

# TARI'S TESTIMONY

## *Sola Gratia*



### FAMILY BACKGROUND

I grew up in a Muslim family, and I lived under the rules of Islam, which taught that I had to do certain activities in order to go to heaven. I considered myself a good religious child, and I read the Quran and memorised a lot of prayers in Arabic. My family always sent me to the Mosque, even though they themselves never went to the Mosque. They also had a strong faith in tradition. On certain days, my great-grandmother took me to the cemetery to pray to our ancestors and offer food to them; we believed that our ancestors could help us in our work and provide us with special blessings.

Money and wealth are as important in my family as traditions; my parents separated because of money. All the people in my family just worked day and night for money. I did not like the way they lived because I needed their attention. Then, when I went to Elementary School, my great-grandfather passed away. My



Above: Sri Lestari (Tari). Below: English outreach camp in Indonesia.



Team ministry with CrossConnect students.

family fought over the inheritance he left; they could not manage the possessions that we had.

Time went by. When I was in Middle School, my mother went to another country for work. For more than two years, she left me without any news. I was angry with her and hated her. I did not expect her to come back because, in my mind, she was already dead. For most of my life, my grandmother had been my main carer, not my mother.

**FINDING CHRIST**

I graduated from Middle School in 2011. I really wanted to go to High School, but my grandmother did not have enough money to put me through. We lived in a small village at that time so, whatever happened in the community, everyone else knew about it.

One afternoon in June, a man named Andreas, from a nearby church came to my house and told my grand-

mother that he would try to help me go to school; Andreas was the leader of that particular church. I was not sure about his kindness. He came again on another day and told my family about Jesus, and about a Christian school that I could go to. He just kept coming to my house and talking about his beliefs. Every time he told me the story of Jesus, I said yes from my mouth and would nod my head, but deep in my heart I did not believe him.

One day, he asked me to join a Christian youth camp so that I might learn more about Jesus before putting in an application to the Christian High School. I decided to go to the camp in order to find some new friends. However, there was a moment at the camp that really spoke to me; this was when one of the teachers said that Jesus is 100% man and 100% God. "What a silly statement!" I thought. But then, I started to ask myself questions about this statement, "What did he mean?" I was afraid to ask other people about this matter, so I just kept the questions to



CrossConnect students, with Helen & Bruce Buckley.



myself. But this questioning led me to the Christian High School, where I had been offered a place.

During my first year in High School, I found that Christians are really friendly and different. I started asking myself, "So, which religion is right?" I could not answer that question because I did not know the answer. I also did not want to ask other people because I did not want to embarrass myself. In my heart, I wanted to be different, but I also wanted to be with my friends who are Muslims; so, for about a year, I was very confused about religion. In Year 11, I had to choose a religion because it was time to get my Identity Card, which would show my religion. I chose Jesus and Christianity because I wanted to be a different person.

### MY CHRISTIAN WALK

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Believing in Christ was a really big decision because I had to protect myself from the community. In the first few months of believing in Jesus, I did not tell my friends and relatives that I was a Christian because I was afraid that I might get rejected by them. My mother had left me when I was a child, so I did not want them to leave too. I would say that my Christian life, at that time, was up and down like a roller coaster.

One afternoon in school, one of my teachers asked me to go to the school office because someone was waiting for me. From a distance I saw a woman in a pink jacket. I could not believe it - it was my mother; I could not believe that she was back. She hugged and

kissed me. I was surprised because that was the first time she had ever kissed me. My heart was touched and I tried to forgive her. I remembered that God had also forgiven my sin.

Not long after that, my mom decided to go to work again in a different town. Even though I had her details, I did not contact her because my heart was hurt. I kept complaining to God, "Why did you give me a mother like her? Why didn't you give me a father like my friends have?" I kept saying that I did not like my family.

### GOD'S GOODNESS

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But God is so good to me; He has done more than I could ever have imagined. He has shown me His love; He has sent me a Christian family who really cares about me and helps me in my hard times. Through their care, God shows me that He really loves me. God keeps sending loving people to me, so that I might also share this love with my mother and other family members.

By His grace, He has sent me here to Australia. Last year at GLO CrossConnect is the year when God has been teaching me that I am important to Him. It does not matter what people think about me, because the most significant thing is my relationship with Him. He has taught me that the world will hate me because I am His follower, but the promises that He has given me through His Word will always be fulfilled. I can trust Him and rest in His future plans for me.