

Dear Friends and Partners:

I want to give you an update now that we know more about the girl I mentioned last time, who passed away here last week. The girl's name was Ailene and she was only nine years old. She died exactly one month before she would have turned 10.

We were able to learn more at the girl's wake. In the Philippines a wake is when they bring the person's body to their home then friends and family gather to pay their last respects and comfort the family. It can often involve a lot of drinking as people get together. It usually lasts about three days and after that they bury the body. They had the wake at the grandmother's home which is near us.

The Father said that they had to take Ailene to the hospital for a urinary tract infection a few weeks ago. We learned about that at the time from the grandmother who met our pastor's wife on the road and told her. At that time Ailene and her family were staying in another city about 2 hours travel time from here, which is where the father is working.

When we heard that Ailene had a UTI our church, including all the kids, prayed for her. That was the last time we heard about Ailene until the morning we learned that she had died.

The Father said that when they took Ailene to the hospital for the UTI she was also diagnosed with a heart condition. After she got out of the hospital the parents took her to an "Albularyo".

I need to explain what that is. An Albularyo came from the ancient Filipino tradition of a Babaylan. This is the way Wikipedia explains it and it seems accurate: *a term identifying an indigenous Filipino religious leader, who functions as a healer, a shaman, a seer and a community "miracle-worker" (or a combination of any of those). Although the role and function of a babaylan is open to both sexes, most babaylans from the pre-hispanic era are female.*

"The babaylan in Filipino indigenous tradition is a person who is gifted to heal the spirit and the body; a woman who serves the community through her role as a folk therapist, wisdom-keeper and philosopher; a woman who provides stability to the community's social structure; a woman who can access the spirit realm and other states of consciousness and traffic easily in and out of these worlds; a woman who has vast knowledge of healing therapies". In addition to this, a babaylan is someone who "intercedes for the community and individuals" and is also someone who "serves."

When the Spanish came to the Philippines they brought Catholicism. The Albularyo has combined the Catholic religion with the tradition of the Babaylan. For instance they may chant some Catholic prayers along with other magical spells and traditions. They can even use Jesus' name in their rituals. However, their practices do not line up with the teachings in the Bible and it is obvious that their power is not from the God of the Bible.

In other words they are a witch doctor, using satanic methods and deception. However, they are very well accepted in the Philippines, especially among Catholics. They provide an alternative form of medicine for the masses who cannot afford, and do not have access to, modern medical care.

The Father said that after they took Ailene to the Albularyo she got better for a while. I was so grieved to hear that they had taken Ailene to the Albularyo. There are many lessons for us in all of this. The first one is to do better follow up and try to keep track of people better. We are planning to work with some people from the church here to do follow-up. We will organize a way to keep track of people.

The good thing is we have a new resolve to do better. We are also making sure that we make it clear to people that they are welcome to come here for prayer anytime when they have needs. Another thing is that we must draw a line in the sand between good and evil. Which we have done when the subject comes up; however we need to do more teachings about this also.

What I am very happy about is that we were able to make an impact in Ailene's life. The theme of the VBS was walking with Jesus. I do believe that she is with Jesus today and I have great peace about that. For you who partner with us I really believe that she will be one of the people who greet you in heaven to thank you personally.

Some of our youth went to the wake and they asked if it would be ok to sing some worship songs and play the guitar for the family. Ailene's mother said sure. When they started singing the mother and other family members started crying, in fact everyone was crying. Two of the youth were Ailene's VBS teachers. All the youth and kids here knew Ailene through the VBS and the Kingdom Kids program.

What touched the mother and other family members' hearts so deeply was that these were songs they often heard Ailene singing. She learned them at the VBS and Kingdom Kids. Her favorite song was called "Heaven in My Heart" by Hillsongs. Here are the words to that song ...

If I could see beyond the sky
I'd look to see You smile
I'd look to see Your majesty
If I could reach above the stars
I'd put my hands in Yours
You'd show me all eternity
But for now I close my eyes and pray
But for now I lift my hands and say
Jesus, You're my Savior
You are heaven in my heart



This is a picture that shows Ailene at Kingdom Kids, singing "Heaven in My Heart", she is the girl in the black shirt.

