

SUBUD AUSTRALIA NEWSLETTER

ENEWS JANUARY - FEBRUARY 2010

WORLD SUBUD CONGRESS 2010

Letter from Maya and Julia

As we look toward putting together a post World Congress edition of the WSA Newsletter, we would like to include a range of members' impressions of the congress from around the globe to share with everyone. This could even be from members who did not attend, but may have participated online. Please can you inquire with your membership about who might be willing to send us a paragraph or so (something short) to publish. We very much want to hear from members about **their** world congress! (in any language)

Thank you!



SUBUD WORLD CONGRESS 2010

The 14th World Subud Congress in Christchurch was attended by over 1600 Subud members from all over the world.

From early December or even earlier, a stream of young people had started to arrive in Christchurch as volunteers. There were a myriad jobs to fill from helping out at the registration desk to very specific trained tasks such as recording requiring sound technicians for Ibu's talks and other events.

Wherever you went you saw young volunteers busy manning information booths, interviewing members for Subud TV or communications. It was inspiring to witness the transition happening in front of our eyes - the young Subud members now having a firm grip on the inner (infrastructure) workings of Congress and working side by side with experienced members. The future is in good hands!

Ibu arrived with her family members on the morning of 3rd January. The official opening of Congress was scheduled for the evening of the 4th. And what an opening it was!

Much has been written about it. Suffice to say that the main theme was woven around the proud Maoris, their culture and their music.

Whilst Hammond Peek and his team of experts were responsible for the important job of seeing that the sound equipment was fine and recording Ibu's talks, the rest of the amazing Congress Organising Committee took on jobs to see that the Congress ran smoothly.

There were several heart warming reports of World Congress. People were touched by their experiences. Subud TV was beamed to members all over the world so as to keep everyone who did not come to Congress, connected.

Ibu's talks were powerful and empowering - much needed to carry us through the present time and into the future. The Congress Committee saw that the talks were distributed world wide within 48 hours. Ibu's testing sessions blew us away.

The closing ceremony was so spectacular, it made us wish that this amazing Congress would go on and on and not end. In between all this, were a variety of workshops, art exhibitions, fashion shows, music and dancing. Personal testing sessions were held with the international helpers and other facilitators.

People attend congresses to feel replenished. Half the passion of wanting to go to congress is to greet Ibu and listen to her talks, catch up with old friends, meet new ones and bathe in the warmth of latihans, morning and night.

Christchurch is a spectacular city. The Congress venues, being central, were like no other. The people of New Zealand are laid back, more so than Australians (my opinion). I loved every minute of being there.

Those of you wanting details of Congress 2010 will need to look up Subud World News and Subud Voice. (This bumper issue of ENEWS has become very bulky.) We have been told that there will be CDs and DVDs of the cultural events.

Congratulations to the Congress Organising Committee and all the members of New Zealand for a wonderful Congress.

Thank you all

Stunning photographs of the World Congress are available on the links below:

<http://picasaweb.google.com/OsannaVaughn/NewZealandSouthIsland#>

<http://picasaweb.google.com/rachman/SubudWorldCongress2010#>

NEWS FROM AROUND AUSTRALIA

Adelaide

Tomik Subagio, the chairman of Subud Adelaide has written to say that he was the proud recipient of the Indonesian Ambassador's award for Community Service in 2009. Congratulations.

Brisbane

After testing, Brisbane will host the first of three National Council gatherings over the Easter period.

Canberra

Maxwell is no longer chairman of Subud Canberra. At the world congress in Christchurch, he was tested in as chairman for the International Subud Council (ISC). Hayward Maberley is the new chairman for Canberra.

Here are the details of the new Canberra Committee:

Chairman - Hayward Maberly

Vice Chair - Maynard Gold

Treasurer - Anna Weideman

Secretary - Maria Jamieson

Project Liaison - Stanford Harrison

Canberra is looking for a Congress Organiser for the 2011 Australian National Congress, which will be hosted by Canberra.

Canberra Project details will be available in the March issue of ENEWS.

Melbourne

Ratna's Wedding:

On the 5th of December, long time SUBUD Melbourne member, Ratna Wheelton got married to Gary Mezzacappa. It was a beautiful and very touching ceremony followed by a reception at the SUBUD Melbourne Hall. God Bless their life together as a family. (Photo attached: the newly wedded Mr and Mrs Mezzacappa).

