



Prof. Linda Tue

A STRANGE DAY

Levi, the son of Alphaeus, to Rabbi Matthias. Blessed be the Name of our Lord who has shown mercy to us all. Thanks be to the God of our forefathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and may he bless you richly.

Ever since I chose to work for the government, we have lost touch for several years, though I am still much indebted to your teachings. Recently I have experienced some strange events. After much pondering, I thought it good to seek advice from you who are known for wisdom, such that I may gain some understanding regarding these strange experiences.

You might have heard that I had started following a young rabbi named Jesus from Nazareth last year. You have probably heard of him, as some might have called him strange. Actually, ever since I met Rabbi Jesus and have stayed with him for the last year, I have not found him as strange as others might have considered him. If you ask my opinion, I can only say that he is true to his word. Since I used to work as a government official and have met a lot of people, I have to admit that I have never met anyone as truthful as he is. Rabbi Jesus is special in the sense that he walks his talk. If his truthfulness could be deemed strange, then I suppose that he would be considered strange by some folks. However, this is not why I am writing you today.

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At that moment, someone in the boat could not take it any longer and started shouting to Jesus, "Rabbi, do you not care that we perish?" Jesus awoke and calmly sat up. It was strange that while we were scared for our life, he seemed to see nothing terrible in this storm, and he only spoke to the storm, "Quiet, be still." Then, the wind disappeared and the waves calmed down. It was really quiet at this moment. The only thing I could hear was our fast and heavy breathing. We were scared. Forgetting the motion sickness, I stared at Rabbi Jesus in the dark. Then, he calmly looked at us and asked, "Why are you afraid? Do you have no faith yet?"

I do not know whether I am describing what happened clearly, or whether you could comprehend what I was feeling at that time. This took place two days ago. In the dark, we disciples looked at one another, and we could not help but kept asking one single question, "Who is this that the wind and the water obey him?" I cannot guess what others were thinking, but my heart was filled with fear. I remembered your teachings before that only our God, the Almighty, has created this universe, and he even sits enthroned above the storm, but this Rabbi Jesus, who is he? I dare not continue this line of thinking. Is it possible at all that our Creator sat in our little boat that evening? Rabbi Jesus has performed many mighty deeds such as healing and exorcism, just like Elijah, and like our great prophets of old. However, calming a storm is something of a different category. It is also strange that all prophets have performed miracles in the name of our Lord, but this Jesus commanded the storm as if he is the master commanding his pet. I am really bewildered now. Our dear honorable Rabbi Matthias, in your opinion, who is this strange Jesus?

I hope you would excuse my rambling and confusing words, but I trust that with your great wisdom you could help me answer my one question: Who is this Jesus?

May the Almighty Lord bless you and keep you. May his peace be with you always.

(Note: This is a fictional letter developed from Mark 4:35-41.)

Supertyphoon Yolanda Affects BSOP

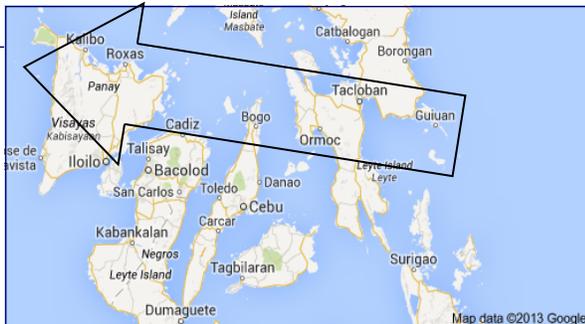
On November 8, supertyphoon Yolanda/Haiyan, packing winds of 250 kph and raising storm surges up to 12.2 meters high, killed more than 5,786 (with 1,800 missing) and displaced 4.90 million people living in 44 provinces that were on her path. Yolanda destroyed 586,227 houses and damaged 590,310 more. As of this writing, damage has reach P34.3 million to the private and government sectors. Hardest hit were cities like Tacloban and Ormoc (Leyte province), Eastern and Northern Samar, Central Visayan provinces (Bohol, Cebu, Negros Oriental and Siquijor), and northern Palawan.

Two areas hit by the supertyphoon directly affected the BSOP family: Tacloban City and the islands of Camotes to the east of Cebu province. Two of our alumni are serving in Tacloban City. Ps. Jerry Yaokasin graduated in 1993 and has been serving in Tacloban Christian Church (TCC) as Christ's servant and in the city as a public servant. He is now the vice mayor. His wife Kathleen is the niece of Ps. Nenita Lee and Ps. Lilian Young. The supertyphoon and storm surge heavily damaged his brother's and his own house, both located beside the sea. He and his family had to fight the wind and waves that tore through their house and all survived Yolanda's fury. A few days after the calamity, many of the members of TCC had left for Manila, but Jerry stayed in Tacloban most of the time, overseeing relief operations and helping his constituents (see photos).

The pastors of TCC, Rev. and Mrs. William Dy, did post-seminary studies in BSOP in 1980. He is the biological brother of Dr. Jean Uayan. Their living quarters were on the second and third floors of TCC, and they didn't go through the same ordeal as Jerry, but the storm surge damaged the office, sanctuary and the vitally important generator of TCC. In the evening of that eventful day, fire broke out in a building a few steps from the church, but by God's mercy, the fire did not spread to TCC. They cleaned up the church as best they could, but without water and food, they had to leave four days later but will soon return for a few days.

Some distant relatives of BSOP's support staff perished in the storm in Tacloban, while many family members of the maintenance staff lost their homes and properties in the Camotes islands. In many of these places government and private relief were not received until several weeks passed. But their lives were spared because there was early warning and evacuation to safer grounds.

The BSOP family, together with believers of the Chinese Evangelical Churches, Christian schools, the Care Caravan of CCOWE-Philippines and the Filipino-Christian Chinese Foundation, immediately took action to raise funds and distribute relief goods to disaster stricken areas. Alumnus Ps. Steven Dime was one of those who helped deliver Care Caravan relief aid and assisted other NGOs in feeding programs and retrieving dead bodies. Many alumni in Metro Manila, Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao also actively worked hard to collect and distribute relief aid and continue to give assistance to the rehabilitation of TCC.



From top left: Path of Yolanda's fury; Vice-mayor Jerry Yaokasin in the midst of desolation; Jerry and his wife Kathleen, Ps. Steven Dime, giving relief packages to typhoon victims; comforting the devastated; a washed out mess inside Tacloban Christian Church; Ps. Deborah Dy cleaning up after the calamity; TCC members and other residents of Tacloban City waiting for their flight inside the totally destroyed airport.