

## May 2011

A Blessed Easter Season - it continues - to you!

Shortly before Easter I read an article by Tomas Munita on the New York Times website. It said, "Stroll through this city (Paramaribo, Suriname), perched between jungle and sea, and Suriname's past as a Dutch colony comes into view: stately wooden white mansions, Lutheran churches, street names with vast streams of consonants and vowels (try Zwartenhovenbrugstraat on for size.) But the colorful minibuses gliding through Paramaribo's streets show a different side of the



evolution of this astonishingly diverse South American country. Drivers adorn these 'wilde bussen' with hand-painted illustrations of the heroes, outlaws, religious temples and musical subcultures that beguile this nation, home to an ethnic variety that includes Javanese, Indians, Chinese, indigenous groups, mixed-race Creoles and Maroons, descendants of runaway slaves." (April 1, 2011)

On that same day I was sitting along side the road in Paramaribo waiting for a friend. Of course I was watching the buses go by but this time I was paying closer attention to what was written on each one. I saw "Give God all the glory!, Only God can move me - oh yeah and the mountains! Give God a chance." Because it was Holy Week after some moments my attention turned to another question. I asked myself how might these buses relate to the resurrection? That seemed to be a stretch but it got me thinking about Easter. And soon my question was "What are the signs of resurrection in Suriname?" When growing up in Wisconsin the signs of spring were the symbols of Christ's resurrection. It seemed so obvious to me -- the snow would melt away, the daffodils would begin to bloom, the grass would turn green, baby sheep and calves were born and we would celebrate Easter. These were all signs and symbols of the resurrection, of new life. But what about in the tropics, in Paramaribo where everyday it is hot and humid?

So I paused a bit longer to reflect on that question. Resurrection, perhaps it could mean the opportunity to take time and sit along side the road and observe closely what is passing by? Could it be that newly painted bus? Could it be the excitement in the voices of the 6 travelers just getting their US Visas to travel with me for 16 days through the Florida - Bahamas Synod and visiting missionary sponsoring congregations and the synod assembly? Could it be in the new Chinese restaurant that just opened its doors with the bright red lanterns and dragon painted flower pots? Could it be in the African mother who wipes off the tears of her daughter after she has just fallen on the curb? Could it be in the bright red fire lobi, hibiscus, frangipani, inpatiens, buttercups that are everywhere all the time in Suriname? Could it be in the three children that were baptized and the 10 students that were confirmed in April in the Lutheran Church? Could it be in the rhythms and singing of the "Brothers in Christ" at our worship services? Could it be in the ice cream cone that I just consumed?

Well now I may be stretching the meaning of resurrection just a little bit. However these things all bring a smile to my face, lighten up my day and bring freshness in the air I am breathing. It is in the everyday sights, sounds, smells and yes tastes that I often take for granted but are the signs of the story of Christ's resurrection in Suriname.

Thank God for them, thank God for you.

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