



# Mission News

Mission Activities of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Volume 12 – August 25, 2017

## Mission Work in Indonesia

*Behold, children are a heritage from the LORD, the fruit of the womb a reward. (Psalm 127:3)*



With great thankfulness to the Giver of Life we are thrilled to announce the birth of our son and brother Aizaach Ben Jan Dethan. Aizaach was born on the fourth of April by c-section without any complications, an answer to prayer! Unfortunately there have been a few health issues since, the latest being a respiratory virus that turned into pneumonia. We are thankful to receive appropriate care for this and are thankful to see improvement in his condition. This does mean that we are still in Bali, hopefully not much longer now, as soon as we receive a clean bill of health we hope to return to Kupang.

### New Life Centre

With Aizaach's arrival it seems that our family has become the eighth world wonder! Wherever we go, people do the head count for us, always followed by the amazed question whether they are all ours?! Opa and Oma Dethan had thirteen children, a family size not unusual in those days, yet sadly with the introduction of birth control it is a size unheard of in today's society!

The Indonesian government heavily promotes "KB" which stands for "*keluarga berencana*" (family planning). This program is being projected as a means to diminish poverty. The ideal family according to the family planning organization consists of mom and dad and two children. It is interesting that while this "Family Planning Program" is heavily promoted in the Christian islands; yet we see many large Muslim families, not to mention the practice of polygamy. It raises the question: What is the true aim of this program? To increase the Muslim population and decrease the Christian population by birth? It reminds me of what Pharaoh decreed in the time of Moses (Exodus 1).

### So what do we do about this? Teach and teach. . . but how?

Family planning is very successful in the Christian islands mainly because most of the Christian islands are poor economically speaking but especially lack in terms of education. The latter really plays a huge role in this. Therefore, through the New Life Centre we aim to educate Christian families that new life is a blessing and that it starts at conception.

How do we do this? The pulpit is too limited for these kinds of topics and so we are very thankful that we can work together with STAKRI (The Reformed Theological College in Timor). STAKRI publishes a monthly Reformed Magazine (*Obor Pembaruan*); and through this magazine New Life Centre is able to discuss and shed light on such matters periodically.

In the second edition of *Obor Pembaruan (Reformed Torch)* magazine, New Life Centre submitted an article on the biblical perspective of the use of birth control. In the article the following was covered:

- God's command to fill the earth – Genesis 1:28.
- Children are a blessing! – Psalm 127
- God will provide for our daily needs! – Matthew 6:25-26.
- Economic betterment has nothing to do with family size – Joshua 1:7-8

The Indonesian government has successfully convinced people that children are a burden instead of a blessing. People are made to believe that economic poverty is due to the amount of children they have.

To obtain and/or maintain the “ideal” family of four, women are given free birth control available at all local clinics. Unfortunately, the healthcare providers give very little or no instruction as to how these methods work and the possible side effects.



*Reformed Torch Magazine*

Birth control is not necessarily unbiblical, but it requires careful thought and study as to why couples would want to use birth control, and how the different methods work, especially since certain methods are abortive. The article presented an overview of the various methods of birth control and the possible side effects.

We realize that it takes more than one article in a magazine to change people’s minds, especially those who have been and/or are using birth control for a long time. The government and medical staff practically force this program on families. Despite the governments program to have a health care post at each village, most of these posts are vacant of medical personnel and typically have a very limited assortment of medication.

Yet, a complete birth control program is either available at this health care posts or brought to them with a Mobile Birth Control Bus. Special attention and awards are given to villages that are one hundred percent KB. It is only through the gospel that people will truly be changed; we continue to pray that the Holy Spirit will change their hearts through God’s Word.

Although the OP magazine is a great way to reach people in their homes, yet distribution is limited. The way to reach those living in remote areas is by radio. We are thankful that through our radio station, Sahabat FM, we are able to bring topics such as these to the wider public. During these live shows the topic is presented after which the phone line is opened for questions and comments. Typically the response is great, so many questions and comments come in through sms’s and phone calls. It really shows how much people hunger for information presented from a biblical perspective.



*An Elder reading the Reformed Torch Magazine*

**Feedback**

To keep up with the work in Timor, Ed has made several trips back to Kupang over the last few months. One Sunday after the church service Mr. Dodi (name changed), a congregation member, came up to him and expressed how thankful he was for the recent article in the OP magazine and the live program on the radio. Mr. Dodi and his wife have a family of ten, one of whom is already with the Lord. His large family is often the subject of ridicule by his friends, family, and neighbours. They “jest” about him being ignorant and uneducated, living in the Stone Age. As a fisherman, his income is not always

steady, and often it is hard to make ends meet. In the eyes of his friends and family this “logically” has to do with the many mouths he has to feed! Mr. Dodi describes how he always has such a hard time responding to such comments; he says:

*“I am not ashamed of my children, I love them and enjoy having them around, yes, even if it is hard some times financially, but I have a hard time ‘justifying’ this, the article put the words in my mouth!”*

Mr. Dodi agrees that it is indeed not easy to take care of such a large family, the daily meals being the least worrisome!



*Sahabat FM Radio Show*

It is very challenging for Christian families here to receive guidance in rearing their families in accordance with the Bible. For you in the west, there is an abundance of literature and resources available to help educate and guide Christian parents. Seeing this huge need we try our best to provide biblical instruction through teaching, counselling, writing, translating, and radio programs. So much work to do, and so limited in comparison to the government’s means and access. However small our efforts seem in our own eyes, we trust that the Lord will bring about his purpose. We ask you therefore to continue to pray for the work done here in Timor.

*Please pray for:*

1. Councilors of New Hope
2. Workers of Sahabat FM Radio
3. Authors of *Reformed Torch Magazine* (Obor Pembaruan)
4. Families who are struggling with making decisions regarding the use of birth control.

*Femmy Dethan*







*Beautiful Sunset in Timor*

### ***Message from the Smithville Board of Mission Aid***

*We would like to thank all those who were able to financially and prayerfully remember the work being done in Timor.*

*We have and continue to receive the financial support necessary to continue to support these projects.*

*Please continue to pray for our brothers and sisters in Christ in Indonesia.*

#### **To financially support New Hope:**

All cheques will need to be written to:  
"Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund" Earmarked "New Hope" and mailed to:  
**Canadian Reformed World Relief Fund**  
PO Box 85225, Burlington, ON L7R 4K4

Or donations can be accepted online by following the link below and hitting the "Donate Now" button and selecting "5-New Hope-Timor" <http://www.crwrf.ca/prayers-and-support/donations/> ~  
All donors will receive a receipt for tax purposes~

In Christ,  
*The Board of Mission Aid Timor*

~ Harry Devries, Tammy Blokhuis, Jason Schutten, Timothy Werkman,  
Craig Owersloot, Keith Weilink, John Ravensbergen, Felicia Vandervelde ~