

21 June 2016  
Summer Solstice

Dear Friends in Christ,

This morning when I met with my Indonesian tutor, she asked me what the date was and I told her that today was the summer solstice. She was puzzled as to what that meant. But this led to a discussion about the seasons of the year in various parts of the world and about the two seasons of Indonesia – rainy season and the dry season. The temperature here does not vary that much and so she was surprised that there were such variations of temperature in parts of the USA and Europe. It also led to a discussion about climate change as the rainy season here has been heavier than in previous years.

As part of the effort to be more environmentally conscience, STT has given the dormitories various refuse and recycling bins. It will, however, take more education than just giving bins to stop the burning of trash that often occurs on campus. As part of the conservation efforts, before the worship service for the celebration of the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the seminary, the bishop and the principal planted two new trees on campus which are fast growing and hardy in tropical climates.



The seminary has also taken on efforts to save costs on cooking fuel for the menza (refectory). They are interested in a bio-gas project that will allow them to buy fewer tanks of cooking gas and also provide some income for the seminary. Thus in late March, we dedicated the foundation for a pig sty



which will house  
Any piglets born  
local markets for  
the seminary.  
complete, but



some 30 adult pigs.  
will be sold to the  
additional income for  
The actual sty is now  
they are presently in  
the pig waste into  
been instrumental in

the process of building the facilities that will convert cooking fuel. The Presbyterian church of Korea has helping with the technical expertise of this project. The seminary has sent one of the staff to Germany for a three-month training program in “pig farming” and bio-fuel production. The anticipated date for completion is the beginning of the new academic year in August.

The churches of the city of Siantar annually host an ecumenical Easter celebration which was held this year on Friday, 8 April. It traditionally includes students from STT re-enacting the Via Dolorosa. They start at STT and walk through the streets of Siantar about 2 miles/3 hours to the large parade grounds at the end of Merdeka (Independence) Street. This banner led the procession into the field.



They then proceeded to re-enact the crucifixion while the various choirs from the many churches offered their songs of lament and praise. Finally, a banner of the resurrection was placed in front of the three crosses. We then continued with the worship service. It was the Pentecostal church’s turn to provide the preacher for the day. They brought in a preacher from Singapore, who preached in English. He had an excellent translator who seemed to anticipate what he was going to say and even before he finished the English sentence, she was ready with the Bahasa Indonesian translation. We prayed that day for about 6 hours.



Just after the 38<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, the students had their annual KORSWA week. This is a week in which there are no classes, but lots of competitions in singing (individual, duets, trios and choirs), sports activities, traditional dancing, English speech competition, and even altar flower arranging. I was the judge for many



of the competitions including the altar flower arranging. Each class provides competitors for the various competitions and at the end of the week, the points are tallied up and the class that has the most points is awarded a very large trophy. All of the competitions are/were friendly, but this year's overall winner was the class of 2013 – that is the year in which they entered the seminary. Rev. Anna and I have been teaching the class of 2013 in Pastoral Theology this academic year.



On the evening of Saturday, 28 May, the LWF sponsored an HIV-AIDS memorial event. It was an evening of song, scripture readings, prayer as well as factual information about HIV-AIDS in Indonesia. It also included a skit by some who are HIV positive about the kinds of discrimination that they face and what the church might do to be more supportive and welcoming to those who suffer. I learned many facts about the problem here. On my way into the event, a student ran up to me and asked if I was going to attend. I said I was and asked him if he was too. He said that he wanted to, but was feeling shy about walking

into the event. So, I took him in with me and sat with him. He is one of the more thoughtful students that I have taught in pastoral theology class this year. His English is quite good. He was astounded to learn some of the facts about HIV-AIDS in his own country. Just a reminder for me that there is a great need for factual information about various topics of pastoral concern in that class as well as the rudiments of pastoral conversation!

I will be leaving for the USA on Monday, 27 June. As I leave, I will bid farewell and God's speed to my colleague, cultural broker and preaching companion, Wilda Simanjuntak. Wilda has been accepted for PhD studies in Old Testament at Duta Wacana Seminary in Jogjakarta. Wilda is the recipient of an ELCA international scholarship for this study. She and the family will be moving to Jogja on 19 July. Please pray for their transition; for her studies; for finding the right school for the two older children; and for some kind of work for Halasan, her husband. I will most definitely miss her/them when I return in August.

In the next few weeks, STT will be selecting students for the incoming class of 2016. As of a few days ago, there were over 350 applicants for 100 positions. There will be a variety of tests, including general knowledge, biblical fluency and English proficiency, for the applicants as well as a personal conversation with them. Please pray for my colleagues who will make this selection of new students. Then please pray for the four weeks of orientation for those who are selected that takes place from mid-July to mid-August

The General Synode of the HKBP is scheduled to begin on 12 September and will last for about a week. As I have mentioned before, they are electing a new bishop at this Synode as well as other department heads for the HKBP. There are many who are actively courting support for these elections. Pray for the Spirit to be at work in this crucial church-wide meeting that wise choices for leadership will be made for the next four-year period.

Once again, I am grateful for your partnership in this ministry that we share together for the sake of the Gospel. I pray that your summer activities will give you opportunity for refreshment as well as time with family and friends.

In Christ,

*Rosanne*