

Documentation Regarding the Interviews on the Earthquake and the Gospel in Indonesia

Senior Church History

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I first met Pastor and Mrs. Reid at the beginning of my vicar year at Peace Lutheran Church in Sun Prairie, WI. At that time Pastor Reid was traveling to Indonesia every other month. The earthquake occurred in May, but it wasn't until several weeks later when I saw the pictures and heard the stories that I decided to document this story for my Church History project. After that I talked to Pastor Reid a few times to ask questions and then on October 27th recorded an interview with Pastor and Mrs. Reid. The Reids were in Milwaukee for other reasons and arranged to meet with me in the afternoon of October 27th at my house. I couldn't think of a place in my house with a suitable background so I decided to use a green backdrop so that I could create my own background later.

I already had a series of pictures that Pastor Reid had taken after the earthquake and the first part of the interview consisted of Pastor and Mrs. Reid responding to each of the pictures -- describing the picture and telling the stories that came to mind. In the second part of the interview I talked to Pastor Reid first and then Mrs. Reid. Pastor Reid gave some background information regarding mission work in Indonesia and then I asked him questions that followed the story in a chronological order:

- What went through your mind when you found out about the earthquake?
- What happened between the time you found out and the time you left for Indonesia?
- What were your first impressions when you got to the earthquake area?
- What was the damage like?
- How did the Christians in the area handle the event?
- What aid did WELS provide and how was it distributed?
- How were the members of the church in Indonesia involved in helping people?
- In what ways did this help open doors for spreading the Gospel?

I asked Mrs. Reid the same basic questions and she sometimes said something very similar to Pastor Reid, but very often was able to give a different perspective on the topic.

Because I interviewed two different people and talked to each of them about a set of pictures and then also went through the whole event separately, I basically had four interviews to try to weave together into one video.

Pastor Reid returned to Indonesia in November and when he returned I talked to him again on December 14th and received a few more pictures from him on December 16th. The interviews and pictures were organized into about 90 minutes of video.

After the interviews and after working with the video and pictures I feel as if Pastor Slamet, Evangelist Margana and the other Christians in Indonesia are now acquaintances. I know they are on the other side of the world, but in taking time to tell their story I have in a small way shared in their story. Even more, sharing the story has helped me realize the strong bond we already have as brothers and sisters in Christ.

Seeing how God has watched over his children in Indonesia has given me a greater appreciation for God's preserving hand in all of our lives. The stories still produce awe in me that not one member lost their life and that Christians survived even though their Moslem neighbors all around them perished. I imagine God dispatching his angels to guard his children and, as in one of the stories told, a woman and her elderly mother leave their bedroom minutes before the walls around that room collapse. Our Lord knew exactly how each brick would fall!

Part of Pastor Reid's message to the Christians in Indonesia was that God still had a plan for all of them on this earth and that plan is to share the Gospel. This is an excellent reminder for all of us alive on this earth.

This story also gives a good example of how to create opportunities to share Christ with unbelievers. The role of Christian love in spreading the Gospel is very clear in this story, especially in the village of Imogiri. The food and water did not convert anyone, but it certainly

broke down barriers and softened the hatred that so many in that village felt toward Christians. It was only a year earlier that Christians were spit upon by those in Imogiri, but now there is acceptance if not friendly relations with the Christians. This last point in particular is something I want take with me as I go into the ministry.

God has blessed me as I learned about my brothers and sisters in Christ in Indonesia. It was a joy to learn about them and to have a part in recording their story. Soli Deo Gloria.