

THE KIMBER CHRONICLES

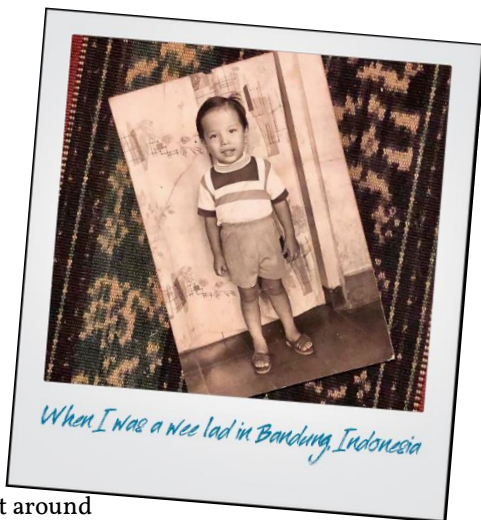
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DECEMBER 2019

ANOTHER Christmas has come and gone, and it's that time of the year when we get a bit reflective and ask the same cliché, "Where has the time gone?" As I prepared The Kimber Chronicles for 2020, I was reminded that I had been publishing my annual newsletter for 15 years! Before you read the next paragraph, maybe get yourself a cup of coffee or tea, so you can read my stories while you're enjoying your drink. Ready? *Andiamo!*

FOR some reason, 2019 is an unsettled year for me. Yes, I know that it's the last year of the decade – but personally, it feels like it's an end to a cycle. I couldn't wait for the year to end when I was only mid-way through the year. I will elaborate as we go along – but let's start at the very beginning, shall we?

THE year started inconspicuously – I returned to work the second day of the year with a plate that was already full. Then in mid-January, Yani had to return to Indonesia when her mum had a fall at home. Life is indeed very fleeting – in those moments, you are reminded that what matters most is not what you do, but who you love and who loves you. Yani spent around two weeks in Indonesia before she returned to Adelaide – her mum had recovered somehow, but is still uncommunicative and being taken care of at home.



When I was a wee lad in Bandung, Indonesia

AMIDST continuous works and projects, life trundles on. Teaching two subjects for the first half of the year at the uni, project work, and my involvement with the Indonesian church kept me well-occupied. Now I know that I should learn to take regular breaks and mini-holidays in between, rather than expecting that my moments of exhaling will only come from a major holiday trip. By mid-year, I was already mentally exhausted – I was experiencing another burn-out episode, and I was oblivious to it.

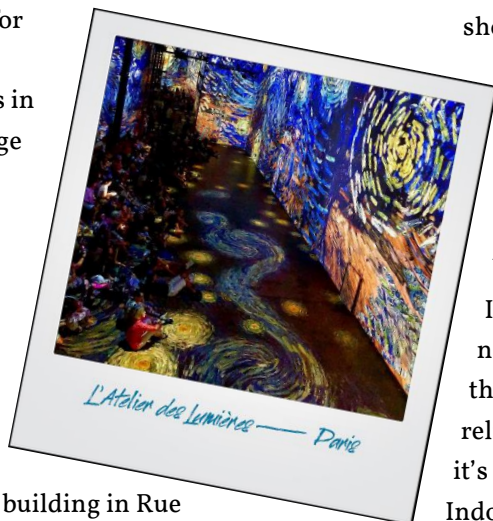


Little Venice, London

IN July, my second sister, Lina, and her family came over for a visit. They came to Australia to accompany Daniel, my nephew – who started his one-year program at the University of Melbourne, as part of his medical degree at the University of Indonesia in Jakarta. It was great to meet her family in my 'natural habitat'. Yani and I also had a chance to show off some of Adelaide's culinary gems and beautiful attractions. At the end of July, Yani and I returned to Indonesia for a holiday. With my mum advancing in age (she's 79 this year) – and Yani's mum still being unwell – it's our decision to visit Indonesia on a regular basis. The trip was memorable – as we were there for my mum's birthday party where all of the children, in-laws, grandchildren, and great grandchildren all dressed in the same orange t-shirt that I designed. As usual, it gave Yani and I opportunities to catch up with old friends and enjoy the local delicacies that we miss in Australia. However, the trip ended up quite draining

emotionally too – Yani’s mum had to be hospitalised again due to a recurring fever. So, our time in Surabaya (Yani’s hometown) was pretty much spent between the motel that we stayed at, the hospital, and several malls where we could at least get a breather and some time for our own.

THE trip to Indonesia was followed by a month-long stint in London for work. It was great to return to one of my favourite cities in the world. It was a massive privilege to visit senior management members in their offices and provide some advice on sound marketing science principles. A highlight for me was also a weekend trip over to Paris – specifically to see Van Gogh exhibition. The immersive exhibition is held at an old factory building in Rue Saint Maur, Paris. When you enter the exhibition space, you will be greeted by the music and the projected animation and images on every wall and on the floor. You felt as if you were part of Van Gogh’s artworks – just silently soaking in the music and the images. An experience that I will always remember.



DURING my time in London, I also got the chance to present my research work in Durham and Stirling. It’s part and parcel of being an academia – doing research as well as establishing and maintaining links with other like-minded researchers all around the world. The other notable trip this year was also a trip to Wellington, New Zealand in December for a conference – again, with the primary purpose for me to maintain and strengthen links with other researchers.

THIS year, Yani and I are also celebrating our tenth-year anniversary. Time flies when you’re having fun, they said. Perhaps it’s true – it felt a bit surreal to realise that I had been married for ten years. We had gone through a lot in the first few years of our marriage – getting used to each other’s stubbornness, quirks, and

habits. It’s only now that we learn more to appreciate each other more and not to sweat the small things. After all, marriage is all about partnership, right? 😊

WITH all of these blessings, you probably thought that I would have felt on top of the world. I should but I didn’t. I know I should’ve. However, somehow, I felt tired, burnt-out, and spent. This experience also gave me an insight that we really need to maintain a positive outlook and attitude in life – those who are feeling downcast and depressed are oblivious to the blessings and the privilege that they have. It made me self-evaluate as well that we need to have our regular breaks throughout the year, rather than pinging our hope for a relief on a massive holiday trip. I know that it’s not really a holiday trip when I return to Indonesia – in a way it is, but it is more of a trip to maintain, strengthen, and rekindle the relationships that I have with my family and friends.

2019 also ended on a poignant note. This morning, my sister-in-law ended her fight against the tumours that grew around her pancreas. It made me reflect again – how this year felt like an end to a cycle and an end to a season.



With a new decade knocking at the door, I hope that this new cycle, this new decade will be a great and prosperous one for us all. The words of Paul in Philippians 4:11-13 come to mind, “*Not that I was ever in need, for I have learned how to be content with whatever I have. I know how to live on almost nothing or with everything. I have learned the secret of living in every situation, whether it is with a full stomach or empty, with plenty or little. For I can do everything through Christ, who gives me strength.*” – this will be my reminder to keep my chin up and look up when I find myself walking through the *Vallée de la merde* again.

God bless you and your family in 2020