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PHILIPPINES

"Building a Better Tomorrow in Tacloban"

January
2014



Hope for a Better Tomorrow

Text and Photos by:
Joshua A. Pengson
(Melo and Rose's grandson)

Typhoon Yolanda was an unmitigated disaster, communicated through the severity of cold, sterile statistics. We, my parents, Joel & Luchie and brother Benjamin, went to Tacloban City in early January to see the human side of these statistics.

An article from the *Philippine Star* on January 12th talked of "...tents collapsed under the weight of the rain and emergency plastic sheets [being] torn away...killing more than 6,100 people and wiping entire coast communities in Leyte and

Samar." A follow-up article on January 22nd detailed newly built long-term shelters being "cramped spaces, [with] lack of ventilation, risk of fires" and questionable occupant security.

Despite these concerns, many refugees were eager to escape the repurposed school buildings they had spent the last two months living within, being forced "to leave the classrooms in the morning while classes are being held...and return[ing] to the rooms only after classes." As of January 22nd, over 6,228 people were still living in makeshift evacuation centers trying to rebuild their lives in the echoes of the storm.

Find out the latest updates at
www.carephil.org



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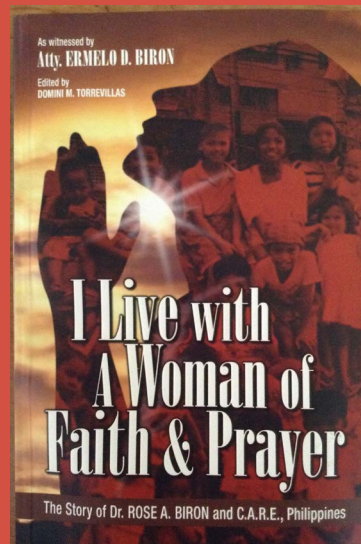


We visited Tacloban early this January, desperate to see the human stories behind these grievous numbers. We caught a 3 AM flight from Manila to Cebu, then a connecting flight that landed early in Tacloban International, the single vital link to the rest of the world. Destroyed during Typhoon Yolanda, little reconstruction work is completed. Jonathan, one of Pastor Glenn's church members, met us at the airport with his driver Jovy, acting as our impromptu guide.

The state of the airport echoed the city itself – bravely surviving the worst of Typhoon Yolanda's anger, but still a hollow fragment of its former self. The ravages of Typhoon Yolanda were clear from our journey through Tacloban's downtown to the hardest-hit districts along the coast. Shells of buildings sat alongside rebuilt businesses, operating by the barest of margins. The excited calls of children intermixed with occasional barking from nearby dogs. The refreshing tang of ocean mixed with the stink of trash and worse things. The kaleidoscope of refuse and waste was peppered with numerous flashes of color and shadows of past lives; the shattered black hulls

of televisions, the aquamarine shards of ceramic and glass, and the innumerable iridescent flashes of red and gold snack wrappers.

We were put in touch with Ms. Montalban, the elected leader of Barangay (*Tagalog for district*) 88. Two months after the worst of the storm, electricity is absent in most of Tacloban City, and clean water scarce. The only source of clean water for these districts were broken underground pipes from an old municipal water source. As they are a vestigial source, it's only a matter of time until they run dry or are



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Benjamin Pengson, Dr. Joel Pengson, and Luchie Pengson, with Pastor Glenn at Conservative Baptist Church in Tacloban



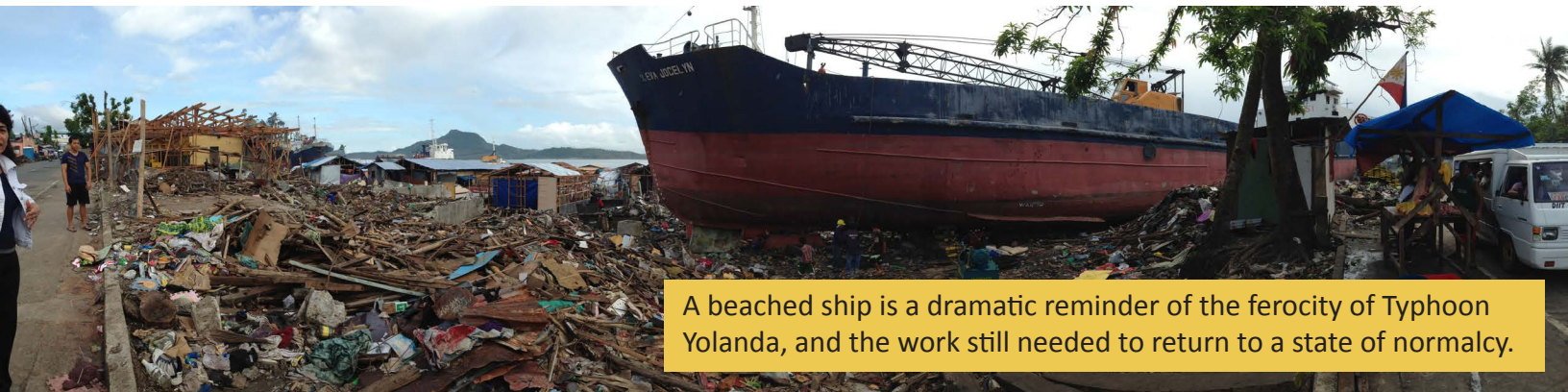
Children playing in the ruins of Tacloban's seafont district, once a teeming hub of life and activity



