



Borneo Briefings

May 2016

*Newsletter from the Trozzo family,
Serving the Church in Sabah, Malaysia*

Greetings, friends and supporters!

The first semester of the school year has finished up for us here, and in America summer is upon you. Before we all move to a bit of slower paced time, here are some glimpses of the past few weeks here in Sabah. It has been a busy time, with two special training sessions with pastors, exams and assignments from students, and getting to know the local youth better, as Eric and Wendolyn have taken over teaching the religious instruction component for the middle and high school students of the Boys' Brigade unit at the nearby church.



A visitor from America

It is always great to have a visitor come and take part in the day-to-day activities of life and ministry here and help them see first-hand the work we do. For three weeks in April and May we had Rev. Dr. Bill Russell visiting STS. He is pastor at Augustana Lutheran Church in Minneapolis, MN and a church historian specializing in the Reformation.

While here he led a seminar for pastors in Kuala Lumpur about the Lutheran confessional writings, and then came to Kota Kinabalu to co-lead a seminar on Lutheran theology with Eric for the pastors here. He then spent the next two weeks leading independent studies with advanced students and taking part in seminary events. This was a big help for Eric, as Bill was able to help out with some of the teaching that Eric simply has not had time to get to due to also having administrative duties. He was also able to use the time here to try to wrap up his new book of translations of some of Martin Luther's writings, which is due out next year. Along with plenty of hard work in teaching, Bill managed to find a few days for some outings into the jungle and the sea to get a taste of Borneo beyond the seminary walls. The boys had a great time teaching him to snorkel and guiding him through the jungles. It was particularly fun to have him with us this time of year because of the Ka'amatan Festival taking place. Ka'amatan is the local harvest festival, and it is one of the highlights of the year, as it has become the time for celebrating Sabah's indigenous cultures. At the seminary, the students cook food, sing songs, wear traditional clothing, and do traditional dances from a different indigenous culture each year. It is always powerful because it is a celebration of people from a culture of their culture. We look forward to it every year, and it was even more fun to be able to share that experience with a guest.

Bill's letter to his home congregation – on the wonders of Borneo

My Dear Augustana,

Blessings to you in the name Christ!

I've been to the rainforest. Amazing: lush and beautiful beyond imagination. The rainforests of Borneo, I'm told, are some 90,000 years older than the Amazon. I wouldn't be surprised. Life, it seems, comes in so many varieties here that biologists still discover unknown plants and animals in the forest. Of course, my hosts and I barely entered the jungle, but it was enough to gape with awe at the incredible variety of plants and animals.

And all of that growth depends on the same source: water. The daily rains and early morning mists make their way deep into the ground and somehow, out of that rich damp earth, grow plants of every shape and color. Trees that make the IDS tower look like a leafless twig (or so it seems). And somewhere in those trees, birds hide from view, mocking us with their calls and whistles. Closer to the ground, the flowers burst with blooms so bright they must keep each other up at night. And then, there are the orchids, more kinds here than anyplace on the planet—not so colorful, but their exquisitely delicate blossoms look like they might break under the weight of the glistening water droplets they hold.

So, my dear Augustana, I think of you and our wonderfully diverse neighborhood—people of so many shapes and colors. And as you gather this morning, I pray that the Word of God will sink deeply into your hearts and minds—like the life-giving waters of the rainforests here find their way to the roots of so much magnificent growth. May the nourishing grace of God drench you once again with a refreshing outpouring of the Spirit of life, in Christ's name.

Peace be with you all,

Pr. Bill



Drum Lessons!

Since we live near the chapel at the Seminary, we got permission to use its drum set, and a 4-th year student, David, offered to give the boys drum lessons. This student was actually invited to go to a college in Florida on a music scholarship, but his heart is with the Rungus people here in Sabah. (The Rungus people, the most traditional of the tribes in Sabah, live near the northern Tip of Borneo, about two hours' drive from the seminary.) David is learning to speak Rungus even though he

is of Tamil Indian descent. It's amazing how simple drum lessons give a window to such diversity.



Home Assignment

Only 3 weeks until we fly! We ask that you pray for travelling mercies as we prepare for a Stateside adventure. Our flights from KK to Dulles (Washington) will be 6 hours + 14 hours. Last year on our flight home, Dante asked as we were over the Canadian Rockies, “how much longer?” And when I answered, “6 more hours,” he looked at me with the most serious expression he’d ever had, and said, “No.” I think he was going to have words with the pilot, but thankfully food arrived then and distracted him. Fun fact: our flight from Seoul to D.C. actually goes up and over the North Pole. Since the earth is wider at the equator, it would be a longer flight, and that’s also why the equator is hotter – it’s closer to the sun. We are learning all kinds of science here!

As we prepare our visit, you can prepare to connect with us and our kids with this article from “A Life Overseas.” -

<http://www.alifeoverseas.com/10-questions-missionary-kids-would-love-to-be-asked/>

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Thank you for being such a blessing to us! The peace of the Lord be with you!