Passing away of Renita Keene:

Our lovely sister Renita Keene, (aged 94) from Poowong, beloved mother of Nuraini passed away peacefully on Monday night, 1st February. Renita was the oldest member of Subud Melbourne.

She has been in Subud since 1960. A service of celebration of Renita's life was held on Friday 5th February. Our thoughts and prayers are with Nuraini, Raphael, Loura, Anwar, Sa'id and Sarah at this sad time.

If you wish to communicate with them - address details are as follows : Nuraini and Raphael Magnusson 39 Nyora Road, Poowong, Vic. 3988

SUBUD Melbourne Group Social events:

In December last year Melbourne SICA Rep, Jayadi and Lestari Indonesian Dance Company organised a fantastic Culture Night at the SUBUD Melbourne Hall, which featured wide array of performances from violin, pencak silat, children's balinese dance, improvised contemporary dance in the subud garden, gamelan, tabla, acoustic guitar to accordion and Malaysian and Indonesian bands. The performers were a mix of SUBUD and non SUBUD people. It was a very special night, one to be remembered by all.

Love,
Frederika

Helpers visit Poowong for the funeral of Renita

The night before the funeral, Nuraini Magnusson was wondering aloud if any Subud old timers would attend her mother Renita's funeral. Renita was born in 1915 and was our oldest and cherished member who left her home in New Zealand to live near her daughter's family in Poowong, outside of Melbourne.

Renita has many friends all over Australia and New Zealand. This account is for them.

Poowong is almost a two hour drive from Melbourne and on Friday morning, the 5th of February, it was raining. Anisah, one of Melbourne helpers, was willing to drive, so Halinah and I decided to go with her.

Anisah drove bravely and covered the distance in less than an hour and a half. As we entered the Uniting Church where the funeral was held, young and talented Sa'id Magnusson was playing the piano. His choice of song was 'There is a Greenhill Faraway'.

The church was packed with local church friends of Renita, family and close friends. There were three of us lady helpers, and three young members from Melbourne, Rowland, Muchtar and Lucinda Y. I was delighted to see friends of Anwar and Sa'id supporting the boys in their time of grief.

The prayers and the hymns sung were so gentle and peaceful, just as Renita was in her life. The Service was sweet, the words well chosen and simple, just as Renita would have wanted it. Whilst Raphael read a favourite prayer of Renita's, Nuraini read her spontaneously received Eulogy for her beloved mother:

"Gentle Spirit like a Dove
Flying high, ready to
Leave this Earth -
Flown off to a distant Shore"

Later on, this is what Nuraini had to say:

"It occurred to me what a wonderful gift mom had given us all, in the peacefulness and beauty of her passing, that the difference between life and death seemed unnoticeable; that the gentleness of her passing seemed to reflect the truly gentle and dignified way she lived her life, (often through huge adversity and hardship).

On the Friday morning, not long before her funeral, while I was having a quiet time with the Almighty (and with Mum), the words came to me - 'to laugh and be happy amidst the tears'.

Quite simply, just these three things seemed to have been what I should say - anything else I said came as it came".

After the funeral all of us went to the family home to do a latihan. Here is what Nuraini had to say:

"It was wonderful seeing you all there, and that we were able to experience such a beautiful, peaceful and most of all for myself, a gentle latihan for my mum and to feel her presence with us."

We left Poowong with a sense of gratitude to have been able to share in this privileged family occasion of celebrating the life of Renita.

May God bless and keep you dear Renita. Ed.

Subud Templestowe (Melbourne)

Related by Steven Bryson-Haynes:

With my friend Oliver not knowing what to do in the UK, I invited him to come to

Australia and stay with me. The first night I was in Melbourne, I went to latihan. When I got home, he wanted to know where I had been. So I explained to him that I had been to a spiritual organisation called Subud, where we try and live our lives in the right way, in accordance with the Higher Power or God's will.

When I said this, he felt that his coming to Australia would give him a better understanding of life, and that, maybe it was Subud. We talked about Subud for two hours at the end of which he said he wanted to meet the helpers. Within a week he was an applicant. He attended three applicant meetings and he could not think of any questions to ask as he knew this is what he wanted.

Testing showed that he should be opened before World Congress. His opening was alive and there was a harmonious feeling amongst us all. He then realized that his coming to Australia was to receive this grace of the latihan.