That song and "Lord, I Give You My Heart" also by Hillsongs, are favorites of the kids here. When we

taught those songs the kids seemed to instantly love them. When those songs are played the kids perk up and several enter into worship.



Ailene is the girl in the black shirt with blue lettering. This was taken at Kingdom Kids.

The Father told how Ailene was so proud of her certificate of graduation that she received at the VBS. He told Ailene that they would get it laminated some day. One of Ailene's projects that she had made at the VBS was lying on her coffin. The father also said that Ailene told him about attending a church service at our house and the father told her, "it is good for you to go there but I can not attend because of my work".

The father and mother said that they are sad and miss Ailene very much but they are comforted that she is in a better place and removed from their hard life and poverty. We will continue to reach out to the family and also do what we can to help John Paul get surgery for his cleft pallet.



This was the first day I met Ailene, she is the one holding her youngest brother, John Paul. Our three kids are in the picture also from the left Alianna, Joshua, and Shekinah. You can see Ailene's love for her brother; she was very nurturing to him.



John Paul has a very severe cleft pallet. He is a very bright two year old boy and he can talk surprisingly well for his condition. We are committed to help him get the surgery he needs. We are in touch with a program in the Philippines that helps kids like him who cannot afford the surgery. We will be helping the family in being able to take advantage of the program.

As I said in the last update the thing that stood out for me about Ailene was her love for her brother. I remember thinking that even though the boy is suffering from a severe cleft pallet he is blessed to have such a loving sister nurturing him. I know that nurturing from her helped him to handle his situation so well. She will be greatly missed.



We gathered to pray for John Paul when they came to our place. The girl standing behind Joshua is a cousin of Ailene. She was one of the girls who came to our house crying to tell us that Ailene had died in the night.



This is Ailene and another one of her brothers at the VBS graduation at our place. This boy was also crying when he started to sing the songs with the youth from our church. Ailene will be greatly missed in their family. In the background is Pastor Alden

I am writing this on Monday July 7, 2008 our time. Yesterday in church at our place a girl collapsed near the end of the Sunday morning service. Suzzhette came and asked me what to do. We took her into our house and laid her on the couch. I did not see her when she was passed out but I was told that she fell back in her seat and her lips were blue. When we brought her into the house she was looking a little better. I am sure people were praying for her immediately when it happened.

She said that she was feeling dizzy and was having chest pain. She held her hand over her heart and would express pain on her face sometimes. We gave her aspirin right away. I tried to take her pulse but it was so weak I could barley feel it.

At first she was not able to talk much so it was hard to get information. The girl who brought her to church is one of the youth and also on the worship team. From what I understand it may have been the girls first time at the church.

I guess the situation with Ailene helped prepare us for this one. I really felt that we were to contend for this girl and fight for her all the way. I also wanted to make sure that she was also fighting with us. I instilled that in the people who were there also. I think before that there was some fear in people because of what happened to Ailene.

You might be wondering why didn't someone call 911 and get an ambulance? It just does not work that way here. Here, you usually only go the

hospital as a last resort. If we would have felt it was last resort time our van probably would have been the ambulance. I know the symptoms were very serious but somehow I knew we needed to faith it out. No one here even mentioned the hospital.

We prayed. I used the opportunity to also do some teaching. We asked the girl about her relationship with Jesus. She said that she knows the gospel and is a believer. It happened that it was communion Sunday here and they brought it to us at that time. Again, I made sure that she understands the new covenant. Then we told her how Jesus purchased our healing with His broken body. She seemed to understand and was well enough by then to receive communion.

We found out that she has a history of heart problems which she thinks is high blood pressure. She passes out at home some times. She has also had some kind of kidney problems in the past. My unprofessional guess is that the Kidney thing could be related to the blood pressure but the heart situation is not. This turned out to be possible. Someone called a nurse who they know and she came and determined her blood pressure was normal.

