

We began our missionary career in 1967 with a couple from Seattle, Washington by the name of Ron & Nita Berglund. Ron was a design engineer for Boeing Aircraft and worked on the development of the 727, 737, and 747 aircrafts, all of which we have flown on many times through the years. Nita was the head nurse on the floor of a large hospital. They, and their four children surrendered to missions and lived across the hall from us in the dormitory of a missionary training center where we all had to use men's and women's bathrooms at the end of the hall, and hand carry any water we used for cooking in our room, which for us was 11 ft. x 18 ft, to a disposal well 100 yards behind our building.

We soon learned how much water we use in a day, and it prepared us for our years in Indonesia when we had to hand pump every drop of water we used up into two 55 gal. drums on a stand where it could then gravity fall into the different spigots in our rented house. With only 300 watts of electricity, we had a kerosene refrigerator and a kerosene stove.

That pre-field training was a long nine months in freezing Wisconsin, which ended up being good training for our five winters in Russia. That summer we were submitted to six weeks of survival training in the thick woods of northern Wisconsin where it rained three out of five days the whole six weeks we were in woods where the mosquitos were larger and more aggressive than anything we ever encountered in Borneo.

Selva came down with the measles in our jungle lean-to as I was leaving with all the other men on a three-day survival canoe trip over some of the most treacherous rapids in this country. It had rained for twelve days and was still raining when we boarded our canoes. In the very first rapids we had a Mirror canoe turn inside out against a tree and lost most of our camping gear and some paddles, so it really did end up being three days of "survival" with no communications or contact with the outside world. Most of our time in Borneo we had no contact with the outside world; and with no GPS back then, we almost never knew where we were in that uncharted territory.

PUNAN TRANSLATION

That experience prepared me for some terrible rapids in Borneo where our missionary friends are still laboring in those rain forests. Before we made the first survey trip into that Punan area, we were told out on the coast by nationals, that the indigenous language group living there, whom we came to know as the Punan People, had tiny tails and were a breed of monkey, because only monkeys could survive where those people live. Now there is a church there and our co-worker's daughter Rachel Searcy, who is very much like a niece to us, continues work on the New Testament translation in the Punan language.

That original missionary training we received helped us appreciate all the more Selva's father's training as an Army Ranger and his being given the assignment of scaling the cliffs on Omaha Beach during the Normandy invasion, where he was shot in the arm inches from his heart. He was later parachuted behind the German lines and lived to be 86. We also appreciate our daughter Angela's husband's training as an Army Ranger and the dangerous assignments he has been given in Iraq and Afghanistan. Both men had unbelievable training before being commissioned.

Most of all we appreciate our Lord's honoring us with the opportunity to serve for many years next to a number of missionaries who have served as Rangers in the King's Army, making contact with and reaching primitive people groups who had previously not had any contact with the outside world and never heard the name of Jesus. Our real heroes are those who have done a translation of the New Testament into previously unwritten languages. Seven of those couples, for which we did all of the survey and staging to help them get into Islamic Indonesia, get their national language training, and get set up in their language group, have completed their translation of the New Testament.

JUNE 25, 2017

Days prior to June 25 hundreds of Semandang Language people of Borneo will be hiking in over muddy trails from villages hours and even days away to be a part of a dedication of their New Testament translation's completion. I have been to the celebrations of previous translations and there is no greater rush and thrill of heart than to see people singing, smiling, laughing, and jumping with joy as they hold a newly printed New Testament with both hands and kiss the cover of God's Word in their heart language, which they understand perfectly. As they press that new translation to their chest tears well up in their eyes. The celebration will be attended by our partners Ron & Nita Berglund, who have continued to go back and forth to Indonesia, and their oldest daughter Darcy, who still lives and works with the Semandang people and has done most of the translation work. Also in attendance will be Indonesian nationals representing the Indonesian organization which we helped to form back in the early 70's.

While celebrating the 40th anniversary of that National organization, which was able to sponsor all of us missionaries into that Moslem country, Selva and I were able to visit the Semandang area in May of 2011 when, rather than hiking in, we were able to fly in with a mission plane, and talk with some of the original men who had been willing to receive us during

our first survey into that area in 1972. They talked about their original fear of our tall frames and white bodies and their amazement in seeing their first chain saw and their first outboard motor. Ron Berglund was the first human they ever saw who was bald headed and had a lot of hair on his arms. They probably thought WE were some kind of monkey, especially when they saw us blow our noses into a piece of cloth and keep it in our pocket rather than wiping it on a tree. Now the church there is very strong, and through the years has sent their own missionaries to many surrounding areas, while those left behind agree to care for their pigs, chickens, and gardens while they are gone.

