



Mission News

Mission Activities of the Canadian Reformed Churches

Volume 12 – June 16, 2017

Mission Work in Indonesia

For to me, to live is Christ, to die is gain. (Philippians 1:21)



Over the last years, there have been several incidents in various parts of Indonesia where terrorists prepared an attack. Thankfully most of these were prevented as the result of a well working intelligence network. Unfortunately, not all evil was prevented and/or anticipated.

Sahabat 102.7 News 13-12-2016

December 13, the grade five students of the local public elementary school in west Sabu, an island in the NTT province, went to school unsuspecting of the tragedy that would develop later that morning. While school was in session, a Javanese man walked into their classroom holding a knife. He sliced the throats of seven students before he was captured by the police and thrown into the local jail. Following the incident, an explosion of suspicions and theories took form on the social network, stirring up anger, revenge, and anarchism.

An uncontrollable, angry crowd broke through the cell's wall and killed the man. Upon investigation, the police concluded that it was not an act linked to terrorism but that the man suffered from a psychological disorder. Thankfully all the victims survived the incident, but one can imagine the emotional trauma this has left behind for the students, parents, and community.

This evil act struck very close to home; many of the New Hope children have family and friends living in Sabu. It has dented their feeling of security and heightened the alert. However sad that such a tragedy happened, it is, at the same time, a reminder that we cannot and should not have such confidence in life itself, as Christians we live for Christ and to die ought to be considered gain. The New Hope counsellors have been focusing on this during devotions and counselling sessions over the past few weeks. We hope and pray that this will become their motto for life.

Besides daily news on a local, national, and international level Sahabat FM has also started off a new program called "Christianity and Politics." This weekly program is a one hour talk show where local Christian politicians are invited to share their mission and vision. The listeners have the opportunity to call in with their questions and/or advice. The purpose of this program is for the politicians and the people to get to know each other better.

Elpida

With the start of the New Year, things have returned to regular routine both at the home and at the Elpida schools. The second semester of each year is always a time of anticipation and perhaps frustration for the students in Grades 9 and 12, as the national exams loom just around the corner. Not an easy time for the teachers either, preparing the students to successfully complete and pass the exams. Just last week one of the teachers, Mrs. Yohanna, a STAKRI graduate, came over for a chat during which she expressed the sense of being overwhelmed with the enormity of her task as school counsellor and Bible teacher. The Elpida students come from different backgrounds; most are from Christian families, however, often very shallow in understanding and putting God's Word in practice. Upon registering at Elpida, all students sign a document committing themselves to follow all biblical teaching and instruction according to the Reformed doctrine. It is human enough to want to see direct results even though we know that only God can change the heart. Just recently one of the students got into a spill over a boyfriend and decided to drop out of school. Despite intensive counselling she would not change her mind. These kind of situations make it hard for the teachers who put in so much time, love, and effort. It is easy to give up, yet in this as well as Christians

we are comforted that to live is Christ. Mrs. Yohanna also struggles with the fact that many of her family members and friends have such a strong focus on economic betterment and gain in status. She has received many invites to job interviews that would provide much better payment than Elpida can offer at the moment. Tempting, yet she is convinced that God has brought her to Stakri and now Elpida for a reason. . . furthering his Kingdom. Not an easy task; it requires great patience, wisdom, and lots of love to continue to reach out to the students yet we are very thankful to see this kind of commitment in our Elpida teachers. Please pray for teachers, students, and us alike that we all may make and maintain Philippians 1:21 as our life principle.

Family matters

Although very thankful for all the rain we have received so far, there are some side effects. Mosquitoes thrive in this humid weather. Despite government measures to eliminate malaria and dengue fever, there continue to be outbreaks of the feared mosquito born diseases. Just recently one of the New Hope children developed the first signs of dengue fever: high fever, severe headache, and bone pain. A blood test performed at the local health clinic indicated the early start of dengue fever; he was sent home with medication and instructions to take complete bed rest and drink lots of water. Thankfully after a few days the fever subsided and he started feeling better again. No further outbreaks so far in terms of dengue, however there seems to be some sort of bacteria causing infectious boils to go around at New Hope. Although not life threatening, they are extremely painful, limiting daily activities. We hope and pray that through rest, nutrition, and medical care further spread of these diseases can be treated or better yet prevented.

In Christ, Femmy Dethan-Bouwman

Update from New Hope/Smithville Board of Mission Aid

With much thankfulness to our heavenly Father, this past month Rev. Dethan and his wife had a son they named Aizaach. All is well with mother and child, but please pray for healing for sister Dethan and patience as Rev. Dethan travels back and forth between Bali and Timor.



Changes at New Hope

Over the past few years the New Hope board in Canada has been working closely with the Smithville Canadian Reformed Mission Aid board and the Canadian Reformed World Relief fund to streamline the work being

done here in Canada in regards to compliance with the Canadian Revenue Agency and overall administration of the “behind the scenes” work necessary to support the New Hope organization. After much time, work, and prayer the CRWRF has agreed to take on the New Hope Home and the children being cared for in the home as well as those who needed help covering their school fees. We are still responsible for fundraising but all the administration is now under the CRWRF umbrella.