He wanted to come to the World Congress. He was a little concerned about his finances, also, the deadline for registration was almost closed. Miraculously, the congress committee informed him that there was a last minute cancellation. On Christmas morning he received an email from Christchurch telling him that he did not have to pay the registration fee as it was all done by the member who cancelled! This was, indeed, a miracle.

So Oliver had the added blessing of attending congress. His latihan took off! He is still staying with me in Melbourne, and joining me in all the latihan I go to. He feels active in the latihan and I am happy that my school friend is now my Subud brother.

Rural and Remote news from Rohana Bourne

My Garden Harvest:

A song of plums

Written by Rohana Bourne.

January.....February... .March

Purple plums promise

Joy....bottled, jammed, jellied, stewed

Swinging, swelling: sweet juice

Amongst the dark leaves.

Our jars are full now

Full of clear, blue skies,

Drenched by golden sun

Goodness of Earth

Stirred with Love.

Hi everyone! I am currently a Rural and Remote Member affiliated with Subud Melbourne and living in Kilmore, Victoria about an hour's drive north from the Melbourne CBD.

Rohana Fraval asked me to tell you something about Family Bourne, as we are part of a small group of Rural Remote Members in Eastern Australia, who recently responded to our Committee Councillor Muhsin's urgent call for help in updating our R & R Mailing List and possibly other matters we have discussed with him. It was only a small number, because all the other emails bounced back! The four who replied are from Queensland, Northern NSW, rural ACT and Victoria – we are calling ourselves The Rural and Remote Circle and hope to continue discussions with each other to improve the R and R situation. It was such a joy to find each other in cyberspace.

Ian and I are responding, at Muhsin's request, by updating Rural and Remote members telephone, postal and email addresses in Victoria. It is a trial project. If you know any R and R members in Victoria who would like to begin or continue to receive Subud information by any means, would you please ask them to contact: Ian and Rohana Bourne, 9 Fitzroy Street, Kilmore, Victoria 3764. Telephone: (03) 5782 0191. Email <ibourne@iprimus.com.au>

Or if more convenient, contact your closest Group Chairperson. Naturally, we hope to work closely with the Dewan and our new Chairwoman and Committee.

So to explain why we are interested in remoteness and rural Australia and why we are so thankful for the latihan, here are a few of those memories:

Ian and I began our married life in Armidale, N.S.W., where we had lived as University students for many years. Armidale is a small country town on the New England Tablelands in northern New South Wales: the University is 3 miles to the west of the town. Ian, (from The Blue Mountains), so totally overwhelmed by the creative beauty of the Universe, had become a physicist and was guided into research by his then Professor, the late Dr. Sommerville, who insisted he do an Honours Year in Mathematics as well as an Honours Year in Physics before completing his M.Sc and Ph.D. UNE was part of Sydney University in those days, becoming independent in my last year there.

Ian had begun his student days at Uni. in 1951, I (from Sydney) commenced at Uni. 1953, hoping to become an English and French teacher, but in the end, became Ian's personal secretary instead! The New England University College was residential. We

first met at dinner one night. Four years later, Ian and I with our two children, sailed on board "The Arcadia" for Canada on 1st January, 1963 – our two beautiful children had been born in the Armidale and District Hospital: first a daughter, Hazel Faith (her later Subud name "Renee") and then a son, Michael Peter (his later Subud name "Lokman"). Ian had gained a position as Research Scientist for Canadian Defence Research. Despite loving Canada, we were both desperately homesick for Australia - and after organising a very successful international conference, Ian accepted a position with Melbourne University in the RAAF Physics Department. He was the only member of staff in that department actually employed by Melbourne University. After three weeks in Parkville we found a rented flat in Toorak, where we remained for 8 years, Ian was doing all sorts of wonderful research involving very long hours: ionospheric studies and then in the Lower Boundary Layer, including inventing a Doppler radar to collect more accurate data.

