



## A WONDERFUL PICNIC ON THE BEACH

By Jason Sentuf

*“Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity. Like the precious anointing oil upon the beard that ran down to the hem of his garments, As the dew of Hermon that descendeth on the mountain of Zion; for there hath Jehovah commanded the blessing, life for evermore” (Psalm 133: 1-3)*

Thursday, May 1, 2008, was the most wonderful day God has given to the local Body of Christ Church of South Kalimantan. About five young ladies and a married woman seemed so busy in the kitchen preparing some food for a whole days picnic on the Beach. They came over to Zaitun, our home since Wednesday evening; while the others came on Thursday morning. The sleepy Sun rise up slowly in the East, while my wife asked me to have breakfast before we took a long trip to Batakan Beach.



The bus has arrived at 8.00 AM. It's a public bus which we had to rent with Rp 750.000 (about \$75 USD) for the whole days use. We began with several minutes of meeting and praying before departing. A few years ago we did the same program where other six young men and women used their own three-motorcycles and followed after our bus, making a little convoy along the silent and empty street to the Beach. But this time all the motorcycles were left inside our multi purpose church building...then, all of its doors

were locked up. Nobody stayed home, except our three lovely dogs always stand by there to protect our house. Every body picked up their things and got on the bus. But the bus seats were not enough so we could took more chairs from the church to complete the bus seats.

My wife and I already took our seats on the second row of the bus. Mrs Memei just arrived with her own car in a few minutes before we departed. There were four women accompanying her in the car – It looked like they were gladly enjoying this outdoor spiritual activity. “Praise the Lord. I could find a driver” – she shouted proudly at me... actually she could drive her own car herself when driving around three contiguous cities – Banjarmasin, Banjarbaru and Martapura. Sometimes, a

well-grounded man must be needed to drive by these ladies if they want to make a long trip with her family to the distant city - much less to Batakan Beach which takes more than two hours to go.

We set out from Zaitun at 09.00AM followed by Memei's white car after the bus. There were about 30 people and five children in the Bus. There was heavy traffic all along highway to the Beach that day due to the national holiday for Christians to celebrate the Ascension Day of Jesus Christ. Batakan Beach is the only beautiful costal area for local tourists in Southern Kalimantan. Some citizens of the three contiguous cities often visit this place, spending the whole day, playing, swimming, fishing and more.



The wonderful view that amazed me so much during our traveling was the spread out area of oil-palm plantations on several distant hills, along the highway down to Pleahari town, the capital of Tanah Laut regency. This used to be an empty and infertile land, a dry and poor area which we had passed through several years ago. I'm absolutely impressed with what I have seen. I supposed, this kind plantation sector is still being expanded by local government.

Some young men and women gave their praises and singing unto the Lord joyfully all along the traveling while the other were talking and laughing ....even some time shouting! The others looked so busy...standing up again and again, moving their hands out the window, pointing towards each place we passed, while giving some information to other fellows...they proved themselves as if a guide for local tourist...in fact, they know the whole region better than others in the bus.

Both Selvie my wife and I took our seats on the second row – I took my small favorite tape recorder and spent a few minutes hearing the Preaching 'entitle "The True Israel of God" by J.A. Harring from USA. I always take it along ... especially, when I make a long trip to a far distant place such as to Central Kalimantan, Java, Papua even to Israel - I never loose a few seconds. To me, it is a very effective piece of equipment to complete my ministry and to develop the ability of hearing English as well ... All the cassettes I carried with me in my small hand bag contained the Body of Christ doctrines sent by some friends of mine in USA and Israel. While hearing the tape recorder seriously, I could also turn my face a little while to all those who took seats behind us. I could see their faces fully expressing joy, peace, and lovely smiles to each other.

