



INDONESIA: To Mountain & Valley

By Tommy & Elisa Christanto



Receiving radios in Ngaduman

Indonesia is a very large string of islands south of Asia and north of Australia with the largest Muslim population in the world. The over 280 million people are of multiple languages and ethnicities, over 85% are identified as Muslims, though most are either uninformed or nominal in their affiliation. Muslims are especially concentrated in the dense population of western and central Indonesia. In the east, they are less dominant.

Jakarta, the capital of Indonesia, is in the west on Java Island. It is the centre of economic activity. MERF, through its daughter organization, YPRI, has a ministry centre in

this huge city. From there, MERF reaches out to many places on Java Island, west to Sumatra Island and even to eastern Indonesia. The Lord called us to share the gospel with Indonesians – across water, valleys, hills and mountains.

On the Mountain

We minister in various mountain locations, among them is Ngaduman village, the highest village on the slopes of Mount Merbabu, Central Java, with an altitude of 1800m(5905ft) above sea level. The main occupation of the villagers is vegetable farming. They are there by the Lord’s own design. By receiving radios, the villagers, who are

99% Christian, continue to enjoy God’s Word even while working in the fields. Through the radio messages, their faith can continue to grow. Muslims in this village also want to listen to the radio broadcasts. They even join in Easter and Christmas celebrations.

Also in another remote village in the southern limestone mountains of Java, God is at work. Of the 153 families in Wintaos village, only 3 are Christian, the rest are Muslim. Yet, the numbers are meaningless. The Lord has used these 3 families to be a light to their neighbours. Their loving and caring lives testify to Christ’s saving grace. This overcomes

religious fanaticism despite differences. The 35 ladies from the neighbourhood Quran study group visited a Christian home this past December 25th to wish them a Merry Christmas. It was the first time this happened in that area where, until recently, there has been much opposition to Christians. It was a gift from God. We consider this a miracle.

In the Valley

Not only in the mountains of Java, but we also serve in the valleys of Sumatra, specifically in two ethnically-mixed areas, namely Tulang Bawang Barat and Seputih Surabaya. We pass through muddy, pot-holed, badly damaged roads in that valley to get there. It took an hour and a half to drive only 10km (6.21 miles). These two churches are from six widespread communities, the furthest being about 25km (15 miles) from the mother church.

In this location, we serve the elderly of the congregations by providing radios to listen to spiritual radio broadcasts. So that when they are at home alone, or even working in the fields, they can still listen to the Word of God.

Radio has become a means of evangelism. Some Muslims who hear the radio programmes ask for prayer for their children and, in time, have come to faith in



*“So, they shall
fear the name
of the Lord from
the west and his
glory from the
rising of the sun.”*

— Isaiah 59 : 19a

Christ. Although the radio is a simple device, radio programmes have a great impact to help nourish the faith of new believers.

In addition to bringing gospel radio programmes, the ministry in this mixed area includes Sunday School Teacher training and children’s Joy Bible Camp. The simple supplies we provide help the Sunday school leaders in their work among children in each of the 6 regions of these 2 churches. In total, more than 100 Sunday school leaders and more than 220 children attended our “Joy Bible Camps.” One Sunday school child attended the

camp, even though he is being raised by his Muslim sister. Our services to this location will continue in order to encourage growth of the churches in this area with additional families. Along with radio ministry, Sunday school teacher training and Joy Bible Camp in person, we also conduct online ministry over the internet.

Over the Internet

Activities over the internet that began as a necessity during the COVID lockdown still continue. Using Zoom we regularly organize Sunday school teacher training and Sunday school

children’s worship online. At the beginning of the pandemic, this Zoom activity began with very few participants, around 10 children. But God expanded the network and increased the number of participants every month. To date, more than 120 children are reached through online Sunday school children’s worship every month. They come from remote villages, including some who find difficulty getting an internet connection. But they persevere with a deep desire to fellowship and praise God online with their friends from other regions in Indonesia. Sunday school teachers who accompany

the children online are also happy to get new ideas for teaching the Word of God to the children.

So, ministry trips take us to various areas in Indonesia where God is at work. On the slopes of high mountains, God is at work.

He opened doors to go down in the valley. He was already at work there, using seemingly simple things to make great miracles, even those that have never happened before. Please pray that this ministry becomes more fruitful, touching many more souls.



Top Left: Joy Bible Camp -Tulang Bawang Barat
Top Right: Tommy & Elisa Christanto family
Above: Christmas visit in Wintaos

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