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INDONESIA

Southern Asia Briefing

Indonesia

Indonesia is the fourth most populous nation in the world, with both the world's largest Muslim population and largest number of Protestant Christians in Asia. Vulnerable to extreme weather patterns, Indonesians experience delays in access to clean water and health care. Additionally, the current economic crisis is affecting every Indonesian. Unemployment and food prices are rising, meaning that fewer children go to school, violence caused by economic and political uncertainty is increasing, and churches continue to suffer a lack of resources.

Christian dialogue with Muslims, Hindus, and indigenous faiths is an important part of the church's ministry in all parts of Indonesia. Religious leaders have tried to encourage all sides to end the violence and enter into discussions through meetings, seminars, and workshops to foster understanding among peoples of faith. Global Ministries partners with more than a dozen organizations in Indonesia.

Julius: A fishing pastor

Pastor Julius Ndakajawal lives and ministers to a rural congregation in Kadahang, a remote village 40 miles from the main city of Waingapu on the drought stricken island of Sumba, Indonesia. Although it has 1300 members, only around 600 usually attend Sunday services. Pastor Julius says that worship attendance these days is very poor. Because of drought, many younger people are moving to Bali in Java to work as housemaids, daily wage laborers, and furniture makers. Those who remain tend to fish or harvest cassava (an edible tuberous root). Julius and his wife do these two things during the whole week to sell and to feed themselves and their four children. In fact, many pastors of the Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS) earn their livelihood by working other jobs during the week.



Julius Ndakajawal

Because of remoteness, lack of transportation, and poor public investment in education and infrastructure, people in many places like Kadahang remain on the margins and in endless cycles of poverty, often without the basics. Pastor Julius wishes for a good standard of living for his people, including water, food, education, and freedom from poverty. He does not know what he will do with his children when they finish their primary education. Secondary education is only available 40 miles away and that comes with costs – food, housing, and someone to care for the children – a reality that keeps many bound to Kadahang where they have been for generations.

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Theological education from below

Pastor Julius studied theology in the church-owned (Gereja Kristen Sumba - GKS) Theological Seminary in Lewa, about 120 miles from Waigapu. The seminary has 374 students, all from Sumba, who serve as GKS pastors. The students are very passionate about church and ministry and are motivated to go through four years of study with very basic living conditions. Their commitment and determination for their calling seem to magnify the importance of resources and infrastructure. Located in a rural setting, the seminary is basic

in terms of infrastructure, facilities, and living conditions, which is different from seminaries elsewhere in the world or in places like Jakarta or Yogyakarta in Indonesia.

Global Ministries supported the construction of hostels for male students some years ago. Global Ministries is now working with the seminary in faculty development. Jakarta Theological Seminary has expressed interest in developing the faculty in partnership with Global Ministries.



Farmers' training

The Centre for Christian Farmers in Lewa is another expression of GKS' outreach to the community, encouraging people to work with what resources they have, especially their skills. The center has about 45 acres of land that farmers use for training in agricultural practices, particularly during droughts and hurricanes.

The region has recently experienced severe drought. With a grant from Week of Compassion in 2015, the farm has now created a sustainable irrigation system with a motor pump and pipes. Seeds produced in 2014 will be sown in the land, now ready for cultivation because of the newly acquired irrigation facilities.



Oase Intim

Oase Intim, founded in 2005, is an institute for the development of contextual theology and empowerment of local ministries in Eastern Indonesia. Oase's work includes organizing study sessions and capacity building for pastors and leaders of nearly 14 mostly rural, multi ethnic, and minority Christian churches in Sulawesi, Eastern Indonesia. They also assist theological seminaries,

especially in Mamuju, with political education and skills in doing theology contextually with its research and publications. They are now developing teologi tanah (theology of land). Their recently released first publication was in honor of Rev. John Campbell-Nelson, a Global Ministries missionary in Indonesia since 1981. Dr. Zakaria Ngelow, director of Oase, edited the publication.



Gereja Kristen Sumba, the Christian Church of Sumba

The Christian Church of Sumba, or Gereja Kristen Sumba (GKS), began in 1947 and is a predominantly rural church that now has 177 congregations with 229 pastors. GKS is composed of and works among people who are exposed to poverty, health concerns, malnutrition, illiteracy, unemployment, drought, and hurricanes.

Yet, these realities don't deter the church. Their projects are ambitious. Since a majority of the residents in Sumba survive on agriculture, GKS developed the Farmers' Centre in Lewa. They have started a reforestation program on their campuses and nearby land with teak, mahogany and sandalwood trees. They are training rural women and assisting them with micro-financing to start small businesses.

It is a continuing challenge to improve the living conditions of their pastors and address the way poverty and drought are affecting church life and ministry. In addition, trafficking, domestic violence, child abuse, and HIV/AIDS are challenges that the church is striving hard to address in Indonesia.

GKS wants their story to be heard elsewhere and to invite others to join



them in their mission in Sumba. Rev. Alfred Samani and Rev. Marlin are president and secretary of the church and Rev. Charles Detha and Rev Rory are in charge of Education and Training and Witness and Service respectively.

Interfidei

The Institute for Interfaith Dialogue in Indonesia, Interfidei, has been a Global Ministries partner for nearly a decade. Interfidei has grown from a Yogyakarta-based study institution to a strong national network of partners committed to interfaith dialogue and cooperation. Interfidei has also moved away from mere gatherings and conversations to seeking dialogue in action. As such, they focus a great deal on justice and human rights issues. Interfidei's current study topics include prejudice, stereotyping, religious freedom, human rights, trafficking, the environment, diversity, radicalism, disabilities, and the rights of the Papuan people. They work a great deal with the younger generation and are most often seen in school and university campuses, as well as government offices. Rev. Elga Sarapung is its director.



Missionary Update



Karen Campbell-Nelson

Karen Campbell-Nelson serves the Evangelical Christian Church of West Timor. Karen teaches Practical Theology, Trauma Counseling and Women's Rights in the Department of Theology at Artha Wacana University. She is a member of Upland Presbyterian Church, Upland, California.



John Campbell-Nelson

John Campbell-Nelson serves the Evangelical Christian Church of West Timor. He has taught as a faculty member in the Theological Department of Artha Wacana University and its Center for Regional Studies. He is a member of Upland Presbyterian Church, Upland, California.

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