



A Cup of Java with the Armstrongs Nick Armstrong, Indonesia

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The Church in Indonesia Provides Encouragement

“Glimpses of the Church living out the story of the ‘hope that we have in Jesus’ are always a great encouragement to us. Our hope is that the following brief glimpses of the life of the church in Indonesia will be an encouragement to you as well.

In our last newsletter we made mention of Noldie, a Christian Indonesian from North Sulawesi. When Noldie was initially asked to go to Aceh to be part of our disaster response team, he said “No.” For most of his life, Noldie had heard about the three decades of civil war when thousands of Indonesian soldiers, rebels, and civilians were killed, and he wanted no part of it. But Noldie was also wrestling with his fear and desire to be part of helping people who had suffered one of the greatest natural disasters in human history.

After many tears and a prayer that lasted into the early morning hours, Noldie changed his “no” into “go.” A quiet and

unassuming man, Noldie became an instrumental part of our team in Aceh, helping literally thousands of people rebuild their homes and restore their livelihoods over the last five years.

One of the amazing things that happened during Noldie’s time in Aceh happened when the disaster response program was over and there were no more funds to pay for staff: Noldie decided to stay and continue to help farmers increase their agricultural yields and strengthen their farm groups. This was possible because of the close friendships he built in the community. They gave him a piece a land to farm so that he could make a living. Today, Noldie and his wife live on that piece of land continuing to love their Muslim neighbors.

We also mentioned in our last newsletter that the GKI church in Tasikmalaya, West Java was burned down by Muslim extremists 13 years prior to last years devastating earthquake in that area. The GKI church went to one of the hardest hit Muslim villages, Cikole Wetan. They provided emergency supplies and helped 36 subsistence farmers rebuild their homes to the highest of earthquake resistance standards.

Even when Bambang, our Christian field project manager was threatened by outside Muslim extremists, he showed his love and commitment to the people of Cikole Wetan by



Noldie

staying and working with the community to finish the project. The village head had once voiced scepticism concerning the presence of Christians in his village. “After all,” he reasoned, “why would people from a church that was burned down by Muslims come to a village of Muslims to help?” After the home reconstruction project was complete he said, “We now have new friends from a new place.” The GKI church continues to work with the community to help restore their livelihoods and love their Muslim neighbours in the village of Cikole Wetan.

As I write this, Indonesia is once again in the throes of more natural disasters that are affecting the lives of thousands of people. And once again—the church is in midst of the mess. Because the two disasters happened within a day of each other, they are being dubbed as Indonesia’s “twin disasters.”



Bambang

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On October 26th an 7.2 magnitude earthquake caused a tsunami that killed 100 people and displaced 5,000 on the four islands of the Mentawai archipelago off the coast of West Sumatra. The next day, Mt. Merapi in Central Java (16 miles from our house in Salatiga), erupted and has erupted an additional 6 times since. Estimates are that 100 people were killed and 100,000 are displaced.

CRWRC has been training Disaster Response teams for the last three years and 24 teams from our network of churches are now in place. Two of those teams, from the GKSBS church in South Sumatra, are responding to the Mentawai earthquake and tsunami disaster by providing food, blankets and other

emergency supplies. We also have four GKI church teams responding to the volcano eruption in Central Java by providing food, hygiene kits, blankets, sleeping mats, and a variety of health services through volunteer doctors and nurses. Here again, the church is reaching out to their neighbors and showing the 'hope that is in us' in a predominantly Muslim country. Please pray!



Please Pray

- Starting in September, Laura launched into her online Masters in Education at Fresno Pacific University, which was required for her role as the elementary principal of the international Christian school in Salatiga. Pray for wisdom and discipline in completing this two year program.
- Nick is coordinating between the CRWRC home office in Canada and the churches responding to the disasters in Indonesia. Pray for wisdom and courage.
- Anna started university at BSU this fall. Anna has continued to suffer from headaches for the last four years and in early October she began to experience seizures. She has had 20 seizures in one month. Our neurologist has diagnosed the seizures as non-epileptic, and we are continuing to pursue the causes and treatment. We covet your prayers.
- Lukas's initial adjustment to Centennial High School wasn't easy, but he has been blessed with some good friends who might make going back to Indonesia a little harder than he originally thought.
- Thanks for all of the love, encouragement, support, and prayer you extend to us!