

IN PARTNERSHIP

April 2019



Sati's Story of Hope

At 69 years of age, Sati no longer wanted to die. Instead, she turned her life to Jesus and accepted the hope of a new, eternal life with Him

Before she experienced the hope of Jesus, Sati had endured five long years of crippling illness and pain. When Pastor Raj visited her home in Fiji to pray for her, Sati had lost all hope of recovery. She asked him to pray that she would die so that she could be free from agony. Instead, she experienced freedom and hope beyond her greatest expectations.

Throughout five years of debilitating illness, Sati sought out endless treatments and various religions to bring an end to her pain, pain that restricted her to the four walls of her home. With no answers from her doctors and her condition deteriorating, she allowed a woman who lived in the neighbourhood to come into her home and pray for her. For the first time, Sati says she started to feel slightly better.

“After two days of praying, the woman asked if she could bring her pastor,” Sati said. When Pastor Raj arrived at her home the next morning, she asked him to pray that she would die so that she could be free from agony.

But Pastor Raj assured her that there was hope for healing. He poured her a glass of water and prayed over it that she may be healed. As Pastor Raj

and the woman who had visited the previous day sang songs and prayed over her, Sati slowly and painfully attempted to drink the water.

The following day she started to feel hungry, and within a few days, Sati was walking without help and had regained enough freedom to use the washroom on her own. She was overjoyed with her progress, and when Pastor Raj returned to ask how she was doing, Sati joyfully responded that she was “very well”. Eventually, Sati’s body was miraculously restored to its former health. She was free from debilitating pain, and able to eat and move freely.

Alongside Sati’s physical healing came a wave of spiritual hope and restoration. God’s miraculous healing and Pastor Raj’s commitment to visiting and ministering to Sati meant that at 69 years of age, she no longer wanted to die. Instead, she turned her life to Jesus and accepted the hope of a new, eternal life with Him. With Sati’s blessing, Pastor Raj collected her Hindu idols and threw them away. With her newfound health and purpose, she started catching a bus to her local church – the Vuci Road Church of Christ, led by Pastor Raj – where she still worships each Sunday.

Without local ministries and pastors to undertake home visits, men and women like Sati may never experience the transformative hope of the gospel. This Good Friday, you can tangibly share the hope of the gospel with people like Sati by taking part in Walk for Hope. By walking one, five or even ten kilometres to church and raising money from family and friends, you can give people in remote communities the opportunity to access life-changing Christian ministries, or fund local pastors to visit people’s homes to pray for them and share the gospel with those who may never otherwise hear it.

Sati’s story is miraculous. With your help, her story of hope could be shared by thousands more – and it’s a hope worth walking for.

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News & Events

Good Friday Walk for Hope April 19.

Spread the word and get your friends and family involved in sharing life-changing hope this Easter! The money you raise and donate will help plant new churches, train pastors, and send evangelists to share Jesus' message of hope to more people. Visit the website to get involved www.walkforhope.com.au



Meet our Walk for Hope Ambassadors

Sati, Jessie, Hlambelo and Melinda demonstrate how they found Jesus in their own walk for hope. Read their stories online at www.walkforhope.com.au



The GMP Sulawesi Emergency Appeal raised \$33,370.99

Thank you for your generosity! Funds have been directed to Act for Peace, through our partnership with the ACT Alliance to ensure that your support reached those in need. Read more about what God is doing in Sulawesi through the students at Christian Church Theological School Indonesia (CCTSI) on page 3.



A Revelation of Hope

I heard of a local church moving to the point of closure. This news has given me much cause to reflect. Not so much on the decision the church has made to close, but the challenge of sharing the Christian message of love with grace and strength. How can we keep sowing seeds of hope in communities in Australia and overseas?

In Jesus Christ, God is fully present in our world. There is deep joy in this. Jesus is fully human and fully divine and opens up, for all who follow, new realities and new possibilities in life. The revelation of the unconditional love, compassion, strength and grace of God through the ministry of Jesus is a revelation of hope.

Core to this hope is the confidence that death does not have the final word. In Lent, while we reflect on the journey of Jesus to the cross, we know that Jesus' death is not the end of the story. Jesus dies for the sake of the whole world and our joy on Easter Sunday is knowing that death is not victorious. Jesus is risen.

