

“Mud, mud and more mud.”

There is one thing I, (Paige) know for sure each time Johnny gets back from a trip to Ketapang, I will have to wash mounds of mud from his clothes. Johnny continues to travel to and from Ketapang once or more each month as the majority of his work is focused on this area. The good news is that he has been able to purchase a motor bike and that has made travel within the area easier. The roads being what they are – mainly logging roads, the mud and rain continue to be the challenge. Johnny works closely with three pastors and their families in this area. Mr. Cahaming, Mr. Harry Wowiling, and Mr. Nikson Karnai. Their goal is to grow the four church plants in the Ketapang district.



One of the goals of Mr. Harry Wowiling is that he will be able to move the Sunday Church service from his home, and into a facility that is larger, and able to accommodate the growing congregation. John helps in the areas of strategy, networking, evangelism, motivation, and seminars on specific topics that he sees a need for.

The road seen in the picture above is the main road used for traveling in the area.

John's work focuses on five major areas. Ketapang city, Tanjung Meloi, Batu Bulan, Tumbang Titi, and Sandai. Sandai is the farthest location (if you travel by boat to Ketapang area). Logging and palm oil farming are the major industries in this area.

Mosques and Churches.

“We are losing our best witness here in Indonesia, our Worship”.

So many of you have asked what Paige meant when she said frequently during deputation of 2008, that; “Churches in Indonesia should be built like mosques” that we felt Paige should further explain her statement. We know she ruffled some feathers, but we think that the following will put you at ease.

I am referring to the physical building when I say that churches should be built more like mosques and I am specifically referring to our witness in Muslim areas here in Indonesia.

John and I noticed during our ministry in Balikpapan what a central role the mosque plays in the community life here in Indonesia. It serves as a place of worship, place of informal gathering, a place for recreation, and a place for travelers to stay. It is a focal point in the community. Part of this is because the majority of the population is Muslim, but also the physical structure of the mosque lends itself to this multi-function. Built with high open arches, no benches or chairs, with wide spaces all around, the mosque is never locked. Travelers who can't afford a hotel can spend the night. It also allows everyone to see and hear the worship. John and I learned what happens in the mosque because we could see and hear, from down the street, all that transpires. Usually around the mosque is a large open area that youth and children play in. The open arches allow the breezes to blow through making this an ideal place to sit and fellowship. People can be seen on the steps of a mosque or area outside talking and gathering. Especially during the month of Ramadan the community gathers within and in the courtyard around to break the fast.

Churches here on the other hand are traditionally built with small high windows, the doors and windows are locked when not in use. During a Sunday service, it is unlikely that passersby can see in and hear the service the same way we can see and hear the Muslim faithful who gather and pray. Often the traditionally built church building stands isolated and mysterious.

For me, this is a huge barrier to the growth of Christianity in Indonesia. Once, when I was preparing communion, I asked a young Muslim man to help me carry it to the car, as I handed him the communion tray he began to tremble so much – he almost dropped the whole lot. He said – “this is human blood and flesh”. I realized that he thought it was actual human blood and

flesh. I put down the tray and showed him the bread and juice (from the local supermarket), used to prepare the communion. He then gladly helped me carry the communion to the car. This young man had heard, or was taught that Christians were cannibals, and because all that happens in the church here remains so secretive to the Muslim community he had never seen or heard what transpires within. A simple act like communion can be twisted, misunderstood and used as a method by some to further procure hatred and opposition. Buildings promoting isolation and secretiveness do not help us. My explanation of communion led us to great conversation with this young man about who Jesus is, what he did.

Our physical structure for worship, traditionally built in western style for cold climates, is hampering our witness in Indonesia, in fact I believe we are losing our best witness, our Worship.

Why don't we build churches here with high open arches, which allow breezes to blow, why can't we sit on the floor and worship? Why don't we embrace the architecture of the east and of warmer climate cultures? Why don't we reach out in every way with the familiar to those we love and seek to bless with the knowledge of God? Why don't we show on a Sunday what it is that we do when we worship; we sing, we pray, we hear the word of God, we fellowship and laugh and support each other. These are elements that will ring true to Muslim people, similarities to their faith. This is a way to draw people to us. None of this intended to be done in a way of deception or tricking people. Make it clear it is a Christian place of worship; just make it accessible to the community.

We should put ourselves out there – yes there is risk involved, and let others, hear what we say, how we pray, what we believe? Until we as a community of believers start asking touch questions and refuting assumptions about buildings and style of dress, worship and music we will never embrace the community in a way that will make our witness real. Also we will never shake the western identity that goes hand in hand with Christianity and so hampers us in our outreach. Obviously this change also must include an attitude change in which we view ourselves as part of a community not separate from the community.

I look forward to the day when I will sit on the floor of a church in Indonesia, with high beautiful arches, enjoying the breeze and worshipping God. A building that embraces eastern architecture, and serves as an important structure in the community.