I have always loved reading and writing poetry and wrote "My Garden Harvest" after making our last batch of plum jam in our first home of our own. This was Nunawading, 1985. It was here in this garden where my darling mother, Winifred, had spent much of the last three months of her life. Tall gum trees down one side shaded a lawn. A small rose garden flourished, a huge Fuchsia which had become a tree, shaded an outdoor table where we Winifred and I – and sometimes a Subud friend, often had lunch. A small sleep-out was at the end of the garden and six plum trees enjoyed the radiant heat from the tin roof. Winifred died in February, 1981 praying for Peace in the world, surrounded by the latihan. Thank you so much to Halimah Armytage and other dear Subud helpers, for those visits to Winifred during that time, and to all my brothers and sisters in Subud Melbourne now, at that time and ever since I was opened at 99 Alma Road, St Kilda on 5th April, 1968! Not to be forgotten: going as a group from Subud Melbourne to the World Congress in Jakarta in 1971! What an incredible blessing! It was our dearest Sandra Fraval, who first received to test with me some months after Winifred's death, about working on the Subud Archives. I had qualified as a Librarian by then, but hadn't given a thought to archive work – which was to be so amazing and such a joy! I was later summoned to Sydney to test further re the Archives work with Moira Isaacs – wonderful support as we built up the national Archives, was asked to speak at a Zone Meeting at Wisma Subud and fund-raised for Bapak's Talks on microfilm - and then there was that amazing experience at our national congress at Greenhills with the national helper testing – men and women national helpers simultaneously and I with Helen Hale, Hassanah van Sommers and one other: was it Rhea Dempsey? All such amazing stuff. December 1985. Ian, who was now Reader in Physics at Melbourne University, was transferred to Canberra along with the RAAF Physics Department. Together with Duntroon Physics Department, they were given the task of founding the Physics Department at the newly established Australian Defence Force Academy, under the aegis of the University of N.S.W. – Ian was now appointed Associate Professor, School of Physics of the University of N.S.W at ADFA. It wasn't easy owing to a dearth of trained technical staff in Canberra.

Ian and I quickly found a lovely home in Giralang in Canberra. Following my dear father's death in Canberra, I found work as a school librarian at a nearby college for 17 and 18 year olds, to help pay for it! The houses in Canberra were then much more expensive than those in Melbourne. My small contribution tipped the balance and we owned our new home in Canberra! Now I learned to drive and bought my own second hand car. What was so wonderful for me was that I could now get to group latihan independently and was able to see the group grow from strength to strength, while

continuing my abiding interest in our Subud Archives, as well as holding and learning from various committee positions, such as Secretary and Susila Dharma Officer, as before. Michael and I were able to go together to the World Congress held at Sydney University in 1989, but only for one week as it turned out. I gave my place to Aisah Parker. Leonard had recently died and she had been unable to register for Congress. My visit to Wisma Subud in 1990 at the request of Daniela Moneta was another amazing experience. Thank you Daniela! It was Bapak's 1000th Day Selamatan. Our daughter, Renee, married Andrew Clarke in December, 1984. (Thank you so much to Simone and Des Melder, Anwar and Latifah Slade and our late Harlinah Firestone -was Hamer- for coming to their wedding so far away from the city.) Their Lutheran Pastor consecrated an area of the land there, so that they could be married in a Green Cathedral of Eucalyptus. It was so beautiful! It was also to be a very challenging assignment for our daughter. We had to leave her in her little tin pioneer cottage, bearing and rearing two small children while she and Andrew built "The House and Workshop"! Andrew also had to work full time in the City as an enginee. Andrew also had to spend weeks away on two business trips, one to Japan and one to Europe, so she was left to her own resources. She is officially a joint Owner/Builder of this project! Evenso, she managed to found the Tallarook Play Group, helped found The Friends of Tallarook Ranges (which became the local Landcare Group), has taken part in various community projects, especially enjoyed a Women's Health project and spent some years as a Scout Leader. Money was always very tight, so when the children were old enough she managed to find employment at Puckapunyal Army Base. This provided some funds for developing the property, now called "Koongarra" (an aboriginal word for the sound of birdwings beating, as they prepare to launch into the air). "Koongarra" is still an ongoing project – the family loves it: as a first generation Australian, it has enriched my life. Renee has been in the Department of Defence since 1993 – more recently based in the Melbourne offices: one of the many Australian unsung heroes: she works unspeakably long hours for the sake of our brave lads.

This was my first insight into the need for a network of Remote and Rural Subud members. Thank you so much to Miriam Karin for such timely kejiwaan support for Renee by telephone when Naomi was a baby in the Bush!