It is this foundational contrast – the reality of death and the fulfilled promises of new life – that gives us hope and peace. Paul affirms in Romans 5:1-5 that hope birthed in

suffering, endurance and character “does not disappoint us”. All this is not a personal achievement. It is possible because of “God pouring love into our hearts”. Paul’s words lift our human spirits beyond being limited to our struggles and to a new place of expectation and peace. This is the hope that does not disappoint.

It is also the message we share. It is such good news. We want people to experience the joy of this new life.

The GMP Good Friday initiative of Walk for Hope is not just a way of encouraging giving to support the planting of churches, it serves as a reminder of our daily commitment to follow Jesus. When we ‘walk for hope’ it is about what we seek for ourselves and what we want for others. To walk to church on Good Friday can be a spiritual discipline of stillness, reflection and effort. Walking with this perspective celebrates the good news of God’s love in Jesus Christ.

How about joining me, and many others, on Good Friday as we ‘Walk for Hope’.

John Gilmore,
Executive Officer

Life-Changing Truth

Labak'e could never have known that a conversation with a new work colleague would trigger such a life-changing chain of events.

On the lush and humid Indonesian island of Sulawesi, the Buginese people live according to Muslim and traditional beliefs, heavily influenced by ritual and culture. While the vast majority of Buginese people have converted to Islam from Indigenous animist practices, it's still common for people to honour their ancestors' spirits through worshipping nearby mountains and rivers.

For Labak'e, these things were common practice. With a mother who he describes as a 'special worshiper witch' in the tribe, he wrestled with experiences of 'dark spirits' and interacted with his god through worshipping nature.

When Labak'e reached adulthood, he decided to marry. Parents in Buginese culture traditionally arrange marriage, and Labak'e dutifully agreed to marry a woman that his parents chose for him. He was happy to find that his wife was a loyal woman who diligently

read the Qur'an and shared his Muslim beliefs.

Just one year after he married his wife, Labak'e found himself on a new and unfamiliar journey. He started to work with a man from Java who called himself a Christian and had graduated from Christian Church Theological School Indonesia (CCTSI). He passionately shared stories of Jesus – a man who had sacrificed his own life for Labak'e. The message of the gospel gradually transformed his heart and, another year later, Labak'e decided to be baptised.

Having decided to follow Jesus, who he calls Isa Almasih, his life started to change. He ceased habits that were offensive to God. Through prayer and persistence, he fought against cultural traditions to witness the good news of Jesus to his friends, neighbours and family, but he was mocked and rejected by them all. His wife disagreed with his beliefs, causing a great divide in their marriage.

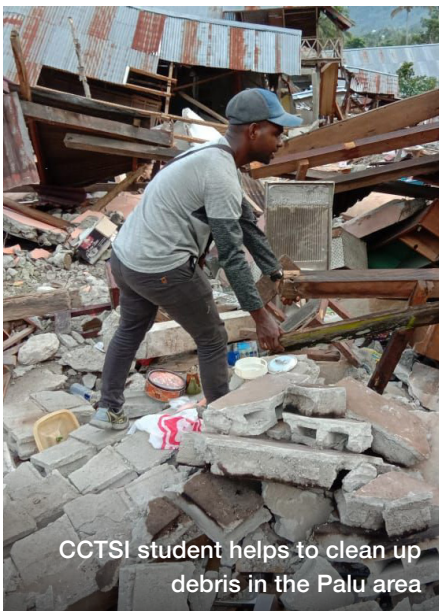
Labak'e says that 2013 was the hardest year of his life. His wife

divorced him on the grounds of his beliefs. Labak'e cried out to God, asking why he faced so many challenges when he had surrendered his whole life to Him. Despite his anguish, Labak'e continued to trust in, and live for, God.

In the Bugis tribe, a man who is single and has money is free to have other wives, or to change his wife. While Labak'e had the resources to do this, his heart had been changed through his faith. With God's help, he came to realise that his past has been buried by the death of Jesus, who has given him new life, "Because of His cross, my life is renewed." Labak'e says his focus is now solely on God. He knows that if he marries again, that his wife will share his faith and be willing to work with him for God's glory.

