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A Tribute to My Mother's Everlasting Ministry

Dear family, friends and colleagues,

I am writing this letter as we approach the season of Advent and the 40th day since the Lord took our mother, Marietje Sapardi, home on November 3, 2021. My husband Bernie, a retired PC(USA) mission co-worker, said that God gave her a new time to continue to grow in God's Kin-dom. We still cry when we miss her. Her legacy of faith gave her the strength to raise us for 32 years after our father died.



My mother encouraged me to live with her Muslim cousin in Yogyakarta where I went to high school in 1981. She motivated me to read the Bible and inspired me to be a light in a Muslim family. At that time my parents lived in Ambon, known as the capital of the Spice Islands during colonial times. There, we lived in a Christian community. Before my mother returned to Ambon, she encouraged me to celebrate the Ramadhan fast with her Muslim family. She recalled the account from the Bible where Jesus fasted for 40 days.



After my father died in 1989, my mother supported us by sewing wedding dresses in Jakarta. She came to help me when I was working with farmers in Halmahera, North Moluccan in 1990. She taught women to sew even though they could not count. Then we had a bazaar to sell their products. Her tenacity and steadfastness rested on her faith in Christ.

After living alone in Jakarta, we invited her to join us in Yogyakarta where all of her six children's families live. She lived with us for 10 years. Mother was also the oldest member of the House of Authentic Sense Co-op (HAS Co-op). She was 81 years old. When we had the Co-op's annual meeting, my mother traveled with us to do activities in person at members' homes.





Her youthful spirit that shaped us as her children seemed to never die. Her sharp mind contributed to our activities even when her body became more vulnerable. Even as she grew weaker, she continued to study, still humbly examining herself and drawing closer to God’s purpose for her. She longed to be a person who loves God, sharing her life with her children, in-laws, grandchildren and great-grandchildren as well as the church and our Muslim neighbors. She testifies of Christ through her actions.

On “Youth Pledge Day,” members of HAS Co-op, whose products were ready for sale at Yogyakarta International Airport were invited for a discussion with the local newspaper, *Kedaulatan Rakyat*. Before leaving, I asked my mother for permission to cut five blooming orchids that were growing in her front room. I put them in my hair. After returning from the meeting, I told her about the exciting discussions we had about our work with people who live with disabilities whose lives have inspired ordinary people. Their lives inspire us all. Her sparkling eyes responded to my report. Before I left her room, she asked me to keep the orchids in the fridge so I could use them again. While wondering when I would use the orchids again, I followed her request. I wrapped the orchids in newspaper and put them in plastic. While my siblings were decorating her coffin with orchids in full bloom taken from her front room, I remembered mine. I looked and found them still fresh in the refrigerator. Mother apparently wanted me to wear the orchids on the day of her departure.



Life is beautiful, even when pain and bitterness accompany us on our path because they foster fortitude and appreciation for life. My mother taught me beauty in production since I was a child. She is a craftswoman who devoted her time to sewing. She was an entrepreneur who contributed to the budget of the family along with my father who served as a government civil servant. Her work made it accessible for me to study in Yogyakarta.


Her sincerity in prayer opened the hearts of others to express their faith with respect for others.

Together as Christians and Muslims HAS Co-op staff, we prayed that selected products that will be collected by the Cooperatives and Small Medium Enterprises are blessed to be sent to Yogyakarta International Airport where the market for all products produced by members of HAS Co-op is. We are so thankful for grants sent by congregations of PC(USA), as well as individual donors. The contributions made by sisters and brothers in the USA touched the heart of HAS Co-op members. They created Christmas greeting cards to send specially to churches and individuals who have supported the HAS Co-op.



Life goes on gracefully. God’s love radiates when goodness brings change in the form of creativity that motivates progress. The ministry of PC(USA) in Indonesia has changed the way we understand life because Christians and Muslims work together to build mutual understanding. To all those who have contributed to the beauty of God’s ministry in Indonesia, we thank you. Bernie is leaving for the USA to spend two months on vacation with our family in the Bay Area. Our passion crosses borders to continue witness Christmas and arrival of the New Year.

Farsijana and Bernie

The page features a decorative border with pink petals scattered throughout and orange flowers with green leaves at the corners. The text "Farsijana and Bernie" is positioned in the upper left area.

Farsijana and Bernie