The recent bushfires in Kilmore East were a vivid reminder that we need to be in touch with each other. On that strangely ominous morning last year (7th February) the town of Kilmore as well as the Broadford and Tallarook districts came so close to being destroyed. Thanks to a wind change, we were saved from the encroaching flames. It was that same day that I received the news that Ian had been diagnosed at the John Fawcner Hospital in Sydney with Acute Myelogenous Leukemia (bone marrow cancer). I think I was in latihan on and off for most of the day. Renee had taken leave to transport Ian to and from the Basal Cell Carcinomas involving long treatments in the previous year. She was able to take further leave (from her long service leave entitlement) for the long months of chemotherapy in the Austin Hospital. I would like to thank, from the bottom of my heart, our darling daughter, our beautiful son and the Subud Melbourne helpers so much for their support while I was having operations myself, during Ian's long years of pain with cancer and in the recent loss of my brother, Peter.

Kilmore, by the way, is from the Gaelic language and means "Great Church". It was named after William Rutledge's home town in Ireland in 1849. May God bless the community here as the years flow by.

**Sent by Rohana Bourne
Kilmore**

PERTH GROUP

Due to holidays and a very large Group representation at World Congress in Christchurch, numbers have been reduced at our usual Sunday gatherings in January, as more than half of our regular members had flown across the continent to New Zealand.

By the last Sunday in January most people were back, and after simultaneous Latihan we gathered to share our personal highlights of Congress. This was a very confirming and bonding experience. Those who had not been fortunate enough to travel also felt included by the stories of what is clearly the highlight in the Subud calendar. Many references were made to the wonderful venue, with all session spaces in close proximity and large twice daily Latihans held in an opened out room that was big enough to cover 6 tennis courts.

Ibu Rahayu's numerous talks and Kedjiwaan sessions were clear favourites, and reported as very uplifting and spiritually nurturing. Those who were Helpers spent much of their time in testing sessions, while others attended the many workshops, plenary sessions and working groups. The very large number of simultaneous sessions made choice difficult, although repeat sessions of the most popular workshops gave us second and third chances.

Also mentioned more than once was:

- The large opening session, with 31 different nations standing, each in turn to be welcomed.
- The world standard of Performing Artists in Subud was recognisable at the symphony concert with Subud soloist vocalist and pianist, and an 80 voice Subud Choir gathered from around the globe.
- The video shown by Alexandra Asseilly on Forgiveness and the establishment of a Peace Garden in Beirut, and then associated Peace Testing sessions.
- The innovative work undertaken by Hermione Elliot on work with the dying and support of relatives.

Several videos have been brought back and will be shown in coming months to continue the sharing from World Congress.

Perth numbers have swelled over the time of Congress with a number of young members opened. We warmly welcome:

- Elliott, son of Amalia G.
- Bethia B, daughter of Alfiah and Simon B.
- Kamil, son of Salim I.
- Raphaela B, daughter Howard and Aisah B.

- Hurun T, son of Deena D. and step-son of Emmanuel D, and opened in the last 6 months.

Although Perth is seen as having an aging Subud population, within the next 10 years the demographics are likely to substantially change, with many Youth soon to be opened to add to these recently opened. On Sunday 31 January a group of 16 Subud Youth, parents and friends went indoor rock climbing and had great fun. After the 'up' a handful went for more challenge - this time 'down' at "The Cliffs", a hefty drop off cliffs into the deep river at a secluded panoramic spot. Just time for a few drops, somersaults, whatever took your fancy, before going home for tea.

ANNOUNCEMENT

There has been a request from Muti Lee and Indra v Hien (Ibu Rahaju's family), that questions asked by Ibu Rahaju at Congress **not** be tested by helpers at group level.

From Indra van Hien:

I spoke to Muti and Ibu Rahayu this morning and Muti explained about getting an e-mail about testing from you. Just to let you know that although the tape unit recorded the testing sessions, they are not to release them, as Bapak used to say that " to avoid people ask the same testing questions among themselves (without Bapak or Ibu)".

The words or questions put forward by Bapak and Ibu will not give the same impact to people if those words are asked by helpers. I hope I have explained this clearly.

As helpers we should not copy those questions. The words will flow into helpers' mouths from God, when He has chosen the helpers as His chanel. Ibu does not copy Bapak's words. She gets those questions from Almighty God.

Indrawati van Hien

Two Gifts in a Single Wall Hanging ...

One for Rungan Sari...and One for Christchurch

Throughout Congress, many members worked to complete a stunning four metre long wall hanging, using pieces of material brought from around the world.

