

THE CURRENT

Updated news and prayer targets from our ministry
to empower national church planters

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Dear friends and family,

Sarwendah was prepared to kill herself, but a conversation with Pastor Bagus this summer changed everything. Recently widowed, Sarwendah found herself mired in debt due to her husband's death and she struggled with financial management. She looked for hope and direction from the leader of her local mosque on the island of Java, Indonesia. But the only help he offered came with strings attached: She would have to sexual relations with him to receive any financial assistance. The very thought bewildered and angered her.

Then the voices started taunting her. She heard voices in her mind instructing her to kill herself. She was tempted to believe that suicide was the only option left to her. But then Sarwendah happened to catch a program on television which focused on a hope that was available in the midst of seemingly insurmountable circumstances. A hotline's phone number flashed on the screen. She called the number and a program manager connected her to Pastor Bagus, one of FMI's newest supported church planters on Java. On this island, with a population of about 145 million people, Sarwendah learned that she lived only five miles away from Bagus' ministry site and she began attending church services there.

Their conversation has continued and Bagus was privileged to introduce Sarwendah to the captivating hope and assurance of salvation available only through Jesus Christ. "There are no more voices telling me to kill myself," Sarwendah said. "I feel new."



Sarwendah smiles now that she has found purpose and hope through her new life in Jesus Christ. A former Muslim, she says, "I am hungry to learn the Bible more, to

During my visit to Indonesia in August, Pastor Bagus told me that Sarwendah's face looks much happier now than when he first met her. "Her circumstances - her widowhood, her financial struggles - have not changed, but *she* has...by God's grace."

Bagus and his family are the only ones in their church who come from a Christian background. Everyone else attending has, like Sarwendah, come out of a Muslim background in order to follow Christ. The area where he serves is challenging. Local Muslim leaders are trying to shut down the church, but Bagus also finds God's grace to be sufficient for his circumstances. "Pray for our church members' growth and their relationships with their neighbors," he requested.

Your prayers and financial support for us and our partners like Bagus are imprints of God's grace. Thank you so much for empowering us to invest in the lives of these devoted evangelists and church planters. Your support translates into life-transforming impact for their ministries and the people like Sarwendah whom they serve.

Vince, my assistant, and I enjoyed a very fruitful time in Indonesia – figuratively and literally. We successfully established two new leadership teams, one for each island where FMI supports church planters. We also got to know several of FMI's newest church planters during field visits and conferences we led that focused on Christian Apologetics. During planning meetings with these new leadership teams, we strategized how to mobilize additional church planters in new areas – often in places where militant Islam is prevalent – as well as how to increase the number of partners FMI will support across Indonesia in 2019. We also ate plenty of new fruits like *rambutan*, meaning *hairy fruit* (photo; the white flesh slightly smaller than a ping pong ball), *reydon*, *sawo bangkok*, and *duku*. It never ceases to amaze me: Every time I visit Indonesia, I encounter new types of fruit I have never even heard of before!



Speaking of food, during our time on the island of Kalimantan, I was also introduced (with much trepidation!) to the delicacy of python. Yes, *python*. It did not taste bad, but was riddled with hundreds of small bones. It seemed like too much work sifting through the bones to make each little bite worthwhile for my palate. The picture here shows the skin of the seven-foot python hanging from a cord on a tree in order to dry. (For those of you who are curious, this snake was not purchased at some exotic market; it had the misfortune of meandering around our hosts' property just a few hours before our arrival! They caught it and kept it in a large burlap sack in the kitchen until we arrived. Once we arrived, they invited Vince and I to watch it be skinned and butchered. I politely declined.)



On the home front, Janet and I are getting more settled in the church where we now attend since relocating to southeastern Pennsylvania. Janet frequently plays saxophone in a special orchestral ensemble and also meets weekly with a small group of women. I have been asked to develop the lesson plans for and teach an adult elective Sunday School class this quarter on *The Persecuted Church*. Our hands are also full as we engage in caring for our parents. While we live with my mom, several times a year Janet returns to Illinois to assist her parents with challenges facing them in this season of life.

The other major challenge we continue to work on concerns Brother Ahmed, our partner in ministry leadership inside Pakistan who has endured a year of brutal persecution because of his allegiance to Jesus Christ – from *fatwas* calling for his death to an unjust trial on bogus charges to an attack inside the courtroom from ten armed men. Now that God has delivered Ahmed from his legal battles with an amazing acquittal, FMI is cleared to work with the US State Department and Department of Homeland Security on a way to bring him and his family to the US. Ahmed would remain a strategic part of FMI's overall ministry, but simply further off the radar screen of those who would want to destroy him. As you know, coming to the US – especially from Muslim-majority countries – is a hot-button topic right now, and our work with lawyers and these government agencies is intensive and slow-moving. Please join us in praying for the Lord's favor in granting Ahmed the visa he needs as well as the funds necessary for his family to safely relocate from overseas and establish a new home.

Thanks again so much for your faithful support of our ministry. We cannot do this work apart from your involvement on our team. As you head into the upcoming season of harvest and Thanksgiving, may you see with increasing clarity the blessings which God delights in lavishing on you. We count your friendship as one those treasured blessings in our lives.

Godspeed,

BRUCE & JANET

You can make contributions to FMI securely and conveniently online. To do so, visit www.forgottenmissionaries.org.

Under the "Partner With Us" tab, select "Online Giving," then click on the "Make a Donation" button.

You can designate contributions for our support (Executive Director Partnership) or for the support of our Overseas Partners.

Because you are our valued partner, it is our pleasure to send this confidential report to you.

Names of overseas individuals are changed to protect identities and photos may be representative.

**DUE TO THE NATURE OF OUR WORK IN SECURITY-SENSITIVE AREAS OF THE WORLD,
WE ASK THAT YOU DO NOT POST CONTENTS OF THIS LETTER ONLINE. THANK YOU!**