*Sunset
over rice fields
in Timor*

Current needs

We are looking for support to help replace one of the New Hope dormitories. There was extensive termite damage to the existing structure and unfortunately it was further damaged during the rainy season as a wind storm has caused the building to lean and have to be propped up with large boards. We no longer feel it is safe for the children so we are asking for your financial support to get the rebuild off the ground as soon as the rains stop (April/May). We are in need of \$20,000 to fully fund this project. This is in addition to the current New Hope Organization budget of \$32,000. Please consider this project in your donations and most importantly please pray for our brothers and Sisters in Christ in Timor.

All future 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 ~

We wholeheartedly thank you for your past support, and covet your prayers and support as we move forward. If you have any questions please feel free to reach out.

In Christ, The Board of Mission Aid Timor

Harry Devries, Winnie Bos, Jason Schutten,
Timothy Werkman, Craig Owersloot, Keith Weillink, John
Ravensbergen, Felicia Vandervelde



www.merf.org

MERTF News

Middle East Reformed Fellowship—"Declaring the Whole Counsel of God"

May 2017



Caring for Threatened Converts

"Behold, I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves."— Matthew 10:16

«هَآ أَنَا أَرْسَلُكُمْ كَحَمَلَانِ فِي وَسْطِ ذُنَابٍ مُفْتَرِسَةٍ،
فَكُونُوا حُكَمَاءَ كَالْحَيَّاتِ وَبُسَطَاءَ كَالْحَمَامِ».

(عيسى المسيح)

issa-almasih.com

Teach Us

One evening two brothers in their early twenties, H and S, entered the open door of a church, approaching a room where a few people were meeting. Looking happy but nervous, they asked if it was a Bible study and could they attend? Welcomed to sit down, they were asked to introduce themselves. They hesitantly said: "But we have Muslim names. Are we still allowed to sit with you? Please teach us about Issa (Jesus). That is all we want." It turned out that for over a year, they had been longing for a safe place

to learn more about Christ.

Naïve but Persistent

H and S had trustingly told their mother of their desire to find help learning more of Christian beliefs. She informed her two brothers,

who had become guardians of the family upon their father's death a few years earlier. As soon as these fanatical Muslim uncles heard of what the two sons had said, they took them aside to persuade them that the Christian Bible

is distorted and its followers will go to hell. S said that he had heard this before, but wanted to find out for himself as he had already read beautiful things on the Internet from the Bible. One of the uncles immediately rebuked him and slapped him on the face. Both uncles made harsh threats and left the flat.

It Begins with Beating

The next day H and S received a phone call. A friendly voice "advised" them not to read the gospel, saying it is not good for the honor of their family. H said, "but we are not reading anything bad..." The man replied, "It does not matter; but you must do



as your family wants.” Then the voice became unfriendly, requesting them to meet a police officer in a security center. As soon as they arrived, they were taken by two plain-clothed policemen to a very small, dark back room and locked them in alone for several hours.

Suddenly, the two officers returned, the door was unlocked, and a small light turned on. One angrily addressed himself first to S, asking him why he was reading the Bible. Before a word came out of S’s mouth, the other officer began to slap and kick him. H’s simple question, “Why are you doing this?” brought the same treatment from the other officer. After a few minutes, the officers stopped, turned off the light, and silently left the room.

Psychological Pressure

An hour or two later (they could not be sure how long), a different but higher-ranking officer opened the door and led them to an office. He seated them down and offered them some hot tea. He spoke softly but firmly to them saying, “...It does not



matter to us what you believe or do not believe. Believe what you want but quietly, and two things you must not do: Do not go to a church, and do not speak to anyone about what you believe. Know that we are very closely watching you; next time it will be far worse, more painful.”

When they got home the two uncles were waiting for them. They told them emphatically, “We leave you alone now but hope that you have learned the lesson... Now you must promise to stop reading the Bible or even thinking about what you read previously.”

H and S did not answer and the uncles left them with their mother. She pleaded with them to obey their uncles, telling them that she would call to say that they had agreed to the demands. H said: “But we make no such promise. We want to find the truth for ourselves.”

Leading a Quiet Life

The next day, one of the uncles phoned. He sternly asked if they now had agreed

to the demands. Hearing no response, he angrily hung up. H and S realized that they were being watched and had nowhere to hide. Still, they continued to quietly go online using a smart phone that they had hidden in the house, in order to read and discuss what the four gospels say about Christ.

Another Phone Call

The phone rang. This time it was the voice of the higher-ranking police officer. He sternly reminded them about the prohibition—no church and no speaking to others about what they believe. S assured him that they were doing neither. The officer surprisingly showed sympathy, recommending to them that since they were of age, it would be better for them to leave the family home.

In a few months, through the help of a sympathetic acquaintance, they moved out to a rented flat in a remote part of the city. They are now quietly receiving Christian instruction and expect to be ready for bap-

tism soon. For such converts in Muslim countries, usually this is done discreetly in homes by the local church.

For their protection, some of the details of the on-going story of faith in the lives of H and S are withheld. Please pray for the safety and spiritual growth of these two brothers and others like them. Their steady walk in Christ’s ways is shown by their rejection of a recent suggestion to seek asylum in a Western country. Growing numbers of thinking young Muslims disenchanted with Islam are considering the Gospel alternative.

Another convert, J. U. of Morocco, has been put in contact with a local MERF discipling volunteer. He recently wrote: “...My love for Jesus grows every day. I am blessed that He loved me first and chose me to be His...”

MERF-Canada

Thank you for your faithful support! Please make cheques payable to MERF-Canada and send them to the address at the bottom of the page.

Online donations can be made to Middle East Reformed Fellowship (Canada) Inc. through www.canadahelps.org