The girl has been in the hospital before but they do not seem to be able to help her heart condition. We are going to try to find out more information. We will be doing follow up with her. We are also helping the girl who brought her to make sure she is a good witness to her. She is her neighbor. We also made it clear to the girl to not go to any Albuaryo and why she should not.

The girl got better and better. I checked her pulse again. It was strong and seemed to have a normal beat. Later she ate lunch. We were having a church potluck here. By the time she went home she seemed to be totally fine.

This girl is only 14 years old. You may be wondering how we could have two young girls with heart problems here. I don't know I am wondering that also. It may be more common here than I knew before. I will see if I can find out how common it is. I do know that people die young here much more often than in the US. I am sure that poverty which leads to malnutrition, and lack of health care contribute to that.

Anyway this girls name is Mariel and we are asking you to join with us in praying for her. I believe that God wants to give her a new heart but it may also be a process. I told her that God wants to give her

a new heart physically and spiritually. We will keep you updated about her also.

**Below is a special message
To Our American Friends and Partners:**

I have been thinking about America over the 4th of July weekend. I am sure many of you were also. I am also sure that the future of the USA came up in many conversations over the weekend. We hope that you had a good 4th of July with friends and family. For some time now I have felt a message building in my heart for our American friends.

Even though we are on the other side of the world our hearts are still connected to the USA and the people there. We can sense that there is some despair in the country, especially among Christians and others who love America. We know the fears that people are having about the US economy. We know about the cost of gas, we are paying nearly \$6 per gallon here.

For many Christians in the USA what is adding to the despair is the current political situation in which it seems that we have been left without a presidential candidate that carries the moral mandate we can support. We know that as the nation goes spiritually so the nation goes economically.

However, we know God is not limited by this and he can call birds to come and feed His people if the need arises; 1st Kings 17. As Christians our prosperity must be measured by the condition of our heart, as our soul prospers (3rd John 1:2), and our treasures in Heaven, (Mat 6:20).

Jesus made it clear in Matthew chapter 6 that provision comes from God as we seek first His Kingdom and His righteousness.

Could it be that God is trying to change our focus? Maybe for too long we have been looking to a presidential candidate to be the savior of our nation. Did Regan get abortion outlawed in his terms? Did Bush one or two? No; abortion continues, immorality has increased. Maybe God is trying to make a clear statement that the moral condition of the country does not have a political solution. Maybe it really is a heart condition. Maybe God wants us to look to Him and the teachings in Matthew 6, and throughout the Bible, for the keys to prosperity, not our economy.

When I shut up heaven and there is no rain, or command the locusts to devour the land, or send pestilence among My people, f My people who are

called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land. (2nd Chronicles 7:13 - 14)

The above passage we have all heard more times than we appreciate, however it seems to apply again. It is very likely given our American history and the mercy of God that the Lord is positioning the country for revival. Maybe it has already begun. What is important is has it begun in your heart and my heart. You will know by the intensity of your love for Him and for others. Is the fire of God's love burning in your heart?

In the Philippines the poor survive by helping each other. People are generally quick to share and quick to help if they see a need. There have been times when I have been in a really poor area, such as a garbage dump and have seen people share and give what little they had. They have learned the joy of giving is greater than the joy of having.

Sometimes the thought has occurred to me that some of the people in the dump are wealthier than some rich Americans. The reason is because of the close relationships they often have here. Friends and family are generally highly valued in the Filipino culture. Some times in the USA we are too busy to focus on the things that are really important. The things that are really important are eternal.

Sometimes the kids here will get into a heated competition involving a sport or game that they are playing. When the question comes up about who is the winner I always remind them, "Who ever loves the most wins". I believe that is the way God defines a winner according to His rules.

Love is always the most important thing. When making decisions ask yourself what would love do? Then you will know what Jesus would do also. *Jesus said to him, 'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.' This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.'* Matthew 22:37 - 39

I do not believe that God is finished with the United States. Some of the reasons I believe that are because I am reminded of our history.