Clean, potable water is still a serious issue in Tacloban. Left: This severed pipe is a remnant from the old municipal water system. For hundreds of families, it represents the only source of clean drinking water nearby. Right: Children huddle around precious containers of potable water.



Even in the face of adversity and amidst dangerous debris, children can still play and laugh



A beached ship is a dramatic reminder of the ferocity of Typhoon Yolanda, and the work still needed to return to a state of normalcy.



contaminated.

Ms. Montalban worried that food would become even more scarce, with federal food supplies dwindling in a matter of days. As mentioned earlier, many of her fellow refugees were living in public school shelters, or making do with cramped tents. Schools were just recommencing their classes, and many children played idly throughout many areas, heedless of the dangers of broken glass and sharp debris. It was clear from our cursory visit that many areas of Tacloban required much more assistance to return to a normal state of life.

Later we traveled to Conservative Baptist Church in downtown Tacloban, headed by Pastor Glenn, a local affiliate of C.A.R.E., Philippines.

With your donations and prayer, he has been able to support and help his church and community through the devastation of Typhoon Yolanda. By being self-reliant and dependable, he is now our primary human resource in Tacloban, effectively and honestly distributing donated goods and funds to those who need it most.

Meeting with him and seeing first-hand his dependability on divine

A WONDERFUL CD OF Christian SONGS THAT THE C.A.R.E. PHILIPPINE'S RON-DALLA ORCHESTRA MADE ON THEIR USA TOUR is now available. Available for a donation by mailing: C.A.R.E. Philippines, P.O. Box 1007, Wildomar, CA. 92595.

providence cemented our belief that he was a vital asset to our recovery operations in Tacloban, both now and in the months to come.

Even though the immediate threat of typhoon has passed, I feel the most important work is yet to come. Instead of the headline-grabbing and adrenaline-packed excitement of emergency food drops and medical relief, now comes the important work of slowly and surely rebuilding the foundations of life and community in Tacloban. With your help, not only were the bare necessities of life provided when needed most, but C.A.R.E., Philippines will now strive forward hand-in-hand with our local partners such as Pastor Glenn with *Conservative Baptist Church* and Ms. Montalban, to rebuild and sustain Tacloban both in 2014 and onward.



Some of the families and children enjoying C.A.R.E., Philippine's blessings on Christmas Day

Christmas Celebration Retrospective

This last Christmas we again helped bring the Christmas season to many families in Metro Manila! We distributed 150 baskets containing rice, pasta, ham and much more, and participated in a Christmas morning concert playing Christmas carols and classical music to our local families in Antipolo. After joining us for a celebratory Christmas morning message, they received these festive gifts with your help and donations! Thank you again for helping us spread Christmas Cheer and the Reason for the Season!



Meet Pastor Glenn

Pastor Glenn Bronola has been the head of Conservative Baptist Church in Tacloban City for over 15 years. He was introduced to us during the worst of Typhoon Yolanda, and we met him personally this last January during our visit. He is vital to restoring the lives of 100 families in Tacloban, enabling 45 college students to continue their education and providing spiritual direction through Bible studies and church fellowship.

WE NEED YOUR HELP IN PURCHASING A FOOD TRUCK TO GET FOOD TO 200 POOR CHILDREN INVOLVED IN OUR PROGRAM WHO WALK 3 MILES TO SCHOOL & BACK HOME WITHOUT ANY BREAKFAST OR LUNCH.

If you are willing to help us realize our goal send your gift to: C.A.R.E. Philippines, P.O. Box 1007, Wildomar, CA. 92595. If you can't contribute would you please join us in prayer that our goal might be realized?

Visit us on the web at www.carephil.org for updates and the latest news on Typhoon relief efforts with C.A.R.E., Philippines



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