Isti Jenkins, who organised the project, wanted to raise \$3,000 to employ a sewing teacher in Rungan Sari to teach women from nearby villages to create saleable products.

But there was also a desire to present the wall hanging to the Christchurch Group to decorate their new latihan hall and to thank them for hosting the Congress.

So, it was decided to do both.

The Wall Hanging was 'walked' onto the stage at the end of the Closing Ceremony and collecting boxes were passed around. The amount raised was the amount needed, \$3,000.

Then the wall hanging was presented by Isti to Maynard MacDonald, the Chairman of the Christchurch Group as a thankyou from everyone.

Peter Jenkins



WOLLONGONG

Hi Everyone,

Just to advise that following our recent AGM the new Chair of Subud Wollongong and therefore the new contact person is:

Les Thomas

lesliethomas1@bigpond.com

Could I ask that I be removed from the listserver and Les added as the new Council member.

Many thanks and best regards to all.....

Bradford.

Bradford Temple.

Outgoing Chair, Subud Wollongong.

INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (ICDP)

Subud World Congresses always have such a rich selection of events that it is not at all easy for me to know where I belong. I am interested in so many things. Having lived in many countries it was great to connect with many friends.

I am very grateful to Halimah Russ for helping me to organise the celebration for Ludwig's 1000 days and for Harry Armitage who was National Helper with Ludwig for conducting the service. It was such a loving event. It was amazing for me to see that Ludwig was remembered mainly for his inner strength and hidden qualities. It was indeed a celebration of love.

It was great to see Ruqman Hundeide, the founder of ICDP, (International Child Development Program) and Lailah Armstrong, the chief trainer. Although they arrived fairly late during the Congress, they were able to bond with so many people and establish precious contacts. According to a research within Susila Dharma, ICDP reaches most human beings of all SD Programs. They reckon maybe 2 million people in the world. That is still a small number when we see the tremendous needs.

Trying to plan ICDP Australia for 2010 - we will have to find out how far our trainees have come with their activities preparing for their diplomas. Our first ICDP Management Meeting will take place on February 24. On March 14 there will be the Morningside Care AGM meeting which we will attend as we are a project under Morningside Care.

Dr Rachman Mitchell who is part of a Mobile Medical Clinic in Perth has told me that the Clinic has expressed their interest in ICDP. They place their van in different shopping centres to be available for aboriginal people's health needs. We see many ways we could work together. Rachman will also contact Bavali who works with the Government Child Protection Agency in Perth and is preparing for her ICDP Diploma. One thing we could investigate is whether SIHA could also become a "Project Under Morningside Care" like ICDP and SINE CERA to profit from the Charitable Status of Morningside Care.

I feel that 2010 could become a busy year for the ICDP team. Therefore I am putting my waiting time in getting my health in top gear and organise my office as well as possible. I also talk about ICDP when people are asking me what I am doing. I met a businessman yesterday. He asked me what I do for a living. I told him about ICDP. I told him that it is a system to raise children in a more loving way. He told me how he loves his two little girls. I said to him that it is important to watch what a child brings and to give it time when it has questions. Or when a father comes home and the child is happy to see him and has lots to tell him not to ask it to come later because you are tired now. You could explain that daddy wants to freshen up to smell good first. The man understood and said that is where we make mistakes.

Please contact me if you would like to become part of the next course. We have one young members in Alice Springs who works with Aboriginal families. She even takes mothers shopping to show them how to buy healthy. She would like to be part of the next course. Not everybody has to become a trainer. Young mothers or future mothers, teachers, child care professionals, even fathers would profit from a course tremendously. It is all about creating happy and confident adults.

With my very best wishes
Renee Goetz
ICDP Australia

NEWS FROM KALIMANTAN

Harris Smart writes from Rungan Sari where he is teaching English at BCU school...

I was eating my dinner one night at Congress in Christchurch when I was approached by a friend who asked me if I would make an announcement.

I was reluctant. I never think these announcements at dinner time are a good idea. People do not like them. They interrupt the meal. They disrupt conversations.

(In fact, I am greatly in favour of the suggestion that at future congresses, there should be “town crier” moments during the day, when we can gather at specified times and places to hear all those last minute announcements.)

