

A Christmas blessing for us all!

It's Christmas day in Padang, Sumatra. The workmen are hammering, as construction continues on the house next door. More workmen are pulling weeds that are growing through the bricks on the path to the Muslim prayer house. As we walk in through the complex we greet others "selamat pagi" who are constructing a ceramic driveway which the earthquake had damaged and a woman who is doing some wash in a bucket outside on another driveway. We continue our walk outside the complex down the street, transport stops gesturing to us if we want a ride, a smile and a shake of the head and he goes on. We reach our usual fruit stand and buy two kilos of oranges from the lady who knows us by now. And as we walk back Hans takes a photo of the cars which still sit in the parking lot completely smashed by the earthquake.



When we come home we are greeted with a "Merry Christmas" and a warm handshake from one of our Muslim team members who remained here in Padang while others have gone home for a short break from some intense and busy work. We have "Christmas" dinner with this family who came from Aceh to be with their father and husband while he is here working on the earthquake recovery. Later he tells us the story of his experiences in Aceh when the tsunami hit. His son was then 20 days old, a catastrophe the little one won't remember but he and his wife will never forget.



And so now, he, like a few others have come from Aceh to bring their experiences and talents to work as part of CRWRC to bring hope back to the people of Padang and the surrounding area. How wonderful it is to work with a team like that!

So this Christmas, we miss our family very much but what a privilege it is to work and celebrate with others of a different faith in a different culture bringing hope and love slowly back to the people who we meet in their devastated lives.

Two prayers have become central in our time here and in all what lies ahead.

“My prayer for the new year is for a nation and world where people can come out of their trenches and together sing their hopes for peace.” Sojourners

“God, forgive us for the walls of separation we have helped to construct between people, all of whom you love. We know these walls exist around the world, but that they're strengthened every day in our own communities. You call us to love our neighbor -- regardless of the cost -- and give us an example of how to do that by becoming a human being yourself. Empower us to follow example of neighboring, and by doing so may we be peacemakers. Amen.” CRWRC & OSJ Advent Devotional

Love and Peace,

Henni and Hans



A community meeting (for all of us) not just to build consensus but to actually work together known as “gotong royong”. A good idea eh?