

extending God's kingdom in Indonesia

Andrew Buchanan writes about how teaching the Bible in Indonesia is extending God's kingdom.



Students are learning about Christ-focused models of ministry.



Andrew Buchanan discipules his students.

I am fortunate that, in CMS circles, Bible teaching is held in high esteem; because in many ways it lacks the “glamour” and hardships of more front-line ministries. I have yet to stay overnight in a place where I’d have to go to the local river for ablutions; my visa states what my actual ministry is; and I am unlikely to see someone outside the reach of “normal” gospel ministry become a Christian. Yet I regard my ministry as being a vital one in the extension of God’s kingdom!

Within Indonesia, the question of sharing Christ with all groups is a very fraught one. On the one hand, some Christians are zealous for the gospel, but without wisdom. The provocative church billboard approach (“Turn or Burn”) may or may not be useful to generate discussion in some places, but in a staunchly Muslim town such as Makassar (my provincial capital) it is difficult to see what the strategy might achieve! In reaction, mainline churches are shy even to think about planning for someone outside the community of nominal Christians to come to faith in Christ. But both those who are over-zealous and those who are shy share this in common: they perpetuate Western models of church

life, resulting in a big cultural gulf with the majority community. In the middle, some interesting and encouraging approaches to presenting Christ in ways that minimise merely cultural barriers are at times misunderstood by both extremes!

It is clear then, that the culture of the church in Indonesia is often not helpful to its being a witness to Christ. Of course, God has raised up some awe-inspiring Christians and ministries here. But if we’re looking at changing church culture for the Kingdom’s sake, then theological education is the place to be.

I am able to defend biblical understandings of the gospel and mission in lectures; model biblical preaching in chapel; suggest Christ-focussed models of ministry; and to support an evangelical student ministry amongst my students through which Christ becomes central in their lives, and later in their ministry. More concretely, we already have one graduate who has gone into cross-cultural ministry within Indonesia as a result of encouragement from a foreigner on staff, and two members of the student ministry are

contemplating a similar step. As they are supported by local churches, they will help bring a wider mission vision to those churches.

Lastly, I have had a number of interesting opportunities for ministry within the local church, at both congregational and denominational level. This has included youth ministry training by a group from Sydney last October, which will be followed up with a visiting speaker this March. In all these, the ultimate goal is that the local church will become an effective instrument in God calling all peoples to himself within Indonesia.

CMS

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 - disciple and foster spiritual development in the lives of students
 - encourage and train students for church leadership and church planting
 - be involved in other Christian ministry outside college where appropriate

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