Anyway, the announcement I was asked to make was that the BCU School in Rungan Sari desperately needed a teacher for the coming term, scheduled to begin right after Congress. Was it just to wriggle out of having to make an announcement that I said I would go?

Well, not entirely. On my very first day in Christchurch, I was innocently walking past the Convention Centre when I was bushwacked by Congress TV. They trust a microphone in my face and asked, “Why have you come to Congress?”

In my confusion I blurted out, “I want a new life.”

Indeed, I was hoping for something new to come out of this congress. I was hoping I would find a place working in a Subud project. I hadn't thought of BCU school because I had been under the mistaken impression that the volunteers at the school were all young people.

But on the contrary, the school welcomes us seniors with our skills and life experience.

So I got together with Karim MacDonald from the school and we talked about it, and tested about it, and it all seemed positive. Of course they were going to be a few issues about leaving home to go to Kalimantan at such short notice, but I felt they could be handled.

Fortunately, when I returned home from Congress my wife was supportive of the idea and that is why I find myself in Rungan Sari,

just a couple of weeks after Congress, teaching English at BCU school. I don't quite believe it, but when I look out of my window there is an unfamiliar landscape and so I suppose it must be true.

I am at the start of the process of learning what it is like to live in Rungan Sari and to teach at the school and perhaps come to some deeper understanding of what this whole "Kalimantan thing" is all about. What I can say so far is that I have been made to feel very welcome...

MY HOUSE

I have a very nice house all to myself. It is a Western-style house with two bedrooms and a living room kitchen area, a bathroom, and a verandah (enclosed by mosquito netting as mosquitoes are a problem here).

I feel like a little king with all this to myself. It is very nicely furnished and very attractive inside, with lots of exposed local wood on bench tops, doors etc.

There is no hot water, as you do not really need it for bathing, as it is so hot. There is a shower. It means that to wash the dishes you have to boil the kettle. There is a gas stove fuelled by a gas tank.

The house is a very pleasant environment. I sleep in one room which has a double bed and I use the other room as an office from where I am writing you this.

Various air-conditioning but you can only use it to a fairly limited extent because electricity is extremely expensive. So you rely as much as you can on fans and just use the air-conditioning for special treats.

I have a maid. She comes each morning and cleans up and does my washing. You have to change your clothes several times a day what with all the sweating etc.

I can also send her on little errands such as yesterday I wanted to get some bananas so I sent her off to buy bananas. I would not know where to go to buy them and also I would not know the proper price or how to bargain for them and would get ripped off at the market and be a figure of ridicule.

The only meal I have to make for myself is breakfast because the school where I teach provides the other ones. I have lunch there and also they bring me my evening meal.. Food appears in my house as if by magic.

THE SCHOOL

Every morning now I go down to the school. School begins at eight o'clock. I do not have a very heavy teaching load. They are easing me into it. Most days I only have one or two classes in the morning.

This teaching to small children is a new experience for me and I never had any training for it. I have previously taught at university level but that is a whole different thing. At university it is mostly an intellectual exercise and it is expected that the students are responsible for themselves. If they do not want to learn, it is too bad for them.

But at this level, junior high school, students are of course much more dependent on you and you have to nurture and motivate them. It is much more of a holistic sort of relationship than just an intellectual one.

So I'm feeling my way into this and trying to establish good rapport with the students.

This is a special school in that the teaching is all done in English. The children are polite and friendly. In this school the aim is to make the children feel valued and esteemed and to learn by loving learning.

In the middle of the morning we have a snack which is usually something quite delicious such as a fried banana or a little samosa type thing, meat and vegetables in a pastry casing.

We also have lunch together. And this is also very good. One day we had spaghetti bolognese and it was excellent. And the next day we had an Indonesian soup. With it came rice and a kind of delicious cracker with peanuts embedded in it.

That's enough for now. I'll write more another time. And if you too, young or old, feel like volunteering at BCU, you can contact Karim MacDonald on karstenmacdonald@hotmail.com

LAST BUT NOT LEAST, WORDS FROM BAPAK:

That is why Bapak always suggests you should be in harmony with other people. For in fact, in Subud, you will spontaneously and without prompting, feel a family bond between you, even if you are not of the same nationality. If a person is feeling upset, you will be able to feel it; you will feel upset too. And if another person is full of joy and his life is happy, you too will feel joyful and happy. So it is clear that it is very necessary for every human being to be united with others in order to be able to worship God.