

Feedback on: Mennonite World Conference
World Fellowship Sunday, January 27, 2013
From: Yogyakarta, Indonesia

Mennonite Day at GKMI Jogja

by Lisi Schrottner

My name is Lisi Schrottner and I am from Kamloops, British Columbia, Canada. I am serving with Mennonite Central Committee's SALT (Serving and Learning Together) program from August 2012 until July 2013. I have been placed in Yogyakarta, Indonesia as an "English Language Coach and Community Worker". A large portion of my assignment is actively joining one of the three Mennonite church synods in Java; in this case, it is the Muria Christian Church of Indonesia (GKMI).



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On January 27 2013, GKMI Jogja celebrated Mennonite Day. This special service was held at a unique time, marking the 488th anniversary of the official beginning of the Anabaptist Reformation in Europe. Since the first adult baptisms in January 1525, these "radical reformers" have spread throughout the world, forming hundreds of different denominations. Even though each church and nation practices its faith differently, goals and eternal hope are the same.

To recognize this global body of believers, GKMI Jogja invited some international guests to the service. There are currently seven other young adults from five different nations participating in MCC's 11-month exchange programs. Two young women participating in YAMEN! (Young Anabaptist Mennonite Exchange Network!) joined me in Jogja this weekend. We began by sharing our cultural faith experiences. I described the current condition of North America where atheism and non-religion are rampantly growing, in juxtaposition with the strong faith of believers. For the past two years, my home context has been a bible college and I constantly



see disciples of Christ emerging. While growing up with a national education that denies God, Fang from China searched for meaning and motivation in this life – eventually finding God. She described the situation of the underground church in her home country and the difficulties that it faces. Nevertheless, believers carry on with perseverance and hope. Our Ugandan sister, Shammah Nakawesi, told of her interesting experience of being in between a Christian and a Muslim family. She decided on the way of Christ as a teenager. In this Christian nation, Sunday mornings are "quite loud" as energetic singing and dancing are a major part of church meetings.

In addition to our stories, we were able to share music with our fellow believers. We began with a well-known chorus, “As the Deer”, in English; it was followed by readings of Psalm 42:1-3 in our native languages: Mandarin, Luganda and German. We closed the song by repeated it in the Indonesian language. As the three of us sang with slight hesitation, the joyful noise lifted from the worshipping congregation was beautiful! To wrap up our presentation, Shammah led us in a traditional Zulu song called “Bambelela”; by adding “Yesu” it means “hold on to Jesus”. There was a dance included and we got most of the congregation moving with us. It was a simple song and the steps were straightforward but there is such joy that comes from dancing and singing together for the Lord. Many people approached me afterwards and commented that we must do that song again!

That concluded the international portion of the service. It was followed by a sermon by Pastor Janti Widjaja, a member of the MWC Faith and Life Commission. She spoke on John 8:3-11, where Jesus encounters the Pharisees and the woman caught in adultery, relating it well to forgiveness and peace; these are two major foundations of the Mennonite faith. Furthermore, it fit well with theme for the World Fellowship Sunday this year (“God’s Justice Restores”) and the GKMI synod’s theme for 2013: Year of Justice. The choir followed with a song of praise to the Lord. I have the pleasure of being part of this group and while I may have difficulty memorizing the Indonesian words sometimes, I enjoy this musical fellowship immensely! Finally, we had the pleasure of witnessing the baptisms of two young men in the church. What an opportunity to proclaim one’s faith on this special occasion, following in the faithful footsteps of our forbearers.

Mennonite Day concluded in typical Indonesian fashion: flashing cameras and many, many pictures! We grouped together to commemorate this joyful occasion – not as strangers (and obvious foreigners) but as sisters and brothers in Christ. The Holy Spirit unites us all, continuing the work of breaking down barriers between people (Ephesians 2:14-18), differences and geographical distances. The three of us were grateful for this experience and enjoyed worshipping with GKMI Jogja. It’s my prayer that such interaction would continue into the future so that the kingdom of God can be preached as a multicultural and eternal reality.

