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## Gospel Gladness in Isles of Indonesia



BY TOMMY CHRISTANTO

Indonesia is a highly-populated Southeast Asian nation made up of thousands of volcanic islands. The majority of the 261 million Indonesian people are Muslim, at least by name. This makes it the world’s most populous Muslim-majority nation. Indonesia is home to hundreds of different ethnic groups. More than 700 languages are spoken in the country.

MERF has two Indonesian daughter organizations based on major islands - on Sulawesi island, *Yayasan Pelayanan Reformed Makassar* (YPRM), and on Java island, *Yayasan Pelayanan Holistik*

*Allamahabab* (YPHA). They are spreading the gospel to different ethnic groups by radio and TV broadcasting and developing effective Internet media ministries.

### Makassar Radio Outreach

In Makassar, Sulawesi YPRM produces 30 minute daily radio programmes in three major local languages: Bugis, Makassar and Toraja. The majority of the Buginese and Makassarese follow Islam. Most Torajanese embrace Christianity, but many still are influenced by their ancestral pagan religion. The title of each of the three gospel radio broadcasting programmes

translates to English as “**The Way of Life.**” They each can be heard every day aired over several different Christian radio stations in South Sulawesi, as well as on the islands of Papua and Kalimantan. Some feedback:

*“Listening to the Word of God on the radio while working in the rice field makes me more energetic. I can understand the message clearly, because it is spoken in my own language.”* Bachtiar (Makassar)

*“I am very thankful for the radio programme called “The Way of Life.” I can understand the Bible better in my own language, my life is truly blessed.”* Mrs. Bertha (Toraja)

*“I am not a Christian, but I love to hear your radio broadcast. It teaches me good things. It is easy to understand, because it is in our own local language. I like the songs as well.”* Yusuf (Bugis)

### Jakarta Radio Outreach

On the island of Java, in the capital city, Jakarta, YPHA’s media ministry produces both Bahasa Indonesian and Javanese radio programmes. Bahasa Indonesian is the national language. Javanese is the most widely spoken ethnic language throughout Indonesia. Two different five-minute radio programmes introduce gospel concepts to this Islamic culture by building upon the everyday philosophy prevailing in the community, especially the Javanese-cultured society. One programme is entitled “**Trivial – But Important**” and the other “**Modern Javanese Almanac.**” Recordings are broadcast every day on sev-

**Above:** Recording a radio programme in Makassar, South Sulawesi.

**Below:** Tommy Christanto serves with MERF in Jakarta



eral radio stations on Java island and also on Sumatra island.

In addition, these programmes also widely distributed on small flash drives that can be played on a computer or another electronic device. In this way the Bible teaching can be shared much farther, including areas where the radio signals do not reach. Some feedback:

*“I am glad to be able to listen to this radio broadcast because I can meditate on God’s Word all the time while looking for grass in the fields.”* Tukiran (Gunungkidul, Yogyakarta)

*“The radio broadcasts are*

*very useful because they can accompany me from dawn, while I prepare fried wares for sale in the market.”* Mrs. Tarmini (Kopeng, Central Java)

*“I take this radio with a flash drive when I go fishing at sea, so I can be uplifted even if the catch is not good.”* Ngatijo (Pati, Central Java)

### TV Ministry

Praise God for the opportunity to also share the gospel throughout Indonesia in the national language by the national satellite TV. Two weekly TV programmes are being produced: **“Light in the City”** and **“I-Trivia.”** Guest speakers, such as



pastors and Bible teachers, give sound biblical and theological perspectives on each topic raised in the programme.

### Listener Communities

Listener Communities are established in many places, including outlying areas on the islands of Sulawesi, Sumatra and Java. The Listener Community Coordinator at each location ensures members receive the recordings of the latest gospel programmes. They also create community activities or projects, including Bible studies and literature distribution.

### Developing Ministries

Sundanese language radio programmes are being prepared to reach people in the western part of Java Island. Sundanese people are more strongly Muslim; their language is the second most widely used ethnic language after Javanese.

Internet ministries are also being developed to reach young people and

others with access to the internet. Websites are being designed to build up Indonesian churches in God’s Word and involve them in these ministries bringing the gospel to the islands of Sulawesi, Java, Sumatra, and other places. In the near future, the radio and television programmes will also be accessible online, enabling even more Indonesians to hear the gospel of Christ for the first time.

Praise God for the teams of Indonesian believers preparing gospel programmes. Please pray that they are enabled to share God’s Word clearly and for the Holy Spirit to prepare the hearts of the listeners for the message.

*Above: Producing a TV programme in the national language.*

*Left: Visiting a listener community in Lampung, Sumatra*



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*“The LORD reigns;  
Let the earth rejoice;  
Let the multitude of isles be glad!”  
— Psalm 97:1*