When a friend heard that I was going to Manila in the Philippines for the first time in 1996, he said, "You need to visit the American military cemetery while you are there." I thought to myself why

would I want to visit a cemetery, and I did not plan to do so. But one day a taxi driver was showing me around Manila and he surprised me by taking me there.

As we were driving into the cemetery grounds I became overwhelmed at the site. A sea of white crosses as far as the eye could see filled the landscape. They continued along a road, which made a large circle and eventually came to the monument area. As we were driving past hundreds and thousands of crosses for the first time in my life I truly understood the cost of freedom. The price of freedom is blood. It was Jesus blood that paid for our salvation.

I have many times watched TV shows that showed scenes from World War II and the Vietnam War. That may be the reason why my mind began to visualize scene after scene of men lying on the ground bleeding and dying in battle, some on the beaches, some in the countryside, and some in the cities. I was overwhelmed. I felt that this is sacred ground. It impacted me. I began to have a new appreciation for the United States. We are able to do what we do in the Philippines in part because of the price Americans paid here.

We happen to live at the top of a mountain pass that was known as Zig Zag Pass in World War II. When the Americans returned to the Philippines in 1945 to liberate the country from the Japanese an important battle took place here. The Japanese were dug in so well and the terrain was so difficult that the Americans were held up for two weeks trying to fight their way through. It was a very difficult battle.

The Battle of Zig Zag Pass was a turning point that led to the surrender of Japanese forces in the Philippine Islands. As a result of the 38th Division's heroic performance during this battle, General Douglas MacArthur dubbed the 38th, "The Avenger's of Bataan".

After 15 days of fighting the Japanese positions were finally overrun. The Japanese had succeeded in their mission to slow the American advance but the price had been heavy. More than 2,400 Japanese had been killed only 25 were taken prisoner. American losses were over 1,400 killed. Since I learned about the history here I think about the price that was paid there every time I drive through the pass. Nearly 4000 people died in that area.

What other country has sent so many of their sons and daughters to die on foreign soil for the purpose of bringing freedom to people in other

countries? *Jesus says, This is My commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends. (John 15:12 - 13)* What other country, as a nation, has demonstrated this kind of love?

The United States is known as a country of compassion. Everyone knows that when there is a disaster the US will come and help. The US has used its power in cold wars and hot wars to open up ways for the gospel to penetrate nations. The people of the United States have been big supporters of missions, financing the gospel to the nations.

We live in the Province of Bataan; we are located right on the border of Bataan and the Subic Bay Free Port Zone, which was a former American Naval base. The Bataan death march happened near here. There are many markers and memorials along that route. The Philippines celebrates what they call "Bataan Day" it is the day they remember World war II and the price that was paid on their soil.

There is a large World War II memorial in Bataan located at the top of Mt. Samat. It is about 2 hours travel time from our place. At the top is a giant white cross standing 300 feet high. It is so big you can ride in an elevator up to the arms of the cross and walk around inside of it. There is a beautiful view from there.

What better symbol could there be to represent freedom. The cross is where Jesus liberated us with the shedding of His blood. When I think of American soldiers dying in foreign lands for the sake of freedom I think of how their sacrifice brought the freedom for people to hear the gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the Philippines the people generally have a good attitude toward Americans. They remember our sacrifice. They appreciate that America is a friend that is willing to come and help them in their times of need. Because I am in a place where there is so much history of the sacrifice of Americans I am always being reminded of one of the things that has made the United States a great country.



This is the cross at Mt Samat. Our three kids are on the steps

I want to remind our American friends that even though there is a lot wrong there are still many good things about the country. The country is going through a shaking, it has happened before, and it has always brought us back to our roots of "In God We Trust". It is in the tough times that we make the changes that position us for greatness.

The best thing about the USA is the people. If you are reading this from the USA you are what makes America great. In every country it is the people who make the country what it is.

For those of you who are partnering with us, we thank you again; we know that God will not forget your sacrifice. We pray for you every day.

We love you.

For those who want to partner with us you can send donations to our address in the USA at:

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