

# *My Heart Aches*

## *a liturgy for counting the cost*

Father,  
when I left my passport country,  
I thought I had considered something of the cost  
of being thousands of miles from my family,  
of living in a different culture and environment,  
of facing opposition for my values,  
of the resources needed to facilitate my transition  
to the other side of the globe.

But, when I hear my family member ask,  
“Are you done with living over there, yet?”  
and she sends the classified Ads for jobs in their area,  
or a leader wonders why I'm teaching there  
when “we have so many needs here,”  
the cost of serving overseas  
cuts a little closer to the bone, and home,  
than when I somewhat naively, zealously,  
said, “Sure, send me!”

Your name is at stake.  
But my heart does ache.

Over two decades into it,  
I don't want to be  
someone who started to build,  
and didn't finish well.  
I see this stark reminder  
in a few construction sites here,  
some shells left empty  
and incomplete—  
useless towers left bankrupt.

Your name is at stake.  
But my heart does ache.

I confess my understanding of the cost  
was limited  
by my naiveté, time, excitement, pride,  
my “self.”  
Please give me the vision and willingness  
to die to self,  
as I follow,  
despite the unknowns of ailing parents,  
or missing my loved one's lead role  
in her high school play,

or hearing my relative's realization  
that I wasn't there  
for that special Christmas memory,  
or having hometown relationships somewhat cool  
from the distance of years  
living apart.

Your name is at stake.  
But my heart does ache.

Remind me that You experienced  
thirty-three years of it.  
The distance traveled  
and cost  
of that trip  
can't be compared—  
all that You bore for me,  
including a heart aching for time  
with Your Father,  
yet You finished it,  
completely.

So, help homesickness to push me closer  
to my true Home,  
to deeper love  
for You,  
for those in my classroom,  
and for those still in my hometown.  
Please continue to grant me the desire  
to bring more Home with me.  
I confess I need a touch to persevere  
and finish many todays well.  
Thanks for enduring for the joy set before You.  
Thanks for the cloud cheering us on.

Your name is at stake.  
So You have born the ache.

Thanks for completing the work  
In me.

*Amen*