The weather was nice and cool that day. Every body really enjoyed the fellowship and began to understand the real unity in the Body of Christ. Such a type of activity we have done collectively based on a unity of the Spirit. It's a balance living harmoniously in the community – living harmoniously with the neighbors, the people around us, keeping in touch harmoniously with other believers around us and so on... However, living harmoniously in fellowship with the Body of Christ has a much deeply meaning than these. That's to walk with lowliness and meekness, with longsuffering, forbearing one another in love; Endeavoring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

An outdoor recreation or picnic somewhere on the Beach just like this is the endeavor of all members of the Body of Christ corporately, to keep the unity of the Spirit. This is the principle of living unity in the Body of Christ. Every decision and eldership program would be supported by all the members of the Body of Christ. The

idea of this spiritual tour firstly came from everyone. Certainly, every one could give their idea freely for the purpose of edifying the Body of Christ. However, all of these personal ideas, opinions or personal suggestions must be processed in eldership meetings which can eventually be agreed and supported by the local church eldership leaders corporately. The atmosphere of joy in the bus looked so pleasant. I suppose, this was a wonderful day God has made for us... He hath made every thing beautiful in his time." (Ecc. 3:11).

We arrived on the Beach at around 10.00AM. But, there were still 10 kilometers to go to our final destination. As far as the eye could see, all the wild trees on either side main road along the seashore to our last destination seemed so short, leafy and shady; growing elegantly on the very short grassy-green land everywhere .... All growing naturally... It looked like a green carpet on the white floor of a king's palace. The surface of the land is flat, glisten by sun ray. The trees were mostly 50 centimeters to 5 meters high, and there was no trash scattered everywhere on the weeds, no creatures could be seen there, except some sparrows fortunately passed by our face., no body could be seen there....everything look so quiet.

I just thought, if only such a place were close to Bajarmasin or Banjarbaru.... it could be daily used as a romantic place by all the citizens of both contiguous cities. "How great and Wonderful of Your Creation, Righteous and True Your Ways, King of all nations" ..that's a song I sang spontaneously while I was meditating on the wonderful creation of God I had just seen all along the seashore.

What kindness a righteous God has, to give such a beautiful land to the un-churched people who occupied this area. The landscape around this area is really breathtaking! Ah, it looks like if I only got off the bus and spend time alone there with God – but the fact is the bus was going along so fast because there were still few minutes to reach our destination! Yes it is true, as one of my friends in South Africa (she was a nature fan, I supposed) once wrote me and said that "the sacred Nature around us always gives us a new inspiration, fresh of life and the new spirit. We must give a brief report to the attendants and pay tickets before we get into location.

## **PRAYER MEETING SERVICE AND FUN**

A short prayer of thank giving have been given by one of our elder, because we arrived on Batakan beach safely. All goods alighted from the bus and put them directly on a chosen place.



As you see in this picture, it was a pleasant place under the Evergreen – trees where we stopped for fellowship and for lunch time. There are so many comfortable places you can find along the beach if you come here one day. But this one was a good enough for us – because it looks so quiet and still, far away from other crowded places. It was a suitable place to use for a Prayer Meeting. You can see fir-trees plantation growing elegantly along the

beach organized by a local private company.

There are several Inns with their wonderful gardens just about one kilometer from here. We once used that same place a few years ago when we came over for a whole day picnic. It was the Ascension Day of Jesus Christ, so we celebrated it on the

beach. That was our main program from the beginning. We spent one hour of service: praise, worship, preaching – and continued on with Prayer Meeting Group.

The group divided in two sections. The First group was made up of several faithful men and women including new believers. Their assignment was to pray for our local body of Christ, Israel, Indonesia Government and so on, and the second group which was composed of young leaders of our church were gathered together with me and Selvie my wife for a special mutual sharing around their responsibility of supporting The Body of Christ. It was very important to gather them together with us this time, because they have been appointed as young leaders since they were in college by the laying on of hands of the elders. They got involved in all activities of the Body of Christ principals since the spiritual revival took place in 1999. They have deeply understood the process of local church development from the time they involved themselves with us and bound in one spirit with us from the onset. They have participated to protect the Body of Christ's existence in the time of Holy Way Foundation's internal conflict and contradiction – and they still go on in their faith and commitment until today. Their loyalty and dedication constitutes the reality Life of The Body of Christ that should be appreciated and protected by the Elders of the Church. Although they are still young physically, they are mature enough spiritually. I consider that it was an opportunity for them to share what God has put in their hearts; share their personal problem and challenges which made their spiritual life down in the last few months. Our meeting finished with a conclusion that every body must arise again in their spiritual life and involved themselves effectively in the Body of Christ activities.