MISSIONARY LEADERSHIP

The Berglund's oldest son Doug provides leadership for our missionaries in Indonesia and preaches in the Indonesian national language so well that the nationals say his grammar and vocabulary are better than most Indonesian pastors. The Berglund's second son Greg has made a successful contact and church plant with a very isolated tribe on another island, but he is presently helping with the training of new missionaries who first arrive in Indonesia. Most of the 115 missionary families we helped to get started in Indonesia are retired, but many of their children continue on there, and we have had some of their grandchildren go to China with us.

There is no greater hero in our eyes than a missionary who has the God given talent, heart, devotion, and patience to put God's Holy Word into the language of a people group which has never had it before. One of the couples we helped to get started in Indonesia, Bob & Cecilia Brown, are still out there working on translation and helping new people with the BMW mission we presently represent to get started in their area. BMW has a goal of placing 20 new missionaries in Indonesia during these coming years, so that is another burden for which we are hoping to recruit new people, and which some of our China interns will hopefully consider in the days ahead, once they finish their education.

MARCH 26, 2017

Since our last report regarding our March 6 departure from Egypt and the bombings which took place two days later on the Egyptian border on which we crossed, we were naturally shocked to hear about the March 26 bombings of Coptic Churches in Tanta and Alexandria, Egypt, where 49 and 22 people were killed and tens of others seriously injured as they worshiped in church on Palm Sunday. We are so thankful that our present government has been able to very quickly establish a close relationship with Egypt, where our Lord spent His earliest years. We saw the well in Cairo from which Joseph and Mary drew water for their baby Jesus. Across that Egyptian border we have seen our very first US president pray for peace at the Wailing Wall. May all of us be praying for the Christians in Egypt and the efforts that our missionary friends and others are making in that country these days.

MAY 20, 2017

May 20th we were invited to what they called a missionary reunion about 60 miles from our home in South Carolina, where we were able to renew acquaintances with four couples who all worked with us at least ten of the twenty years we focused on Indonesia. It was like old army war buddies getting together to share stories about their survival on the front lines of spiritual warfare. One couple was one of our pilots and airplane mechanic for more than ten years. It was so wonderful to be able to share stories of how the Lord saved lives, including our own, to show His grace and mercy on so many occasions when we really thought we would not survive the situation in which we found ourselves.

Our mission only had a single engine Cessna 185 and the rule was that the pilot was never to fly out over the ocean further than he would be able to coast back to shore were the engine to quit or malfunction. But on one occasion we had one co-worker with a broken back and ribs, and another one with a badly broken leg and compressed vertebrae, when they were hit by a falling tree in July of 1984. The closest place to get them the help they needed was in Singapore, 392 miles of ocean away. That was just one story that was told by the pilot and one of those two injured men during our hours together May 20. One of the injured man's parents lived just two miles from where we live today here in Anderson, SC, but we never visited this town until three years after that accident. Those parents had been calling for updates on their son in the middle of our night over there, which was mid-afternoon for them here in South Carolina, 12 time zones away.

JUNE 6, 2017

June 6 we met in the home of our very first pilot in Indonesia, Ken Simmelink and his wife Lee, where we pulled out the old maps, and reviewed our first air survey of Borneo to look for people groups who had no translation, no church, no believers, and no contact with the outside world. We and the Simmelinks were the only westerners living in the coastal city of Pontianak, West Borneo at that time, where all the buildings were built on stilts along the banks of the mighty Kapus River, which was the highway into the western half of Borneo. Most Indonesian cities had a very small percentage of ethnic Chinese, but Pontianak was made up of 80% Chinese.

MAY 25, 2017

May 25 we spent a night with the Russian lady who was the individual who helped us get a start in Russia January 25, 1990, when there were no Americans living in what was then Leningrad. Only years later did we find out that her father was a high-ranking KGB man, who used his influence to help us move over there. We were also able to see her 86 year old mother who was in the US at the time of our visit. That dear lady had mothered us during our five years in Russia when we were all in survival mode since there was very little food available on the open market during our first two years there.

They are ethnic Ukrainians so they told us that on February 27, 1954 (when I was nine years old), Russia's Nikita Khrushchev put the USSR's Crimea under the jurisdiction of their state of Ukraine for convenience, because the Russians were building a hydro-electric dam on the Dnieper River and they wanted the project to be under Ukraine's nearby administration, as a state in the Soviet Union, just like states in our own USA, which we have annexed into our United States union. Even when we lived in the USSR we needed no passport or paperwork to go to the Ukraine, because it was just another state.

To this day the Crimea is mostly ethnic Russians who desperately want to remain part of Russia, because their area is one of the favorite resort areas that all Russians like to visit, and many of them work with Russia's most important sea port there. In fact, it was in the Crimea that our Russian friends were vacationing when the father died of a heart attack while sleeping on the beach after a long swim. The ethnic Ukrainians in other parts of the Ukraine have desired to break away from the USSR, like Texas would like to do here in the US, but the Russians living in the Crimea still want to remain a part of Russia, and they have even voted to that end.

