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# MERF News

Middle East Reformed Fellowship—“Declaring the Whole Counsel of God”

July 2020



## Indonesia Update



**I**ndonesia Reformed Fellowship teams are lively and creative. They are strategically based at different locations in the widespread island archipelago nation. Indonesia includes five major islands and over 17,000 minor ones. The diverse population speaks over 300 different tongues. Bahasa Indonesian is the official language. With nearly 300 million, Indonesia

is the fourth largest population in the world, only a few million less than the United States.

Ancient folk beliefs are strong, yet the vast majority nominally profess Islam. By God’s grace, Christian missionaries began work in Indonesia in the 18th century. Vibrant churches were established in different parts of the five main islands. The work continued and was expanded by local evangelists to include many of the smaller islands.

For over ten years, MERF has encouraged and supported the witness of faithful Indonesian churches through its four-fold ministry programs of evangelism and church extension, biblical training and diaconal aid. MERF’s daughter organization, the *Indonesian Reformed Fellowship* (IRF) ministers through centers on two major islands: *Sulawesi* and *Java*.

### Media Ministries

Solid Christian literature is translated, printed and distributed. This includes evangelistic materials for children and adults as well as books and other materials to strengthen the faith of believers. Current translation projects in progress include: *The Old Testament Explained and Applied* by Dr Gareth Crossley, *Children’s Ministry International Bible* teaching materials and basic booklets by *Banner of Truth Trust* and *Bryntirion Press*.

IRF prepares gospel radio programs in five major Indonesian languages as well as in Bahasa Indonesia, the official common language. These are aired on many different local stations and distributed on memory sticks in areas with poor radio reception. The fruit is encouraging. Last year, an online radio website was established on the

internet. Wonderfully, this greatly expanded the number of people able to hear these gospel messages. Visual materials were also added online, including short sermons and theological teaching videos.

Since the pandemic, more internet ministries have been developed. These have been enthusiastically received. They are not just online replacements for scheduled biblical and teacher training conferences as well as children’s Bible activities. New



*“All the kings of the earth shall give you thanks, O Lord, for they have heard the words of your mouth, and they shall sing of the ways of the Lord, for great is the glory of the Lord.”*

— *Psalm 138:4 & 5*

materials are being developed. Last month an online devotional has been provided to strengthen the faith of those isolated at home. It can also be shared over social media.

### Pre-Pandemic Ministries

Earlier this year, before the pandemic, activities for mothers and children from different backgrounds were held at the *Jakarta center, west Java* as well as a children's vacation Bible school in a nearby location. Teacher training sessions were held alongside the Bible school at the same time. In *Malang*,



istries were regularly held at IRF centers in four different communities. Praise God for the help of volunteers and part-time workers. There were also opportunities to teach Christian doctrine

up poverty-stricken rural communities by an initial investment to raise animals or crops. This is usually organized as a rotating fund reimbursed for others' use after produce goes to market.

Early this year, parts of *Jakarta, west Java*, suffered severe flooding. MERF partnered with local churches to aid needy affected families. They received food and school supplies along with the gospel message.



*east Java* the gospel is shared with college students. Some of these young people receive more intensive biblical training. They are eager to share the gospel with others.

Early in the year on *Sulawesi island*, children outreach min-

istry to students at the *Institute of Health Science Makassar* and Theology, Missiology and Communications in *Jaffray Theological College, Makassar*, including leading mission trips to rural areas. As social distancing measures are relaxing, it is hoped that such activities will soon be resumed.

Indonesia spans an earthquake zone, making it particularly prone to disasters. Over the past decade, our teams worked with local churches to quickly aid those suffering from the traumatic aftermath of volcanic eruption, tsunamis, mud slides and flooding. Physical needs are met along with the divine message of hope. A year and a half ago *Palu, central Sulawesi* suffered great loss of homes and lives to a major tsunami followed by mudslides and flooding. MERF has partnered with a local church to establish a small center ministering to devastated families. Community outreach activities continue, including Bible stories and activities for children.

Recently, the lockdown for coronavirus also caused many to lose employment and become unable to provide for their families. IRF teams have partnered with local churches to help meet their needs.

Praise God for many ministry opportunities in Indonesia. Pray for the efforts of the IRF teams in Sulawesi and Java to faithfully and effectively shine the light of Christ to build His Church in Indonesia by the various language media ministries (print, radio, online), biblical training, and children's programs along with diaconal aid.



#### 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](http://www.canadahelps.org)

#### Diaconal Aid

Through IRF, MERF provides two kinds of diaconal aid to the most needy along with the Christ-centered life-giving Word - agricultural micro-projects and emergency assistance.

Agricultural micro-projects lift