Prayers.

1. Pray for Johnny as he continues the routine of traveling to Ketapang each month. Pray for John's safety and health, and also for wisdom and insight as he helps the three national families in the ministry.
2. Pray for the ministry in the Ketapang area. Pray for all the pastors, like Mr. Harry Wowiling, his family and

their goal to have a place of worship large enough for their growing congregation.

3. Pray for Paige and the girls as they continue to work on home schooling. At times it is hard to keep focused and disciplined. We are into our third semester and focus is what we need.



Mr. Harry Wowiling and his family, Kristin, Thessa and Timothy. Ministering in the city of Ketapang.

Ask Us Questions

Don't forget to send us your questions. If there is something you want to know, then for sure others do too. Send them to: johnnybm@telkom.net

“Paige, I am confused is Ketapang a city or an area?” The answer is both. Ketapang is the name of a district, and also a city within the district. The KGBI's (Convention of Indonesian Baptist Church's) work in this area is within the city of Ketapang, but also in three other areas within said district; Tanjung Meloi, Batu Bulan, and Sandai.

Johnny, you talk about boat rides and motor cycle rides, how exactly do you travel to/from Ketapang? The simple answer is all of the above. Currently there is no good road connecting the district of Ketapang with the city of Pontianak where we live. (By good I mean passable – in theory there is a road, but it is so bad that cars and motorbikes can't travel on it.) So, I travel into the district by boat (usually Kelotok) this type of boat allows me to take my motor-bike on board. It is a 15 hour trip on this boat one way. I travel down the coast, at times on rivers, at times on the sea until I get to the main city Ketapang. At times I will leave my bike in Ketapang city and then I can take a speed boat into the area this only takes between 6 to 8 hours. Within the district of Ketapang I travel by motor bike. The three major areas of my work are about five to eight hours apart from each other. (More during rain and mud). So, traveling to the various locations is probably the biggest challenge I face. Having a flat tire can mean pushing the bike for hours until you come to the next village for repair. But at times these difficulties in travel become my opportunity for witness. At Christmas time when the Kelotok boat was too full for me to take and I ended up stuck at a port with no hotel, or boarding place nearby. I was forced to sleep under the stars on the street near my motorbike, it was a local

restaurant owner, and “Imam” who offered to let me sleep on his living room floor. He now is someone I regularly visit on my travels to Ketapang area. As the world swings out of balance, and fear rules men’s hearts, your continued support is witness to your faith that God is truly in control of all things.

Team Support News

Thank you to all our team supporters who have not wavered in your giving during this world wide recession. Even here in Indonesia we have felt the effects of the recession with factories closing or laying off staff. Your continued support for God’s Kingdom work in Indonesia is proof of your love and obedience to Him, and we know that God will also be faithful to you and your families. As always we thank you and want to encourage you to keep supporting us. We continue to build our team support base and need your gifts, and also new givers in order to remain in Indonesia and continue in ministry.

Family News

Many of you heard that Paige’s father Frank Byrne suffered a heart attack on February 7th and double by-pass surgery in Feb. 13th. Thank you for your prayers for Dad, for Mom and Suzy, for Christine and her family, and also for our family here. Dad is making a good recovery. We pray he will continue to heal and regain his health.

In the month of April we had the opportunity to visit Manado (Johnny’s home area) Johnny preached in several different locations, on April 5th we attended church in Iman Baptist church in Wanea – Manado. This is where Paige was baptized years ago. To our delight Rev. Alex Tiaras, one of the founding fathers of the Convention of Indonesian Baptist Churches, was also attending. It has been many years since we were able to visit with Rev. Alex and it was a joy to see him, and fellowship with him. He continues to be an inspiration, and leader for the churches of KGBI. Johnny preached and Rev. Alex conducted a baby dedication. We also stayed in the home of Mrs. Sintje Legoh a long time member and supporter of the KGBI, and family friend. It was a joy to be there and worship with Rev. Alex, and Mrs. Sintje.

News from Shoshannah

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“I know people think Home-Schooling is easy, but this work is harder than regular school. I can’t wait to get back to regular easy school.”



News from Nakita ...

“One good thing about home schooling is that you can wear your pajamas all day. Mom is pretty cool; she doesn’t make me change. But, she’s not so cool in that she makes me study for the tests.”



Paige celebrated her birthday in the month of March. Thank you to all for the notes and birthday wishes.



L to R - Mrs. Sintje Legoh, Nakita, Shoshannah, Johnny, & Rev. Alex Tairas

To learn how you can be a part of our ministry please contact Canadian Baptist Ministries, 7185 Millcreek Drive, Mississauga, ON L5N 5R4 OR Visit the website at: www.cbmin.org

With all our Love and Prayers,
Sincerely in Christ,
Johnny, Paige, Nakita and Shoshannah.

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