While he now works independently, he still studies the Bible with the man from CCTSI and looks forward to a life of following Jesus and sharing His hope with the Bugis tribes.

Practical Support Gives Sulawesi Hope



CCTSI student helps to clean up debris in the Palu area

Students who study at the Christian Church Theological School of Indonesia (CCTSI) dedicate their lives to serving the Lord and to impact the lives of others.

On weekends, students travel to villages where they can assist local churches and build relationships with local people who desperately need to hear what Jesus has done for them. So when the earthquake and tsunami hit the Palu area of Central Sulawesi in September 2018, CCTSI students and alumni were quick to take up the opportunity to participate in the local relief efforts. They helped the community clean up debris, joined with government volunteers

and aid agencies to bring food, LPG, stoves, blankets and books, as well as assisted building temporary shelters. Students helped to provide counseling and trauma healing, addressing health concerns, and ministered to children and parents. CCTSI also sent in some water tanks for clean water supply.

Hery Susanto, CCTSI Academic Dean said, "It will take years for life to return to normal after such a disaster, but at least we could help, even in small ways to share God's love to those who had suffered so much."



The Saviour Complex

“We should do what Jesus did,” said one member of the Bible study group. Heads nodded all around the circle. “Does that mean we should die on a cross?” Well... it took a good deal more discussion before everyone thought through what it meant to be like the Saviour of the world without being the Saviour of the world.

In the book, *When Helping Hurts**, Jayakumar Christian, CEO of World Vision India, argues that the economically rich have ‘god-complexes’, a subtle and unconscious sense of superiority in which they believe that they have achieved their wealth through their own efforts and that they have been anointed to decide what is best for low-income people, whom they view as inferior to themselves. You can feel some of the impact of being on the receiving end of Western ‘god-complexes’ in Christian’s words. Try thinking about yourself dying on a cross for the sins of the world for a minute – just to give you an idea about the dangers of a saviour complex in helping the poor.

For starters you would not be effective – you wouldn’t have the sinless life or the anointing from God to back it up. Your solution for the community would not be as perfect as you think it is. Next up,

you may realise that your sacrificial actions are more for your own benefit than for the community. Sacrificing yourself and being involved makes you feel good and important – like you have real purpose in your life. There’s nothing wrong with feeling good about yourself, but if that takes over from serving people, then you aren’t helping anyone but yourself.

People look up to a saviour. It is a great feeling to visit poor communities and feel some sense of reverence and importance, but this too can lead us down the path of serving ourselves and not others. People rely on saviours and we are often motivated by the need of those in poverty. So if it becomes about our need to be needed or we work in a way that doesn’t help people out of their need, we are hurting instead of helping.

A story from *When Helping Hurts**:

Creekside Community Church reached out to a nearby public housing community, delivering toys each Christmas. After a few years, volunteers were hard to find. They were disillusioned because the people they were helping were still as poor and dependent as when they started the program. Also the deliverers noticed that there were few men in the houses they delivered to.

Later they found out that the men often made themselves scarce when the delivery came because they were embarrassed that they couldn’t provide Christmas toys for their own children. Creekside’s strategy, developed from a sense of being the saviour of the public housing community, didn’t help people out of poverty. It only made them feel worse (in the case of the men anyway) about the difficult situation that they were in.

At GMP one thing we do to try to get our eyes off ourselves is keep out of photos. If you look at GMP publicity there are very few photos with GMP staff or other Australians alongside our overseas or Indigenous partners. The absence of the helpers in the photos is intentional. It stops us congratulating ourselves and draws the focus toward our partners and the participants in their projects. And we hope too, that it draws attention to the one who is really working the miracles in our lives and in theirs.

Recognising the true Saviour of the world, as our own saviour, and the saviour of anyone we reach out to, is the only correction for a ‘saviour complex’ or any other distorted view of ourselves (Hebrews 12:2).

Colin Scott,
COCOA Director

**Corbett, Steve & Fikkert, Brian 2012, When Helping Hurts: How to Alleviate Poverty Without Hurting the Poor and Yourself, Moody Publishers, Chicago.*