We were having lunch after a spiritual service and meeting. It was some kind of a Party on the Beach, because it was also a party also to honor Ms. Ester Silimang who faithfully ministered with us for five years, to build up The Body of Christ in South Kalimantan. She has just returned to Manado, North Sulawesi on May 12, 08. It seems everybody calmly enjoyed their lunch under the fir-trees. Everybody could get their comfortable place themselves freely. The other thing after this was beach games which include every body: children, young and old people. There was an eating cracker game, jumping game, marbles on the spoon game and some other games went on, very attractive and so funny under the shady fir-trees..... Such funny games like this are an important part of an open air recreation somewhere under the heavens – to release our stress, saturation, drabness, and mental depression as result of our daily activities in a very noisy city.

I enjoyed a brief time away from the others, and took a walk for a few minutes around some places, not far from our first shady spot, and snapped several objects with my digital camera. Because of the rainy season, the surface of the sea is somewhat muddy about 100 meters from sea-coast; but the nicest thing is, the whole coastal-area of about 100 to 1000's meters widens towards the hilly area and is very fantastic. There are a lot of small rivers streaming around that coastal area – the whole area is flat, and covered by green-grass! A small Island called Batu Lima could be seen from the beach. It is about 20 minutes and we can reach the Island by using the local boat.

It dawn on me that, it would be very interesting if someday in the future we could make a Beach Camping Activity at this same place. I am sure everybody will be satisfied with its wonderful scenery, as long as the implementation of that Beach camping is not scheduled at the same time as the Muslim festival days; because Batakan Beach is always crowded by all citizens of three contiguous cities in Southern Kalimantan, mostly, all along Muslim festival days.

On Muslim holiday's, there are so many stands selling local souvenirs, tradition foods, and all kind of beverages erected along the Beach. And it could be going on for several days, especially, around Idul Fitri festival Day. And after this, all of those stands are left messy and untidy, but they could be used again the next time of tradition festival days but especially as Idul Adha Festival. I imagine that it was just the temporary places for selling their local tradition wares.

We instructed all people to gather again to pray before our trip home. Every body could share and express what they were feeling before prayer started. Most of them expressed the feelings that they were really satisfied with the picnic. The youth leaders even built up their mind for another spiritual adventure to another place somewhere on May 20, 2008 on the Hindus Holy Day.

We have been delegated to South Kalimantan (South Borneo) since May, 1999. I am the one of three senior pastor of our Local Church in Jayapura, West Papua and officially appointed as one of senior leaders among Holy Way Evangelical Church Eldership Leaders throughout West Papua until now. So I still care for and am responsible for our Church there. Sometime two or three times a year we visit Papua for several weeks ministry there. The first time we came over here, we started a prayer meeting group with seven or sometime ten people. But now our church is growing with 57 committed people. Below picture show both Selvie and me are among some of our congregation who joined the picnic.



Most of them are young people. Some of them are still in college while the other have gotten good jobs in Banjarmasin and always stand in partnership with others to support the Body of Christ. They consider us as their spiritual fathers and mothers and involve themselves with us together as a great happy family of the Body of Christ. Both of us love this small growing Church very much that make us forget our own hometown. Such

a unity would create a new dream of making this land become our own home.

The Beach became desolate and quite!! The sun went down slowly in the West while we were moving slowly toward our Bus. We took this picture before we got on the bus. Everybody raised up their hands and said:

*Good bye Batakan Beach until next time!!!*

We departed from Batakan Beach at 05.00 PM after a few minutes of Prayer and just got home at 07.00 PM safely.