at all in the way we were thinking...

Last Spring, we finally got a diagnosis and answer to questions we have carried most of Sophia's life. You likely remember, Sophia was born deaf, and we always wondered; "Why?" Then in high school she began having difficulty with her feet, and walking, and loss of muscle. Many tests in Japan revealed nothing. So we finally got her to the Mayo Clinic to see if we were facing muscular dystrophy. We waited for 4 months for the test results. Meanwhile, we noticed her having eye problems and found she was losing vision...

Finally, we learned that Sophia has an ultra-rare genetic mutation discovered in 2019 and only 5 people in the US are identified with it. It means deafness, blindness, muscular dystrophy, and other things yet to be discovered.

For a young woman who has already grappled valiantly with deafness, and is pursuing her career in graphics, to now be losing her sight, it seems far too much, and then add muscular dystrophy, and uncertainty...

After hearing the diagnosis, we told Sophia we wanted to take her on a trip to enjoy the Alps and museums in Switzerland—Covid restrictions tanked that plan, but we are taking an extra week in Austria instead.

On the reverse we share our struggle from old, but then Sophia shares in My Miracle (encl) the path where God has been leading her...you will be blessed.

Appreciating your prayers!



## Where It All Started...

### From Our Letter of September 1998

Where do I begin? I don't know...

Doubts and worries come crashing down into brutal reality.  
Like a two-by-four slammed across the chest.

Our little girl is totally deaf.

In nearly a year and a half she has never heard a word we spoke to her. Never heard a lullaby, a love call, a prayer.... only complete silence.

It breaks my heart...

Each time she brings a book with hopeful little eyes that say; "Read to me like you do to big sister and big brother."

It breaks my heart...

When she puts a toy phone to her little ear, as though to hear a voice or tune coming from it. Toys that make sound are a caustic reminder..

It breaks my heart...

To think of hardships she will face...of isolation, prejudice, cruelty of other children. Being born into a bi-lingual family—and can we even hope for her to speak one language at all?

My precious little girl, our heart breaks for you.

But amidst grief there is one seemingly very small beam of light projecting into the murky terrain. There is peace. A peace flowing from a sense that this was supposed to be, the plan is ancient. It is part of something great, an adventure that we have just begun to embark on, a journey in which we will—as a family—grasp something precious—things which cannot be understood otherwise—things that really matter.

And so now in the flux between grief and peace, uncertainty and certainty, a tear in my eye and a gleam in my eye, I hold you my sweet little Sophia.

In God's wisdom, you are beautiful as you are.

And the question, Father, is:

Can I trust you with my little girl?

I guess so. (Appendix 2021: Yes. I can.)



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