

Breaking my Silence

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Returned AIMer; Philippines

We are closing in on the middle of 2014. It's been a year and a half since I returned from the Philippines...and I haven't been able to utter a word about it in written form.

I told my friend Melinda Poitras, "It's like there's nothing I can adequately say about it. It's all in the crock pot of my mind and every time I go to lift the lid, I just know I'm going to ruin it."

I've started so many articles about it. This one doesn't even do it justice. But it will have to do.

It started stirring for some reason yesterday afternoon, when one of my sweet girls in our youth group surprised me with a beautiful case for my phone; a wooden, hand-carved world map on the back of the casing. "The whole gospel to the whole world," something inside of me whispered. I thanked her profusely, went to my car, put the case on, and sat in silence. I traced Asia on the map with my index finger, and before I knew it, I heard the noise of Manila traffic.

I remembered speaking to children in their native language and emptying my pockets of any loose change I could find.

I remembered hot tea in the evenings and making pancakes for the guards.

I remembered being so physically ill that I thought I was going to die and the Great Physician paying me a few supernatural visits always leaving me stronger than He found me.

I remembered the terrorist threats, and I remembered the tangible brush of the wings of the invisible army that was greater.

I remembered the boys teaching me to shoot the perfect free throw and acting like secret agents in the streets as they escorted me to the market, and I in return, teaching them English adjectives, and how to impress a girl.

I remembered how the kids would touch my arm, hoping the white would rub off onto their skin.

I remembered kneeling beside my students on the floor of chapel, and feeling puddles of water accumulate in front of us from the tears of our awe of Jehovah Jireh; the God who ALWAYS provides.

I remembered looking back to that horrible Saturday I left one last time at the boys who woke up early to see me off and I watched with tears as they ran out into the street and waved, crying, until our car was out of sight.

Japhet, my friend of trouble and adventure, leaned his head on my shoulder the night before crying, "Why ma'am? Why you go? You do not like it here? You do not like us in the Phils?"

"Japhet no," I teared up, "I have to go back because I promised my pastor and my family I would. I love the Philippines. I never want to leave you and the students. It's just something I have to do."

“Ma’am I do not understand ma’am. I want to go with you.”

“I know Japhet, but you have to stay and graduate. Promise me that you’ll graduate and start a church in the Philippines. Be a part of the 1 million soul revival Japhet. Promise me.”

“I promise ma’am. I promise. God say to me that we live together again in heaven one day. Make Heaven a happier place. We will all live together again one day.”

This conversation was open heart surgery to the max. Never have I more quickly gained an understanding of heaven in their eyes; truly no more sorrow, sickness, pain, or death.

I’ve been back in America for a year and a half. The first year back was an extreme case of whiplash and a nightmare that I felt would never end.

“Why are you taking your shoes off before you go into that house? Why do you pray in Tagalog...you’re in America now. Why aren’t you wearing a jacket? Why do you still have those pesos in your wallet? Isn’t it time to clean those out?”

Questions I had no sufficient answer for. Was I supposed to forget everything that happened and revert back to normal? Ok fine...but if so...how was that even possible?

I shut up and shut it out of my mind. I kept my shoes on when I entered houses. I avoided the rice aisle in the grocery store. I took the pictures of the students off my phone background.

There are still days where the coffee isn’t strong enough. But as I sit in a diner with Philosophy assignments hanging over my head and a to-do list a mile long, I break my silence on the issue to tell all of you that Japhet graduated this weekend.

Japhet graduated this weekend. I’ve attached his picture. I also Instagrammed it. I texted it out to my friends who heard me talk about Japhet. I stared at it for the longest.



The faces have changed. They are no longer students at ACTS. They are POAKids and more recently junior high JCrew students that God has blessed me with the privilege of investing in.

This is not to be set up as an argument of “Well America needs revival too.” I’m aware and active in that department. Let’s skip that.

This is for all the “displaced missionaries” that I have talked to in the last year and a half. Some of you may be on deputation, some of you may be returning AIMers with no idea of when you can go back, and some of you may not even be appointed yet but you have a country that is constantly tugging at your heart.

Some of you may never have plans to leave the USA or your home country for any reason, but you support humanitarian efforts and the UPCI with PIMs and prayer.

In whatever state this finds you, please don’t ever shut up about what you’ve seen. Please don’t stop taking your shoes off before you enter someone’s house. Please don’t stop praying in another language over your food. Please don’t pour water over the fire of revival you feel consuming your heart and mind.

Because there are Japhet’s graduating today...spreading the whole gospel to the whole world.

Japhet you will never read this. But I’m sending your picture everywhere today with my hands over the Philippines on the back of my phone. I put you back on my lock screen as a reminder of the revival that we’re going to see.

And when I see you in heaven when all of the classmates can live together again one day, I won’t be silent buddy. I promise.

The whole gospel to the whole world.