Our friend asked us if we knew that while she was Secretary of State Hillary Clinton signed off on a transaction that gave Russia a 20% stake in our American stockpile of uranium, and that Uranium One made two million dollars in donations to the Clinton Foundation, after which Bill Clinton made a Moscow speech for a half million-dollar payoff. We had not heard anything in our news about that, so we could only sit in silence since we did not know what to say. She then reminded us that Stalin was one of the worst individuals who ever lived, but our president Roosevelt befriended him to fight against an even more evil devil in the person of Adolph Hitler. Now America has another common enemy with Russia in ISIS.

MAY 28, 2017

May 28 we were in Rhode Island for the wedding of one of the two sons of a Lithuanian couple, who are related to my Kweder (Kvedaras in Lithuanian) family. When we did the original survey into that country to help a missionary friend get started there in December of 1991, we met these relatives, and later helped them as a family of four, to legally immigrate to America. It took years of work on the part of my cousin Jean in Rhode Island, who at the time was a city mayor because we wanted to do it the "right" way, like our grandparents did when they came through Ellis Island.

The Lithuanian language is related to Sanskrit, a classical language of India, Latin, and ancient Greek, and it is the oldest surviving Indo/European language, and the oldest living language. It has no relation to the Slavic languages around it like Russian and Polish and it has preserved the most phonetical and morphological aspects of the proto-language which many other European languages come from.

The Lithuanians have always been at war with Russia, and for many years they have been under the heel of the Russia boot, even though Lithuania once conquered land all the way to Moscow and down to the Black Sea. Lithuania is an island nation which is Catholic rather than Russian Orthodox, and they use the Roman Letters rather than the Cyrillic alphabet that a Jesuit missionary developed for the Russians. The Russians became Russian Orthodox in 988 when King Vladimir the Great in Kiev, Ukraine ordered everyone down to the river to be baptized, and Christianity spread up through the Russian kingdom. Our American missionary friend in Lithuania, Eric Chapman who is sent out by one of our supporting churches, Morningside Baptist, has planted a strong church in the part of Lithuania where both my grandmother and grandfather were born and raised.

JUNE 29, 2017

Thursday, June 29, Selva and I, and 38 young people, will gather at JFK in New York to catch our Boeing 777, China Southern 16-hour non-stop flight, of 7,986 miles, to Guangzhou, (old Canton) southeast China. We will be 1,288 miles from the rocket launch pad of the crazy man in North Korea, and feeling very safe from him and any potential terrorists who might show up, since China guards every inch of her border very carefully and they stand ready to squash North Korea like a bug. We have taken a Chinese boat across the river border between China and North Korea that is not very wide, and we were close enough to watch the North Koreans walking around. The Chinese have no fear of North Korea, which was once a thriving Mecca of Christianity, but today just possessing a Bible will bring imprisonment with hard labor and torture.

China makes no apologies for racially profiling and scrutinizing very closely anyone coming to their border who looks anything like someone from the Middle East, and they keep a close eye on them, since they are easy to pick out of a crowd of Chinese faces. We are so relieved and thankful that our present government has a good relationship with China. We should be safer in southeast China than we would be were we to remain here in the States.

FUTURE TRANSLATION

One of our dreams for any of our China Interns this summer or in past summers, who have the ability and heart to do so, is that they would develop a vision and burden to do a translation of the Bible into one of the more than 50 languages in China which still do not have so much as a New Testament in their language. For those language groups to have a church with believers who are growing in their faith in the Lord, they desperately need God's Holy Word in their heart language. A linguistically inclined person could potentially get a job teaching English in a city or town near where some of the tribal people come down out of the mountains to get special supplies; and with regular visits from those informants, a teacher could gather material they need to do a translation.

Please Pray for Darcy Berglund and her family as they celebrate with the Semandang people on June 25 that there will be those who are saved through this dedication service.

Please pray for Rachel Searcy as she continues her difficult work on the Punan Bible translation.

Please Pray for Bob and Cecelia Brown's work on their translation in Sulawesi, and their need of 20 new missionaries to help them with surrounding language groups in their mountains.

Please Pray for potential translators who will develop the heart and burden to work on translations of Chinese languages which are still without the scriptures in their language.

Please Pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in Egypt and our missionary brethren from our organization who are going in to that dangerous area to give doctrinal teaching.

Please pray for our Christian brothers and sisters in North Korea, where they are imprisoned and tortured for nothing more than having a Bible in their possession.

Please pray for traveling mercies and protection of our 41-member American China Team.

Please pray that there will be souls saved and that our interns will develop a burden for translation and other types of ministry during these coming weeks.

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